

THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMERCIAL ADVERTISER  
AND THE EASTERN FRONTIER, 1834-1847;

An examination of the ways in which and the sources from  
which it reported frontier conflicts.

A Thesis for the Degree of Master of Arts,

by

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The name of John Fairbairn is remembered with honour in South Africa for the part he played in the achievement of a freer press in the Cape Colony, in the campaign to prevent Britain from establishing a convict station on Cape soil, and in the movement which resulted in the establishment of a form of representative government in the Cape in 1853. More controversial is his share, as the editor of the first modern newspaper in the Colony, in a campaign to secure just treatment for the natives both inside and outside of the Colony. It is with his treatment of the conflicts, both small and great, between the Colony and the AmaXhosa tribes on its Eastern Frontier that this study is concerned.

Fairbairn created a great stir throughout the Colony when his newspaper, the South African Commercial Advertiser, seemed to support the enemy when the Xhosa invaded the Eastern Districts of the Colony in December 1834. He was denounced, especially by many of the British Settlers in Albany, as being a traitor who had no feeling for the suffering of those who were left widowed and fatherless, and those who had lost all their possessions in the invasion. The Graham's Town Journal, at that time the only newspaper in the frontier districts, burst out against Fairbairn's lack of understanding of the frontier situation and his disparagement of the frontier settlers. Not only Robert Godlonton, the editor of the Journal, but also many residents and refugees in Graham's Town condemned Fairbairn's comments for years past, and endeavoured to discredit Fairbairn as a theorist and as a completely unreliable witness to events on the Frontier.

The attack was maintained by Godlonton and two other British Settlers of 1820, Lt. Donald Moodie and J.C. Chase. It was averred that Fairbairn was partly responsible for causing the Xhosa to make war on the Colony, in that he and Dr. Philip, superintendent of the London Missionary Society in Southern Africa and Fairbairn's father-in-law, had made known to the Xhosa chiefs that they had been unjustly treated and that their wrongs would be redressed. This was on a

visit they made to the Khosa in 1830<sup>1</sup>. The charge became widespread in the Colony, and as late as 1838 the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary W.B. Boyce remarked that

"the calamities of December 1834, and the following month, are in part traceable to the injudicious and thoughtless interference of Dr. Philip and Mr. Fairbairn in 1830." \*

Godlonton, writing in 1835 in Introductory Remarks to a Narrative of the Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes, stated that Fairbairn had created a false impression of the invasion of December 1834 and minimised its seriousness to the inhabitants of the Western Districts of the Colony. This meant that the required help and sympathy was not forthcoming for the sufferers on the frontier. The Commercial Advertiser had, he said, "boldly avouched that the whole [invasion] was a pretence for meditated aggressions by the colonists on the unoffending Kafirs<sup>2</sup>." A notice in the Graham's Town Journal of 2 January 1835, which was supported by a list of 360 names of prominent frontiersmen, implored

"All who would not wilfully be made instrumental in stifling the cries of the widow and the fatherless for protection, - to use their best endeavours to suppress the circulation of that paper, during the continuance of the present awful crisis."

J.C. Chase wrote in 1836, in Some Reasons for our opposing the author of the "South African Researches" that Fairbairn had used the press "to insult and prove that the charge of aggression rests with the Colonists alone". Fairbairn and Philip had between them tried to force the Governor of the Colony to adopt their plan for the relations between the Colony and the Khosa. After being in some degree responsible for the war they tried to "protract a sanguinary warfare" by the "dissemination of dangerous opinions" in favour of the enemy. Then, said Chase, Fairbairn had tried to force the Governor to abandon his scheme for the settlement of the war by threatening him with the "indignation of the English Public and Government"<sup>3</sup>."

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1. Godlonton (1) p.50.  
 2. Godlonton *ibid.* p.114.  
 3. Chase p.40.  
 \* Boyce p.14.

Fairbairn was guilty of theorising about the Frontier situation, said Chase. The Commercial Advertiser stood condemned for its "wild and visionary, and grossly ignorant views of frontier affairs<sup>1</sup>." Donald Moodie accused Fairbairn of having "a frantic enthusiasm for colour<sup>2</sup>," and of being unable to see virtue in a white skin.

Another charge made was that Fairbairn was paid to put the views of the London Missionary Society, and that Fairbairn had learned from Dr. Philip to become an "accuser of the Colonists<sup>3</sup>." His treatment of events on the frontier and his grasp of the frontier situation, were therefore most unreliable. Godlonton, in his Narrative of the Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes, written in 1836, said of Fairbairn and his friends that

"The Kafirs have been declared, by those who were superlatively ignorant of the subject, to be an injured people; and every occurrence on this frontier for many years back has been made to bend to, or subserve in some way or other, this fanciful hypothesis<sup>4</sup>."

Godlonton further accused Fairbairn and his philanthropic "party" of undermining the Commando System. Commandos and patrols were expeditions sent into Xhosa territory to punish the tribesmen when the frontier Colonists suffered plunder. The Xhosa should not have been told, as Fairbairn and Philip had told them, that the punishment was unjust which

"has sometimes been inflicted on them for their frequent murders and continual robberies within the Colonial boundary...<sup>5</sup>."

Fairbairn's activities had blackened the reputation of the British Settlers in Albany and the other frontier districts. Godlonton was convinced that the British Government would do much to help the Colony if only its true state were known, but only the sort of comments which Fairbairn and Philip made were received in Britain. Correspondents in the Graham's Town Journal agreed with Godlonton on this matter.

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1. *ibid.* p.42.

2. Observer (D. Moodie) in G.T.J. 16 July 1835.

3. Godlonton (1) p.115.

4. Godlonton (2) p.50.

5. Godlonton (2) p.49.

The correspondent A.B. saw in the author Thomas Pringle the venom of Philip, and through Pringle it spread to George Thompson and Stephen Kay, whose books had also been printed in Britain. These opinions were detrimental to the Colony and

"we have no one equally interested to defend us; nine tenths of us are even ignorant of the allegations which gather credit from our silence, and these works become the vade mecum of our parliamentary declaimours<sup>1</sup>."

A newspaper war developed between the Commercial Advertiser and the Graham's Town Journal on the subject of the Frontier and continued intermittently until Fairbairn ceased to report anything controversial. Fairbairn's attitude suddenly changed in March 1846 and he condemned the Xhosa as faithless and intractable. Fairbairn left the Xhosa to the action of the Colonial forces, and insisted that they be severely punished.

This sudden change of attitude indicated to Godlonton, Chase and others in the Colony that Fairbairn was, as they had so long claimed, a most unreliable guide to the Frontier situation. Godlonton made the point that Fairbairn,

"... in writing on the Kaffir question, indulges, as very sanguine persons are wont to do, in extremes; and hence is an unsafe authority on the subject on which he descants ... He writes obviously for effect; he uses very poetical terms, but which are too flashy and turgid to possess in reality much force or substance. The change of his sentiments is much more startling than gratifying; it being obvious that the transition is too great and too sudden to be well considered ... He has abandoned his pets - and truly it was high time, - and he now cuts them up root and branch; he treats them as though they were insensate inanimate images, and that the troops had only to hew them down, and scatter them to the winds of heaven - blotting out their very name from among the inhabitants of this section of Africa<sup>2</sup>."

From his weekly reports of depredations on the frontier to his concept of the frontier as a whole, and especially in his estimation of "Caffer Character," Fairbairn was condemned.

Of the historians who have dealt with this matter Sir George Cory agrees with Godlonton's position<sup>3</sup>. G.M. Theal sums up the traditional attitude towards Fairbairn in the following words:

1. A.B. in G.T.J. 30 January 1835.

2. G.T.J. 9 May 1846.

3. Cory Vol. III p.91.

"There was, however, a party in Capetown that entirely disapproved of the governor's policy. It was composed of only a few individuals, but it had powerful support from abroad, and its leaders were men of such ability and energy as the reverend Dr. Philip, superintendent of the London society's missions, and Mr. John Fairbairn, editor of the Commercial Advertiser. The members of this party desired the formation of states ruled by Bantu chiefs under the guidance of missionaries of their own views, and from which Europeans not favoured by missionaries should be excluded. They maintained the theory that the Kaffirs were an eminently docile and peaceably disposed people, who must therefore have been provoked to take up arms by great wrongs and cruelties. In the opinion of this party, the war had been unnecessarily protracted, and had been conducted by the Europeans in a barbarous manner. By its leaders the sufferings of the colonists were either ignored or represented as very trivial, while the utmost fear was expressed that the Bantu tribes would perish if exposed to free intercourse with white people.

Time has shown how groundless were such fears, but in 1835 that could not be seen as clearly as it can be to-day. Men were then as it were groping in the dark towards a solution of the difficult question how to protect the colonists without disturbing the rights of the Kaffirs, and the views set forth in the Commercial Advertiser could be legitimately held without anyone having just cause of complaint. It was the manner in which those views were forwarded by some members of the party, and the distorted charges against the colonists made in support of them, that excited anger from one end of the country to the other.<sup>1</sup>"

W.M. MacMillan's two books Cape Colour Question and Bantu, Boer and Briton, based as they are on correspondence between Philip and his friends and colleagues, have changed the attitude of historians to Dr. Philip. MacMillan shows that Philip was well supplied with information on the Xhosa frontier, and he gives in detail Philip's policy at various stages. But he does not distinguish Fairbairn's position from Philip's except incidentally. He states, inadequately, that Dr. Philip "had nothing to do with the newspaper"<sup>2</sup>, and there is a hint that Fairbairn differed from Philip on a crucial point of Xhosa policy<sup>3</sup>, but that is all.

MacMillan criticises frontier opposition to Dr. Philip and, in the case of the Graham's Town Journal notice, to Fairbairn. He concludes that Fairbairn's comments had been "unfavourable but

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1. Theal (1) Vol. VI p.136-137.
  2. MacMillan (1) p.136.
  3. *ibid.* p.183 n<sup>2</sup>.

not unjustified", and that the outcry against the Commercial Advertiser is understandable:

"The colonists were in no mood to distinguish nicely between the criticism of a faulty system of administration and personal attacks on themselves and their interests. Fairbairn, for his part, did little to mollify their wounded feelings and, in their continuing rage, they could thereafter see in him and his like only a clique of bemused fanatics<sup>1</sup>."

Again, MacMillan does notice the change in Fairbairn's attitude in 1846, but he does no more than mention it in a footnote<sup>2</sup>.

Some clearer definition of Fairbairn's position is necessary to determine how justified are the statements of Godlonton, Moodie and Chase. This will lead to comment on the kind of pressure under which "Settler Opinion" was formed.

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1. MacMillan (1) p.137.

2. *ibid.* p.291.

## CHAPTER I

### FAIRBAIRN AND HIS EARLY SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON THE XHOSA

The newspaper press in the Cape Colony was very backward in the 1820's. The Cape Government Gazette, which had developed under British administration from the Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser, fulfilled a limited function. It was described in 1822 by a government official as being

"a mere list of proclamations, of civil and military appointments and promotions, marriages, births, christenings, deaths, the price of articles of produce, and advertisements of sales, the notices of the sequestrator, of the orphan chamber, of the burgher senate, and other boards; all of which is extremely useful to the buyers and sellers, but by no means amusing or instructive<sup>1</sup>."

Thomas Pringle, head of a party of British Settlers in 1820, had left his location on the frontier in 1822 and taken up the appointment of Sub-Librarian at the new South African Public Library in Cape Town, and he and a friend, Rev. Abraham Faure of the Dutch Reformed Church, determined during 1823 to set up a periodical to cater for the "amusing" and "instructive". As Pringle phrased it, they wished to "enlighten South Africa<sup>2</sup>". They were to produce a periodical, the South African Journal.

A newspaper was projected at the same time, by a certain George Greig, another recent immigrant from Britain, who began work in Cape Town in September 1822 as a printer. His South African Commercial Advertiser seems to have been planned to fill the need felt by Bird, and to take over much of its circulation from the Government Gazette. Greig promised to include "original miscellaneous matter", including extracts from English newspapers, prose productions and poetry<sup>3</sup>.

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1. Bird p. 59.

2. T. Pringle to J. Fairbairn, 24 November 1822. Pringle Corr. For Abraham Faure, 1795-1875, see R.F.H. Immelman "Dr. Abraham Faure, Book Provider and Library Pioneer" in South African Libraries, Vol. 29 no. 1.

3. G. Greig Manifesto.

Pringle had, before his departure from Britain, asked a friend of his to accompany him<sup>1</sup>, and at the end of 1822 he repeated his invitation. John Fairbairn, a life-long friend of Pringle's, was urged to go to Cape Town to run a boarding school for Pringle and aid him in establishing his periodical. These offers appealed to Fairbairn: he accepted the teaching post and was most enthusiastic about the second project:

"What should hinder us from becoming the Franklins<sup>2</sup> of the Kaap? The history of the settlement requires to be brought down by rational men on the spot for a good number of years. Little or nothing has been done in the natural history of South Africa since Sparrman and Vaillant; and it is a rich region in that respect .... I have a number of literary schemes in my head, some of which may furnish us with matter for communion ..... surely popular lectures on Chemistry, Geology, Botany and other departments of science, might be rendered acceptable to your new countrymen<sup>3</sup>."

It was with high hopes that Fairbairn set sail soon afterwards. He arrived in Cape Town on 10 October 1823, and on 13 November was given permission to remain in the colony with "No Securities<sup>4</sup>".

Both Pringle and Fairbairn had attended Edinburgh University, though neither had taken a degree. Fairbairn's time was at first devoted to medicine, and then he turned his attention to theology. Due to some unfitness on his part, the details of which it has not been possible to discover, he was rejected by an unidentified church as a candidate for its ministry<sup>5</sup>. He turned to school teaching for a livelihood.

Edinburgh was at this time the centre of vigorous intellectual activity, given expression in its educational institutions and in its journalism. Both Pringle and Fairbairn had played active roles in literary circles at the University, and they entertained literary aspirations. Pringle was more active, wishing to make journalism his career, and in 1817 he was for a short time co-editor of the new

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1. Pringle to Fairbairn, 12 December 1819. Pringle Corr.
  2. Benjamin Franklin, 1706-1790, the American editor, inventor and statesman.
  3. Fairbairn to Pringle, 2 March 1823. Quoted in Pringle, p. 189 n.
  4. C.O. 4180. Cape Archives.
  5. This was probably the Independants. See ? to Fairbairn, 14 May 1818, a letter in possession of Capt. J. Fairbairn, Simonstown.

Blackwood's Magazine<sup>1</sup>. Fairbairn made some contributions to the columns of Blackwood's both during and after his friend's period of office, but their efforts lacked the fire of first class Edinburgh journalism and did not measure up to the standard of the Edinburgh Review and the Quarterly Review<sup>2</sup>. Both men held as their ideal in journalism the standard which prevailed in Edinburgh. Pringle, in fact, had come to the Cape partly to write an account of the "New Settlement", and with the encouragement of the novelist Sir Walter Scott. John Barrow, author of Travels in South Africa 1801-1804, had promised to review Pringle's work in the Tory Quarterly Review.

The story has often been told of the campaign for the "Freedom of the Press" at the Cape<sup>3</sup>. This occupied the period May 1824 to May 1829, when the Cape heard that Ordinance 60 had given the press freedom from arbitrary regulation by executive officials and established for every individual in the Colony what Fairbairn called "the privilege of delivering his opinion on all the public acts of public men<sup>4</sup>." For the purposes of this study it is sufficient to remark on the broad effect which this campaign had on Fairbairn's career.

Both the South African Journal and the South African Commercial Advertiser ceased publication in May, 1824, under the displeasure of the Governor, Lord Charles Somerset<sup>5</sup>. Pringle and Fairbairn had become co-editors of Greig's newspaper at his request, but had no property in it. Fairbairn's school languished for want of patronage and perhaps for want of supervision, and he and Pringle lost money on the venture<sup>6</sup>. Journalism now became Fairbairn's

1. Robinson, p. 10.

2. *ibid.* p. 11.

3. L.H. Meurant; Pringle Chap. x; Theal Vol. I chap. xviii; Cory Vol. II. chap. vii. Robinson (1), is a fresh approach.

4. S.A.C.A. 9 May 1829.

5. Lord Charles Henry Somerset, Governor of the Cape April 1814-March 1826.

6. Pringle to Fairbairn 20 May 1825. Pringle Corr.

sole occupation as well as his vocation. He also gave up the idea of publishing a periodical. In the absence of Pringle, who had returned to his farm on the Baviaans River, and after Greig had returned from England on the first mission to the Secretary of State, Fairbairn published the first, and only, number of the periodical New Organ, "a kind of educational digest<sup>1</sup>", true to his dream.

Fairbairn became sole editor of the Commercial Advertiser when publication was resumed in August 1825<sup>2</sup>. Pringle, about to depart for England, had no hand in the paper from then on, apart from the contribution of sundry articles. The Advertiser was silenced again in March, 1827, and Fairbairn himself went to England in an endeavour to have the ban lifted. He was in London for over a year, and the paper recommenced only on 3 October 1828. There was only one other interruption in Fairbairn's editorship of the Commercial Advertiser. This was during the campaign for representative government in the Cape when Fairbairn went to London to advocate the "populist" blueprint<sup>3</sup>. In June 1835, with some financial backing, Fairbairn bought out George Greig's share in the newspaper. There followed a period of nearly a quarter of a century when the Advertiser was under Fairbairn's management in all respects. Fairbairn retired from the editorship only in 1859.

Soon after the settlement of 1829 two other newspapers made their appearance in the Colony. In 1830 De Zuid Afrikaan was published for the first time in Cape Town, and in December 1831 the Graham's Town Journal began a long career in the Eastern Cape.

It was an article in the South African Journal on the "Present State and Prospects of the English Emigrants in South Africa" which had sparked off the controversy with regard to the press at the Cape<sup>4</sup>. The Eastern Frontier districts and the British Settlers

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1. Robinson, *ibid.* p.80.

2. The nineteenth number appeared on 31 August 1825.

3. Walker p. 242.

4. MacMillan wrongly calls the periodical the South African Magazine. (2) p. 194.

had become a thorn in the Governor's side before Fairbairn's arrival in the Colony. The Society for the Relief of Distressed Settlers was established in Cape Town to make known to men in the colony and in Britain the plight of the Settlers in the Albany and Somerset Districts, and the activities of members like Dr. Philip, superintendent of the London Society's Missions in South Africa<sup>1</sup>, H.E. Rutherford and R.W. Eaton, merchants of Cape Town, were obnoxious to Lord Charles Somerset. Pringle, who wrote the article in the Journal, soon introduced Fairbairn into this circle of public-spirited men, and some of them proved his staunch supporters and benefactors for the rest of his life.

Fairbairn became aware, during the first years of his editorship, of the situation on the Eastern Frontier of the Colony mainly through letters from Pringle, who was building up a case against Lord Charles Somerset's administration in this area. The Commissioners of Inquiry were still in the Colony<sup>2</sup>, and in Cape Town Fairbairn had regaled them with his construction of the case for a freer press. Pringle wanted "to flank them with the frontier affairs as Blucher did Napoleon at Waterloo<sup>3</sup>", and to aid him in his struggle Pringle endeavoured to enlist the more active and intelligent of the British Settlers and form them into a sort of Whiggish opposition to the Governor<sup>4</sup>. These men included settlers like Lt. Donald Moodie, Miles Bowker and Capt. Duncan Campbell, all Settlers of 1820, who in the next decade were to become enemies of Philip, Pringle and Fairbairn because of their "liberal" attitude towards the Hottentots within and the Xhosa outside of the Colony<sup>5</sup>.

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1. John Philip, D.D., 1775-1851, arrived at the Cape in 1819.
  2. They arrived in 1823 and left in 1826.
  3. Pringle to Fairbairn 4 November 1825. Pringle Corr.
  4. Pringle to Fairbairn 22 March 1825. Pringle Corr.
  5. Campbell sent to Cape Town a petition from the Eastern Province in support of the freedom of the press. MacMillan, (2) p. 202.

Pringle was largely disappointed in his efforts when most of the "Radicals" accepted government posts from Somerset on his visit to the Frontier in February, 1825. Pringle was surprised that "they actually wish a change but they have no enlarged plan nor specific object<sup>1</sup>."

Somerset's "System" included commandos against the Bushmen and the Khosa, and Pringle was collecting information for a book, which later appeared as Narrative of a Residence in South Africa. It is indicative of Fairbairn's attitude in this respect that when Pringle described to him a commando which he himself had been obliged to mount against the Bushmen<sup>2</sup>, his friend was wrathful. Pringle replied:

"Your damnations against my Bushmen Commando do not alarm me. There is no "damned spot" on my hands. But I am no quaker to turn my cheek to the .... [illegible] and if attacked will resist even to slaying him then [illegible] who he may be<sup>3</sup>."

There were on the frontier two men in particular who contributed articles to the Commercial Advertiser from the Eastern Districts, namely John Centlivres Chase<sup>4</sup> and Thomas Phillips<sup>5</sup>, and they sometimes collaborated in supplying Fairbairn with information<sup>6</sup>. Their material consisted mainly of their impressions of tribes outside the Colony like the Koranna and Griquas, and they had nothing of importance to offer on the Khosa. Fairbairn had a high regard for

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1. Pringle to Fairbairn 28 March 1825. *ibid.*
  2. Pringle to Fairbairn 29 June 1825. *ibid.*
  3. Pringle to Fairbairn 5 August 1825. *ibid.*
  4. John Centlivres Chase 1795-1877, in 1825 Accountant for Albany; wrote for the S.A.C.A. under the nom de plume "Brittanicus".
  5. Thomas Phillips, 1776-1859, wrote Scenes and Occurrences in Albany and Kaffirland in 1827.
  6. See Chase to Fairbairn I October 1826, single letter in S.A.P.L.

these productions<sup>1</sup>, but it is not possible to discover whether he elicited reports from these men originally, or whether they were volunteered.

Reports in the Advertiser during the years 1827-1830 are not many, and contributions from Chase and Phillips seem to have fallen off. There is unfortunately no correspondence either of a private nature or in the form of letters to the editor in the original, which covers this period, and perhaps an explanation of this is to be found in the hardening of opinion in the Eastern Cape against the Commercial Advertiser. Pringle had advised Fairbairn in 1825 that "the general opinion about Graham's Town and Graaff-Reinet seems to be that it is too egotistical<sup>2</sup>," and Chase and Phillips thought that "too large a portion [is devoted] to politics and that a little relaxation would render it more pleasing to the general mass of readers<sup>3</sup>."

The issue of the treatment of Hottentots was probably the determining factor before 1834, in the attitude of many people on the Frontier towards the Commercial Advertiser. On this matter the pronouncements of the Advertiser often seemed to the colonists to be indistinguishable from those of Dr. Philip, whose attitude was becoming increasingly unbearable to them.

There is some justification for regarding Fairbairn's opinions on the Hottentots as being second hand. He was very close to Philip, especially in 1825 while he was out of a job and also very ill<sup>4</sup>. Fairbairn spent much time reading and thinking about the Cape and its people and system of government. Dr. Philip was, by May 1825, at work on the plan of his book which was to appear three years later as Researches in South Africa<sup>5</sup>. The two would

1. Fairbairn to Chase 9 December 1825. Quoted in MacMillan (2) p. 116n.
2. Pringle to Fairbairn 5 October 1825. Pringle Corr. Pringle's emphasis.
3. Chase to Fairbairn, 1 October 1826. Single letter in S.A.P.L.
4. Pringle Corr. 1825 passim.
5. MacMillan (2) p. 203.

naturally discuss the work. The Philips looked after Fairbairn for some of the time he was ill. In a letter to Fairbairn, on 30 May 1825, written while Philip was at "Chalk Bay", Philip acknowledges the receipt of two letters from Fairbairn and comments

"They shew me that you understand the people - that you are at work upon them and that the subject has taken a firm hold of you. Particular remarks in reply to any of your observations upon them (sic) are unnecessary, as I see nothing in them to which I can object and which does not accord with my own sentiments<sup>1</sup>."

Philip went on to comment especially upon the administration of justice within the Colony and the way in which this discriminated against the Hottentots. This is a strong theme in his Researches.

After Ordinance 50 had secured a better status in Cape society to "Hottentots and other free persons of colour" in July, 1828, Fairbairn wrote in the Commercial Advertiser that

"All classes of the community will soon feel the advantage of equal rights, without which human society is but an organised system of plunder and injustice<sup>2</sup>."

To Fairbairn the chief goal of government action should rightly be the extension of political liberty to its own subjects, not the denial of such liberty. He believed the Philip version that it had been due to Philip's efforts only that the Ordinance had been promulgated<sup>3</sup>.

It is not to be expected that farmers and other employers of unskilled labour should go along willingly with a measure that they imagined would make labour even scarcer. Albany especially, without any slaves, as the Landdrost Major Dundas had put it to the Colonial Secretary in Cape Town the year before, could develop only by using "every means" to increase the labour supply, "as by this only can those advantages which the District of Albany possesses be rendered available ..."<sup>4</sup>

1. Fairbairn Corr.
2. S.A.C.A. 25 October 1828.
3. For Capt. Andries Stockenstrom's share in the measure, see Marais, p. 156.
4. Dundas to Plasket 8 June 1827. Theal (2) Vol. xxxiv p. 431.

Fairbairn's report and editorial comment soon induced unfavourable reactions from persons on the Frontier, and the letter of "Another Albany Farmer", which appeared in the Advertiser in 1829 is typical: Fairbairn should be ashamed of his "indefensible and injudicious defence of the general character of the Hottentots on the Frontier .... Some of my neighbours do not scruple to say that the reports you hear monthly or otherwise, have had the effect of inducing you to believe them a truly religious and industrious people<sup>1</sup>." Fairbairn's reply took the form of an editorial in the following issue of the paper: Ordinance 50, he said, "tends to make them not only happier men, but better servants, better neighbours, and better citizens". He seemed surprised that "... the chief outcry against Vagrancy comes from the villages on the Eastern frontier<sup>2</sup>." And he was never tired of reminding his readers that "You have no natural right to [the] service [of the Hottentots] or to that of any man<sup>3</sup>."

Fairbairn's Commercial Advertiser had been criticised, at the time when Chase and Phillips were supplying him with articles, for taking no notice of the repeated thefts of stock by "Caffres" on the Frontier. A "Farmer residing on the limits of the Somerset District" wrote

"Is it because you are partial to the Caffres (as many of the good people in Cape Town I understand are, who never heard of them, except through individuals who had but casually seen them, and were prejudiced in their favour) and do not wish to have anything mentioned to their disadvantage? or is it that you never hear of their depredations?<sup>4</sup>"

The writer was dismayed that "Government will neither protect us nor will they allow us to do it ourselves."

There are two charges contained in this extract: that Fairbairn was prejudiced in favour of the Xhosa tribes, and that his system of reporting was defective. Certainly the Advertiser

1. S.A.C.A. 4 April 1829.
2. S.A.C.A. 8 April 1829.
3. S.A.C.A. 24 December 1828.
4. S.A.C.A. 4 November 1826.

did not concern itself much with the farmers on the Xhosa frontier before 1829. There was a gap in the publication of the paper from March 1827 to October 1828, and it was during the year or so after the resumption that Fairbairn came to doubt gravely the nature of information received from the Albany and Somerset Districts. In 1828 came the scare that Chaka was invading the Xhosa on the border of the Colony, and in the same year Ordinance 49 made it possible for the tribesmen to seek work on farms in the Colony<sup>1</sup>. 1829 was a year of recriminations against the Xhosa for depredations on the Colony, and many feared in the last quarter of the year that there would be war between the colonial authorities and the tribes in the "Neutral Territory". Reports reaching Fairbairn were impressionistic and often contradictory, and in August he exclaimed that

"Our Correspondents in Albany and other parts of the Frontier differ so much from each other at all times, and from their own previous statements now and then, when they profess to give a general view of the Settlement, that it is hard to believe that they speak of the same people as they exist at any given time<sup>2</sup>."

Fairbairn was very much aware of the need for reliable information on the affairs of the Colony. While stating that the ordinary colonist was not competent to give reliable accounts of day-to-day occurrences even in his own district, he was conscious of the limited use to which he could put the accounts of literary travellers, who were "out of the common course". He suggested that the only satisfactory procedure would be the establishment of a good statistical account of the Cape such as had been successfully undertaken in Scotland.

The clergy in the Colony were particularly fitted, said Fairbairn, to contribute to such a project because of their education and lack of prejudice against any section of the population. If this were done,

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1. MacMillan (1) p. 87.

2. S.A.C.A. 22 August 1829.

"The Inhabitants of the Cape will be placed beyond the reach of misrepresentation. They will tell their own story ... We shall then know what we are, and what we are likely to become. With regard to both points we are at present much in the dark, which is not very greatly to the honour of any of us<sup>1</sup>."

Anything approaching such a scheme was not established to Fairbairn's satisfaction, at least before 1847. He had to make do without it.

This did not prevent Fairbairn from forming his own opinion about the Frontier, and especially of the districts within the Colony. If his correspondents, unpaid as they were and with no access to official documents, did not satisfy his requirements, this was not surprising<sup>2</sup>. He was aware of the Xhosa frontier and accepted in lieu of immediate information from the Frontier, the published comments of travellers who had visited the area.

By 1830 there were available to the public in Britain and at the Cape a number of books of travels and propaganda pamphlets. John Barrow's Travels into the Interior of South Africa was published in London in 1801 and 1804 in two volumes and concerned the years 1797 and 1798 at the Cape, during the first British Occupation. Henry Lichtenstein's Travels in South Africa was published in English translation in 1812 and 1815. He had accompanied Governor Janssens on a tour of the Colony during the Batavian Republic's rule at the Cape. George Thompson's Travels and Adventures in South Africa appeared in 1827, and it was with this work and those subsequently published that Fairbairn concerned himself mainly. In 1828 Dr. John Philip's Researches in South Africa was published, and in 1829 Lt. Cowper Rose of the Royal Engineers published Four Years in Southern Africa. Saxe Bannister's Humane Policy, or, Justice to the Aborigines of New Settlements, appeared in 1830.

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1. S.A.C.A. 13 June 1829.

2. S.A.C.A. 21 October 1829.

Two other important works appeared after 1830: Stephen Kay's Travels and Researches in Caffraria in 1833 and Thomas Pringle's Narrative of a Residence in South Africa was published for the first time as part of his African Sketches in 1834. Discussion of these works is best left until after an examination of John Fairbairn's visit to the Frontier in 1830.

With regard to the books about the Xhosa, it is useful to discuss first their statements about the Xhosa tribes and thereafter their attitudes towards government policy and administration. Each of these has some common ground and comment to make, for though it is true that dates vary and also the route followed by the travellers, they offered to contemporaries a kaleidoscopic view of the Frontier.

Barrow accompanied the Governor, Earl Macartney, on his tour round the Cape, and spent a short time among the Xhosa. Barrow came to the Xhosa after being among the Hottentots, whom he saw as "perfectly harmless, honest [and] faithful<sup>1</sup>". Whereas the Hottentots were subject to inhuman oppression by the Boers and would not improve socially until they were freed from this oppression, Barrow saw the Xhosa as bold, upstanding and independant. He was among the Xhosa from 11 August to 30 September 1797, most of which time he spent with the chief Gaika. Under the enchantment of the "noble savage", he described a most blessed race of mortals. His picture of the social mores of the Xhosa is hasty and naive. Their

"... rest is not disturbed by violent love, nor their minds ruffled by jealousy; they are free from those licentious appetites which proceed frequently more from a depraved imagination than a real natural want<sup>2</sup>."

The Xhosa's diet of milk and the products of milk ensured that his "manners are mild and gentle<sup>3</sup>."

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1. Barrow Vol. I p. 97.

2. *ibid.* p. 158.

3. *ibid.* p. 155.

Consequently Barrow condemned the prejudice of the colonists along the eastern Frontier that

"... the Kaffers are a savage, treacherous and cruel people; a character which appears as false as it is unmerited. Their moderation towards the colonists, and to all white people, has shown itself on many occasions; and if the inhabitants of the bordering parts of the colony had any sense of shame or feelings of gratitude, instead of assisting to propagate, they would endeavour to suppress, such an idea<sup>1</sup>."

Fairbairn was not lief to quote the traveller Lichtenstein. The war, on the Eastern Frontier, of 1799-1803 lies between the tours of Barrow and Lichtenstein, and Xhosa social structure could have changed little in four years. The fact that Lichtenstein shows the Xhosa in a more realistic light, must depend on the two authors and their capacity for accurate investigation. Lichtenstein stated that the great bone of contention on the Frontier - the receiving of cattle - was to be attributed as much to the white colonists as to the Xhosa. There was peace during his tour of the district only because of

"... the Caffres having not for some time ventured to drive away the cattle which the colonists had imprudently suffered to stray into their neighbourhood, and the latter having abstained from seeking to remunerate themselves upon the treasures of the Caffres ...<sup>2</sup>"

Lichtenstein saw the chief as a despot while affairs ran smoothly, but if he exceeded certain clearly accepted limits his people would simply leave him and join another chief<sup>3</sup>.

George Thompson estimated the chief's power more finely. He thought that

"the power and influence of the chiefs depend so much on their popularity, and the transfer of allegiance from one chief to another is so readily effected, that the arbitrary power of the hereditary aristocracy is under tolerably efficient checks<sup>4</sup>."

The nation as a whole was peacefully inclined but it was true that, "like all barbarians", the Xhosa were "fickle and fierce, and fond of plunder", although they had never evinced a "bloodthirsty or

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1. Barrow Vol. I. p. 149.

2. Lichtenstein Vol. I p. 372. cf. Stockenstrom's contention, below p.

3. *ibid.* p. 352.

4. Thompson Vol. I p. 346.

vindictive spirit<sup>1</sup>." Thompson offered as proof of this claim that marauding parties of Xhosa usually spared the farmers' herdsmen, and that the settlers themselves had suffered very little violence: in seven years of residence in Albany the 4,000 or more Europeans had suffered only five murders at the hands of these bands.

Thompson wanted to settle new European immigrants in the territory "ceded" by Gaika in 1819, "and which is understood to be held in reserve, by government, for this express purpose<sup>2</sup>." He wished to increase the "Caffer trade", as a merchant himself<sup>3</sup>, and he suggested that such a settlement was the best way of achieving this and of establishing better relations with the Xhosa east of the Fish River. That the tribes would be prepared to fight for the land did not occur to Thompson. His solution to the problem of peaceful penetration might have worked, albeit to the disadvantage of the Xhosa, for as another observer, Ives Stocker, had remarked in 1820, it was just the lack of "organised civilization on the Frontiers" that created the doubt and uncertainty which bedevilled security for the colonist<sup>4</sup>. Thompson wanted an "orderly and active British population", to be "organised for defence under discreet officers," and frontier policy to be "directed by systematic regulations, at once firm and beneficent<sup>5</sup>." If that had been possible there would have been no Frontier problem.

Also in Thompson's book, as an appendix, is a long statement by Rev. John Brownlee<sup>6</sup>, of the London Missionary Society, who had worked with Gaika's people for several years both as

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1. *ibid.* Vol. II p. 190.

2. *ibid.* p. 186.

3. *ibid.* p. 299.

4. Theal (2) Vol. XIII p. 67.

5. Thompson Vol. II p. 191.

6. John Brownlee 1791-1871. Arrived at the Cape in 1817 and became government agent among the Gaikas in 1820. In 1825 he returned to mission work in the same field. His son Charles later became Secretary for Native Affairs in the Cape Government.

missionary and government agent. Brownlee was strongly against Gaika's being expelled from the neutral territory and this appendix may have been tacked on by Thomas Pringle, who "ghosted" the book for Thompson<sup>1</sup>. Brownlee declared that "every chief considers himself a king in his own kraal and altogether irresponsible to any superior<sup>2</sup>." Therefore Somerset's policy of 1819 of making Gaika give away the land of other chiefs was something alien to Xhosa ways<sup>3</sup>. Even Hintza, who was the principal hereditary chief of the AmaXhosa, was limited: "... his authority extends only over the people residing in his own territory..."<sup>4</sup> This view was closer to the working of Xhosa politics than the official view then was.

Lieutenant Cowper Rose spent some weeks among the Xhosa and, writing in 1829, he took a step further the knowledge of Xhosa society and the power of the chiefs. None of the writers so far mentioned thought to link up cattle-theft with the Xhosa custom of lobola. Rose is somewhat superficial in his estimation of the lobola custom, which he saw as the buying of a wife, but the point is made:

"The depredations of the Border-tribes are still frequent, but they are unstained by blood, and have nothing of a vindictive character; their general motive indeed being love. Wives in Kafferland are purchased from the fair one's father, and paid for in cattle. He has none to give, but the white men have plenty..." so he organises a raiding party to take of the white man's plenty<sup>5</sup>.

Rose believed that the chief's power must be supported and increased by the colonial authorities to help them control their subjects and prevent cattle-reiving. Thus

"... annual presents [should be] made to the chiefs, with some ceremony, which might flatter their vanity and render them important in the estimation of their followers ..... These presents I would have made dependant on the good conduct of the tribe, and to be increased, diminished, or withheld accordingly<sup>6</sup>."

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1. Godfrey p. 125. See also the introduction by Professor Forbes to the van Riebeeck Society's forthcoming republication of the Travels, Vol. I.

2. Thompson Vol. II p. 343.

3. Compare MacMillan (1) p. 82.

4. Thompson Vol. II p. 374.

5. Cowper Rose p. 65.

6. *ibid.* p. 77.

Dr. Philip was in the 'twenties not much interested in the Khosa. He was concerned in the Researches to point out their amenability to Christianity. Thinking mainly of the Griquas, Philip made this generalisation about the tribes beyond the borders of the Colony:

"Notwithstanding the length of time we have been engaged in our attempts to christianize savage tribes, we have not yet been able to raise any of them to<sup>1</sup> that state in which we can leave them to their own resources<sup>1</sup>."

He believed, somewhat optimistically as events were to prove, that through the medium of evangelism and education "the cause of Christianity and civilization appears to be gaining ground in Cafferland<sup>2</sup>. There is present in the Researches the outline of the policy which he later stated clearly<sup>3</sup>, that for the sake of the aborigines the imperial government should annex their territory and exclude degraded colonial elements and where this was not feasible, that treaties should be made with the chiefs of the tribes concerned<sup>4</sup>. According to Philip the link between Christianity and civilization was very close:

"Civilization bears to religion a relation similar to what the foliage bears to the tree. Trees are not planted in our gardens for the sake of their leaves; but without leaves, in their season, the garden would be without beauty, and the fruit neither well flavoured nor abundant<sup>5</sup>."

Any other influence among the tribes should, therefore, be severely limited. And with policy made within the Colony being corrupt and in favour of the exploitation of the aborigines, it was not safe to give play to such influence<sup>6</sup>.

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1. Philip Vol. II p. 211.

2. *ibid.* p. 197.

3. See below p.

4. MacMillan (1) p. 256.

5. Philip Vol. I. p. 204.

6. *ibid.* p. 378.

Philip stated that the chief Gaika had realised clearly that Christianity was incompatible with cattle-stealing, and he claimed that the Xhosa who had received missionaries "are, without a single exception, friendly to [the Colony's] security and interests<sup>1</sup>." The problem of conflict on the Eastern Frontier, then, was to be solved over an undefined period through agencies whose effectiveness Philip did not really measure against their task. It is true that Philip recommended trade and commerce as a useful way in which to open doors in the structure of barbarism, but he did not mention how difficult this was proving in the laissez faire environment of the Frontier.

Saxe Bannister's<sup>2</sup> main concern was the extension of British control over the various tribes on the boundaries of the Colony, and especially was he interested in the Xhosa. He had come from quarrels in New South Wales about the treatment of the aborigines, and he practised for a time at the bar in Cape Town. There seems little doubt, from internal evidence, that his Humane Policy is merely an expansion of a series of articles which appeared in the Cape Town newspaper The Colonist<sup>3</sup> in consecutive weekly issues from 18 June to 10 September 1828, during the time Fairbairn was in England. The articles were called Extracts from Manuscript Papers upon African Civilization, and Dr. A.M.L. Robinson sums them up as follows:

"Tracing the relations between black and white at the Cape from the earliest times, they are less biased and more historically accurate than Philip's Researches in South Africa which they just antedate, though they are trying to prove the same point. We know that Dr. Meent Borchers of Stellenbosch was working on the old Cape Records at this time, but this survey must, from internal evidence have been compiled by an Englishman<sup>4</sup>."

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1. Vol. II p. 227.
  2. Saxe Bannister 1790-1877. M.A. Oxon. He read law at Lincoln's Inn in 1823, and was from then until April 1826 Attorney-General of New South Wales. He practised at the Cape bar from March 1827 to July 1829. He published numerous works on colonial legal matters.
  3. It was published weekly from 22 November 1827 to 30 September 1828.
  4. Robinson p. 92.

Large sections of the Extracts, and the whole of those of late August and early September, are identical in structure and often in words to the text of Humane Policy. It is possible but unlikely that Bannister plagiarised the articles in The Colonist<sup>1</sup>.

Bannister was a self-conscious philanthropist and wrote from a deep interest in the general aspects of colonization. He had spent six weeks among the Xhosa in 1828, riding alone with a Xhosa guide.

As Barrow and Philip did, so Bannister stated that aborigines untouched by European interference are blameless, moral creatures, and that the fringes of the colonies contain the most degraded elements of colonial society.

About the Xhosa the Colonist claimed that it was not a good policy to merely keep them in check in a military sort of way - it was possible to do this, it claimed, and cheaply too. But

"If we do not raise them to a condition and capacity to take care of themselves, we do nothing. We are bound as Christians, and as men, to carry correctives into every quarter where we cannot prevent our vices finding a way. By settling in South Africa we place many unprincipled white and coloured men in contact with new tribes: and make more unprincipled those who began only with natural preference of their own interests... and if duly restrained and opposed will not injure others. Therefore by not following up our communications with any obvious means of improving the aborigines, we expose them in their weakness to inevitable destruction; ... by not being just and by leaving bad influences unchecked so far from lessening, we directly aggravate the too numerous evils of African savage life<sup>2</sup>."

Bannister noticed that the poorer tribesmen, those with few cattle, habitually took work with the colonists. It became essential in this situation to set up institutions to settle the disputes that must arise, and "other institutions calculated to

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1. Plasket, the Colonial Secretary in Cape Town, suggested to the London Colonial Office that Bannister would be a good man to establish a pacific press in the Cape. Bannister was unwilling at that time. Sir R. Plasket to R.W. Hay, 3 September 1827. Theal (2) Vol. 33.

2. The Colonist 20 August 1828. cf. Humane Policy p. 149.

improve the Aborigines, and to raise to one level .... to prevent our progress ending in bloodshed<sup>1</sup>." Thus it was that there should be, instead of the policy of non-intercourse with the Xhosa, which had pertained since Van Plettenburg's time, "political intercourse .... with the interior<sup>2</sup>". Where there had been a temporary arrangement of a purely military nature with the Xhosa, the chiefs had been faithful in bringing marauders to punishment<sup>3</sup>, and Bannister attributed most of the conflicts on the Frontier to non-intercourse with the tribes.

Bannister also suggested that there should be a study of Xhosa society and of the Frontier situation such as the government had not undertaken before, for which the stimulus could be provided by the controlled expansion of trade and "other sources of profit to ourselves<sup>4</sup>." He suggested that a "system of free connection between us and our neighbours" could best be begun by a sort of rural group area pattern of settlement in the Neutral Territory of Xhosa, Hottentots and white colonists in the same districts but in different field-cornetcies<sup>5</sup>. He condemned the expulsion of Gaika from this territory unilaterally, and thought that this move had been the result of a suggestion of Sir John Barrow's. Any new arrangement must be enshrined, unlike that made by Somerset in 1819, in a written treaty. Finally, to facilitate communication between the Cape Government and the chiefs, two permanent commissioners should be established among the Xhosa chiefs<sup>6</sup>.

If such a system could be established, Bannister thought, there was a clear possibility that policy made within the colony would be refined to such an extent that beneficent measures would

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1. *ibid.* 9 July 1828.

2. Bannister p. 149. Bannister's emphasis

3. The Colonist 6 August 1828.

4. Bannister p. 106. The Cape authorities assumed that the "Neutral" Territory was "Ceded". Galbraith p. 34.

5. *ibid.* p. 177 & 239.

6. *ibid.* p. 242.

be put into practice such as the mother country should not be allowed to frustrate.

Bannister was superficial in his desire to see the Xhosa assimilated into the Cape Colony: "In another five years", he wrote confidently, the whole subcontinent south of the Orange River and west of the Kei would be British Territory<sup>1</sup>. In his judgement though, and assuming a position of arbitrary strength on the part of the colony, Bannister estimated the "Neutral Territory" as the touchstone of Frontier Affairs. What was done in that area would determine the future of Xhosa-Colonist relations.

An interesting commentary upon Bannister's remarks is provided by those made to the Governor, Sir Lowry Cole<sup>2</sup>, by the new Commissioner-General of the Eastern Districts, Captain Andries Stockenstrom<sup>3</sup>. These "Suggestions of the Commissioner-General", written on 28 September 1829, were not published until they appeared in the evidence led before the Committee on Aborigines six or seven years later<sup>4</sup> but Fairbairn may have known the gist of them<sup>5</sup>. Stockenstrom, who had grown up in the vicinity of the Xhosa tribes, was to some extent in his person the civil power which Bannister had recommended to control cross-boundary relations, although he was stationed in the Colony and had surveillance over other matters as well.

Stockenstrom was in favour of the immediate clarification of the situation within the "Ceded Territory" between the Cape and Xhosa authorities. But the land should be returned by the Colony, "the admission of our right to the said territory must be made the basis of all further discussion or treaty, and this question be placed beyond all doubt and future dispute." The chiefs Eno and

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1. *ibid.* p. 242.

2. Sir Galbraith Lowry Cole, 1772-1842, was Governor of the Cape 9 September 1828 to 10 August 1833.

3. Appointed July 1828, left the colony in March 1833 and the office was subsequently abolished by the Secretary of State.

4. See Urie, p. 173, and 538 of 1836 p. 211-213. Appendix I

5. See below p. 90

Botma<sup>1</sup> should be allowed to remain in the ceded area so long as there was no proof of their conniving at any thieving propensities which their tribesmen might exhibit. These chiefs, being nearest the colony, would have to exert themselves in apprehending any marauders who passed by them on their way from the colony, and there was to be a very strict exclusion from the colony of all but those who had some legitimate business there, and any such Xhosa tribesman could be apprehended or, if he resisted arrest, shot at. The police forces on the colonial side of the boundary must be strengthened and improved, and the whole system of relations put onto a regular footing.

With the published material to draw on, and to a lesser extent the reports which he had received in the Commercial Advertiser, Fairbairn determined to visit the Frontier himself. He had been expected in the area for some time<sup>2</sup> but for some reason delayed his journey until he could accompany Dr. Philip on the latter's journey to the mission stations of the Eastern Districts. The pair began their journey in January 1830, by which time tranquility had returned to the Frontier after the scare of the previous September and October<sup>3</sup>. Fairbairn reached Albany in March and set about in determined fashion to investigate charges, common among the colonists, that all disturbances in the area could be blamed on the "Caffres and Hottentots<sup>4</sup>". While he was away from Cape Town Fairbairn posted back the editorials for the Commercial Advertiser.

Fairbairn found that the reported trouble-makers among the Hottentot population around Grahamstown were few in number and, according to their appearance and the records of the magistrate's

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1. "Luno, Botwan" in the report. 538 of 1836 p. 211.
  2. Pringle to Fairbairn 25 August 1829. Pringle Corr. This letter must refer to information from the Colony of some months before.
  3. See above, p. 10 and Cory Vol. II p. 392.
  4. S.A.C.A. 3 October 1829.

court, they were relatively harmless<sup>1</sup>. It was great shame for the inhabitants of Grahamstown, said Fairbairn, to be afraid of them as their public pronouncements showed them to be.

His comments on the Xhosa appear in the Advertiser on 3, 7, 10 and 14 April. They consist of reports of his and Dr. Philip's personal contact with some of the chiefs and people among the Gaika, Ndhlabi and Gunukwebi tribes, and also of Fairbairn's editorial comment on these reports. They depended on conversation with the chiefs by means of an interpreter, and on the opinions of men on the Frontier who, though they are not named, seem to have given Fairbairn little information which he did not already possess. It cannot be determined whether he and Philip visited Commissioner-General Stockenstrom. This is perhaps unlikely because Philip was highly critical of the latter's expulsion of Macomo, the leading Gaika chief, from the neutral territory near the Kat River to make room for a large settlement of Hottentots<sup>2</sup>. There is nothing in MacMillan's quite full report of Philip's notes of this journey, his first to the Xhosa in their own lands, which either confirms or denies a visit to Stockenstrom<sup>3</sup>.

Fairbairn was struck by the "profound peace" which he found among the tribes he visited. The chiefs of the Gaikas, including the Queen Mother Sutu and Gaika's under-age successor Sandile, and his uncles Macomo and Tyali, were all "aware of the superior strength of the Colony", and wished to continue on friendly terms with it<sup>4</sup>. But the chiefs Eno and Botma stated that this position depended on the observation of a certain condition: there must be no interference in their tribal affairs. Fairbairn found these two chiefs perfectly statesmanlike at the interview:

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1. S.A.C.A. 20, 23, 27, 31 March 1830.
  2. May, 1829. Cory Vol. II p. 386.
  3. MacMillan (1) pp. 95-100.
  4. S.A.C.A. 3 April 1830. This agrees with the opinion of the Governor in January - Sir Lowry Cole to Sir George Murray, 2 January 1830. In 252 of 1835 p. 52.

"... two more grave and sedate personages, when you get them into serious conversation, or men who understand their own affairs better, their rights and the relation in which they stand to the Colony and their neighbours, we have never met with, either in office or out of it."

But they had been broken in spirit by their expulsion from the land which they had occupied in the Fish-Keiskama area, and they were adamant that Gaika had had no right to sign away land on which they lived. There is no mention of the fact, in Fairbairn's report, that Botma and Eno had been allowed back into the Tyumie River area in 1825<sup>1</sup> or thereabouts, and that Fairbairn was talking to them in some part of the land from which they had been driven.

The method of recovering cattle was also a grievance. Fairbairn said that Botma and Eno claimed that only "Rogues and Vagabonds amongst them" were responsible for stealing cattle from the Colony, and they complained "with much appearance of truth" that these bandits were as numerous on the colonial side of the boundary as on theirs. They suffered, they said, far more from this element than did the colonists.<sup>2</sup> Fairbairn concluded that the "spoor system" should be given up because it merely embroiled one chief with another. It was senseless, he thought after what the chiefs had told him, that compensation for a theft should be extorted from the kraal nearest the Frontier: the disciplined chief would then have to look for the guilty kraal, probably in the domain of another chief, where he had no authority.

After he had been among the Gunukwebi tribes of Pato, Congo and Kama, Fairbairn came out more strongly against the spoor, commando and patrol system. He summed it up in this way:

"Our Old System of plundering a whole tribe, and reducing them to poverty, out of revenge for a number of petty thefts committed along the whole line of the Frontier, was certainly the most Boeotian method of teaching honesty to barbarians that ever was invented. What were the wretched men to do? Their cattle were their sole means of subsistence. Deprived of them they must either lie down and die in the midst of their families, or become robbers<sup>3</sup>."

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1. Cory Vol. II. p. 343.
  2. S.A.C.A. 14 April 1830.
  3. S.A.C.A. *ibid.*

The Governor, Sir Lowry Cole, and the Commandant of the Frontier, who had long been Lt.-Col. Henry Somerset, son of Lord Charles, had much to answer for<sup>1</sup>. There had been no attempt to understand the situation on the Xhosa side of the Boundary. Here Fairbairn agreed with Saxe Bannister, but his earnest declaration that there be no interference in the domestic affairs of the Xhosa places a different bias on his remarks.

Fairbairn estimated that there was inherent racial equality between the Europeans and the Xhosa. In the first editorial which he wrote on the Xhosa he said:

"With regard to this people as a nation, or as individuals, and their susceptibility of Improvement and Civilization, as it is called, we would say, without hesitation, that we know of nothing of which an Englishman is capable, of which they are not capable. They have the same powers of mind, the same passions, the same virtues, the same vices. Nothing is wanted but Education, to put them on a footing with the proudest people in Europe<sup>2</sup>."

He did see clearly that there was a great gulf between Xhosa culture and that of the Europeans. The knowledge of the Xhosa was very "limited", their customs "mischievous" and their superstitions often "dangerous and fatal in their effects", but missionaries had begun the work of bringing these people up from their barbarism, and Fairbairn was most sanguine of their success.

Fairbairn's views of Xhosa society, as they were formed on this journey in 1830, are impressionistic and tend to generalization. It is interesting to compare Philip's first impressions of the Xhosa with those of his companion. In his diary Philip declared that they were not savages as he had read about "in books", though they were certainly not the paragons of virtue which the "romantics" described<sup>3</sup>. He is in agreement with the "philanthropists" when he comments that "The Caffres have not only gained nothing by their intercourse with the colony but they have greatly deteriorated ... They have had

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1. Lt.-Col. (later Lt.-Gen. Sir) Henry Somerset, 1794-1862.
  2. S.A.C.A. 3 April 1830. For Fairbairn's later comments on Education, see below p.
  3. MacMillan (1) p. 97.

the vices of civilization grafted on...". There is more bitter comment on the commando system than Fairbairn made<sup>1</sup>, and it contains a scathing condemnation of the desire of all classes in the Albany area for the beautiful land which the Xhosa farmed. As to the robbers of cattle, Philip's judgement is in agreement with Fairbairn's but phrased more harshly, as the nature of the document he was compiling was different from Fairbairn's:

"Most of the people who infest the bushes on the frontier are those who have been robbed by the colonial commandoes. This was the case with the Bechuanas I met at the Cradock in 1825 and it is now the case on the Eastern frontier. Some of these Commandoes have taken 10,000-16,000 head of cattle from the Caffres"... nineteen out of twenty who have been plundered were innocent..."

The blame for much of the injustice on the Frontier Philip laid at the door of Lt.-Col. Somerset, perhaps the most significant difference between Fairbairn's public observations and Philip's private observations are those with regard to education. Fairbairn made play with the claim of equality, but to Philip the crux of the matter was the survival of the Xhosa on their own land:

"... I can see nothing before the Caffres but slavery or extermination (i.e. extrusion from their lands) if they are not educated. Education would teach them that their true interest is to be at peace with the Colony and the folly of resistance, raise them above stealing, and fit them for coming under the colonial Government<sup>2</sup>."

This was to Philip their only hope of survival: to be guaranteed their lands by the Government. Therefore they had to prove to the government that they were worthy of protection.

Two other authors are important in this survey of Fairbairn's sources of information on the Eastern Frontier and the Xhosa. One was the Rev. Stephen Kay, whose Travels and Researches in Caffraria appeared in England in May 1834.

Rev. Stephen Kay of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society arrived on the Frontier in 1822 and for some years assisted in Mission work in Grahamstown. During the next eight years he worked

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1. MacMillan (1) p. 97.

2. *ibid.* p. 99.

at Mount Coke Mission station near the present King William's Town, among the Genukwebis, and at Butterworth, among Hintza's Gcalekas. In 1825 he made a tour of Kaffraria. He brought to his book something that had not thus far been apparent in printed information about the Xhosa: the knowledge that he had failed in his task of converting the Xhosa, at least as he had originally envisaged it<sup>1</sup>. There is a deep feeling in his comments which no attempt on his part to write up his missionary society can cover:

"O how difficult it is to address those who have literally no more knowledge of divine things than the very beasts that perish! who are altogether "earthly, sensual and devilish", who have no conception whatever of the character, attributes or perfections of Jehovah, - of heaven or of hell, - of their state and danger as sinners, or of their absolute need of a Saviour<sup>2</sup>."

Kay saw Gaika, who looks so well in Barrow's pages<sup>3</sup>, as a "lying, sordid, avaricious and beggarly wretch<sup>4</sup>." Thieving was congenital in the Xhosa race to the extent that they even stole from their friends, Kay thought<sup>5</sup>. Their ceremonies and rites were execrable and a great obstacle to the spread of Christianity, and usually accompanied by sexual excesses<sup>6</sup>.

In spite of this realistic appraisal of the situation, which is supported by Rev. William Shaw and others<sup>7</sup>, Kay supported the Christian assault on paganism among the Xhosa people. It was "the grand engine of peace<sup>8</sup>". His sympathies were with the tribesmen in their benighted state. To Kay the main obstacle to the spread of Christianity among them was the feudal social system which they perpetuated. But withal, the sufferings of "these poor

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1. Cf. Williams p. 331. He shows that Kay was not alone in this opinion.
  2. Kay p. 97.
  3. Barrow Vol. I p. 153 f.
  4. Kay p. 42.
  5. *ibid.* p. 159.
  6. *ibid.* p. 113.
  7. Rev. William Shaw, 1799-1872, was a Methodist missionary. Shaw *passim*.
  8. Kay p. 68.

creatures" touched Kay deeply, even though many of the chiefs and their tribes were robbers and "banditti"<sup>1</sup>. He attributed the hostilities since the beginning of the century to the government's restricting the activities of the missionaries, rather than, as Saxe Bannister did, to the lack of political intercourse.

Kay condemned the way in which the Boers had oppressed the Xhosa, and he execrated the commando method of reprisals. Using Thompson's Travels and articles which the Rev. A. Faure had published in his Zuid Afrikaan'sche Tydschrift in 1824, Kay's condemnations fell mainly on the period before the arrival of the British. "Official documents," he wrote, "under seal and signature of the Colonial Government, are quite sufficient, independently of oral testimony, to prove the oppression and tragic scenes of former days"<sup>2</sup>. Kay pointed the necessity for a change in relations with the Xhosa, but his approach was not as watertight as that of Dr. Philip and he did not possess what Pringle might have called an "enlarged plan"<sup>3</sup>. Indeed he was writing, he said in his preface, for missionaries and philosophers.

Pringle's Narrative of a Residence seems to have been the result of inspiration: he was encouraged to support Philip and Fowell Buxton, M.P., in their crusade to put an end to the Cape system of commandos or military reprisals<sup>4</sup>. Pringle is indebted to many of the authors already cited for his attack on the commandos, although there is a good deal of his personal experience described in the book. It seems clear moreover that some of his own ideas about the Frontier at this stage are directly or indirectly derived from the printed works apart from those which he had influenced originally, like Thompson's Travels<sup>5</sup>. Pringle, in fact, draws together in his own way all the comments which have so far

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1. Kay pp. 104 and 152.

2. *ibid.* p. 241.

3. above p.

4. Urie p. 59.

5. Letters from Pringle to Fairbairn, 14 October, 10 November, 25 November 1825, and 12 July 1826. Pringle Corr.

been considered, including the Suggestions of Stockenstrom, or at least the ideas which lay behind that document. He ends the Narrative with information from Fairbairn's Commercial Advertiser, and so the relative positions of the two friends is reversed after nearly ten years, but one remove further from the scene of disputes.

Pringle's main interest is not in the hazard of analysing racial traits and environmental theories, but in the structure and working of official policy. Official policy could be changed and this was his target. Here he was engaged on a task similar to that which Philip set himself in his Researches, but with the emphasis more specifically on the sufferings of the Xhosa.

Philip and Thompson, said Pringle, had recorded "only a small portion" of the butcheries consequent on the reprisals system.<sup>1</sup> He did not proceed to catalogue all of the outrages which they had omitted to mention or which had occurred subsequently to their writing, but he claimed that commandos were as ferocious in 1834 as they had ever been. He gave great prominence to the infamous Zeko incident of June 1830, in the course of which the chief Zeko and several of his men were shot dead: they were unarmed at the time<sup>2</sup>. He complained that the Boers, and some English settlers, had become hardened to such outrages, and declared that the commando system was barbarizing the colonists<sup>3</sup>.

The Frontier burghers with their Hottentot servants were usually the men who had made up the Commandos, and it is not surprising that they came in for a great deal of criticism from the authors. Lichtenstein and Thompson declared that what was often brutal action was to be blamed primarily on the environment in which the Boers found themselves<sup>4</sup>. Barrow and Philip agreed

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1. Pringle p. 242.

2. *ibid.* p. 326. For details see also Urie chap. IV and Cory Vol. II p. 398 and 400.

3. Pringle p. 243.

4. Lichtenstein Vol. I p. 448; Thompson Vol. II p. 132.

with this premise but did not hesitate to castigate individuals where they were discovered in the perpetration of some crime against humanity, and even by implication to extend this to a whole group<sup>1</sup>. Cowper Rose declared that all the havoc caused by all the Commandos was the responsibility of the Cape authorities<sup>2</sup>. Bannister declared that it was impossible for justice to be done under the current system of Frontier relations, although for this he blamed more the colonial authorities than the colonists<sup>3</sup>, and he allowed that the situation had improved after the departure of Lord Charles Somerset from the Colony. Finally, Pringle, while agreeing that evil doings on the Frontier had abated after Lord Charles had left<sup>4</sup>, in spite of the Zeko and other incidents, bewailed the fact that

"... quiet and well-disposed chiefs are continually punished and plundered on account of offences committed by individuals or bands of Caffer thieves whom they cannot control, and from whose depredations they themselves continually suffer<sup>5</sup>."

Pringle's plan amounted to a recognition of the status quo as far as land occupation was concerned, and an extension of British order and a system of peaceful relations between the Cape Colony and the Xhosa. British rule was to be confirmed over the Neutral Territory<sup>6</sup>. People and groups who had been established in this area should be allowed to remain, and there was to be no further extension of the Colonial boundaries. Pringle recognised the need to control criminal elements on both sides of the Frontier line. The chiefs in the Neutral area were to be settled in orderly fashion, thickly on clearly defined allotments, but they were to retain certain "rights of seignory" over the lands occupied by their own hordes. The British authorities were obliged to recognise and

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1. Barrow Vol. I p. 116; Philip Vol. I p. 378. See above, p. 16.

2. Rose p. 75.

3. Bannister p. ccxxx.

4. Pringle p. 309.

5. *ibid.* p. 329.

6. Fairbairn was later to reject this proposition, which Pringle shared with Thompson and Stockenstrom. See below p. 86.

even bolster the power of the chiefs for the sake of order and good government. The authorities were, however, to ensure that the chiefs were not able to oppress their vassals. Colonial law should be extended over the whole Neutral Territory and missionaries be encouraged to spread the Gospel and to form schools in the area. Then the Xhosa west of the Keiskama could actually be enlisted in the service of the colony: they could be safely entrusted with guns and formed into a militia to defend the colony against tribes further inland<sup>1</sup>.

There was a second part to his plan: the chiefs between the Keiskama and the Kei, the "independent" Xhosa chiefs, were also to be subject to some regulation of their affairs. There should be a "general Convention of all the Chiefs west of the Keisi [Kei] river ... solemnly assembled; and let an equitable plan for the restoration of stolen cattle, for the redress of mutual grievances and for the regulation of commerce, be proposed for their adoption." This should be held at regular intervals and might come to form a "legislative and judicial council for maintaining peace and good order among the independent Caffer Tribes." Pringle proposed in addition to provide for trans-Frontier relations by three measures: one or more English agents were to be stationed among the independent chiefs; these agents should work through an agent stationed within the colony; and there should be a "just and simple code of international law drawn up and translated into the AmaXhosa language; and get the chiefs to affix their signatures to it and to concur in giving it prompt and firm execution<sup>2</sup>."

With these two facets of his plan in operation, Pringle envisaged a time on the Xhosa frontier when it would be necessary only to "Be Just - and fear not<sup>3</sup>."

Pringle quotes from the authors mentioned above, throughout

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1. Pringle p. 339.

2. *ibid.* p. 340.

3. *ibid.* p. 338.

his book, and he was in touch with Stockenstrom while the latter was in Europe<sup>1</sup>. Pringle's relations with Stockenstrom are of importance not only in the endeavour to establish the extent of Pringle's originality in concocting this plan for Frontier relations but for the argument at a later stage, and it should be mentioned here that Pringle claimed at this time to have drawn up a list of queries for Stockenstrom to answer officially, which he hoped would shock the Secretary of State into action on the matter of Commandos in South Africa<sup>2</sup>. Pringle informed Fairbairn that he would show up Stockenstrom well in the Narrative: "Stockenstrom has rendered valuable service to Buxton and me, and I have consequently brought his merits prominently forward in my book<sup>3</sup>", but just what elements in Pringle's Frontier plan are derived from Stockenstrom's ideas, remain to be seen. Pringle does not hold himself indebted to Stockenstrom in this sphere. And to his friends Pringle mentions Stockenstrom only in connection with his attack on the authorities and the "system".

Pringle and Stockenstrom share a great awareness of the need to control the bad elements on the Frontier: it was those people only, said Pringle, who stood to gain by the actions of commandos. But Pringle differs from Stockenstrom on what was to become a major issue, viz. the composition of the settlers in the Neutral Territory<sup>4</sup>. Pringle nowhere suggested that any but Xhosa people be allowed to settle there. Stockenstrom considered that a dense population on the Frontier was essential to stability and wanted, as can be gauged from his opinions other than those expressed in his Suggestions, to settle Hottentots and Europeans there as well<sup>5</sup>, rather after the manner which D'Urban was to propose eighteen months later<sup>6</sup>, "each group with its own clearly defined areas of

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1. Pringle to Fairbairn 4 November 1833 and 22 May 1834. Pringle Corr.
  2. Pringle to Philip 22 August 1834 Gubbins Library, University of Witwatersrand.
  3. Pringle to Fairbairn 2 May 1834. Pringle Corr.
  4. See below, p. 78 f.
  5. Pitman p. 112 and Urie p. 178.
  6. See below, p. 77 f. Sir Benjamin D'Urban 1777-1849, was Governor of the Cape Colony 10 January 1834 to 20 January 1838.

settlement<sup>1</sup>."

Apart from the possible influence of Stockenstrom, the idea of the extension of British power over the Neutral Territory is in tune with Philip's thought<sup>2</sup>, and Pringle's refinement of political relations between the Colony and the Xhosa tribes may owe something to Saxe Bennister, whom he often quotes. The idea of turning the faithful, endeared tribes within the Neutral Territory into a defensive militia, was common as an organization in British India at the time<sup>3</sup>, and was recommended by a Secretary of State in the following decade<sup>4</sup>.

Pringle's debt to Fairbairn has not yet been mentioned. Pringle was endeavouring at this time to procure for his friend an appointment with the colonial government<sup>5</sup>, and partly for this reason often passed on numbers of the Commercial Advertiser to Duxton and the Secretary of State. However that may be, Pringle quoted Fairbairn's articles in support of his attack against the Commando system<sup>6</sup>. In these articles Fairbairn pointed out that the Commandos were bound to cause bloodshed sooner or later. Further, Fairbairn warned the new Governor, Sir Benjamin D'Urban, that, on the issue of land, most colonists expected the Neutral Territory to be carved up for European settlement.

It is not possible, unfortunately, to be certain that Pringle was not in possession of Fairbairn's important article of 22 February 1834<sup>7</sup> in which he presents his conclusions on a new system for frontier relations. The two plans are similar in many

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1. Urie, *ibid.* p.178.

2. See above, p.16.

3. The visitor Capt. Fawcett, of the Bombay army, recommended it in the Cape in 1836. See below, p.89.

4. Earl Grey in 1846. See below, p.117.

5. Pringle to Fairbairn 21 January 1833 (Pringle Corr.) and Pringle to Philip 22 August 1834. Gubbins Library.

6. Pringle p.335. Pringle quotes S.A.C.A. 7 December 1833 and 18 January 1834.

7. See below, p.42.

respects. According to Pringle, the section of his book which contains his own plan, was written in April 1834. It is unlikely that a ship could have brought him Fairbairn's plan before his manuscript was sent in for printing.

From the eyewitness accounts so far examined, it seems clear that although they diverged on points of information and on the emphasis which they placed on the various factors comprising the frontier situation, they all come out strongly in condemnation of the conduct of affairs between the Xhosa and the Colonists. In many cases the colonists were blamed for acts of aggression and provocation. The troops on the frontier were sometimes blamed for atrocities committed against the Xhosa. But above all the Cape authorities were blamed for the system of relations which prevailed.

It is proposed in the following chapter to analyse more particularly what the Cape authorities thought and did about the situation and what the climate of opinion was like as expressed in the Graham's Town Journal, before examining Fairbairn's attitude as it was manifested in the Commercial Advertiser during 1834.

1834 AND FAIRBAIRN'S REPORTING OF THE FRONTIER

1834 was to be a crucial year for the Cape. Sir Benjamin D'Urban took over the government from Acting Governor Wade<sup>1</sup> on 16 January and was charged with instituting many changes at the Cape<sup>2</sup>. He was to prepare for the emancipation, in December, of all slaves in the Colony; to change the system of administration of justice; to institute a new system of legislative government based on an Executive Council and a Legislative Council in which the Colonists received some representation; and to systematise the relations between the colonists and the Xhosa on the Eastern Frontier by instituting a system of alliances with the chiefs. "And of course," Galbraith comments, "all these ends were to be achieved with the most rigid economy<sup>3</sup>."

Stanley, although his tenure of office was brief, was the first Secretary of State for War and the Colonies<sup>4</sup> to inquire specifically into the situation on the frontiers of the Cape Colony, and largely because of promptings from Fowell Buxton<sup>5</sup> and others<sup>6</sup>. Stanley came to see that frontier relations were based on a bad system, and he augmented D'Urban's Instructions with a dispatch of 27 November 1833. D'Urban must definitely end the commando system:

"You are doubtless aware of the statements which have gone forth to the world in regard to these commandoes, which have been represented as a system of military execution inflicted upon the aborigines, sometimes to prevent or punish their hostile incursions into the territory wrested from them by the European settlers, but more frequently as a means of gratifying the capacity on the vengeance of the latter<sup>7</sup>."

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1. Lt.-Col. Thomas Francis Wade, Acting Governor 10 August 1833 to 16 January 1834.
  2. See Harlow and Madden pp.115-119.
  3. Galbraith pp. 99-100.
  4. E.G.G. Smith Stanley (later Lord Stanley), 1799-1869, was Secretary of State for War and the Colonies 3 April 1833 to 4 June 1834.
  5. Thomas (later Sir Thomas) Fowell Buxton, 1786-1845, British philanthropist and parliamentarian.
  6. MacMillan (1) p.103.
  7. Stanley to D'Urban 27 November 1833. 252 of 1835 p.64.

Stanley was aware of the sparseness of population on the frontiers, both north and east, and of the "savage character of the native tribes", and of the vast extent of the boundary line, yet he required D'Urban to continue to protect the Colony by "ordinary means of precaution<sup>1</sup>." The commando system was to cease as from 1 August 1834, and Stanley suggested the propriety of

"cultivating an intercourse with the chiefs of the Caffre tribes, by stationing prudent and intelligent men among them as agents of your government, for the expense of which missions an adequate provision will be made<sup>2</sup>."

The initiative in policy making lay effectively in London, and neither of the two previous Governors had attempted to change the Commando practice<sup>3</sup>. But within the Colony the very authorities who were responsible for administering frontier affairs, and who had received a good deal of criticism from philanthropists, were concerned to have a proper system created. Lt.-Col. Henry Somerset, Commandant of the Frontier, and the Civil Commissioner for the districts of Albany and Somerset, Captain Duncan Campbell, made the "strongest representations" to Cape Town to that effect<sup>4</sup>.

The new Executive Council, comprising the five most important officials in the Colony, met for the first time on 19 March 1834. At the fifth meeting in May, the Governor gave members copies of Stanley's dispatch of November 1833, for private perusal. In June the Governor pointed out to the Executive Council that in a subsequent dispatch of 31 December 1833, Stanley restricted expenditure on any new system to the sum of £600, to cover also any new appointments he might make<sup>5</sup>.

The Council decided that the great difficulty in implementing Stanley's instructions was a "want of proper instruments." The only solution seemed to them to be to choose socially superior men

1. There were only 1,789 regular troops in the Colony, of whom 1,034 were stationed in Cape Town. Galbraith p. 35.
2. Quoted in Crankshaw p.20.
3. For Sir Galbraith Lowry Cole, 1772-1842, Governor of the Cape from 1828 to 1833, see MacMillan (1) p. 102, and for Wade see Theal (1) Vol. II p. 27.
4. Col. Wade's evidence before the Committee on Aborigines. 538 of 1836, paragraph 3452.
5. Executive Council Minutes 20 June 1834.

as Field Cornets and thus to concentrate on the local authorities. The difficulty was that the position was so poorly remunerated that the better type of Colonist would not accept it.

D'Urban then instituted an investigation into the defence arrangements which would remain in force after 1 August when the Commando System ceased to be. The Attorney-General was not certain of the legal standing of any alternative militia type of organization, and finally in September the Executive Council decided that "it is neither necessary nor expedient to come to any immediate determination on the matter<sup>1</sup>." Three months later war broke out between the Colony and the Xhosa tribes on the Eastern Frontier and took the authorities by surprise. The Secretary of State's instructions did not reach the Legislative Council, and they received no sort of publicity.

D'Urban himself did not lose sight of his responsibilities with regard to the frontier. He asked Dr. Andrew Smith<sup>2</sup>, who in July led a large party on a journey of exploration into the interior beyond the Orange River, to contact the important chiefs whose territory he might pass through and to distribute presents among them<sup>3</sup>. Smith made no treaties with the nine tribal chiefs to whom he gave presents, but he ascertained that they wanted a "friendly" alliance with England, that they wanted colonists to visit them and trade with them and would protect them, and that they wanted teachers of religion, whom they would support and protect<sup>4</sup>. The only actual treaty made was signed in Cape Town in March 1836 by a representative of Mzilikazi, chief of the powerful Matabele.

With regard to the Xhosa frontier the only definite step which D'Urban took was to appoint Lt. Donald Moodie<sup>5</sup> as Compiler of Records concerning the relations between the colonists and the

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1. Executive Council Minutes 29 September 1834.
  2. Dr. (later Sir) Andrew Smith, 1797-1872, was an explorer and botanist.
  3. D'Urban to Glenelg, 23 April 1836 503 of 1837 p. 347. See also Kirby p. 139.
  4. 503 of 1837, p.348.
  5. Lt. Donald Moodie, 1794-1861, an 1820 Settler and compiler of The Record.

various tribes, late in December, 1834. D'Urban was seeking advice on the frontier at least as early as February when Dr. Philip was preparing notes at his request<sup>1</sup>. In March he asked the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary W.B. Boyce<sup>2</sup> to make suggestions towards the formation of a new policy<sup>3</sup>. When Dr. Philip began a tour of the London Society's missions in August 1834, he regarded himself as being unofficially commissioned by D'Urban to prepare the Governor's way for him by advising the Xhosa chiefs that a new system was about to be instituted, although, as Galbraith has pointed out, Philip did not appreciate that the Governor had ideas about the prospective new system which did not agree with Philip's own plans<sup>4</sup>. Philip evidently assumed a status for himself similar to that which Andrew Smith was given<sup>5</sup>. D'Urban had communicated with certain of the Xhosa chiefs by October, through what channels he did not say, his words consisting of "admonitions at once, and of conciliation<sup>6</sup>". The Governor did not himself visit the frontier until after war had broken out between the Colony and the Xhosa in December 1834, but he had by mid year planned to expel most of the troublesome tribes from the Neutral Territory<sup>7</sup>.

Public opinion on the frontier was outspoken in its disapproval of the conditions which existed. The Graham's Town Journal had been launched as a newspaper at the end of 1831 with L.H. Meurant as editor<sup>8</sup>, and it soon became a mirror of the opinions of frontiersmen. At the beginning of 1834 Meurant employed Robert Godlonton<sup>9</sup> as editor<sup>10</sup>. It seemed to many of the men who

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1. MacMillan (1) p.106.
  2. W.B. Boyce, 1803-1889, arrived in the Eastern Province in 1830.
  3. 538 of 1836 p. 180.
  4. Galbraith p.108.
  5. MacMillan (1) p.119.
  6. D'Urban to Spring Rice, 28 October 1834. 252 of 1835 p.103.
  7. Galbraith *ibid.* p.108.
  8. L.H. Meurant p.79, and *le Cordeur* p.2. Meurant had been a proof reader for Fairbairn and Pringle.
  9. Robert Godlonton (1794-1884), a Settler of 1820.
  10. Meurant *ibid.* p.101.

wrote to the editor that defence against cattle-reiving was hopeless and that the only factor which affected its incidence was the change of seasons: winter with its long nights afforded more cover to thieves and so increased the incidence, as did drought, when the animals of the Xhosa were starving and dying. Characteristic of the frustration of the farmers is the following extract of a letter appearing in the Journal:

"It is no use sitting still, cursing the Caffers, and venting our anger against the authorities; let us petition again and again; and if the Government will not listen to our prayers, but suffer us to be plundered without redress, then shall we not (as one of your correspondents has observed) be justified in protecting ourselves, or levelling our vengeance against the Caffer nation at large?"

He did not even hope for protection from the authorities, and saw no alternative to the Commando System:

"It does not lie in the power of Government, with three times the present number of troops, to prevent depredations, if the Caffers are determined to plunder us; but it is always<sup>1</sup> in their power to obtain compensation by force or otherwise."

Godlonton admitted and underlined the fact that there was great loss to the farmers by depredations, but whereas Frontier Farmer wanted peace or war within the current nature of frontier relations, the Journal recommended "milder measures" and the use of kindness towards the Xhosa tribes, something which he believed had not been given a fair trial:

"When we find a system radically bad we cannot expect it to work well; hence a material alteration becomes necessary. The system adopted towards the Kafirs is radically bad inasmuch as it is not based on admitted principles of mutual faith and of national policy<sup>2</sup>."

A more enlightened system of relations with chiefs and tribesmen would stimulate the already valuable trade with them, and it could be administered in order to give the chiefs more incentive to protect the traders. The trade with the Xhosa was estimated in 1834 to be worth over £30,000 to the Colony, and it afforded employment to about 200 traders and their employees<sup>3</sup>.

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1. "A Frontier Farmer" in G.T.J. 13 February 1834. His emphasis.  
 2. G.T.J. 13 February 1834. My emphasis. Quoted also in Urie p. 4.  
 3. Godlonton (1) p. 149. This trade fell away completely on the outbreak of war, and there are no detailed reports on it between 1835 and the war of 1846-7.

Godlonton's attitude towards the Xhosa, as a people and as individuals, is somewhat mixed. Three weeks after stating that a good system must be based on "principles of mutual faith and of national policy", he referred to the Xhosa as "cunning, - dishonest - superstitious - and cruel", and challenged their "sense of equity"<sup>1</sup>. He claimed that his outlook was based on Saxe Bannister's remarks in Humane Policy but believed that this did not require the Xhosa to be treated as rational beings, although Godlonton supported Fairbairn's plan for a new frontier system<sup>2</sup>. Godlonton differed from Fairbairn substantively only in his estimation of the "Caffer character", and he stated that the Journal had been consistent in this regard since the middle of 1832<sup>3</sup>.

The high water mark of Godlonton's interest in the amelioration of cross-frontier relations and sympathy for the plight of the Xhosa, was his favourable comment on a letter by "A Kafir", dated "Kafirland", 11 March 1834. It was probably written by a missionary for a chief. It relates most graphically the effect of the current state of affairs on the Xhosa living in the Neutral Territory. In August 1833 many Xhosa families were expelled from the Mankazana River area by patrols because of various depredations traced to kraals in that neighbourhood. Colonel Somerset visited the expelled group:

"He came and he saw Kafirland dry and parched; the cattle poor; and he heard some of our complaints, and he promised to represent our case to the Governor. He saw and he pitied us, and he gave us a little shortlived indulgence. He well knew our manners, and he felt we could not subsist without grazing ground; he permitted us for a short time to go back to our former grounds, until matters would be better settled. But alas! what was our astonishment when last week Colonel Somerset appeared among us, and without warning us ... burnt our houses and ordered our cattle away. ... The effect of such conduct on the minds of my countrymen has been of the worst kind; they cried out - "Ah! why should we be so perplexed;" and, as through despair, many of them turned their cattle into their cornfields (the corn was in the ear) and caused it to be destroyed.

"What we want is a fixed rule of Justice on the part of the British government."

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1. G.T.J. 6 March 1834.
  2. See below p.42
  3. G.T.J. 6 March 1834, referring to S.A.C.A. 22 February 1834, for which see below p.42

Godlonton agreed that there was good reason for these complaints.

For the current chaos the Journal blamed "the system, not the men", as a correspondent phrased it<sup>1</sup>.

In December a certain Ensign Sparks was wounded by Xhosa tribesmen while on a punitive expedition beyond the frontier<sup>2</sup> and the Journal became alarmed. Godlonton wrote that

"Every day, almost, brings some intelligence of that evident bad feeling towards the Colony which is rapidly spreading amongst the Kafir people,<sup>3</sup>"

and yet the authorities did nothing to ameliorate the position. It was government policy which was to blame and the fault lay in Cape Town and London but not with the soldiers and officials on the frontier.

The Commercial Advertiser was outspoken in its criticism of colonial policy towards the Xhosa and of the Colonists who were involved, and Fairbairn used the arguments of the "philantropist" authors and the arguments which he had developed between 1828 and 1834 to condemn what he saw as evil in both policy and people. He saw the evils of the Frontier System as an aspect of the oppression of the aborigines of the Cape Colony and the neighbouring areas, and it is significant that although his attack on the conduct of relations with the Xhosa tribes was heavy, yet there are only ten editorials during the year 1834 which particularly concern the Xhosa frontier<sup>4</sup>. This was, after all, the year in which the slaves were to be emancipated and the new Vagrancy Ordinance debated. The weight of Fairbairn's attack fell on the "System", but he went deeper than did Godlonton into the reasons for the proliferation of such a system, and this meant that blame must be apportioned.

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1. Equity in G.T.J. 9 October 1834.
  2. McGeogh p.68.
  3. G.T.J. 11 December 1834.
  4. McGeogh p.67.

The arrival in the Colony of Stephen Kay's Travels and Researches in Caffraria was the occasion of a stirring editorial in the Advertiser, in which Fairbairn surveyed the criticisms which had been made against colonial policy on the frontiers:

"A series of witnesses, from Barrow, who wrote in 1799, down to Mr. Kay, whose work on Cafferland has just reached the Colony, have agreed as to the main facts of the Colonial Policy towards the Tribes on our Frontier...<sup>1</sup>"

He mentions Philip, Rose, Saxe Bannister and Pringle as all

agreeing "in condemning the System as impolitic, inefficient, injurious to the Colonists and to the Natives, inevitably becoming worse in all these respects in proportion to the activity with which it is administered, and leading, as it has led, to deeds of oppression and bloodshed that make humanity shudder."

It would be ridiculous, he claimed, to think that they could all have been mistaken in their condemnation, and to deny the validity of these "is to deny the value of all human testimony". Just because there was no enlightened, systematised form of contact with the Xhosa, so

"Discontent, alarms, reports of inroads from the Caffers, and of Patroles (sic) and Commandoes, as unprincipled and ferocious as the forays of the savage, make up our weekly budget of news."

The final point which Fairbairn made in this sally was that the British press published the often startling news from the frontier in preference to anything else from the Cape, and little else was known about the Colony. A reader would be left with the impression that the system of frontier defence, operated by Lt.-Col. Somerset, was one mighty burden which no-one was likely to throw off.

Fairbairn had said in February that

"After a number of ridiculous experiments, the Old System of Commandoes and Patrols seems to be indolently acquiesced in, as if nothing better could be devised<sup>2</sup>."

He had warned the new Governor, Sir Benjamin D'Urban, within a few days of his arrival in the Colony, of the need for instant action to remedy frontier affairs<sup>3</sup>. He had, he said, condemned

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1. S.A.C.A. 14 June 1834. See also S.A.C.A. 27 August 1834.  
 2. S.A.C.A. 22 February 1834.  
 3. S.A.C.A. 18 January 1834.

two aspects of the "Old System" over the last few years: the vacillation of government policy, which arose because each governor - and there were five between 1819 and 1829 - had the power of changing border policy at his whim; and the fact that in any dispute between the colonial authorities and the tribes, the latter always suffered some new loss, often of territory<sup>1</sup>.

In fact Fairbairn looked to the initiative of the British government, as had Pringle<sup>2</sup>, for it was now influenced by the humanitarian impulse. It was possible for the British Government to be magnanimous where "little governments on the spot" found it impossible.<sup>3</sup>

In February 1834 Fairbairn proffered a well-conceived plan for a new system of relations with the Xhosa. He saw the problem clearly:

"How to live on amicable terms, with these our neighbours, to prevent our being plundered by them, and secure good treatment to such of our Traders as reside in or pass through their Country?"

Stated thus, it was the same problem as Godlonton had confronted a few days previously<sup>4</sup>.

His suggestions, or "hints" as he called them, were as follows:

"The first thing to be done, we submit, is to invite the attendance of all the Chiefs at some convenient spot on the Border, or even within their own territory, to meet the Governor of this Colony, accompanied by such persons as he may deem most likely to aid him with their counsel or advice on the occasion.

To this assembly of the Chiefs the relative situation of the two countries should be fully laid open - the necessity of a final adjustment of all claims and points of dispute clearly stated - and the great advantages likely to arise from an amicable intercourse distinctly pointed out.

When this had been accomplished, the Chiefs should be requested to take the whole case into their immediate and most serious consideration, and to appoint a day on which they will announce to His Excellency the result of their deliberations.

It is not to be expected that in two or three Sederunts a complete mutual understanding will be effected. But though the negotiations should extend over weeks or months -

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1. S.A.C.A. 7 December 1833.

2. See above p.28

3. S.A.C.A. 7 December 1833.

4. G.T.J. 13 February 1834. See above p. 38

though the Chiefs should have to separate and re-assemble, - the Governor should not leave the Frontier, nor suffer the design to cool, till some General Articles, embracing the main points of our future policy, have been confirmed by all, or at least a major part of the Chiefs.

For the faithful observance of these articles, the Governor and the Chiefs will consider themselves mutually bound to aid and assist each other against all adversaries; and the Penalties of a violation of any of them should be clearly stated in writing, and guaranteed by both parties.

By thus uniting Cafferland, we make the Nation responsible to us for the crimes of individuals, and have a ready method of obtaining redress, without committing violence or injustice, by making innocent individuals suffer for the conduct of the injurious. ...

... in short a regular, formal treaty such as we enter into with civilised Nations, containing all that is necessary to be contained in such a document, should be drawn out, signed and interchanged between the parties."

A British Resident should be appointed to regulate affairs between the traders and the chiefs, and between the Cape authorities and the Chiefs, and

"When cattle are stolen from the Colony, or any outrage committed by Caffers on this side of the Boundary, notice should be transmitted to him, and by him to the Chiefs, whose business it shall be to detect and punish the Thieves, they themselves being bound to indemnify the parties for the actual loss sustained and proved before a competent tribunal.

In the same manner, when any injury shall be done to the Caffers by the Colonists, Government shall be bound in the first instance, to indemnify the sufferers, and afterwards to proceed against the aggressors according to law<sup>1</sup>."

The most important single aspect of this scheme is that the "Chiefs", whether petty or great, were regarded as responsible and independent by Fairbairn, although they should come together and form a group of sorts as a result of a convention with the Cape authorities. Ideas like this were not unheard of at this time<sup>2</sup>. There was a good deal of confusion in the Empire as to the best way to deal with native tribes<sup>3</sup>.

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1. S.A.C.A. 22 February 1834. My emphasis
  2. Hinsley, p. 206, quoting Parry Vol. I p. 608 on the case of a British Resident in New Zealand in the 1830's advising native Chiefs to form themselves into a "United Tribes of New Zealand."
  3. C.H.B.E. Vol. II p. 856. Parry mentions the variety of experiments conducted in India in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. *ibid.* p. 836 - 839.

The Commercial Advertiser carried many reports on affairs in other colonies of the Empire, often taken from British papers, and it is possible that Fairbairn was applying to the Eastern Frontier a theoretical scheme which he had adapted from such information.

Fairbairn was not concerned in his plan about the wrongs and rights of settlement in the "Neutral Territory" just across the boundary. The idea of a written treaty was present in the eye-witness accounts on which Fairbairn based much of his comment on the frontier, and the idea was common at the Cape at this time<sup>1</sup>. It is possible and, as it emerged later<sup>2</sup>, probable that Fairbairn knew of Stockenström's idea of the chief being able, when he exerted his authority, to control his tribesmen<sup>3</sup>, but again, Fairbairn does not include the details which Stockenström knew. As Dr. Philip pointed out in a letter to the Governor soon after, in which he recommended Fairbairn's plan, it could so easily be modified to suit all circumstances<sup>4</sup>. In fact Fairbairn's plan was based on one broad principle - a regularised contact with the Xhosa which would be able to deal with all matters likely to cause friction and hostility. There must, also, be definite penalties for infringement of the terms of such a treaty as he envisaged.

During the following months Fairbairn was concerned to destroy the trappings of traditional border relations, the ignorance, rumours and consequent unjust aggression. He wrote in April that

"The Light of the Press now shines strongly on the Caffer Frontier, and enables the friends of peace and order to quash all such mischievous reports which, in former days, were generally succeeded by aggressions on the one side or the other<sup>5</sup>."

Fairbairn summed up the eye-witness reports on which he based his knowledge of the frontier<sup>6</sup> when he said that

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1. Crankshaw, p. 26 ff.

2. See below p. 90 ff. and p. 109.

3. Appendix 1.

4. Philip to D'Urban 13 March 1834. Quoted in Urie p. 202.

5. S.A.C.A. 5 April 1834.

6. Above, Chap. I.

"guilt is suffered to accumulate upon our heads as a community, until our name becomes a reproach wherever it is pronounced; and the nations on our borders are broken into fierce and hostile bands of vindictive robbers, whose vengeance falls indiscriminately on the innocent as well as on the criminal."

Therefore the whole colony was affected and "the evidences of our National criminality are distinct, specific and overwhelming<sup>1</sup>."

Such analysis was common among philanthropists at this time<sup>2</sup>.

A conclusion which Fairbairn drew from this was that the colonists must agitate to have the Frontier System replaced. If this did not happen then the British Parliament would not trust the Cape with any further measure of self-government;

"unless we make it appear that we condemn the whole Frontier System, and the abominable crimes to which it gives birth - our political hopes, our hopes of "Self-Government", are blasted for another generation<sup>3</sup>."

Godlonton did not share this deduction. He too was desirous of some form of self-government for the Cape and if possible for the Eastern Districts as well<sup>4</sup>, but he refused to support Fairbairn's Campaign<sup>5</sup> and, indeed, reacted strongly against Thomas Pringle's criticisms of the Colonists. These criticisms he regarded as misrepresentation on Pringle's part.

What emerges then is that condemnation of the "frontier system" was unanimous. The only doubt voiced about its cessation was by those on the frontier who could not see that they would be adequately protected by any other means than by Commandos. Stanley's instructions were effectually shelved. In fact the threatened end of the system on 1 August did not greatly affect the state of affairs on the frontier, and it was on a punitive patrol that Ensign Sparks was wounded on 2 December 1834<sup>6</sup>. There was no immediate prospect, by the time the invasion of the Colony began late in December, that a thoroughgoing new system of frontier relations would be implemented.

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1. S.A.C.A. 27 August 1834.

2. Cf. Madden p. 8.

3. S.A.C.A. 27 August 1834.

4. Sole Vol. I p.40 f.

5. G.T.J. 9 October 1835.

6. See below p.55.

An issue did arise in the third quarter of 1834 other than the matter of relations with the Xhosa, which set the Commercial Advertiser at loggerheads with the Graham's Town Journal and the majority opinion in the Cape. That issue was the draft Vagrancy Ordinance to prevent anyone in the Colony from living an "idle and vagabondizing life" and to "secure a sufficiency of labourers for the Colony<sup>1</sup>". As Marais has said

"Like the old Hottentot code this Ordinance rendered punishable acts of mere vagrancy without proof having to be produced of any crime actually committed. Moreover the measure proposed to re-establish to some extent the bad old system of fieldcornet control over Coloured People which had been abolished in 1828<sup>2</sup>."

Wade had hoped by this measure, during his Acting-Governorship to reduce the great labour shortage which was anticipated on the liberation of the slaves in December.

This draft Ordinance was virtually a denial of Ordinance 50 of 1828 which had assured the personal freedom of "Hottentots and other free persons of Colour<sup>3</sup>", and Fairbairn and his friends mounted a campaign to have it defeated in the Legislative Council. Fairbairn's arguments were three: that the Ordinance, if passed, would not be allowed by the British authorities; that the measure was unnecessary because Vagrancy was on the decline, an argument of doubtful accuracy; and that it was an improper remedy because it encroached so drastically on personal rights<sup>4</sup>. Fairbairn fought a battle on two fronts, against the Zuid Afrikaan in Cape Town and the Journal on the frontier, and the respective propaganda campaigns became heated. The draft Ordinance passed the Legislative Council on 9 September and Fairbairn's recriminations were great.

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1. MacMillan (2) p. 234, quoting a circular by Acting-Governor Wade of 7 May 1834. On this section see MacMillan (2) p. 234 f and Marais p. 182 f.
  2. Marais *ibid.* p. 182.
  3. See above p. 8.
  4. S.A.C.A. 17 May and 16 August 1834.

Fairbairn condemned the myopia of colonial opinion and declared that the Englishmen on the Legislative Council, including Wade and Pillans, had deserted "that Liberty which is the exclusive glory of England, and of the genuine descendants of Englishmen", and blamed the passing of the draft on the work of a pressure group which enshrined Dutch sentiment and thrived on misrepresentation<sup>1</sup>.

The Governor reserved the Vagrant Ordinance for the consideration of the Crown, after it had passed the Legislative Council, and he explained publicly that the tenor of some of its clauses would "prejudice the Colony in the opinion, not only of His Majesty's Government, but of the English nation<sup>2</sup>." The inhabitants of Grahamstown and district were indignant at the idea that they would be the object of British disapproval, and called a meeting on 2 December 1834, to "frame resolutions in vindication of the general character of the colonists<sup>3</sup>." The resolutions passed were to the effect that the colonists were "in no way responsible for the actions of the Legislative Council. Lieut. T.C. White<sup>4</sup> argued lengthily that Philip and Pringle were responsible for the fact that the Cape had already a bad reputation in England, and Edward Norton, a Justice of the Peace in Graham's Town, declared that all were present at the meeting to defend their reputations against Philip, Pringle and their friends. The upshot of the meeting was a petition to the King for the granting of a "Representative Legislative Assembly" which could take steps to protect the colonists' interests<sup>5</sup>. T.C. White, W.R. Thompson<sup>6</sup> and R. Godlonton were appointed to draw up the document.

Fairbairn was scathing in his comment on the meeting. He published all the resolutions and some of the speeches, including

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1. S.A.C.A. 15 October 1834.
  2. G.T.J. 4 December 1834. The Act was finally disallowed.
  3. G.T.J. 11 December 1834.
  4. White was a Settler of 1820, and in 1834 a land surveyor and farmer.
  5. At the same time Fairbairn rejected the idea of a measure of self government, for the sake of the natives. *Mac Millan (2), p. 249.*
  6. A merchant of Graham's Town. Not a Settler of 1820.

that of T.C. White. He ridiculed White's "rambling and ludicrous oration" and declared that there was the "strongest presumptive evidence of partial derangement" in his obsession with Vagrancy.

Mockingly Fairbairn adapted from the "Idiot Boy":

"In high and low, in round or square,  
'Tis Vagrant, Vagrant, everywhere!"

Fairbairn had attacked some of the leaders of the community in Graham's Town. Two issues later, on 27 December, his comment on an incident which occurred in Xhosa territory on 2 December, brought down the whole wrath of a panic-stricken community upon his head<sup>1</sup>.

In the heat of the press controversy about the Governor's reservation of the Vagrancy Act Fairbairn had been accused of being "the hireling of the London Missionary Society<sup>2</sup>." He had been so charged before<sup>3</sup>, but at this stage the charge must be investigated and Dr. Philip's influence on the Commercial Advertiser examined insofar as it concerns the Xhosa frontier.

It was well known that Fairbairn and Philip were close friends. They had visited the frontier together in 1830 and their ideas on the matter of Hottentot Vagrancy were identical, certainly to the public. Fairbairn had married one of Philip's daughters, Eliza, in 1831. The accusation that Fairbairn was "the hireling of the London Missionary Society" amounted to an accusation that the Commercial Advertiser was Philip's mouthpiece in the Colony. Fairbairn chose to take the accusation literally, and hotly denied that he had ever had "any connection, Correspondence or intercourse directly or indirectly" with the Society<sup>4</sup>. If one pursues the literal meaning and consults the Incoming Correspondence of the London Missionary Society, one finds that no letters or reports by Fairbairn found their way into Dr. Philip's letters to his superiors,

1. See below, Chapter III.

2. S.A.C.A. 22 October 1834, quoting Zuid Afrikaan 17 October 1834.

3. S.A.C.A. 27 April 1833, referring to a general feeling at the Cape.

4. S.A.C.A. 22 October 1834.

or into his enclosures<sup>1</sup>. On a wider plain, as the Zuid Afrikaan report implicitly was, Fairbairn's intimate friendship with Philip continued, even while the latter was on the frontier<sup>2</sup>.

MacMillan goes so far as to say that between August and December 1834 Philip regularly supplied Fairbairn with much information on vagrancy on the Frontier. MacMillan cannot "entirely disentangle the dates of these memorials and letters", but they were "poured out in the columns of the Commercial Advertiser" and upon the Governor<sup>3</sup>.

An examination of the columns of the Advertiser does not seem to support MacMillan's claim. Philip left Cape Town on 13 August for the Xhosa frontier areas and returned at the end of the year. He began reporting to the Governor on 22 September<sup>4</sup>. During the last months of the year the Advertiser printed only nine letters from the Eastern Cape. Of these five could have been written by Philip, if they are dated correctly, but there is no reason to regard them as different from reports on the Kat River which had appeared in the Commercial Advertiser for years. The only letter probably written by Philip, and consisting of a survey of the reasons why there should be no new Vagrancy Law, was written by "A Voluntary" from Uitenhage District on 21 September<sup>5</sup>. It is possible also that Philip wrote the report of the Kat River Settlement Anniversary meeting of 8 October 1834<sup>6</sup>.

Fairbairn knew nothing, publicly, about the semi-official nature of Philip's tour of the frontier. There is no private source which states that he did know.

There was, furthermore, a difference between Fairbairn's conception of the needs of the frontier situation and that of Philip.

1. Hinchliff *passim*.
2. Mrs. Philip to Philip, October 1834 MacMillan (2) p.249.
3. MacMillan (2) p.235 and n<sup>I</sup>.
4. MacMillan (1) p.117.
5. Read to Fairbairn 12 April 1834, quoted in MacMillan (1) p.138 n. James Read, 1777-1852 served as a missionary for the London Society in South Africa from 1800-1855. He was in the Kat River Settlement 1829-1855.
6. S.A.C.A. 1 October 1834.

Just a few days after Fairbairn published his "hints" of 22 February 1834 Philip wrote to the Governor consistently with his earlier views<sup>1</sup> that

"I should have no objection to see the whole country, from the Keiskama to the Kye [Kei], or even from the Keiskama to Delagoa Bay, included within the limits of the Colony, on the plan adopted by the ancient Romans, which led them to spread themselves and their institutions over the countries which submitted to their government<sup>2</sup>."

But D'Urban had told him how small was the sum - £600 - which the British Treasury allowed him to spend on a new system of frontier relations, and Philip therefore advocated Fairbairn's plan which certainly did not involve immediate annexation. It is not warrantable to suppose, as does Urie, that in Fairbairn's plan "many of the ideas, if not all, were probably Philip's suggestions<sup>3</sup>."

The crux of Fairbairn's plan was the freezing of current land ownership, and this was what Philip's idea of annexation aimed at. The land should be guaranteed to the natives. Fairbairn assumed, on the information which he had gathered, that the Xhosa social structure was strong: each chief had a large amount of control over his subjects, and therefore a simple correction of abuses could be carried out within a clear framework, by two societies dealing with each other in a rational way<sup>4</sup>. Philip was more sceptical of the innate stability of this semi-savage society and saw a need for the guiding hand of British authorities.

Fairbairn's plan catered for the need for constant contact between the colonial and Xhosa authorities. Here men like Boyce and Wade, and Godlonton of the Journal all agreed, and none of them were enamoured of Fairbairn's conception of the "character of the Kafirs". The plan was realistic within its limits: it was explicitly a framework for relations more than anything else, and it goes a long

1. See above p.16.
2. Philip to D'Urban 13 March 1834. 538 of 1836 p.693. Quoted in part in Galbraith p.105 and Urie p.202. This was in conformity with the ideas of Thompson, Stockenstrom and Pringle. See above pp 13,20,27
3. Urie p.202.
4. Boyce p.52 comments on "the incapacity of Chiefs under ordinary circumstances to repress cattle theft". His emphasis.

way towards supporting Fairbairn's claim of the following year that he was not dealing with the merits of the Kafirs as noble creatures per se, but with the requirements of a situation involving human conflict<sup>1</sup>. Philip himself did not regard the February plan as the last word, and while on the frontier he tried to formulate his own solution. He felt in October that his ideas were only beginning to mature<sup>2</sup>, but he had not thought out an alternative before he faced the questions of the Committee on Aborigines in 1836. The principles of the two men were different: Fairbairn thought independence for the immediate future was the best course, while to Philip control was the best course. Their preferences were to enjoy various measures of success in the D'Urban administration of the Province of Queen Adelaide in 1835 and 1836, and under Stockenström's Treaty System from 1836 to 1846.



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1. S.A.C.A. 5 September 1835.
  2. Philip to Pringle, 7 October 1834. MacMillan (1) p.122.

CHAPTER III

THE KHOSA WAR, DECEMBER 1834 TO MAY 1835

The Xhosa invaded the districts of Albany and Somerset in December 1834, and there followed nearly ten months of hostilities in an area stretching from the Sunday's River in the south-west to Hintza's kraal in the north-east, and from the coast to the Stormberg mountains. The Xhosa were followed across the Fish River, the current boundary of the Colony, and slowly reduced to famine and submission in the Ciskei. Before these Gaikas laid down their arms, the Governor had sent an expedition across the Kei and brought back Hintza, chief of the Gaikas, a captive. In May the Governor declared the war at an end, annexed the land between the Keiskama and the Kei to the Colony as the Province of Queen Adelaide, and began to drive out from the new province all tribes which had been engaged in hostilities<sup>1</sup>. There was, at least to begin with, very little information about the trend of events apart from scattered details of plunder and murder, and it was difficult to separate fact from rumour. Fairbairn during January 1835 tried to supplement the dearth of information with his own analysis of what was happening, but his comments on frontier news were so ill received that he was compelled to tone down his comments and came to depend entirely on reports.

The English colonists on the frontier were panic-stricken. The war caught them unawares. This was racial war, and the Settlers had known nothing more than racial incident. Men were astounded. A Mr. Fleming of Uitenhage, looking back after a month of hostilities, wrote to Dr. Philip that

"No one ever seems to have apprehended that the power of the Caffres to blast the Colony was hanging over our heads like a drawn sword suspended by a thread<sup>2</sup>."

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1. See Theal (1) Vol. II chaps. XXV and XXVI, and Cory Vol. III chaps. II - VI and Galbraith pp. 104 for details of the war.
  2. MacMillan (1) p. 139 quoting Philip to T.F. Buxton, 23 January 1835.

Agreement had been unanimous in 1834 that frontier policy must be changed, but in their shock at an invasion, frontiersmen tended to lay the blame for the outbreak as much on trouble-making individuals as on the system of frontier relations. Philip, Pringle and Fairbairn came to be condemned for interfering in relations with the Xhosa just as they had been with regard to the Hottentots. This was so much the case that even an outsider, Capt. J.E. Alexander<sup>1</sup> who came to the Colony only in December 1834<sup>2</sup>, ascribed the cause of the war as much to "the wicked tampering of insidious men"<sup>3</sup> as to a bad policy. A press campaign was mounted, against the "Anti-Colonial" activities of Philip, Fairbairn and Pringle, such as strikes a strange cord when one looks back over the previous years. It was the report in the Commercial Advertiser of a border incident which began what amounted to a newspaper war.

The Civil Commissioner of Albany, Capt. Campbell, had been warned on 20 December that the Xhosa tribes on the boundary were unusually hostile<sup>4</sup>. Graham's Town was in a state of acute apprehension as early as 22 December<sup>5</sup>, and the following day the citizens knew that Xhosa warriors had invaded the colony along "the entire line of boundary"<sup>6</sup>. On 24 December Lt.-Col. Somerset reported that there were between 8 and 10,000 Xhosa warriors in the Colony<sup>7</sup>. By 25 December most of the frontiersmen knew of the outbreak of hostilities. Many were already in Graham's Town and some still making their way thence or to the safer district of Somerset. They left most of their possessions on their farms or in their hamlets, and many had all their stock stolen.

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1. Capt. (later Sir) J.E. Alexander, was soon to be famous as a writer of travels.
  2. He became an officer on Sir Benjamin D'Urban's staff.
  3. Alexander Vol. I p. 427.
  4. Rev. J. Laing to Campbell and Lt.-Col. Somerset to Campbell, 20 December 1834. Cape Archives 8/85
  5. G.T.J. 25 December 1834. See also McGeogh p. 11.
  6. Godlonton (2) p. 19.
  7. Somerset to Campbell. 252 of 1835, p. 125.

Arms were issued to all able-bodied men, numbering about 600<sup>1</sup>, and on 24 December a provisional "Committee of Public Safety" was established which tried to organize the men into divisions to defend the town<sup>2</sup>, but as late as 2 January Campbell commented that the Civil Force was "yet very imperfect", and he saw no prospect of improvement, owing to "the state of alarm in which the Town is kept by reports of the Caffers in all directions<sup>3</sup>."

The Commandant of Graham's Town, Lt.-Col. England, wrote on 26 December that the general panic in the neighbourhood had increased, although he was sure that the Xhosa warriors would not attack Graham's Town where they might "incur such a fair prospect of resistance". England himself was shaken in his judgement by the opinions of various refugee traders whom he regarded as reliable: they declared that the Xhosa would attack Graham's Town, and he took precautions. His comment is significant:

"It is obvious that the panic thus spread, even if the aggressions of the Caffres did not exceed their present amount, cannot be recovered for a considerable number of years, if ever....<sup>4</sup>"

Col. England did not see his way clear to have the troops active in defence of the town. The garrison numbered only some 420 men<sup>5</sup>. Guard duty fell to the lot of the citizens and refugees, who soon numbered thousands<sup>6</sup>. The military helped to put the town in order for defence<sup>7</sup>. When on 30 December it was reported that warriors were close to Graham's Town panic reached a new height, and the Committee of Safety advised the Commandant of the Frontier, Lt-Col. Somerset, to abandon the outlying military posts and concentrate his entire force on Graham's Town, and Somerset agreed<sup>8</sup>.

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1. Campbell to Colonial Secretary 2 January 1835  
Cape Archives 9/7
  2. McGeogh p. 12.
  3. Campbell to Colonial Secretary, *ibid.*
  4. 252 to 1835, p.127.
  5. Civil Commissioner to Colonial Secretary, 2 January 1835  
*ibid.*
  6. Civil Commissioner to Lt.-Col. Somerset, 31 December 1834. 503 of 1837, p. 74.
  7. McGeogh p. 56.
  8. Godlonton (2) p. 30.

In the town there was insubordination in the civil force<sup>1</sup>. There was a shortage of ammunition in Albany, and requests for reinforcements from other districts were long delayed because the panic was widespread also in the Uitenhage and Somerset districts<sup>2</sup>.

A vivid impression of the situation was left in the mind of Rev. H.H. Dugmore, himself a refugee, and he wrote thirty-six years later:

"The aspect of Graham's Town, when made the central refuge, was such as it has never, in the same degree, presented since. Every tenement of every class was thronged with families of white, brown or black, who had pressed in from every side for protection. The portions of the flocks and herds that had been saved from the Kaffers, crowded the vacant spaces in yards and gardens at nights, and covered the slopes of the hills around the town by day, exhausting very speedily the pasturage of the neighbourhood<sup>3</sup>."

On 1 January, when panic in Graham's Town was at its height, the South African Commercial Advertiser of 27 December arrived by post. Fairbairn had there reported an incident which occurred on 2 December, before there was any sort of war scare on the frontier. A patrol commanded by Ensign Sparks was harried by tribesmen of the Chief Eno<sup>4</sup>. Sparks had been wounded in the arm by an assegai. The Advertiser based its report on the Graham's Town Journal of 11 December. A correspondent at Fort Willshire had supplied the information. Fairbairn did not misrepresent the facts in the report, but he commented adversely:

"Colonel Somerset and the frontier authorities make this a pretense for driving all Kafirs from the neutral territory, where several of them have been permitted to graze their cattle and sow their corn. This proceeding takes place, as usual, when the corn is nearly ripe, and the grass in Kafirland scanty."  
 ... "It affords another illustration of the absurdity and madness, not to say atrocity, of this System of patrols. Suppose a few Caffer Cattle had been traced into the Colony, what would the Albany orators have said, had Macomo sent an armed party to Graham's Town, and seized the Civil Commissioner's horses, or a few dozens of Mr. White's Saxon Sheep?"

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1. Alexander Vol. I p. 412.
  2. Civil Commissioner of Somerset to Civil Commissioner of Albany, 14 January 1835. Cape Archives 8/55
  3. Dugmore p. 52.
  4. Fairbairn had visited Eno in 1830. See above p.22.
  5. S.A.C.A. 27 December 1834.

There was an immediate outcry against Fairbairn's article, which was prominently brought to the attention of the people in Graham's Town, and within a day 360 men had signed their names in support of a boycott of the Commercial Advertiser<sup>1</sup>. The Civil Commissioner estimated the number of able bodied civilians in the Town to be about 600<sup>2</sup>. The terms of the "advertisement" of boycott were wide. They referred to the Sparks incident an "occurrence connected with the invasion of the colony." Fairbairn had misrepresented this incident, stated the "advertisement",

"and commented upon his own false statement, in a manner calculated to affect our hopes of succour from other quarters; and as there is an impression abroad that former misrepresentations in that paper, as well as the visit of the Editor of the Frontier, are among the causes of a confederacy among the Caffer chiefs, which threatens the total ruin of a large portion of the Colony, we consider it our duty to call upon all well-wishers to their Country - to implore all who would not wilfully be made instrumental in stifling the cries of the widow and the fatherless for protection, - to use their best endeavours to suppress the circulation of that paper, during the continuance of the present awful crisis<sup>3</sup>."

By 9 January another 60 signatures had been collected in Port Elizabeth<sup>4</sup>.

There was another manifesto from Cape Town a month later in which 234 persons declared that Fairbairn's opinions were a danger to the colony in time of war, and they "would do all in [their] power to check the propagation of such cruel and wanton attacks<sup>5</sup>." This manifesto was unfortunately not reproduced in the press, and there is no trace of the signatures. This, albeit not as threatening as the first in terminology, was ominous in that it came from the area where the Advertiser's circulation was greatest.

Some of the signatures of the Graham's Town list are most interesting, and taken together they represent many of the most substantial men in Albany. One who signed was A.T. Caldecott, who was the agent who distributed the Commercial Advertiser on the frontier.

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1. See also MacMillan (1) p. 136-7 and McGeogh p. 67.

2. Civil Commissioner to Colonial Secretary, 2 January 1835. Cape Archives 9/7

3. G.T.J. 2 January 1835.

4. G.T.J. 9 January 1835.

5. G.T.J. 13 February 1835.

It is not possible to discover if Caldecott had pressure exerted on him to sign the list any more than the others who signed, and Fairbairn at no stage suggested this.

Clergymen, from whom Fairbairn had hoped so much<sup>1</sup>, signed the lists in numbers. There were three Wesleyan Methodist missionaries who signed immediately, W.J. Shrewsbury, S. Young and R. Haddy, and each of these later justified their actions in a letter to the Secretaries of their Missionary Society in London<sup>2</sup>. Shrewsbury had been in the Colony since 1826 and was in 1834 in charge of the Graham's Town circuit. Young arrived in the Colony in 1823 and spent ten years in the Graham's Town and Salem area. Both he and Shrewsbury had spent a year working among the Xhosa. There is no reliable information to be found on Haddy.

Two other Wesleyan missionaries added their names to the Graham's Town list on 6 February after they had returned by devious routes from their stations among the Xhosa. Rev. Shepstone was engaged in work at Wesleyville and Rev. H. Dugmore<sup>3</sup> at Mount Coke, both of these stations being near the present King William's Town.

Three colonial chaplains, members of the Established Church, signed. Rev. J. Barrow was chaplain at Bathurst and Rev. F. McClelland at Port Elizabeth, and J. Heavyside<sup>4</sup> was acting colonial chaplain at Graham's Town. Rev. J. Murray, denominated "Minister of the Gospel", who also signed, cannot be identified<sup>5</sup>. Rev. G. Morgan, Dutch Reformed minister for the district of Somerset, did not sign the "advertisement" and was later accused of being a correspondent of Fairbairn's<sup>6</sup>. He strongly denied this.

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1. See above p. 10.

2. The letter was written on 31 January 1835. 538 of 1836 pp. 182-3.

3. See above p. 55.

4. For Heavyside's version of the events of late December 1834, see Abstract of the Proceedings of the Board of Relief, 1836. Heavyside's diary reads similarly to reports in the Journal.

5. A Rev. Andrew Murray was minister to the Dutch Reformed Church at Graaff-Reinet.

6. An observer in G.T.J. 13 February 1835.

Not surprisingly, T.C. White and W.R. Thompson signed the document, as did Robert Godlonton. Three of seven Justices of the Peace for Albany signed: C. Maynard, J.M. Bowker and E. Norton. Capt. Duncan Campbell's signature is missing, perhaps because of his official position. A few officers in the regular army added their names to the list. Of all the names there is not one that can be classified as Dutch<sup>1</sup>.

It is probable that this outburst originated with Fairbairn's enemies of some weeks previously. Fairbairn had twisted a justifiable comparison into a mockery of Capt. Campbell and T.C. White, and it is likely that such men led the reaction against Fairbairn. Godlonton adds to the presumptive evidence that the attack on the Advertiser had its origin in personal antagonism. In 1836 he wrote the Narrative of the Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes, mainly for readers in Britain. This was based on the reports of the Graham's Town Journal during the war, and it accuses Philip and Fairbairn of stirring up the Xhosa into hostility against the Colony. But Godlonton omits any reference to the last part of Fairbairn's comment, in which he mentions Campbell and White, and says that the whole attack on the Commercial Advertiser was "unquestionably injudicious" as "the public mind required no additional excitement." His explanation was that there had been no time to consider actions carefully<sup>2</sup>.

Fairbairn certainly considered his opponents in the Vagrancy Ordinance debate to be the instigators of the "advertisement"<sup>3</sup>, but if this were so they would not have had to bring much pressure to bear on the men in Graham's Town to cause an outburst. The words "what would the Albany orators have said, had Macomo sent an armed party to Graham's Town", were most unfortunate.

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1. The Civil Commissioner for Albany reported as late as 2 January 1835 that there were not even ten Dutch refugees in Graham's Town. Civil Commissioner to Colonial Secretary, 2 January 1835 Cape

2. Godlonton (2) p. 50.

3. See below, p. 63.

The Committee of Public Safety carried further the accusations against Fairbairn and his friends. White, Campbell (ex officio), and Godlonton were all members of the Committee. The causes of the war featured prominently in their discussions at a time when they might more usefully have discussed ways of improving the security of the Town and neighbourhood. On 6 January the Committee interviewed a certain T. Robson, a Xhosa called Humanus, and Rev. Young, the Methodist Missionary<sup>1</sup>. Robson had been a storekeeper at Balfour in the Kat River Settlement, which bordered on the lands of Macomo and other chiefs of the Gaikas. He said that he had heard Dr. Philip in 1832 boast to an audience of Hottentots and "many Caffre chiefs" that his influence had freed the Hottentots from oppression by the Europeans. Humanus stated that it was common knowledge among the Xhosa that Philip in 1834 had promised the chiefs that they would be given back the Zuureveld (Albany). Young declared that the visit of Philip and Fairbairn to the frontier had tended to inflame the chiefs.

This inquisition was probably the last meeting of the Committee of Public Safety, which was dissolved the following day by Lt.-Col. Smith<sup>2</sup>.

Potentially the most damaging claim which the "advertisement" made against Fairbairn was that which accused him of stifling "succour from other quarters". If it could be proved that Fairbairn's statement of the incident of 2 December had reduced response in other districts to the predicament of the frontier Colonists, Fairbairn's newspaper could be ruined. A second glance at the charge shows it to have been a wild one at the time, although it might easily have been made against Fairbairn's editorial comments in January<sup>3</sup>.

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1. 503 of 1836 p. 78.

2. Lt.-Col. (later Lt.-Gen. Sir) H.W.G. Smith, 1787-1860, was Deputy Quarter-Master-General at the Cape from 1829 to 1840. In 1847 he returned to the Cape as Governor and High Commissioner.

3. See below, p. 66 f.

The burghers of the Uitenhage and Somerset districts were retained in their places by the officials as a defence measure, and the mobilization and removal to the frontier of burghers from more westerly districts would take so long as to be of no immediate use to Graham's Town. The conclusion that this charge was the result of panic and disorganization, is supported by the fact that Godlonton omits it from his apologia of 1836.

Opinions expressed in the columns of the Journal elaborate on the statements made in the "advertisement" of 2 January and place in context the inquiry held by the Committee of Safety on 6 January. There is a distinct move away from the thought of any contact at all with the Xhosa, and a growing resentment against those who advocated it. The result was an attitude more thorough-going than the "powder and ball" mentality of those who had been robbed by the Xhosa<sup>1</sup>, and is illustrated by Rev. William Shaw's<sup>2</sup> statement, on his return to the Eastern Cape after the war, that there was "a great revulsion in the sentiments of the British settlers in reference to the Kaffir race<sup>3</sup>".

Pringle was accused of rousing the Xhosa to war, in his poem Makanna's Gathering, which begins "Wake, AmaXhosa, wake..." It dealt with the battle at Graham's Town in 1819, when the little settlement was nearly overwhelmed by thousands of Ndhlabi's warriors. The correspondent C.J. Gray had it from "Whispers" and "rumours" in Graham's Town that Pringle's poem had been interpreted to the Xhosa<sup>4</sup>.

Perhaps the classic statement of the new attitude is found in a letter of A.B. in the Journal of 30 January 1835. He stated that there was no longer security for the white man on the frontier. Whereas Pringle had recommended fairness to the Xhosa in his dictum "Be just and fear not", now justice meant compensation and security for the frontier colonists. The Xhosa were on the rampage because

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1. MacMillan (2) p. 121.
  2. Rev. William Shaw, 1799-1872, was a Wesleyan minister who came to the Cape with a party of Settlers in 1820.
  3. Shaw p. 159.
  4. G.T.J. 2 and 9 January 1835.

they had not been properly disciplined and there was no knowing where they would draw the line:

"we may expect to hear Tyali, whom Mr. Pringle calls a barbarian - but no savage, or Macomo, who calls himself the friend of Fairbairn, demanding from us (as rumour says they have already) a few of our wives or daughters to swell their seraglios,<sup>1</sup>"

and the colonists might not be able to defend themselves or "reply to their insolence as it deserves" owing to the

"effects produced upon our Government by the disgusting cant of a few men who live by administering to the sickly sensibilities of the philanthropists of England<sup>2</sup>."

A.B. claimed that many of the works used by Fairbairn for information on the frontier were biased against the Colony. Philip's Researches in South Africa and the works of Thompson and Kay were "edited, that is to say chiefly written by", Thomas Pringle<sup>3</sup>. Fairbairn himself, "the audacious and unscrupulous writer who is here held in pay by their party", endeavoured with them to evoke sympathy for the native inhabitants both inside and outside the Colony. Because of the recent campaign of the philanthropists

"we have no one equally interested to defend us; nine tenths of us are even ignorant of the allegations which gather credit from our silence, and these works become the vade mecum of our Secretaries of State, the text-books of our parliamentary declaimours<sup>4</sup>."

The Journal itself adopted a new policy towards the eye-witnesses whom Fairbairn often quoted. In particular Saxe Bannister, who a few months previously had been held in such high esteem, was condemned as being too optimistic in his estimation of the character of the Xhosa<sup>5</sup>.

Godlonton now said that the colonists were doomed in any case. Even if the Xhosa had not broken out in open war against the Colony, they would have sapped its strength by continuously flouting "British Power" in their depredations, and the British authorities would have been powerless because London was supplied with lies about the nature of Xhosa character<sup>6</sup>. Fairbairn's past concern about the frontier,

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1. My emphasis.
  2. Compare this letter with the effect which Stanley's letter had on the Colony with reference to the Commando System. See above pp.35f.
  3. This is true of Thompson's book, but very doubtful of Philip's and Kay's. See above p. 15.
  4. Fairbairn had already pointed out that the colonists had a bad  
/continued overleaf.....

said Godlonton, had been invalidated by his recent statements concerning the Xhosa aggression.

The "pseudo Philanthropists", said the Journal, those who were in fact harming their fellow men, were more to be blamed than the British authorities in the Cape and London for the ruin of Albany. As a complement to the "advertisement" of 2 January, as it were, Godlonton suggested that by rights the Commercial Advertiser should not meddle at all with frontier affairs:

"Would to heaven! that the Editor of that paper had always confined himself to topics on which he was conversant, and on which he is so well able to enlighten the public, - and left the subject of our Frontier policy to wiser heads, we mean to men who could form conclusions from actual facts and long experience, and not from a false hypothesis, or a dangerous, false and absurd theory<sup>1</sup>."

Fairbairn's reply to the onslaught in the Journal was complex. In the first place he allowed a manifesto in support of his policy to be laid before the public in Cape Town. This was published in the Advertiser on 28 January and contained a list of 110 names of men who recognized his "consistent advocacy of Justice in intercourse with the natives bordering on our Frontiers", and hoped that the inhabitants of Graham's Town would soon recover from the illusion which Fairbairn's "political opponents" had created. Fairbairn himself believed that the "advertisement" was an act of revenge, and he may have had a hand in drafting the terms of the manifesto.

Furthermore, Fairbairn wrote a letter to a resident in Graham's Town, which was then submitted by the recipient to the Journal for publication<sup>2</sup>. In this way the boycott of Fairbairn's views was evaded. Fairbairn said that he realised the seriousness of the situation which his comments had landed him in, and he apologised to

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(Footnotes continued from previous page)

4. (cont.) press in Britain. See above p.45.
  5. G.T.J. 9 January 1835.
  6. G.T.J. 16 January 1835.
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1. G.T.J. 16 January 1835.
  2. Constant Reader in G.T.J. 23 January 1835.

"Mr. White, or any other man in Albany, [who] was on the point of suffering either in person, or property, as they have unhappily done. I would sooner have cut off my right hand than have written one word that breathed of unkindly feelings towards them.....",

and he readily forgave those of his subscribers who had turned against him<sup>1</sup>. He declared that the nature of his reports depended on the information which he received from his correspondents on the frontier, and he was always ready to correct false impressions which he had been led to publish. He pointed out that he was by no means opposed to the colonial war effort and that as soon as the invasion was known, he used the Commercial Advertiser to stir up sympathy in the western Cape, and ultimately in England, for sufferers on the Frontier<sup>2</sup>. The Journal "advertisement", Fairbairn said, had arrived in Cape Town in the midst of his campaign for the relief of distressed Settlers, and had been largely discounted by the public.

Fairbairn tried to scotch the effect of the "advertisement" by claiming that it was merely a political thrust by the enemies he had made in the debate on the Vagrancy Ordinance. He wrote this on 20 January and published it only on 28 January, as a reply to the manifesto in support of his policy. His tone was arrogant:

"My "political opponents" had just been defeated in a similar attempt in the same place and among the same people, and only showed an ordinary degree of address in seizing the late opportunity for recovering, as they supposed, the ground they had lost in public estimation."

This reply was not published in the Journal and is not mentioned by any of the Correspondents in that newspaper.

The manifesto in support of Fairbairn's journalism was badly handled. There are in existence two drafts, one dated 10 January and the other dated 20 January and which was subsequently printed in the Advertiser. The first is in the Fairbairn

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1. "about twenty" had signed the "advertisement". S.A.C.A. 10 January 1835.
  2. S.A.C.A. 3 January 1835. This was at a time when he thought only a few of the Gaika tribes were involved in the invasion.

Correspondence in the Library of Parliament. It contains 53 names<sup>1</sup>. The second, comprising 110 names, includes most of those in the first draft, but rearranged. Blocks of names have been lifted from the first list and incorporated at random into the second<sup>2</sup>. Four names were not transferred to the second list, viz. N. Wollaston, Jas. Smith, A.I. Robertson and, significantly, George Greig. Greig was Fairbairn's partner in the Commercial Advertiser, as well as being the printer. Fairbairn did not attempt to explain this in spite of the fact that it was spotted by Observer, a correspondent of the Journal. Observer alleged that the second petition was subscribed in the most questionable way. He said that a member of the Legislative Council<sup>3</sup>, who possessed much influence in Cape Town, dragooned men into supporting the manifesto.

An analysis of the list of 110 names reveals some interesting facts. The great majority of the signatories were British, and only seven were obviously Dutch. Some 20% of the signatories were regular advertisers in Fairbairn's newspaper, and a few others like A. Chiappini advertised now and then. Of the 110, 88 had no obvious connection with the Commercial Advertiser. The occupations of the signatories varied greatly, and merchants, teachers, a librarian and an undertaker were among them.

A separate memorial appeared in the Commercial Advertiser on 28 January from the Committee of the Commercial Exchange in Cape Town, dated 26 January. It represented the "mercantile community, and especially those connected with the Frontier Trade", and who were gratified by the reports and free supplements which Fairbairn was producing on the progress of the Xhosa war. The Advertiser was, said the memorial, rendering an important service to the public. It is interesting to notice that this, the second manifesto, was in support of Fairbairn's journalism whereas the first had approved

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1. Appendix 2.

2. Appendix 3.

3. J.B. Ebdon signed the second manifesto only, and was a member of the Council.

of his policy. Of the 110 signatories of the first, some 22 were merchants and many of them, like Chiappini, who was on the committee of the Commercial Exchange<sup>1</sup>, may have been concerned in the drawing up of the second. However that may be, it seems that there was comparatively little vocal support for the Commercial Advertiser in Cape Town.

Fairbairn took his defence further when he asserted, characteristically, that the "advertisement" in the Journal assailed the rights and liberties of the press.

Finally, Fairbairn was disillusioned and full of self-pity at the opposition which he now experienced. He said on 28 January that

"the Irruption of the Caffres, against which I had wearied all my readers with the reiteration of warnings and advice has brought into play in one phalanx the whole body of the discontented from the Fish River to Table Bay, under leaders whose names only excite in me sentiments of regret, with a confidant hope that they will one day change their opinions."

He was asking to be understood by his public, and not trying to understand them. In fact, he explicitly refused to change his principles. In a later number of the Advertiser Fairbairn went so far as to say that as a self-conscious "Reformer" he was trying to change the prejudice of a whole people, and he must therefore "make up his mind for martyrdom<sup>2</sup>." He was convinced of the rightness of his ways.

It is enlightening, against this background, to examine Fairbairn's reporting of the war during January 1835.

Fairbairn refused to accept the statements and information of the Graham's Town Journal as reliable, although he reprinted many reports verbatim from it during January. This was in conformity with Fairbairn's mature views on the nature of reports from the frontier<sup>3</sup>, but his attitude was hostile after the attack on the Commercial Advertiser.

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1. Immelman p. 77.

2. S.A.C.A., 1 April 1835.

3. See above, p. 10.

During war time there was a particular type of information available. With the eyes of the Colony fixed on the frontier as never before, and the Governor at the head of a large force of troops and burghers, there was an interest in the area such as never before. Official information was published from Head Quarters in Graham's Town, in the form of proclamations, General Orders and reports by senior staff officers. This information was published again in the Government Gazette by the Colonial Secretary's office in Cape Town. The Colonial Secretary, Lt.-Col. John Bell, was head of the Provisional Government during the Governor's absence from Cape Town.

News of the invasion of the Colony reached Cape Town on 1 January. Official communications in the Government Gazette in January include one on 3 January, two on 9 January and a number on 22 January. Between those dates there was nothing, and between 9 and 22 January there was no post from the frontier.

According to these communications the situation on the frontier was not very serious. On 3 January Cape Town learned, indeed, that Graham's Town was in a perilous situation and that the troops were being withdrawn from the outer forts and camps. But on 9 January, relaying information received up to 4 January, the Gazette announced that Graham's Town was safe after being re-inforced, that the inhabitants of Bathurst were preparing to return to their homes, and that "offensive operations" were about to begin. On 22 January the public was informed by Lt.-Col. Smith, through the Gazette, of the various actions which had taken place, and it became clear that the campaign against the Xhosa would be a long one.

Fairbairn followed roughly this pattern in his portrayal of the course of the war. Before 22 January he did not regard the invasion as serious in a military sense, and this attitude conditioned his reaction to any other news which he might receive. It allowed him to fall back on his corpus of knowledge of the frontier which

he had gained over the previous decade in order to supply information to an eager public. He based his remarks on "a correct view of frontier affairs, founded on facts which have been known for several years<sup>1</sup>." Any information which came to hand therefore, especially that contained in the Graham's Town Journal, went through the mill.

At first Fairbairn looked upon the invasion primarily as a good opportunity to bring in a new system of relations with the Xhosa. The Governor was on the frontier, as Fairbairn had required, and to remind him of his duty Fairbairn reprinted his "hints" of 22 February 1834<sup>2</sup>.

Turning to the reports in the Journal, Fairbairn tried to discover the number of Xhosa involved in the war. He concluded that only the chief Tyalie, a brother of the "regent" of the Gaikas, Macomo, was at war with the colony. The columns of the Journal nowhere give this impression, but they do implicate Tyalie's men beyond a doubt. Also, it was Tyalie alone of the chiefs who had proposed terms of peace after the initial invasion<sup>3</sup>. This was, indeed, the only definite information respecting the Xhosa chiefs which this particular issue of the Journal contained. Fairbairn concluded from his "correct view of frontier affairs" that Tyalie would get no support from his peers. Macomo, certainly, would never co-operate with him because he knew Tyalie's "rashness" and "inability to control his own people<sup>4</sup>."

Fairbairn said he knew that there were no more than a hundred thousand Gaikas, men, women and children<sup>5</sup>. Of these, fifteen thousand

1. S.A.C.A. 21 January 1835.

2. S.A.C.A. 7 January 1835.

3. G.T.J. 9 January 1835.

4. S.A.C.A. 21 January 1835. Fairbairn's emphasis.

5. The census of late 1835 estimated the total number of Xhosa in the area between the Colony and the Kei River as 72,000. Cory Vol. III p. 229. Godlonton's statement, that there were forty to fifty thousand men capable of bearing arms, includes also the Gcalekas across the Kei. Godlonton did not attempt to estimate how many Gaikas were capable of bearing arms. G.T.J. 6 February 1835.

men were able-bodied, but one-third of the fifteen thousand was absolutely required to guard and tend their families and stock. If Tyalie alone was involved, then the number of warriors he could send out was about 600, or perhaps at the outside 1,000. The war could quickly be terminated:

"a Commando of two hundred armed Boers or Hottentots, who possess both animal and moral courage, could sweep Cafferland from the Keiskama to the Kei,"

and at once all invaders must hurry back to defend their families and cattle. The government had not published Somerset's report of 24 December<sup>1</sup>, or Fairbairn would not have made such a statement.

Against this background it is easy to explain Fairbairn's comments on a particular incident as reported in the Journal on 2 January. Fairbairn took up this report on 21 January to illustrate that even the few warriors involved in the war were of inferior quality. An inn-keeper named Tomlinson had defended himself against the attacks of the Xhosa for two days, and had left only when his cattle had all been stolen and he was requested by Lt.-Col. Somerset to seek refuge in Graham's Town. The Journal report appeared in the same issue as the "advertisement" against the Commercial Advertiser. It was verbose and misleading, for Godlonton did not even estimate how many Xhosa were involved. Godlonton cited various incidents and made special mention of

"....George Tomlinson, whose residence is in one of the most intricate and dangerous passes in the country; surrounded by ample cover for myriads of the enemy, and affording in every direction a retreat where it is impossible for men to follow, besides many situations which are quite impracticable for any other animals than Kafirs and Baboons, the denizens of the rocky precipice. Still, notwithstanding these disadvantages Mr. Tomlinson bravely defended himself against the repeated night attacks of the savages; and it was not until he had lost his cattle that he abandoned his dwelling, and then only at the earnest recommendation of Lieut.-Col. Somerset."

Fairbairn's comments were as follows:

"And what kind of soldiers would these six hundred, or this thousand be? Tomlinson, an Inn-keeper, defended his house against their whole force and skill and "admirable tactics" for two days, and only left at the earnest entreaties of the "Commandant of Caffraria" - who, instead of sending this

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1. See above, p. 53.

sensible and bold man a reinforcement and thus checking the enemy at one point at least, sent him his "earnest entreaties" to run away as all the rest had done!"

The italicised portions do not refer to any report of the incident and are merely a refinement of sarcasm. Apart from this, Fairbairn's comment is confusing. At one place he refers to the "whole force" of the Xhosa attacking Tomlinson, and later talks of "one point at least", inferring that the Xhosa were attacking on a long front. This report would fall within the limits of misrepresentation.

Fairbairn made the inhabitants of Graham's Town look small when he pointed out that their "seige" had been raised with ease, once by a detachment of Hottentots from Bethelsdorp and again by Lt.-Col. Smith, second-in-command in the Colony. Smith had ridden up almost alone from Port Elizabeth to Graham's Town on 6 January and not seen a single Xhosa warrior. This information he took from the Journal of 9 January.

Fairbairn's conclusion was severe: there had never been "any danger worth the name of danger on the immediate Frontier". Danger would have arisen if the Hottentots in the Colony had revolted and joined the Xhosa in an attack on the Colony. The panic which Fairbairn saw in the columns of the Graham's Town Journal surely encouraged the Hottentots to join what seemed the stronger side<sup>1</sup>.

This article of 21 January astounded Godlonton. He said that Fairbairn had been "superlatively wicked and foolish" to write thus. Godlonton's indignation was extreme and when he combined that with the boycott of the Commercial Advertiser, he refused to repeat Fairbairn's words in any form. It would suffice that

"Like the branded Traitor who carries the mark of infamy on his own forehead, it has only to be perused to be at once reprobated<sup>2</sup>."

What Fairbairn's words actually were, few people on the frontier can have known.

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1. S.A.C.A. 21 January 1835.

2. G.T.J. 30 January 1835.

A great change came about in Fairbairn's attitude towards the war on the publication of the official information of 22 January. The Commercial Advertiser brought out a supplement containing a Government Notice from Lt.-Col. Smith at Head Quarters, dated 12 January. It stated that Martial Law had been proclaimed in Graham's Town<sup>1</sup> and a corps of Volunteers established. Smith reported great activity on many sides, and his announcement that the chief Eno's kraal had been destroyed, and that the kraals of Tyalis and Macomo were to be attacked, made Fairbairn's construction of the situation look ridiculous. Further Smith reported that about 400 Xhosa had been killed, and this would mean that half of the total number estimated to be involved in the war, had been killed. None of the reports published by any source during this period claimed anything like half of the number of Xhosa killed at any one time.

A notice from Col. Bell in the Government Gazette on 23 January confirmed Smith's report.

Fairbairn's reaction was complex. In the Commercial Advertiser of 24 January he admitted that all the Gaika chiefs seemed to be involved. He praised the actions of the military but at once pointed out that their task was an easy one: "Formidable as freebooters and ravagers, the Caffers as an enemy are contemptible." He also tried to exonerate himself from blame for his false reports by protesting that there was "no certain information" about the number of Xhosa who had actually entered the Colony. Neither the Graham's Town Journal nor letters from the frontier which he had been shown by various people, could be relied on because they reported only rumours. Finally, Fairbairn tried to avoid making an apology by explaining that his reports had not been favourable to the men of the frontier because he wanted to stir them to greater efforts. This is, incidentally, an admission that he was capable of using the truth merely as an instrument for some purpose of his own.

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1. This was proclaimed in Albany on 6 January.

It was in the following issue, that of 28 January, that Fairbairn published the two manifestos and his reply to them. Here too he made an apology for his article of 21 January against which there had been a public outcry.

"The Editor of the Commercial Advertiser having learned with some surprise, and deep regret, that his remarks in last Wednesday's Paper on the state of the War at its commencement, and on the mistakes committed somewhere in the operations for repelling the enemy in the first instance, have been entirely misunderstood by a large portion of the Public, - appeals respectfully to the candour and upright feeling of his fellow men, for a deliberate and fair construction of his writings.

They will then discover that, - so far from INTENTIONALLY hurting the feelings of any living man, - he has laboured from the commencement of the present unhappy war, to encourage, to confirm, and combine all the Colonists in the common defence."

He promised to show "proofs" of his good intentions in his future articles.

It was his readers in the western districts that Fairbairn was trying to placate by this apology. It was printed one week after the contentious statements of 21 January, much too early for comments from the frontier to have reached Fairbairn. The Journal's comment was dated 30 January. It is possible that the second manifesto, composed on 26 January, was solicited by Fairbairn to reassure advertisers in his newspaper. The hostile manifesto published by the Journal in February<sup>1</sup> was compiled just after this<sup>2</sup> and it refers explicitly to the Advertiser of 21 January. In sum, Fairbairn had gone too far even for Cape Town opinion on the frontier.

During the months February to May 1835 there was little divergence on points of fact between the Commercial Advertiser and the Graham's Town Journal. Information was supplied more regularly by official sources, and Fairbairn was more willing to endorse the reports contained in the Journal. The feud between personalities continued and in Godlonton's eyes Fairbairn was consistently the

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1. See above, p.56.

2. G.T.J. 13 February 1835.

"self-sufficient" editor, full of "personal rancour" against the Colonists on the Frontier, the publisher of "silly puerilities and malicious innuendoes".

Certainly Fairbairn continued to attack Godlonton personally<sup>1</sup> and two of the clergymen who had signed the "advertisement", the Methodist Haddy<sup>2</sup> and the Acting Colonial Chaplain Heavyside of Graham's Town. He tried to intimidate Heavyside by threatening to report him to his superiors for meddling in politics. Heavyside remained firm<sup>3</sup>.

Fairbairn went so far as to imply that the vast majority of the people in Albany were his enemies. He declared ponderously that there were still a few "good men" in Albany who were the "Salt of the District". For their sakes the charity of the people in the western districts should not be abated<sup>4</sup>. His bitterness must have been extreme at the losses his newspaper was suffering. There is unfortunately no record of a fall-off in sales, and no extant correspondence mentions it.

On the whole Fairbairn kept his mind on the overriding problem of the security of the frontier. There never could be real security while the colonial side of the boundary was so thinly populated, while

"the surface of the country we have to protect exhibits more than one square mile to every two inhabitants - that is, to every male creature from the babe of yesterday to the infirm ancient who feels his staff a burden!<sup>5</sup>"

The traditional pattern among farmers on the frontier was one of unlimited expansion, and this denied the Colonists the very stability which they craved.

Godlonton agreed on this point. Although it was only justice to expel the warring Xhosa and extend the boundary of the Colony, it was not desirable because it would "spread the inhabitants

1. e.g. G.T.J. 27 February 1835.

2. S.A.C.A. 14 February 1835.

3. Heavyside to Fairbairn 27 February 1835. Philip Transcripts.

4. S.A.C.A. 21 February 1835.

5. S.A.C.A. 18 April 1835.

over a larger surface of the country, and remove them to a greater distance from the seat of government<sup>1</sup>."

Fairbairn was quite aware of the probability of the Gaikas, or at least those involved in the war, being expelled from the Neutral Territory and perhaps from more of the territory they normally occupied. He was adamant in maintaining that this would not solve the frontier problem and would not be "Christian Politics". Britain's privilege was rather to right wrongs than to commit new ones:

"Extirpation, or the seizure of the lands, cattle, or persons of the people, Christian Politics no longer allow. Where we conquer we must preserve. Where we govern, Justice must preside.

In this view of the subject, the British Government is admitted into a glorious field of usefulness, and were they inclined to conquer mankind by heaping benefits upon them, and to wipe off, at a moderate expense, many an African stain from the national character, Europe through them might almost atone for the Slave trade and the depopulation of America, by adding the millions of this dismal continent to the family of civilised and free men<sup>2</sup>."

Fairbairn did not believe either that it would be any use to overthrow the Xhosa political authorities. The Commercial Advertiser was commenting on news received dated up to 24 April on the frontier, by which time Sir Benjamin D'Urban had begun an expedition to see Hintza<sup>3</sup>. To replace the authority of the chiefs with any other would be unwise:

"This opens a prospect of war, conquest, and dominion in South Africa, which stretches into future ages. The overthrow of Caffer authority, involves the establishment of our own over the whole of their country, and the birth of a system of relations with the nations beyond them, which it will require great force or great wisdom to sustain."

The colony had, maintained Fairbairn, with its bad frontier policy "converted a whole people into fierce and vindictive enemies<sup>4</sup>," by huddling them together on small tracts of land. Not enough attention had been given to spreading the "arts of peace" among them. A successful frontier policy depended on closer contact between the two peoples<sup>5</sup>. On a political plane this meant consultation between

1. G.T.J. 18 May 1835. Boyce, p. 4, supports this argument.

2. S.A.C.A. 16 May 1835.

3. Cory III p. 130. The expedition began from the Buffalo River on 11 April, and Hintza came in freely to parley on 29 April. Hintza died at the hands of a soldier on 11 May 1835, across the Kei.

4. S.A.C.A. 16 May 1835.

5. S.A.C.A. 11 March 1835.

two groups of authorities: those of the colonists and those of the Xhosa. On a cultural plane it meant imparting Western European education and values to the aborigines. The missionaries had been working to impart Western Education and values to the aborigines. They had begun to introduce "Religion, Knowledge and Virtue" into heathendom, and they should return to the Xhosa after the war and proceed rapidly with their labours.<sup>1</sup>

No "barbarous language" could convey "the Knowledge, Sentiments and Feelings which constitute Religion and Science", and a good knowledge of these was essential to living a good life. The practical thing to do, therefore, was to rapidly increase the number of schools in Kaffraria.<sup>2</sup> Fairbairn said this in favour of a speech on the subject made by Dr. Philip at a meeting of the Infant School Institution in Cape Town.

Such reliance on a broad plan of cultural penetration was unrealistic in the circumstances, as Kay had shown<sup>3</sup> and as was to be proved by many missionaries among the Xhosa before two decades had passed<sup>4</sup>. Macaulay<sup>5</sup> was hoping for the same sort of success in India when he said, that the native inhabitants should become "thoroughly good English scholars."<sup>6</sup> Fairbairn was sharing premises held widely in his day by philanthropists, romantics and radicals outside South Africa<sup>7</sup>. He overlooked the fact that there was no tradition of bookish education among the Xhosa, and the fact that the missionary thrust among them was as yet small and superficial.

1. S.A.C.A. 25 February 1835.
2. This suggestion astounded "An English Settler" and others on the frontier. G.T.J. 20 March 1835.
3. See above p.26.
4. See Williams Chap. IX.
5. T.B. Macaulay, 1800-1859, was a literary figure in England and as a member of the Supreme Council of India lived there from June 1834 to the beginning of 1838.
6. Macaulay's Minute on Education, 2 February 1835, quoted in Muir p.301.
7. See Madden pp. 8 and 26.

Certainly their efforts were not of such a nature as to affect the security of the frontier in the near future.

It is interesting to notice that in John Fairbairn's Memorandum, or Suggestions for the Advancement of Education at the Cape, dated 19 February 1838, he made no differentiation between the system of education required in the Colony and that required "among the Native Tribes connected with it and the British Nation by many important relations<sup>1</sup>."

Some comparison must be attempted at this stage between Fairbairn's position and that of Dr. Philip with regard to the frontier war. Philip's attitude has been described in detail by MacMillan<sup>2</sup>. He supported D'Urban in his campaign against the Xhosa from January to the end of May, when he heard of D'Urban's decision to expel the Xhosa tribes from the whole area between the Fish and the Kei Rivers. During this period D'Urban was, nevertheless, "on his trial" and in danger of being persuaded by the frontiersmen into taking revenge on the Xhosa by expelling them from their land. He was convinced that Settlers and Boers alike wanted the old Neutral Territory "for sheep farms<sup>3</sup>." It has been the practice of "English Governments" in the Cape for the last thirty years to confiscate Xhosa land, and D'Urban must steer clear of this.

Philip's position and Fairbairn's were indistinguishable when the former wrote that an advance of the colonial boundary was not desirable:

"since it may drive the Kafirs back into the more savage interior, from the frontier where they have been in contact with more humane standards<sup>4</sup>."

Furthermore, Philip wrote before Fairbairn<sup>5</sup>, and may have been the originator of Fairbairn's policy. Philip certainly implied as

1. Fairbairn is referring to the Glenelg or Stockenström Treaty System. See below, p.95 f.
2. MacMillan (1) pp. 138-141.
3. Philip to J. Read 13 February 1835. *ibid.* p.140.
4. Philip to Read 27 February 1835. *ibid.* p.141.
5. S.A.C.A. 11 March 1835.

much<sup>1</sup>. It is probably true that the pair worked closely together, but what each thought of the other's point of view cannot be told for lack of any references in correspondence which has survived. It is interesting that Godlonton's idea of the requirements of the situation, although based on different reasoning, come to the same thing<sup>2</sup>.

In conclusion, one may say that the outburst in the Journal on 2 January against the Commercial Advertiser was the result of panic and some misconstruction on the part of the frontiersmen gathered in Graham's Town. The form which their action took was probably guided by men who had been strong opponents of Fairbairn's before the war began, and Godlonton's later statements on this period add to this suspicion because they omit all mention of a political feud. Fairbairn's reports on the frontier war during the month of January do not do him credit as a Journalist, but the opposition he encountered in the Western as well as the Eastern Cape soon taught him the danger of relying on a preconceived corpus of knowledge in reporting on the war. He relied largely on official information, and reformed his concept of the war when that information showed that the situation was in fact involved and serious. After that there was little conflict over Fairbairn's reporting of points of fact. He and Godlonton came to agree, although for different reasons, that there should be no extension of the boundary of the Colony into Xhosa territory.

In May, however, D'Urban decided that the military Security of the Colony demanded the expulsion of the Xhosa from the territory for many miles around the Eastern Frontier of the Colony.

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1. MacMillan *ibid.* p.141.

2. See above p.73.

CHAPTER IV

THE D'URBAN SETTLEMENTS AND THE STOCKENSTROM TREATIES - FAIRBAIRN'S  
SUPPORT FOR THE INDEPENDANCE OF THE CHIEFS

Fairbairn's shock and distress at the Governor's proclamation of 10 May that the warring tribes were to be expelled from their land, gave way to a hearty acceptance of the treaty of 17 September with the Khosa. The Gaikas and Ndhlabhis were allowed to remain on their land under the supervision of the Colonial authorities. Fairbairn's support for D'Urban's new arrangements, as administered by Lt.-Col. Smith, continued to the end but an under-current of dissent developed as he became aware of the restiveness of the chiefs under Smith's control. His attitude is strikingly similar to Stockenstrom's, but no connection can be found. Fairbairn joyfully welcomed Stockenstrom to the colony in July 1836 as the Lt.-Governor of the Eastern Districts who had come to fulfil D'Urban's system. When Stockenstrom's policy was shown to depend on treating the chiefs as responsible for the conduct of their tribesmen, Fairbairn was completely in agreement. He regarded the Stockenstrom treaties of December 1836 as instituting a new era on the frontier.

D'Urban's policy for the settlement of the Frontier was announced on 10 May, while the war was yet in progress. He was to remove the hostile tribes far from any contact with the colonial boundaries. They had "justly forfeited" their land by invading a peaceful neighbour on no provocation and they were to be removed, not only from the old Neutral Territory which they had been allowed into on sufferance, but from the whole area between the old colonial boundary of 1819 and Hintza's territory across the Kei River. The area between the Fish and the Kei, inland as far as the Stormberg Mountains, was declared annexed to the Colony as the Province of Queen Adelaide. In the new province D'Urban would settle the tribes which had not taken up arms against the Colony, like the Gudukwebi group, and also some 17,000 Fingoes whom he had liberated

from "the most wretched slavery<sup>1</sup>" among the Gcalaka across the Kei.

In practice D'Urban almost immediately modified the sweeping terms of the Proclamation. Any tribesmen of the tribes under expulsion, the Gaikas and Ndhlabhis, who had not themselves taken a part in the invasion of the Colony and who abjured their guilty chiefs, could also settle in Queen Adelaide. Each tribe or group of individuals who had forsaken their chiefs was to be settled in a clearly defined area in such a way that there was land left for "British locations" in the new province<sup>2</sup>.

So the whole nature of the colonial boundary was to be changed. Instead of a line between black and white it was to become a whole province with so many cushions of friendly tribes and British settlers separating the frontier colonists from those who had attacked them.

D'Urban found subsequently to 10 May that he was not able to expel the warring tribes from Queen Adelaide, and he made little progress in separating the sheep from the goats within those tribes. In fact, he found it necessary to conclude a different sort of peace settlement with the Gaikas and Ndhlabhis<sup>3</sup>, and after some negotiation a peace treaty was signed on 17 September which brought an end to the deadlock which had been the result of the May project.

By the treaty of 17 September 1835<sup>4</sup> D'Urban allowed the tribes to remain in the Province of Queen Adelaide and endeavoured to render them harmless there. They were to cease hostilities and give up their muskets and also to subject themselves to regulation of their living space and the framework and even the spirit of their society. As D'Urban wrote to the Secretary of State, Lord Glenelg<sup>5</sup>,

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1. Galbraith p.114.

2. MacMillan (1) p.151, quoting D'Urban to Smith 21 August 1835.

3. MacMillan (1) p.154.

4. Treaties with Native Chiefs p.24.

5. Charles Grant, 1778-1866, (created Lord Glenelg in May 1835), was Secretary of State for War and the Colonies from 18 April 1835 to 19 February 1839.

"It was indeed high time to devise and adopt some new measures at the conclusion of this Kaffir war, differing in character from those pursued after all former ones; since these had invariably ended in speedily replacing the security and order of the Border Districts in the same condition, (or perhaps a worse) as that in which they had found it<sup>1</sup>."

The provisions of the treaty made deep inroads into the Xhosa structure of political power. The chiefs and all their adherents must live in "submission to the general laws of the Colony", especially with regard to the "Maintenance of their rights, their property, their security and welfare." A British type of order like this meant that witchcraft could no longer be practised among the tribes. The chiefs and their representatives were "peremptorily forbidden" to deprive any man or woman of life or property for the "pretended offence of witchcraft." Apart from this stipulation and an injunction that the tribes should not molest the Fingoes, the treaty stated that no "English" laws would apply to "the domestic and internal regulations of their tribe and families, nor their customs."

The administration of justice was to depend on officials nominated by the Governor of the Cape Colony, superior magistrates to be Europeans as "agents for the government, to reside among, or near to, the locations" of the great chiefs; and inferior magistrates appointed from the tribes. The agents were to be controlled by a Chief Commissioner whose centre of government was to be in the heart of the Xhosa area, some fifty miles from the old border of the Colony, at King William's Town. Not English law but Martial Law was to be in force in the province, at least until the Xhosa people had been resettled on lands according to "a fair and adequate proportion ... of the population of each family."

These arrangements became known as the "D'Urban System" and remained in force from September 1835 until December 1836, when they were replaced by the Stockenstrom treaties. The full terms

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1. D'Urban to Glenelg 7 November 1835. D'Urban Corr.

of the treaty were never put into effect with regard to a new legal code, and Lt.-Col. Harry Smith had to administer Martial Law as Chief Commissioner.

D'Urban expected more of this system than he made public. He instructed Smith that "every silent and unseen effort must be made to divest [the Xhosa men] of their present attribute of soldiers<sup>1</sup>." This would be the result of undermining the powers of the chiefs and headmen by making some of them inferior magistrates, and to some extent by the settling of Colonists in the Xhosa area. For D'Urban was still in favour of this probe into Cafferland, and "large tracts are still left vacant for the occupation and speculations of Europeans<sup>2</sup>." Smith was, in fact, to preside over a cultural onslaught upon Xhosa mores and the Xhosa were to live subject to the forces of civilization in their own territory. As D'Urban expressed it,

"The system of clanship will be at once broken up, and its spirit and feeling will be rapidly subdued and forgotten, as the power of the chiefs shall be seen to have ceased and passed away<sup>3</sup>."

This would lead to the tribes being eventually "assimilated with the mass of the old Colonists."

In the September policy D'Urban modified his original conception of the new frontier, but the idea of the Xhosa, now including the recently belligerent tribes, acting as a cushion against other tribes in the interior, was still there. The warlikeness of the Xhosa would be dissolved by the application of civilization, and the Xhosa officials in the Province of Queen Adelaide were pledged to warn the Colonial authorities of any "foreign" incursions.

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1. D'Urban to Smith 29 September 1835. D'Urban Corr.
  2. Confidential Notes upon the Treaties, in Public Documents of Sir Benjamin D'Urban's Administration p.75.
  3. D'Urban to Bell, the Colonial Secretary in Cape Town. 25 September 1835. D'Urban Corr. Quoted in Majeke p.47.

The Graham's Town Journal came round after a period of doubt to a position which was favourable to the September treaty. MacMillan argues that the concessions which were made to the Xhosa put Godlonton against the treaty, and MacMillan quotes a statement in the Journal of 17 March 1836 to the effect that the editor had "never admired" the new treaty arrangements<sup>1</sup>. But the general trend of Godlonton's editorials is in support of the treaty.

Godlonton's chief complaint against the September treaty was that the chiefs were not sufficiently humbled or punished. The colonists had not been recompensed for their plundered property, and there now seemed little prospect of their ever being recompensed. But he wanted the colonists to support the new "experiment" in frontier policy, and he pointed out the probable alternative to the course which D'Urban had taken:

"Had [the Xhosa] on the other hand, been expelled from the country - allowing that it is practicable, and which is at present rather problematical - and forced to retire into the unoccupied country to the north-east, the natural and inevitable consequences would be that they would there immediately form themselves into bands of ferocious and, from their distance, unconquerable banditti. Living remote from the Colony, their plans would be concocted and matured with perfect secrecy, whilst the country from which they had been expelled would never be habitable by the colonial farmers, nor could it be protected by any military force that can ever be expected to be stationed in the colony<sup>2</sup>."

The importance of the first four lines of this quotation for the supercession of the May policy cannot be overemphasised. D'Urban reminded Smith in November that their campaign against Hintza could not have been conclusive if it had depended on fighting in Hintza's country<sup>3</sup>.

Godlonton went on to indicate the advisability of binding the Xhosa tribes on the edge of the Colony more closely under the control of the colonial authorities:

"On the other hand, by permitting these people to remain in that tract of country to which they are attached, while at the same time they are controlled by British law and placed under the ever wakeful surveillance of British authorities, you guard against the commission of crime; and this not merely by the arm of power, but by the potent and well-understood principle of self-interest. They will have something really

1. MacMillan (1) p.155.

2. G.T.J. 25 September 1835.

3. D'Urban to Smith 10 November 1835 D'Urban Corr.

valuable at stake, which they will be fully sensible may be forfeited by misconduct, or by an infraction of that engagement into which they have solemnly entered."

It is clear that Godlonton supported a contractual relationship between the Xhosa and the Colony. This extract supports Roxborough's conclusion that in the September treaty D'Urban "still looked to colonial defence, but now by keeping the Caffres where he could control them<sup>1</sup>."

Godlonton played down the desire among frontiersmen for some compensation in the form of land from the Xhosa. He allowed that the Xhosa possessed "twice the extent of territory" which they could usefully occupy, but stressed that the primary need of the Frontier was protection and security<sup>2</sup>. General opinion in Graham's Town and in the frontier areas was divided as to how security could best be found, but there was a vague feeling that it called for a repetition of the Albany Settlement in the Ceded or Neutral Territory. In other words, more land was needed to protect the land which the colonists already possessed<sup>3</sup>. Godlonton had learned the inadvisability of allowing Colonists to occupy scattered farms.

Security was in fact being attended to by Smith, and Godlonton, although he reported stock losses continually, was convinced by July 1836 that the system was working well and that the chiefs or magistrates were doing their utmost to suppress the criminal inclinations of their tribesmen<sup>4</sup>. This was at a time when Smith himself was reporting adversely on the functioning of the system<sup>5</sup>. It is clear enough that Godlonton supported the Governor's new system.

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1. Roxborough p.70.

2. G.T.J. 17 September 1835.

3. A.G. Bain's Military Journal, entry 17 June 1836. Bain p.177.

4. G.T.J. 21 July 1836.

5. Galbraith p.121.

Dr. Philip regarded D'Urban's September treaty as desirable "on conditions<sup>1</sup>". His reservations boiled down to an objection against having colonists in the Xhosa area. "Barbarous nations" could never "rise to civilization and independence" "in immediate contact with civilized nations<sup>2</sup>". But it was of prime importance that the government take "full responsibility and control by acknowledging the offending tribes as British subjects<sup>3</sup>". They must be governed, as it were, at one remove from the colony, and there is no doubt that the principle of the D'Urban system aimed at just that. Philip stressed that the September policy was an experiment, and that the best thing his friends and missionaries could do would be to let it work itself out<sup>4</sup>.

Fairbairn knew only the outline of D'Urban's treaty<sup>5</sup>. This he accepted joyfully and unconditionally:

"This treaty needs no comment. The terms generally are such as the Caffers at any time for six or seven years back, would have received with gratitude. Indeed, they are in substance what Macomo and several other Chiefs have repeatedly declared it to be their ardent wish and desire to obtain from the Colony, and which they are understood to have expected from the present Governor when they first heard of his intention to visit the Frontier. To grant terms best calculated to settle the Caffer Tribes, lays a Foundation for the security of the Frontier - and the only sure foundation..."

Harking back to his theme that contact was of great importance on the Frontier, Fairbairn said

"We felt confident that nothing was wanting to ensure a permanent peace but a personal interview between the present Governor and the Chiefs - and particularly Macomo. This would have stopped the war at any stage since the 23d of December. Macomo never desired any thing unreasonable; and it was not for the interest of the Colony to impose hard terms upon him."

Fairbairn then widened the perspective. He said there was now the prospect of an intelligible system of relations with all the native tribes on the colonial boundaries. He was most enthusiastic and claimed that "the Plan now adopted had been

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1. MacMillan (1) p.167.
  2. Philip to the younger James Read, 19 October 1835. Quoted in MacMillan (1) p.165.
  3. *ibid* p.165.
  4. Philip to Read *ibid.* p.166.
  5. He published the official documents of peace.

recommended and advocated at all times by us in this Paper<sup>1</sup>." He saw it as of the same stuff as his own plan of February 1834, "in which the best principles are recognized, and in which what is amiss is capable of an easy remedy<sup>2</sup>." Nevertheless he warned that much depended on the character of the administrators of the new system.

A regularised contact had been established and Fairbairn was not too concerned with the details of the treaty. He likened it to the D'Urban - Waterboer treaty of December 1834<sup>3</sup>. There is some similarity. Both treaties set up a framework of control whereby European agents, be they missionaries or officials, were planted in tribal society to control relations across the boundary, and they both encouraged the various chiefs to report to the officials on matters likely to affect the peace<sup>4</sup>. But Griqua society was not like Xhosa society, and it took Fairbairn another twelve years really to appreciate this<sup>5</sup>. There had been no missionary on the Eastern Frontier who could mould whole tribes of the Xhosa as missionaries of the London Society had attempted to mould Griqua tribes<sup>6</sup>. The Griqua lacked the social cohesion and independence of the Xhosa, and the treaty terms themselves show that the Xhosa were to be subject to far more control than were the Griqua.

The treaty was in the best interests of both the colonists and the Xhosa. It would increase the opportunities for civilizing the tribesmen and "We should, therefore, give them the full advantage of our great power and superior knowledge<sup>7</sup>." Here was an opening for more intensive education for the Xhosa, as Fairbairn had recommended during the war<sup>8</sup>, and now it was so much

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1. S.A.C.A. 3 October 1835.

2. S.A.C.A. 7 October 1835.

3. See above, p. 36, for a comparison with Dr. Smith's "treaties".

4. MacMillan (1) p.69 and n.

5. See below, p. 120.

6. Marais chap. II.

7. S.A.C.A. 7 October 1835.

8. See above, p. 74.

easier because they had been "admitted to all the privileges of British subjects."

Fairbairn regarded the D'Urban system favourably throughout the time it was applied to the Province of Queen Adelaide by Smith. A good indication of this is his attitude towards the incidence of stock losses. Although he admitted that his own sources of information were not very regular<sup>1</sup>, he insisted that there were relatively few cattle and horses stolen during the period September 1835 to July 1836. Godlonton was in agreement with this, but Fairbairn discounted and tried to disprove the Journal reports of thefts, wherever he could. Fairbairn may or may not have received information from C.L. Stretch, who had been appointed Agent with the Gaikas, and Hougham Hudson, the new Agent-General, as to stock losses. Fairbairn knew both of these men, the latter through Dr. Philip, and Stretch, certainly, wrote frequently to Fairbairn<sup>2</sup>. It is unlikely that Fairbairn's reports on stock losses were influenced by these men, however, as the official records of stock losses which they compiled showed an unprecedentedly high number of thefts between February and September 1836<sup>3</sup>. When Stockenstrom arrived as Lt.-Governor in the second half of 1836, he found that "the Fingoes and Kaffirs since they have become British subjects plunder worse than ever they did before the war<sup>4</sup>."

Fairbairn also came out in favour of Smith's methods of dealing with the Xhosa chiefs. He had himself recommended frequent consultation with the Xhosa authorities, and Smith did this. Fairbairn applauded, even though it meant a good deal of imposition on them of Smith's powerful personality. After one of Smith's meetings with all the chiefs at King William's Town on 7 January 1836,

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1. S.A.C.A. 26 December 1835.

2. MacMillan (1) p.168 n<sup>I</sup>.

3. Crankshaw p.91.

4. Quoted in Smuts p.81.

the Advertiser commented:

"The new system, we are happy to say, is working in the hands of Col. Smith, in a manner satisfactory beyond expectation. This is the proof so long wanted, that the practice of taking the land without the people, was not so good as that of admitting the people with their lands into the Colony<sup>1</sup>."

In spite of this overall support for D'Urban's experiment, neither the Advertiser nor the Journal were in complete agreement with it. Godlonton thought that there should be more rapid cultural and political penetration of the Xhosa society<sup>2</sup>, and Fairbairn thought that political penetration should be reduced to a minimum. Fairbairn had not been aware of the covert importance of D'Urban's system for the Xhosa authorities, and when he discovered this he began picking his way back to a position which was very like Stockenström's: the fabric of Xhosa society should not be touched.

A matter of days after Fairbairn's reception of the September treaty he lamented that the extension of the Colonial boundary had been by conquest and not by negotiation. He had long anticipated the "ultimate union of Cafferland with this Colony", but that should have been done gradually. The first step should have been to make the chiefs allies, and then they should have become "Stipendiaries" and finally subjects. Under peaceful conditions the Xhosa should have been ready to be united with the colony in twenty or thirty years. Now that the sword had been drawn, however, rule by the sword must continue. Colonial authorities should "take none of the Caffer Territory from the Caffer people<sup>3</sup>."

Only two weeks later the Advertiser noticed reports of addresses to the Governor respecting "the non-existence of any right in the Caffers to the land of their ancestors." Many colonists were applying for land in the heart of Xhosa territory, and Fairbairn demanded that government should at once disavow such "piratical doctrines"<sup>4</sup>.

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1. S.A.C.A. 16 January 1836.

2. G.T.J. 14 January 1836.

3. S.A.C.A. 10 October 1835.

4. S.A.C.A. 31 October 1835.

As it happened the issue did not materialise. The Governor knew he could do nothing so final as to grant lands until the treaty had been ratified at least by the Cape Government<sup>1</sup>. By January 1836 it was obvious to the commissioners who were settling the Gaiikas that they needed much more land than had been so far allowed them. Stretch wrote to Fairbairn that the commissioners had recommended that land be given them according to their needs, and in February D'Urban himself enlarged their locations after a census had shown them to be "more numerous than he thought"<sup>2</sup>. In the end only a narrow strip between the Buffalo and the Nahoon Rivers was retained for settlement and free communication between King William's Town and the sea<sup>3</sup>.

The land issue illustrates significantly that, as Fairbairn had required, an intelligible and workable system of relations had been created on the frontier in which "what is amiss is capable of an easy remedy"<sup>4</sup>.

Fairbairn, like Philip and Godlonton, soon regarded D'Urban's system as an experiment. This became clear when he heard of a possible enlargement of the scope of the system. A report came to Fairbairn's notice that the Governor was willing to accede to a request by the Thembu chief Mapassa for his tribe to become British subjects and to have their land added to the Colony<sup>5</sup>. Mapassa had been a neutral in the recent war, and had not been mentioned in the September settlement. While Fairbairn accepted that a treaty was the best way of concluding an agreement with a chief, he did not think this treaty should have been made at all:

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1. D'Urban Corr. September 1835 to January 1836 passim.
  2. MacMillan (1) p.168.
  3. Theal Vol. II p.126.
  4. S.A.C.A. 7 October 1835.
  5. S.A.C.A. 19 and 26 December 1835.

"Has the Governor of this Colony the power of extending the Colony at pleasure, and of carrying the boundary line over the heads of peaceful and unoffending tribes? If he has such power, the sooner it is taken away from him the better..."

and he ended in a superior way that "We shall probably hear from England by and bye, what we are doing at the Cape<sup>1</sup>."

Fairbairn must have known, in spite of his disclaimers against any contact with the London Missionary Society<sup>2</sup>, of Philip's efforts in conjunction with Fowell Buxton to persuade the British Government towards a change in colonial policy at the Cape<sup>3</sup>. He shared with Philip the idea that no land should be taken from the Xhosa for settlement by the Colonists, and he was convinced that the action of Buxton and the revelations of the Committee on Aborigines, would achieve something.

The Committee on Aborigines Fairbairn expected would bring to the management of colonial affairs the blessings that the great Reform Act of 1832 had brought to the conduct of British internal affairs. As a result of the investigations of the Committee matters would surely be changed by London and

"both Colonists and Caffers may expect with confidence what has been so much spoken of lately - "Redress for the Past, and Security for the Future"<sup>4</sup>."

The source of this redress and security was where Pringle had expected to find it - in parliament. And as Fairbairn was to say soon after when he heard that London had taken action in Cape affairs, "The Reform in Parliament has Reformed the World"<sup>5</sup>."

The undercurrent, of Fairbairn's dissatisfaction with the D'Urban-Smith system, grew and soon took the form of criticism of the subversion of the authority of the Xhosa chiefs and the subversion of Xhosa culture. On 23 January 1836 Fairbairn opined

1. S.A.C.A. 19 December 1835. The Governor did not have this power Galbraith p.123.

2. See above p.48.

3. See MacMillan (1) 161 f.

4. S.A.C.A. 2 December 1835. Fairbairn's emphasis.

5. S.A.C.A. 16 July 1836.

that the Xhosa would soon resent their subjection and a "reaction will be constantly taking place in their minds in favour of ancient customs, and ancient independence." This opinion was not in the Philip mould, and in the following month Fairbairn showed that his ideas of civilizing and converting the Xhosa did not agree with certain missionary ideas. The issue was witchcraft.

In October 1835 Fairbairn had made no comment on the treaty provisions with regard to witchcraft. Then in February the "... bainful custom of witchcraft"<sup>1</sup> was denounced by Capt. Fawcett, the Indian soldier - missionary who was a friend of both Philip and Fairbairn. Fairbairn countered his friend's denunciation in two ways: directly in his editorial, and by publishing selected extracts from the histories of Britain and America to show that witchcraft had been practised in these civilised countries until very recently. He said that witchcraft was the only factor which kept the Xhosa from a thoroughgoing heathenism; it was obviously inferior to Christianity, but rather than endeavour to stamp out witchcraft, the government should encourage teachers and missionaries in their efforts to substitute Christianity for witchcraft. In this connection he wrote later that "Direct attacks harden men in error"<sup>2</sup>.

Fairbairn wrote to Dr. Philip in March 1836 that the D'Urban system should be modified in the direction of treating the chiefs of tribes surrounding the colony as allies. He regarded relations with these chiefs as "foreign affairs" and thought that the Governor should be supplied with a strong military force to protect these allies<sup>3</sup>. Soon after this and before he heard of the appointment of a Lt.-Governor, Fairbairn stated in the Commercial Advertiser that he looked forward to a time when an "effective system of defence and police will be established on the Frontier"<sup>4</sup>.

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1. S.A.C.A. 13 February 1836.

2. S.A.C.A. 16 April 1836.

3. Fairbairn to Philip 28 March 1836, quoted in MacMillan (2) p.258.

4. S.A.C.A. 16 April 1836. My emphasis.

It cannot be said from these remarks that Fairbairn formulated a clear policy with regard to the need to take off the shackles from the chiefs and to reduce the official attack on Xhosa customs, but his opinion is distinct from Philip's. Philip was in Cape Town, prior to leaving for England to appear before the Committee on Aborigines when Fairbairn said that the Xhosa would react against their subjection, but there is no evidence that Philip shared such an opinion. It was before the Committee that Philip came out in favour of maintaining British sovereignty over the neighbouring tribes<sup>1</sup>.

The trend of Fairbairn's ideas was rather like that of Stockenstrom<sup>2</sup>, and it is interesting that the Advertiser carried a letter about this time which defended Stockenstrom. The gist of the attack mounted against the ex-Commissioner General in the Eastern Districts was that Stockenstrom's opinions as given to the Committee on Aborigines were not at all like those he held during his Commissioner Generalship. The implication was that Stockenstrom had adopted a pro-Xhosa attitude under pressure from the Philanthropists<sup>3</sup>. Observer had proudly displayed, during the year<sup>4</sup>, Stockenstrom's recorded opinions in favour of the colonists, but after the publication of Stockenstrom's evidence had called him an "Apostate"<sup>5</sup>. The letter in the Advertiser defended Stockenstrom's consistency of attitude<sup>6</sup>. From the time he became Commissioner General and came into close contact with the Xhosa:

"Captain Stockenstrom did what all the other authorities should have done, that is, he gave the Caffers an opportunity of stating their grievances, and entered into the details of every case that came before him, and thus he became acquainted with the real state of things<sup>7</sup>."

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1. 536 of 1836 p.693.
  2. See above p. 21.
  3. Urie pp 16 and 19.
  4. Observer in G.T.J. 22 May, 26 July and 10 August 1835.
  5. Observer in G.T.J. 17 December 1835. See also the opinions expressed at a public meeting in Graham's Town on 24 January 1836.
  6. Urie p.310 f. proves this consistency.
  7. A Friend to Capt. Stockenstrom in S.A.C.A. 13 January 1836.

The origin of this letter is uncertain, but it could easily have been written by Philip. MacMillan points out that Philip recommended that Stockenstrom be re-appointed to control the Xhosa frontier<sup>1</sup>, and the letter in the Advertiser could be seen as trying to clear Stockenstrom's name in case of his return to that position. Philip had written a year before that Stockenstrom would be the best man to assist D'Urban in carrying through a new system on the frontier<sup>2</sup>. It is probable therefore that Philip expected Stockenstrom to return to take charge of frontier affairs, and it cannot be claimed at this stage that Fairbairn was supporting the Stockenstrom ideas in opposition to Philip's policy. It is more likely that the two men shared an admiration for Stockenstrom and his work. Certainly Pringle had supported Stockenstrom as well<sup>3</sup>. But Philip wanted the Xhosa to remain under British control<sup>4</sup>.

There is no discoverable correspondence between Stockenstrom and either Pringle or Fairbairn at this time. Philip had died in <sup>PRINGLE</sup> 1834, so one possible indirect link between them had been removed. It is certain that Stockenstrom held Fairbairn and the Commercial Advertiser in high regard<sup>5</sup>.

Just at this time Stockenstrom was proposing to the Secretary of State that the Xhosa should be allowed to rule themselves<sup>6</sup>. Only by working through the social and political system of the Xhosa as it then existed could peace be secured and civilization promoted. There was nothing to be gained by taking direct control over the Xhosa for

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1. MacMillan (1) p.177.
  2. Roxborough p.120.
  3. See above p.31.
  4. MacMillan (1) p.183.
  5. Stockenstrom Vol. II p.7. Stockenstrom did think, however, that Fairbairn's conduct of January 1835 was most reprehensible.
  6. Stockenstrom to Glenelg 7 January 1836. Stockenstrom Vol. II p.31.

"The supercession of their authority by that of our magistrates, however desirable in many respects, will constantly remind them of their fall from independent power, and keep secretly smothering in their bosoms, and that of their adherents, a discontent which cannot fail to break forth with destructive violence as soon as it gets vent<sup>1</sup>."

To invest the current generation of Xhosa chiefs with the office of British magistrate, as D'Urban had attempted, would be of no avail because they would not be able to administer British laws.

Fairbairn certainly defended Stockenstrom continuously against Godlonton's charge that he had added to "the depth of that prejudice which exists against us as a people<sup>2</sup>." Godlonton said that criticism of some of the settlers was tantamount to criticism of them all, but Fairbairn asserted that Stockenstrom, and Pringle and Saxe Bannister before him, had laid blame only on those "who by their foolish conduct have brought repeated wars upon the settlement<sup>3</sup>." He could not appreciate that the little society in Albany identified itself with the acts of the military authorities who protected it. Never in the Journal was the action of a military man censured if it was performed in the line of duty. Fairbairn had himself published, ten days before he made this comment<sup>4</sup>, Major Dundas' evidence before the Committee on Aborigines in which Dundas had identified himself with the colonists in blaming the Xhosa for the last war: "they have made war on us<sup>5</sup>". Fairbairn wanted to see reliable authorities on the frontier, of the calibre of Smith rather than that of Lt.-Col. Somerset, and it was inconceivable to him that the frontiersmen could defend the actions of Somerset, that bad administrator of a bad system. In vain Fairbairn pleaded for discretion:

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1. *ibid.* p.35.

2. G.T.J. 28 January 1836.

3. S.A.C.A. 30 January 1836.

4. S.A.C.A. 20 January 1836.

5. 538 of 1836 p.136 paragraph 1200. My emphasis.

"The Colonists had no more concern in the "Frontier System", which brought so many woes to the people, and sent before their time so many souls of Heroes to Pluto, as Homer says, than they had in the late earthquake ... But the Graham's Town Faction, it appears, wish the Colonists to take the odium upon their broad shoulders<sup>1</sup>."

His defence of Stockenstrom did not help to endear the future Lt.-Governor to the people he was to govern.

Stockenstrom was appointed by Glenelg to be Lt.-Governor of the Eastern Districts of the Cape Colony and his appointment was gazetted on 2 February 1836. Fairbairn heard of this on 20 April and was very pleased. It was a good thing that Glenelg had chosen

"A gentleman, a Native of the Colony, so well qualified by his abilities, experience, local knowledge and liberal principles, to discharge the important duties attached to his post, beneficially to the country, and honourably to himself, as Capt. Stockenstrom<sup>2</sup>."

There were immediate petitions from the Eastern Districts that Stockenstrom be not allowed to take up his appointment<sup>3</sup>, and Fairbairn became so outspoken against men like J.C. Chase and Donald Moodie who were attempting his "life and honour"<sup>4</sup> that he brought a libel case upon himself<sup>5</sup>.

Stockenstrom arrived in Table Bay early in July 1836 but his ship was quarantined for nearly three weeks owing to the presence of smallpox on board. Fairbairn did not wait for him to land to send him correspondence concerning the frontier, some of which was from C.L. Stretch. A letter from Mrs. Fairbairn to her sister Mrs. G. Christie in London says that

"Mr. F. sent him [Stockenstrom] some of Stretch's letters with copies Stretch had sent of Somerset's and Smith's letter, to give him some idea of the state of things<sup>6</sup>."

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1. S.A.C.A. 30 January 1836. Fairbairn's emphasis.
  2. Fairbairn's emphasis. D'Urban had no official intimation of Stockenstrom's appointment until later. Cory III p.310.
  3. Cory III pp. 311 and 312.
  4. S.A.C.A. 6 July 1836.
  5. See Report of the Trial Moodie vs. Fairbairn.
  6. Eliza Fairbairn to Mrs. Christie, 16 July 1836. Foulger Corr.

Stockenstrom landed on 23 July and Fairbairn wrote in the Advertiser that the Lt.-Governor's task was to complete D'Urban's "New Arrangements" for the frontier by capitalizing on the achievements of Smith in Queen Adelaide. Fairbairn paid a handsome tribute to Smith's administration:

"By Justice, by Civility, by manifest goodwill, and by checking every growing mischief in the bud - not to mention occasional flashes of wrath which also have their uses - he has tranquillized a half-conquered people and gained a certain degree of ascendancy over the minds of the Caffers, which his successors may turn to advantage<sup>1</sup>."

There is some difficulty in understanding how Smith's "ascendancy over the minds of the Caffers" could be consistent with Stockenstrom's policy of treating the chiefs as politically independent. For Fairbairn's next issue contained these words on the Xhosa:

"With their Chiefs alone, in the Councils of their Old Men, can we with the slightest pretensions to political common sense, hold any political intercourse...Through the Chiefs alone can we in any degree control Cafferland."

Fairbairn did not fully understand the difficulties which Smith experienced in the administration of the Province of Queen Adelaide during the last few months of its existence<sup>2</sup>. This is perhaps not surprising for he seems to have received few details as to the shortcomings of the "New Arrangements." Stretch, probably his most active correspondent, was a supporter of the D'Urban system until Stockenstrom's arrival on the frontier as Lt.-Governor<sup>3</sup>. Stretch wrote to D'Urban in May that the Xhosa chiefs wished to remain under British rule. Evidently Fairbairn had not derived his opinion of January 1836<sup>4</sup> from Stretch.

In November 1836 the Parliamentary Papers containing the Glenelg Dispatch of 26 December 1835 to D'Urban<sup>5</sup>, arrived in the Colony. The dispatch showed everyone the shape which frontier

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1. S.A.C.A. 3 August 1836.

2. Galbraith, p.121, is particularly revealing as to Smith's lack of success.

3. Roxborough p.120.

4. See above p. 88-89.

5. 279 of 1836.

relations were to take. Fairbairn published specially the treaty system which Glenelg had outlined, and stated that it "summed up" the future "Frontier System"<sup>1</sup>. By this time D'Urban had revoked Martial Law in Queen Adelaide, and force was essential to his System as it then stood. He had also ordered the evacuation of the province.

Glenelg's stipulations were for the most part enshrined in Stockenstrom's treaties of December 1836 but they require some comment in their own right<sup>2</sup>. Glenelg regulated the Colonial side of the boundary whereas D'Urban had regulated the Xhosa side. The Lt.-Governor of the Eastern Districts was to supervise especially "the future relations between the Caffre tribes and the colonists," and he was to live within the colonial boundary. He was assisted by a "protector of the native tribes" who was to attempt to protect both sides of the frontier from aggressions, and to keep a careful record of all plunders and outrages.

Every cross-boundary contact must henceforth be made according to strict formulae which must be in accordance with the basic requirement which Glenelg stated: that the chiefs were responsible for their own particular tribes. It was the chiefs who would, in the final instance, make restitution for cattle which were clearly proved to enter their territory, and they would retrieve the cattle themselves or through their own authorities. As Glenelg put it, "we must look to the chiefs, and to them alone, and must no longer take upon ourselves to make reprisals upon the people." In this way there would be no possibility of any commando or patrol entering the Xhosa area.

Furthermore, the Great Fish River was to become the boundary beyond which no colonist, Hottentot or European, could live. This did not apply to the Hottentots of Kat River, however, who were to remain on their lands.

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1. S.A.C.A. 19 November 1836.

2. See appendix, 4.

A few days after Glenelg's Dispatch had become public Stockenström met the chiefs of the Gaika, Ndhlabi and Gunukwebi tribes. From 1 December till 5 December the authorities from both sides of the boundary discussed the terms of a treaty which Stockenström had compiled according to Glenelg's outline. On 5 December treaties, all similar, were concluded with the three families of tribes. They were agreed to

"after several preliminary discussions on various occasions, and the fullest explanations, by means of the official interpreter, Mr. Theophilus Shepstone, assisted by interpreters of the said chiefs' own choosing."

This was just the sort of negotiation Fairbairn had suggested in February 1834.<sup>1</sup>

Boundaries were marked and every conceivable contingency subjected to regulation. The rules governing recovery and restitution of stolen property were set out in great detail, and they applied equally to the Xhosa and to the colonists be freed from subjection to Britain.

x Fairbairn was not concerned with the details of the treaties. They were published with all their 29 articles on 9 June 1837, in the Government Gazette after being debated in the Executive Council for a period of over six months<sup>2</sup>. They then went down to the Legislative Council for discussion. Fairbairn hoped that there would be no attempt "to invade the principles of those Treaties<sup>3</sup>".

It is surprising how little Fairbairn cared for details. He saw the treaties as forming a firm foundation for peace on the frontier, and other things were after all secondary. With regard to thefts, laws could be easily enough drawn up to reduce them<sup>4</sup>. It did not affect the "principles" of the treaties that these laws

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1. See above p.42.

2. The Executive Council discussed the treaties on 16 and 31 December 1836, and 9 February, 13 March, 19 and 20 April and 1 June 1837. Executive Council Minutes.

3. S.A.C.A. 24 June 1837. Fairbairn's emphasis. See also S.A.C.A. 31 October 1840.

4. S.A.C.A. 12 December 1840.

were not drawn up. In any case, Fairbairn held by his analysis of the frontier situation. Total cessation of thefts could not be realised until

"the civilization of the Caffer people, and ... the filling up of the lands on both sides of the Fish River, with an industrious and dense population<sup>1</sup>," was realised.

Fairbairn regarded his watch on the frontier as virtually at an end. The old Commando System was no more, and he said, before the provisional ratification of the treaties, that

"We believe we shall have little to say in future of the New Frontier System established and administered by Captain Stockenstrom<sup>2</sup>."

But Fairbairn's support for the treaties survived Stockenstrom's departure for England in September 1838 and his dismissal from office in August 1839.

Fairbairn saw the abrogation of Stockenstrom's treaties by the Governor Sir Peregrine Maitland<sup>3</sup> in September 1844 as being of minor significance. The public in Graham's Town went wild with joy at the news of other treaties, and men like Stretch and the London Society Missionary Henry Calderwood were convinced that the whole relationship with the Xhosa had been changed in Maitland's new treaties<sup>4</sup>. There was even a good deal of co-ercion of the Gaikas by Maitland<sup>5</sup>. But Fairbairn said that the principles of the treaties had not been jeopardized. The Stockenstrom treaties, Fairbairn said,

"were founded on three principles or propositions:- First, that the Caffer tribes should enjoy national independence; second, that the territory from and beyond the Colonial boundary on that side should be guaranteed to them and remain inviolate; and, that all intercourse between the Caffers and British subjects should be regulated by written Treaties equally binding on both parties<sup>6</sup>,"

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1. S.A.C.A. 24 July 1844.
  2. S.A.C.A. 18 March 1837.
  3. Lieutenant-General Sir Peregrine Maitland, 1777-1854, Governor of the Cape from 18 March 1844 to 27 January 1847.
  4. Galbraith p.169 and Stretch Memorandum, in Crankshaw.
  5. Cory Vol. IV p.382.
  6. S.A.C.A. 5 October 1844.

and he praised Stockenström's ability to see clearly the major issues involved in the frontier problem.

The alternative to the operation of these three principles was war, said Fairbairn<sup>1</sup>. He regarded the conscience of the Cape Government as quite clear in case of an incursion by the Xhosa, and by 1844 ascribed the tranquil state of the tribesmen to

"the generous and upright conduct of Government towards the Caffers ever since the last war<sup>2</sup>."

Often the Advertiser omitted for weeks and sometimes months any reference to the Xhosa frontier. The Colony in general was entering an exciting era of development and there were many subjects like public works, and the Stamp Act, to discuss. Fairbairn was reasonably satisfied with the frontier. A framework had been created within which almost any contingency, except war, could be dealt.

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1. S.A.C.A. 3 July 1839, and 1 November 1837.  
2. S.A.C.A. 24 August 1844.

THE WAR OF THE AXE AND FAIRBAIRN'S CHANGE OF ATTITUDE

The War of the Axe was a war, for the most part, waged in Xhosa territory, and it involved, at some stage or other, all the Xhosa groups. The Gaikas, Ndhlabhis, Gunukwebis and even the Gcalekas were the enemies in a conflict which began sluggishly in April 1846, stumbled into the new year and only came to an end in December 1847.

The war took no-one by surprise. A "war party" had been noticed among the young bloods of the Xhosa, and especially the Gaika branch, for many months, and unrest on the Fish River frontier had resulted in meetings of worried colonists<sup>1</sup>.

Opinion, both at the Cape and in Britain, was almost universally that the Colony was fighting a just war<sup>2</sup>. Fairbairn himself regarded war as inevitable and even imperative before war was actually declared, because the Xhosa had broken the treaty relationship with the Colony.

Some people had expected the Commercial Advertiser to support the Xhosa cause through thick and thin, and they found it difficult to accept Fairbairn's condemnation of them. Probably the most virulent critic of Fairbairn's "volte face" was his antagonist and sometime correspondent J.C. Chase. Chase wrote during the war to Sir Benjamin D'Urban, who left the Cape, where he had been living as a private citizen, in April 1846<sup>3</sup>:

"Are you not astounded at the extraordinary change in Fairbairn's tone; at the outset of the war he seemed inclined to play off his old game, but at one moment he threw overboard all his tactics of 1835-36<sup>4</sup>. No thanks to him, I suppose he found the influence of his party was gone. He is very generally despised for this ratting, for which he has not been honest enough to offer an excuse<sup>5</sup>."

Godlonton also was surprised at Fairbairn's sudden swing away from a pro-Xhosa policy. He was amazed at the manner in which

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1. Cory Vol. IV p. 400 f.

2. MacMillan (1) p. 290 and Galbraith p. 174.

3. Theal (1) Vol. II p. 172.

4. See above, p. 55 f.

5. Chase to D'Urban, 1 July 1846 D'Urban Corr.

the Advertiser counselled ruthlessness towards the common foe, and thought that it would provoke the Xhosa to greater violence<sup>1</sup>. The relative position of the Advertiser and the Journal was the reverse of that of January 1835, as Godlonton saw it, and he relished the irony of the situation. Godlonton at once advised the authorities to be prudent, and gibed that Fairbairn,

"... in writing on the Kaffir question, indulges, as very sanguine persons are wont to do, in extremes; and hence is an unsafe authority on the subject on which he descants. .... He writes obviously for effect; he uses very poetical terms, but which are too flashy and turgid to possess in reality much force or substance. The change of his sentiments is much more startling than gratifying; it being obvious that the transition is too great and too sudden to be well considered... He has abandoned his pets - and truly it was high time, - and he now cuts them up root and branch; he treats them as though they were insensate inanimate images, and that the troops had only to hew them down, and scatter them to the winds of heaven - blotting out their very name from among the inhabitants of this section of Africa<sup>2</sup>."

In spite of this the Journal could not decide for some time what Fairbairn's new position was, and Godlonton hoped that sound principles, some of which Fairbairn had adopted, would make the Advertiser a more "informed witness" to events on the frontier.

In a later issue of the Journal there was a single echo of the cut and thrust of eleven years before, when Godlonton took Fairbairn to task for trying to prove that the Xhosa were a "paltry and insignificant enemy" by adverting to the small loss of life thitherto suffered by the colonists. Godlonton stated, consistently with his general position put so variously and often confusedly during the previous war, that

"the character of a war is not determined by the number of its slain, but by its consequences in reference to the non-combatants<sup>3</sup>."

Apart from such comments, the Journal had little to condemn in the editorial policy of the Commercial Advertiser in 1846 and 1847. By

1. *ibid.*

2. G.T.J. 9 May, 1846.

3. See below, p.106. Fairbairn agreed.

December, 1846, indeed, the two old antagonists were saying the same things<sup>1</sup>.

When one turns to the opinions of Fairbairn's friends, Chase's reference to the old "party" seems to have some point. Dr. Philip had nothing remarkable to say about the outbreak of the war, or even about its course<sup>2</sup>. Even those storm petrels, the Reads, had little to say and certainly did not make a public stir. Philip's daughter Mary Christie wrote to Mrs. Philip that lack of criticism was "so very strange"<sup>3</sup>, and one is left with the impression that probably H.E. Rutherfoord, Fairbairn's old friend and benefactor, expressed the opinion of most of the "Philanthropist" party of previous years when he wrote to a friend in England

"You will have heard of our Caffre war: it is very shocking for we must kill them by hundreds before we shall make them understand our power. They are tricky, dangerous fellows: the young men are all for war and began to think they could bully us<sup>4</sup>."

Stockenstrom's opinion at the outbreak of war has not been recorded, but he is quoted as saying in September that "The colony must be Kafirland or Kafirland the Colony<sup>5</sup>."

Later historians mention Fairbairn's position only cursorily. Theal acknowledges that Fairbairn wrote about the conflict in the "same spirit" as did the editors of other colonial newspapers<sup>6</sup>. Cory avoids all mention of the Advertiser during the War of the Axe, and MacMillan says that Fairbairn supported Maitland's policy<sup>7</sup>.

Fairbairn himself was quite clear as to why he condemned the Xhosa, at the drop of a hat as it were. The treaty between the Governor of the Cape and the Xhosa was rejected by the Xhosa, and this meant war. It is necessary to examine the nature of this breach

1. See below, p. 119.

2. MacMillan (1) p. 291.

3. *ibid.*

4. Rutherfoord to E. Smith, 30 April 1846. Rutherfoord Corr.

5. Bowker p. 247.

6. Theal (1) Vol. III p. 63.

7. MacMillan (1) p. 291.

of treaty against the backdrop of events on the frontier during the first quarter of 1846.

Sandilli, the great chief of the Gaikas, was notoriously the focus of Xhosa unrest. He was concerned in each of two war scares, the Block Drift crisis of January and the incident of the Axe in March which finally led to war.

On 13th January Sandilli personally plundered the store manned by Thomas McLachlan<sup>1</sup>. Sandilli was obliged as a chief to protect the persons and property of all colonial subjects in his territories<sup>2</sup>. The Block Drift crisis began only a few days later. Sandilli had, in his personal capacity, "informally"<sup>3</sup> agreed that the Governor should build a fortress on his land to inhibit cattle stealing by Sandilli's subjects. In January a military survey party appeared on Sandilli's land and began to cast about for the best situation for the new fort. Suddenly Sandilli demanded the withdrawal of the party, and when the frontier authorities remained adamant, the work had to be completed under the protection of an escort from Fort Beaufort<sup>4</sup>. Sandilli behaved so contumaciously that Col. Hare demanded his presence at a meeting on 29 January to explain his conduct.

Sandilli was accompanied by several thousand armed warriors. He explained that his young pakati (councillors) had demanded the expulsion of the surveying party. Sandilli had been condemned for this at a council of the Gaika chiefs which was held subsequently to the arrival of the British escort. The chiefs took their stand on the custom that it was not in the power of any chief to give away land which belonged to his tribe, at least on his own fiat. Lt.-Governor Hare was pacific, and admitted to Sandilli that he had been at fault in not making use of the proper channels. The meeting ended the incident but fear of war remained high in the Colony and among the Xhosa, and a week later the agent with the Gaikas, Stretch,

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1. 786 of 1846, p. 34-5. The Journal reported this incident rather late and stated incorrectly that the trader's name was Murray. G.T.J. Supplement 27 January 1846.

2. Treaty of 22 November 1844, Article II. 3. Walker p. 227.

4. Cory Vol. IV, p. 414.

reported that Sandilli and his household were "in the bush"<sup>1</sup>."

Maitland in Cape Town criticised Hare for letting slip an opportunity of humbling the young bloods among the Xhosa. Maitland was sure that an open rupture was imminent<sup>2</sup>, but he could see no sense in expelling the Gaikas from the territory between the Kat and the Keiskama. This had been stated to be on "loan" to them<sup>3</sup>. Apart from the treaty relationship which then existed, Maitland had no solution for the problem of frontier conflict. Even an extension of British authority over the area would be merely a

"barren and verbal extension of colonial law, for I do not think that we could practically do anything more under such circumstances, than we now can do by treaty, and it could not be effected without war"<sup>4</sup>."

Maitland, in common with the majority on the Executive Committee<sup>5</sup>, wished above all things to avoid a war and saw no remedy under the circumstances for a "modern degree of plunder"<sup>6</sup>.

During February and March depredations increased and the agents were greatly concerned. Extracts from their diaries show that there was general unrest among the Frontier tribes<sup>7</sup>. This was attributed partly, even by the Graham's Town Journal, to the famine conditions which prevailed on the frontier<sup>8</sup>. On 16 March, however, Stretch, who was himself so concerned that the treaty relationship should remain, reported the stealing of an axe from a shop in Fort Beaufort. The chief Tola had called on him

1. 786 of 1847, p.26.
2. Maitland to Stanley, 21 March 1846. 786 of 1847, p.27.
3. Treaty of 22 November 1844, clause 5.
4. Maitland to Stanley, 21 March 1846. 786 of 1847. p.27.
5. At a meeting of the Legislative Council on 7 October 1845 the Colonial Secretary, John Montagu, and the Attorney-General, William Porter, claimed that reports of depredations from the frontier were exaggerated and that there was no reason to fear a Xhosa invasion. Cory Vol. IV p.402.
6. Maitland to Stanley, 31 March 1846. 786 of 1847 p.90 ff.
7. Maitland to Stanley, 31 March 1846. 786 of 1846, p. 90.
8. G.T.J. 24 and 31 January 1846.

"to report the rescue of a Kafir prisoner from the escort of four Hottentots, who were conveying him from Ft. Beaufort to Graham's Town on a charge of theft. He had been accused by some of the residents of stealing an axe, - Tola states, "unjustly accused, and he was hurried off without inquiry;" - he had no passport, and when the party arrived at Dance Hooghte, the Kafirs belonging to the prisoner's kraal, armed, and released him. The Hottentot to whom he was handcuffed, was murdered, and one of the assailants shot<sup>1</sup>."

In sum, a party of aliens had entered the colony and murdered a colonial subject who was engaged on state business. All this could have been handled under the terms of the treaties and the matter settled according to some legal code, but the chief concerned, Tola, and his superiors, Botma and Sandilli, chose not to uphold the terms of the treaty or its methods.

The Agent-General, Major Smith<sup>2</sup>, advised the Lt.-Governor that no move be taken towards occupying the land of the chief Tola, whose subject the murdered man was, until his superiors, Botma and Sandilli, had had time to reply to the demand that they give up both the thief who had stolen the axe, and the murderer.

By 21 March it was clear that both Tola and Botma refused to take action to give up the wanted men<sup>3</sup>. The Lt.-Governor wrote to Maitland that war with the implicated chiefs was inevitable. This was not a simple matter because Sandilli also refused to take action, and war against the paramount would, Hare believed, involve the other chiefs of the Gaika group at least. The agents agreed with such an opinion. The information which came in from the agents was somewhat confused and Maclean, at Fort Peddie with the Gudukwebis, claimed, with no substantial proof, that Pato was "the chief instigator in the present hostile movement among the Kafirs<sup>4</sup>."

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1. Maitland to Stanley, 31 March 1846 786 of 1846, p.90.
  2. Fairbairn seems to have been acquainted with Major Smith, and there are letters in the Fairbairn Correspondence which show that there was at least correspondence between the two men.
  3. Maitland to Stanley, 31 March 1846 786 of 1846, p.90.
  4. *ibid.* p. 83.

A report in the Journal stated that Macomo was involved in the murder of the Hottentot. With no reliable information about the movement and plans of the various chiefs, Hare hesitated to act.

Maitland would not entertain the idea of a general war. Instead, the Lt.-Governor was to take a punitive expedition into Sandilli's territory. This happened on 11 April, with Hare still complaining of lack of information. As it turned out, neither the Gudukwebis nor the Thembu joined against the colony until after the Xhosa victory at Burn's Hill. By then the burning of Sandilli's huts had brought most of the Gaika chiefs out and Hare's punitive expedition was seen to be inadequate to cope with the eventuality which he had feared<sup>1</sup>. By 21 April it had become necessary to declare Martial Law throughout the Frontier Districts<sup>2</sup>.

The Commercial Advertiser supported to the hilt the treaty system until the issue of 28 March, 1846. Before that date Fairbairn maintained that bad faith on the part of the Xhosa could not be proven.

The Block Drift crisis Fairbairn handled sceptically and was justified by the result. The Frontier authorities, he said on 4 February, had placed themselves in a "false position" by not using the normal and well-known channels through which any negotiations must pass on the question of acquiring land from the Xhosa. It is difficult to discover if Fairbairn's comment derived from specific information. There is no evidence that he obtained the information from any of his friends on the frontier. The most likely origin of this report is Fairbairn's reconstruction of material contained in the Graham's Town Journal Supplement of 24 January, which said that there was "some doubt" as to whether Block Drift was within the Xhosa boundary, "and rumour says that the Chief, Sandilli, has declared he will resist by force of arms any attempt on the part of our government to occupy it." However that may be, Fairbairn made a good forecaste of what actually occurred:

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1. Walker, p. 228.

2. Cory, Vol. IV p. 436.

"Should it turn out, in the present instance, for example, that there has been a misunderstanding - that something important has been overlooked by the Resident Agent, or by the higher authorities, and that the jealousies and fears of the Caffer people have been excited by conduct on the part of the government which requires explanation, that explanation must be frankly tendered, and every effort consistent with honour, made to restore tranquillity<sup>1</sup>."

This had actually been done by the Lt.-Governor on 29 January.

The only alternative to Fairbairn's construction of the crisis, was he said, that the Gaikas had broken the treaties and war must follow. War with barbarians like the Xhosa was devastation, and not "confined to armies in the field", and if the Xhosa rejected the treaty relationship they should be crushed at once and

"it will become the duty of government to extinguish that independance which they cannot enjoy with safety to their neighbours, and to assume the Sovereignty of the Country<sup>2</sup>."

But for this to happen there must be no doubt that the Xhosa had broken the treaty relationship.

Ten days later Fairbairn reaffirmed this position. He was commenting on a letter in the Journal which accused Sandilli of inviting the Thembu to join him in an attack on the Colony<sup>3</sup>. The writer of the letter stated that an attack on Fort Beaufort was imminent and that the Xhosa had resolved to seize all the country east of Algoa Bay. Fairbairn said that if this was true Sandilli was treacherous and the authorities must not spare him. But first the authorities must thoroughly investigate the matter.

Subsequently it was shown that the allegation against Sandilli was substantially true. By the time that the next issue of the Advertiser appeared Fairbairn had a report of the meeting between the Lt-Governor and the chiefs, which the Frontier Times had carried. The Times had somehow obtained a report by Stretch on a decision by the Gaika chiefs in council that Sandilli had gone

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1. S.A.C.A. 4 February 1846.

2. ibid.

3. S.A.C.A. 14 February 1846 referring to G.T.J. 7 February 1846.

too far. Fairbairn summarised the information as follows:

Sandilli had

"insulted the British Resident, maltreated some of the British traders living under his protection, and made preparations for war. All this seems to be clearly proved. It is also extremely probable, that to the common Caffers, he represented that the movement of the Colonial Government was a wanton aggression, and that they must defend their country or lose it. It is also probable that he invited the Tambookies to join him in an attack upon the Colony, and was rapidly collecting his people for a desperate struggle. Such was the guilt of Sandilli, a mixture of folly, duplicity, and presumption."

But Sandilli had been remorseful. He had "humbled himself" before the Lt.-Governor, and was forgiven, whereafter Hare announced that there was no further cause for alarm on the Frontier. Fairbairn followed the Lt.-Governor in accepting the Chief's apology in settlement of the incident<sup>1</sup>.

Lt.-Governor Hare nevertheless recommended that the colonists form a militia-type organization for their defence against the "treacherous" Xhosa. Fairbairn supported Hare's suggestion but strongly objected to his calling the Xhosa treacherous<sup>2</sup>.

Fairbairn's position influenced the way he reported stock losses on the frontier until the end of March. There is, as Crankshaw points out, no fully acceptable account of losses<sup>3</sup>. The diary of the agent to the Gaikas, C.L. Stretch, shows that in March 1846 the recovery system was not working well, although Macomo, Botma and Tola were returning some cattle which had been traced to their territories<sup>4</sup>. It is unfortunate that there is no evidence of contact between Fairbairn and Stretch at this time, for Fairbairn noticed few cases where the terms of the treaty were not effective. On the other hand, Fairbairn took care to mention cases in which restitution of property was made according to the treaties. On 14 March he fixed on one such case and accused the frontier press

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1. S.A.C.A. 18 February 1846.
  2. S.A.C.A. 21 February 1846.
  3. Crankshaw Chap. IV.
  4. Crankshaw Diary p. 340-1.

of not having published the result. Godlonton's reply was to the effect that Fairbairn lacked perspective in frontier affairs and displayed "malice prepense" and "dishonesty of purpose"<sup>1</sup>."

The incident of the Axe was decisive in the reformulating of Fairbairn's views on the Treaty System. On 28 March the Commercial Advertiser stated that "a war with some portion of Cafferland, if not with portions of all its tribes", was "among the most probable calamities of this year." Fairbairn declared that

"the rescue of a prisoner accompanied with murder, in the colony, and the refusal of the chiefs Sandilli and Botma to surrender the perpetrators, - relieve the government from all theoretical difficulties. The war has begun, for these chiefs, by admitting the facts and refusing redress, virtually declare war."

The Xhosa chiefs had rejected all efforts on the part of the British authorities to apply

"every practicable scheme that promised to avert from them the doom that hangs over every savage race to which the civilised European becomes a neighbour."

An end must be made of diplomatic relations and force be resorted to, or as Stockenstrom would have said, "protocolling" must give way to "bayonetting"<sup>2</sup>.

The information on which Fairbairn based his change of policy was contained in the Graham's Town Journal of 21 March. This in turn depended on the official notice of the Civil Commissioner for Albany, Hougham Hudson.

The change of policy immediately brought Fairbairn to take a different view of some of the facts of the Frontier situation. Probably the most striking was his admission of the significance of the increasing number of outrages on colonial property. In the number in which he announced the Axe incident, that of 28 March, Fairbairn reviewed the facts of the previous month in a new perspective:

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1. G.T.J. 28 March 1846. Godlonton's emphasis.

2. Stockenstrom to Fairbairn, 25 September 1837. Fairbairn Corr.

"The numerous depredations, thefts, and insults committed by Caffers for some time back, and most audaciously within the last few weeks, prove that either the Chiefs and head men will not, or cannot, restrain their people<sup>1</sup>."

Fairbairn and Stockenstrom had based their whole Xhosa policy on the idea that the chiefs were the responsible authorities of Xhosa government. Fairbairn gave as much weight to information contained in the Journal report as he did to the official notice. The Journal report seems to be semi-official, by its tone, but Fairbairn was not interested in the relative value of the reports. It was clear enough that the Xhosa had rejected the offer of peaceful relations with the colonists. They had broken a contractual relationship which had been carefully constructed to their best advantage and he, Fairbairn, had no further use for such a relationship. So it was that when Sandilli on 4 November 1846 gave up the murderer and the thief who had sparked off the war<sup>2</sup>, Fairbairn had nothing to say.

During the course of the war there was a dearth of official, and even reliable, information about troop movements, battles and plans for the future pacification of the Frontier. Maitland was reluctant or unable to commit himself even to the Secretary of State<sup>3</sup>. Pottinger<sup>4</sup>, who became first High Commissioner of the Cape, with surveillance over affairs in the lands "adjacent or contiguous to" the borders of the Colony as well as over the Colony<sup>5</sup>, had little chance even to think of a broad policy of any sort for the states and tribes of Southern Africa. He was both soldier and diplomat but concentrated his attention on the conduct of the war. He was even less approachable than Maitland had been and did not entrust any news of his movements or plans to the press in the Colony.

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1. My emphasis.
  2. Verwey, p. 144.
  3. See 786 of 1847, p. 144.
  4. Maj.-General Sir Henry Eldred Pottinger, High Commissioner and Governor of the Cape Colony, 27 January - 1 December 1847.
  5. C.H.B.E. Vol.VIII p. 345.

Both the Graham's Town Journal and the Commercial Advertiser were scathing about this lack of information<sup>1</sup>. For instance, in the last month of 1846, when the whole colony was agog to hear of Maitland's settlement scheme and no word came, Fairbairn said wryly:

"He seems determined to let facts precede words, and the public will only become acquainted with his system as it develops before their eyes<sup>2</sup>."

Official information of two types was available during the twenty months of the war. Government Notices, Military Orders and reports from Head Quarters were issued periodically in the Government Gazette as in 1835. More precise and explicit material could be procured only in the form of published Parliamentary Papers of the Governor's dispatches to the Secretary of State, with their enclosures. Such papers were published in London in February 1847, covering the first part of the war. Fairbairn procured a copy of these papers in June 1847, and intermittently for the period of a month the Commercial Advertiser carried extracts from Maitland's dispatches to the Secretary of State.

Fairbairn's attitude towards private and other unofficial information was sceptical, as it had become during the previous war, after January 1835. When he began to publish in the columns of the Advertiser the outline of a history of the War of the Axe, he regarded only the military information, published officially, as authoritative. He excluded from his newspaper during the war all controversial material no matter what its source might be.

This can be gauged by an investigation of his use of correspondence which he received as editor of the Advertiser. The number of letters which has survived, whether in the original or in quotations or transcript form, is small<sup>3</sup>, but sufficient to illustrate the point. There is one from Kafir women in the Amatolas dated 14 May 1846, in the form of an affidavit bearing on the

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1. See G.T.J. 20 June and 19 December 1846, S.A.C.A. 25 July and 5 December 1846.

2. S.A.C.A. 5 December 1846.

3. They are all contained in the Philip Transcripts.

intentions of the Khosa<sup>1</sup>. Fairbairn evidently took no notice of it at all, at least not in the Commercial Advertiser. Another of 19 May by Old Colonist in Graham's Town is in the form of an article on the defence of Graham's Town<sup>2</sup>, and that does not find an echo in the Advertiser.

Most controversial was a letter from James Read to Fairbairn dated Eiland's Post 4 February 1847<sup>3</sup>. Read criticised Maitland for his conduct of the war, which was proving a curse to the Kat River Settlement, and he accused Maitland and the Colonial Secretary John Montague of prejudice against the settlement. Read complained that the Hottentot troops were badly done by and that the officers of the regular army seemed in no hurry to end the war. Furthermore, Macomo had been badly treated by the soldiers. Read expected this letter to Fairbairn to be published and sent a covering letter explaining that neither he nor the Hottentots were at all popular with Maitland. The letter was written, incidentally, after Maitland had left the frontier and was waiting in Port Elizabeth for a ship to take him to Cape Town<sup>4</sup>. Read's letter perhaps prodded Fairbairn to defend the Kar River Settlement in the broadest terms<sup>5</sup>. He criticised military procedures, but there are no allusions at all to persons. Had the Hottentots not been called off "for the defence of other parts of the line," said Fairbairn, they would in their own Settlement have "bid defiance to all the efforts of their savage neighbours". There was no material in Fairbairn's article which had not been published before.

Three letters from A.G. Campbell were written to Fairbairn on 19 and 27 February and on 23 November 1847<sup>6</sup>. The first concerned

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1. Philip Transcripts.

2. *ibid.*

3. *ibid.*

4. Cory Vol. VI p.514. Maitland left the Colony on 23 February 1847.

5. S.A.C.A. 13 February 1847.

6. Philip Transcripts.

a quarrel between Lt.-Col. Johnstone and Sir Andries Stockenstrom on the course of events during a meeting with Kreli on 21 August 1846. Fairbairn had come to a decision in this matter<sup>1</sup> and did not re-open discussion or even refer to it again as a result of Campbell's letter. The second letter commented on Frontier policy in general, but there is not sufficient information about it in the Philip Transcripts to allow one to identify its terms. The third letter strongly criticised the Governor, Sir Henry Pottinger, for having Sandilli surrender on the promise of terms and then not keeping his <sup>promise,</sup> and also for the way in which owners of commandeered property were treated. None of these letters influenced the Advertiser in any way. In fact, the only hint that can be gained from the Advertiser that Campbell wrote letters at all, is to be found in a quotation from a letter of his which appeared in the Graham's Town Journal, and that was not about Frontier affairs<sup>2</sup>.

Dr. Philip was still receiving letters from Read, Stretch and Stockenstrom<sup>3</sup>. Dr. Philip wrote to Fairbairn from Hankey, his mission station to the north-west of Port Elizabeth, on 12 July 1847<sup>4</sup>. Philip referred to a letter of Sir Poregrine Maitland<sup>5</sup>, in which Maitland disparaged the natives. Here again the Philip Transcripts are not definitive, but Philip's reply was like an echo from the past: he referred to the high opinions which so many travellers had of the natives. Furthermore, Philip enclosed evidence that the blame for the War of the Axe lay not wholly on the Xhosa side. The Xhosa, he said, might have acted more wisely than they had done, but on the other hand Napier and Maitland had committed gross errors in administering the treaties. There was no mention of Philip's letter in the Advertiser, which was far more concerned with the question of

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1. S.A.C.A. 12 December 1846. See below, p. 114.

2. S.A.C.A. 15 and 18 September 1847.

3. MacMillan (1) p. 294 n<sup>I</sup>.

4. Philip Transcripts.

5. Maitland left the Colony in February 1847.

a separate government for the Eastern Districts. It is a great pity that there is nowhere mention of how Fairbairn answered his father-in-law's letter.

From C.L. Stretch there is record of only one letter, and that undated. Stretch was in charge of a Hottentot and Xhosa Corps on the Frontier, and would have been a first-class source of information. He was dismissed from his post by Pottinger in March 1847 for being too liberal in distributing provisions to his men and for "tampering with the natives"<sup>1</sup>, but until then his great knowledge of Frontier affairs, and of the Gaikas especially, would have rendered him an ideal reporter. The one letter of his which survives in transcript is of no value because too cryptic.

No information seems to have been forthcoming from the missionaries who had worked among the Xhosa till the outbreak of war. They all left their stations before the end of April 1846. Kayser and Birt of the London Missionary Society were soon in Somerset district<sup>2</sup>, while Calderwood and others remained cooped up in Fort Armstrong until 8 May. After that Laing remained in the Kat River area<sup>3</sup>. In September 1846 Calderwood and Kayser of the London Society were negotiators in a military parley with the Xhosa chiefs on behalf of the Cape authorities<sup>4</sup>. Fairbairn's only notice of this took the form of reports reprinted from the Journal and the Frontier Times<sup>5</sup>.

Calderwood himself would have been a worthy correspondent. Late in 1846 he was appointed Commissioner to settle the "friendly" Gaikas and to implement Maitland's plans as they evolved<sup>6</sup>. He was an acquaintance at least of Fairbairn's, and was expected by some to succeed Dr. Philip as Superintendent of the London Society's missions<sup>7</sup>. Fairbairn appreciated Calderwood's potential value as

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1. Crankshaw p. 6. cf. Cory Vol. V p. 18.

2. Sibree pp. 28 and 43.

3. Laing p. 99.

4. Cory Vol. IV p. 500.

5. S.A.C.A. 14 October 1846.

6. S.A.C.A. 5 December 1846.

7. Crankshaw Diary p. 345.

a correspondent, as can be gauged from his use of Calderwood's letters which were published as enclosures in the Governor's dispatches in 1847<sup>1</sup>.

It cannot be said that Fairbairn had a system for collecting news as was the case at one time<sup>2</sup>. Certainly he did use information that was available from certain sources.

Fairbairn's caution in using private information was not extreme, and he did make use of letters from "highly trustworthy parties" on the frontier. This is especially so in the last quarter of 1846, when matters on the frontier seemed to be going awry. Fairbairn had shown his independence of government when he stated, about a month after Maitland had taken personal command of the British forces, that there was lacking a "single superior mind" on the frontier<sup>3</sup>. His opinions during October, November and December knock out Godlonton's gibe that the Advertiser was "a sort of demi-official organ<sup>4</sup>."

These opinions were built up around the actions of Stockenstrom. In the first place the quarrel between Stockenstrom and Lt.-Col. Johnstone flared up as a result of the Governor rejecting Stockenstrom's statement that he had concluded an agreement of friendship<sup>5</sup> with the chief Kreli, and had submitted only Johnstone's report on the meeting with the chief<sup>6</sup> to the Secretary of State in England. Stockenstrom claimed that Johnstone's report was wholly inaccurate and that a definite agreement had been made.

Fairbairn reserved judgement on this issue in spite of the fact that he was of old a partisan of Stockenstrom's. But his inclinations were clear in that he abstracted from the Frontier Times on 30 September and 28 October information favourable to Stockenstrom. Along with the report on 30 September Fairbairn stated that "a

1. 786 of 1847. See S.A.C.A. 5 June 1847. And see his letter to Philip of 18 January 1846 in MacMillan (1) p. 287 f.

2. See above, p. 85.

3. S.A.C.A. 3 June 1846. Maitland assumed command on 1 May.

4. G.T.J. 11 July 1846.

5. See Cory Vol. IV p. 482 ff. and MacMillan (1) p. 294.

6. See above, p. 112.

source on which we place reliance" said that there was no "unfriendly feeling" between Stockenstrom and the Governor about their difference.

A growing disgust on Fairbairn's part at the authorities' conduct of the war twined in with his cautious support of Stockenstrom. On 3 October Fairbairn used "private letters from highly trustworthy parties<sup>1</sup>" to say that the state of the colonial and British troops was very bad. They put the situation in an even more "gloomy light" than the Frontier Press. Still Fairbairn's conclusion is careful:

"After making every allowance for personal suffering, and, it may be, defective information, it is impossible to read the letters alluded to without feeling that despair and anarchy begins to prevail where a few months ago there was, amidst all their griefs, both zealous and hearty service and a ready obedience<sup>2</sup>."

This was a time when the burgher forces were being disbanded and sent to their homes, and the regulars bedevilled by drought. The Governor moved his Head Quarters nearer to the Colony and away from the Khosa in the Amatolas<sup>3</sup>.

Private letters again on 21 October enabled Fairbairn to say that provisions were very scarce and transport very expensive, when it could be obtained. The authorities were culpable to allow such a state of affairs to continue. It was false economy, Fairbairn said, to try to save a little money when it caused so much suffering. The Khosa had to be completely subdued for the sake of the people on the frontier<sup>4</sup>, and "if a million of money be required for this purpose, it must be found". It was unforgivable that such a situation be allowed to continue. Stockenstrom, Fairbairn said in the following issue of the Advertiser, was possessed of a "considerable force and a well replenished commissariat<sup>5</sup>." Stockenstrom resigned in frustration on 25 November.

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1. These could have been from Stockenstrom and Stretch. See MacMillan (1) p. 294 n<sup>I</sup>.
  2. S.A.C.A. 30 October 1846.
  3. 786 of 1847 pp. 153 and 181.
  4. See also S.A.C.A. 28 October and 4 and 7 November 1846. Fairbairn was not concerned with Calderwood's attempt, of which he wrote to Dr. Philip at this time, to persuade the Governor to allow the Gaikas to retain their land. MacMillan (1) p. 295.
  5. S.A.C.A. 24 October 1846.

Fairbairn brought the contrast between Stockenstrom and Maitland to a head in the Advertiser on 12 December, much to the Governor's disfavour:

"[Stockenstrom's] reputation is established, and so is the reputation of those whose conduct has made him retire in disgust. Nothing can raise the one higher or sink the other lower than they stand at present."

But, suspicious as ever of the frontier situation, Fairbairn said that perhaps the Governor had lost his "self-possession and integrity" amidst the rabble of trouble-makers.

With Fairbairn's attitude to the war defined, it is interesting to detail his attitude towards the Xhosa chiefs and people whom he had so long defended and now sought vengeance upon. This is best illustrated by Fairbairn's comments on Maitland's projected experiment in governing groups of Xhosa tribesmen without the agency of their chiefs, and on land which was not their own. Maitland's experiment was ended by order of Earl Grey, the Secretary of State, in January 1847, and so one's attention is fixed on the latter half of 1846.

Maitland's purpose was to break the political structure of the guilty tribes, as D'Urban had tried to do in his treaty of September 1835<sup>1</sup>. He wanted first to refuse to negotiate a settlement of hostilities with the chiefs: surrender would be allowed only to individual tribesmen. Secondly he wanted to impose on those who surrendered a different type of land settlement, where a unit was not a tribe but an individual.

In September 1846 Maitland thought he had "shattered the hostile tribes, and broken to pieces their organization as communities<sup>2</sup>." Now, in the land between the Colony and the Kei, which he was to call "British Kafirland", he set to work the missionaries Shaw and Calderwood<sup>3</sup>, to settle the Xhosa who had surrendered. Furthermore he said "I have distinctly informed the chiefs that no chieftainship shall hereafter be recognized.....<sup>4</sup>". Maitland proposed to maintain

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1. See above pp. 78f.

2. Maitland to Secretary of State Gladstone, 18 September 1846 786 of 1847 p. 175.

3. du Toit p. 28.

4. Maitland to Secretary of State Grey, 26 November 1846 786 of 1847

control through a system of British magistrates acting through a series of senior and junior headmen who could control population complexes of various sizes. Some of the "former chiefs and pakati" might be used as headmen. Later Maitland described this system as being that of retaining the chieftainship but divorcing it from heredity<sup>1</sup>.

He was faced with a situation in which he had no chiefly authority to act through and had left on his hands "probably some 50,000 robbers, against whose petty depredations and outrages we shall have to find security for the colony<sup>2</sup>." To render the colonial boundary safe, he would then have to expel the Gaikas from the old Neutral Territory and into this area, bounded by the Fish and the Kat River on the colonial side and by the Tyumie and the Keiskama on the east, he would introduce a thorough-going Hottentot population to serve as a buffer between black and white.

This was a reversal of Maitland's policy of March 1846<sup>3</sup>. He adopted a system closely resembling D'Urban's, based on a state of anarchy and policed through the agency of martial law. Cory correctly estimates this plan as "completely annulling all that remained of Stockenstrom's policy of 1836<sup>4</sup>."

Nearly a month before Maitland sketched his plan, Earl Grey had appointed Sir Henry Pottinger as Maitland's successor. Pottinger was also to be the first High Commissioner, with the task of keeping under surveillance all the neighbours of the Cape Colony<sup>5</sup>. Pottinger was instructed to incorporate the Xhosa tribes, with which the Colony was still at war, into a Sepoy army type of Organization, to defend the Colony against the tribes of the interior. This could

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1. 635 of 1851 p. 359 paragraph 2878.

2. Maitland to Grey, 26 November 1846 786 of 1847 p. 195.

3. See above p.103.

4. Cory Vol. IV p. 508. See also Verwey p. 152.

5. Walker p. 229.

only be done through the existing Xhosa political structure, and therefore the fabric of the Xhosa political society should not be touched. Grey did not know how far the power of the chiefs had waned already<sup>1</sup>.

Pottinger himself found Maitland's plan anarchic and "preposterous" on being confronted with the Frontier situation<sup>2</sup>. Pottinger's successor, Sir Harry Smith<sup>3</sup>, based his policy for the settlement of the tribes on the premise that the chiefs remain each "at the head of his own tribe"<sup>4</sup>.

Fairbairn had come in May 1846 to agree that all the Xhosa tribes west of the Kei were involved in hostilities with the Colony, with the exception of Stockwe's tribe. There was a good chance that the Thembu would join the enemy as well. It was necessary for the government to "add Cafferland to the dependencies of the Cape"<sup>5</sup>.

Fairbairn had believed at the beginning of the war that the Chiefs were culpable and the people not, because the chiefs had not kept the people informed of the good intentions of the colonial authorities towards them. In May he dropped this distinction in the face of circumstances. It was Stockwe's people, for instance, who were forcing their chief against his will to enter the war against the Colony.

Maitland's plan was broached by Lt.-Col. Johnstone at a meeting with the Xhosa chiefs Macomo, Sandilli, Botma and Tola<sup>6</sup>, on 30 September. Fairbairn reprinted a Frontier Times report on the meeting. It covered all the details of the Governor's new policy and Fairbairn commented that

1. Walker p. 225 and Hammond-Tooke passim.
2. Pottinger to Berkeley, in Pottinger to Grey 14 April 1847. 912 of 1847 p.51.
3. High Commissioner and Governor of the Cape 1 December 1847 - 31 March 1852.
4. S.A.C.A. 15 January 1847, reporting Smith at King William's Town, 7 January.
5. S.A.C.A. 9 May 1846.
6. Cory IV p. 500.

"It is perfectly just. The Caffers who continue hostile and, after the crimes they have committed, still assert independence, have forfeited all claim of forbearance. Such must be put down or expelled, though it should require ten thousand regular troops to accomplish it."

He did not differentiate between the chiefs and the people:

"both chiefs and people have to learn, that the effects of an unjust war are not to end with the termination of actual resistance in the field. They have forced the British government most reluctantly to declare, that not victory but conquest is to be the end of this outbreak<sup>1</sup>."

Two weeks later Fairbairn's words outlined Maitland's policy very well: the Xhosa must be made to feel that "they are no longer chiefs, no longer a people<sup>2</sup>".

Fairbairn's desire to see all the guilty Xhosa punished was more thorough-going than Godlonton's. Godlonton sought rather to wean the people from their chiefs, and he still regarded the chiefs as the originators of all the mischief which the Xhosa had wrought. On 5 December Godlonton published an official notice from Head Quarters which showed that thousands of cattle had been captured from the Xhosa in the previous two months, and that little opposition had been offered to the troops. He concluded that the war was virtually over and said that "a large proportion" of the Xhosa people wanted to accept the Governor's terms and would be grateful to be rid of the tyranny of their chiefs. This idea had been held by many missionaries<sup>3</sup>, and had been the basis of Lt.-Col. Smith's administration of the Province of Queen Adelaide. Neither Stockenstrom nor Fairbairn had been prepared to accept it.

Now Fairbairn went much further. Commenting on Godlonton's editorial of 5 December, and publishing the whole official notice from the Government Gazette of 17 December, Fairbairn said

"[The Governor] will not be satisfied with the submission of the Caffer chiefs. The work before him is more comprehensive. His purpose is to establish in the new territory a numerous population, under laws and with the institutions consistent with Justice and Freedom, restrained as well as protected by a well-distributed military force.

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1. S.A.C.A. 14 October 1846.
  2. S.A.C.A. 31 October 1846.
  3. Williams Chapter 9.

One thing, however, must be fully accomplished before the sword is sheathed:- the Caffers, Chiefs and people, must be made to feel that the Colony is too strong for them... With this view terms must be imposed upon them, not agreed upon, nor modified after consultation with them, or with any parties on their behalf."

They must be made "to feel at their throat the impartial sword of Justice."<sup>1</sup>

This is an explicit negation of any treaty relationship with the Xhosa. It is also almost exactly the policy of D'Urban and Smith after September 1835. There is the difference that whereas the D'Urban-Smith system was largely a matter of military necessity, Fairbairn supported Maitland's plan as a matter of principle. Also, Fairbairn did not want any white colonists among the new inhabitants of the Neutral Territory as D'Urban had wished<sup>2</sup> and Pringle suggested<sup>3</sup>. Fairbairn wanted the Xhosa separated from the white colonists, but no longer was he driven to desire this for the sake of allowing the Xhosa to develop their society to the stage where they would be able to enter a single South African civilization as an equal partner with the Cape Colonial culture. His sole aim was to keep separate the whites and the Xhosa.

Fairbairn saw Maitland's attempt to alter the nature of Xhosa society fail, and he concluded in April 1847 that

"In race, colour, language, customs [the Xhosa] differ as much [from the colonists] as any two varieties of the same species ever did or can do. To this difference is added a gloomy jealousy on the part of the natives, who have seen for generations the steady and irresistible progress of the white man towards the interior, not only as a master, but as sole proprietor of the country<sup>4</sup>."

Fairbairn had to admit that the Xhosa were even more independent than he had thought. Whereas the Hottentots within the Colony and even the Griqua on the northern borders had co-operated with their superiors in culture, the Xhosa were different:

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1. S.A.C.A. 19 December 1846.
  2. See above p. 80.
  3. See above p. 29.
  4. S.A.C.A. 24 April 1847.

"They have never been subdued and humbled like the former nor have they been mixed up with the Colonists like the Griquas in former times. Their pride of race, their pride as individuals, their unbroken organization under hereditary chiefs and leaders, are all formidable obstacles to the progress of what Europeans understand by the word civilization," and it was the Xhosa's cultural self-sufficiency which "renders the pacification of his country a work of such transcendant difficulty<sup>1</sup>."

Fairbairn did not regret the Treaty System. In fact he said on 2 December 1846<sup>2</sup> that if the treaty system had not suffered from a "want of the sufficient power" there would have been no war, in all probability. Furthermore the Colony had been too weak militarily speaking at the beginning of 1846 to cope with its commitments on the frontier. But the Xhosa had rejected the treaties and shown "unequivocal signs of war fever", and there was an end to it. The system had proved that there was no "cupidity or cruelty" on the colonial side. Any faults on the "civilised side" had arisen only from a "generous unwillingness to draw the sword on so unequal a foe".

In the same article Fairbairn commented on a letter from a writer in Britain who "changes the guilt of the war on the Frontier Colonists, and less directly, but still clearly enough on the Colonial Government." Fairbairn said that this was quite incorrect, but he could understand those who thought this way and they were

"amply justified by the history of colonization by European nations in all parts of the world.

And it is only since the abolition of the Slave Trade and of Slavery, and the invaluable labours of the Aborigines Committee of the House of Commons in 1835, that the national sentiment on this subject has been fully corrected, and fixed, it is hoped for ever, on the basis of Justice."

Henceforth Fairbairn was unable to suggest a solution for the problems of the Xhosa frontier. His only criterion was that of expediency. The war came to an end only at the end of 1847. In December 1847 the new Governor, Sir Harry Smith, symbolically placed his foot on old Macomo's neck and brandished a sword above his head,

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1. S.A.C.A. 24 April 1847.

2. MacMillan refers to this article in (1) p. 291 n<sup>I</sup>.

and the Commercial Advertiser commented

"The judgement to be finally passed on this manner of treating the guilty chiefs, and, in their persons, the guilty people, will depend entirely on his success<sup>1</sup>."

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1. S.A.C.A. 29 December 1847.

The bad reputation which Fairbairn was given because of his reporting of frontier conflicts was exaggerated but not entirely unmerited.

Fairbairn had particular beliefs about the nature of frontier conflicts involving a civilized and a primitive society. The primitive society always suffered some loss in conflicts which resulted from its proximity to the civilized society. The cause of the conflicts must therefore lie in some element of the civilized society. Fairbairn was suspicious of all news and reports from the Eastern Frontier, and was highly critical of the actions taken by white colonists and the military authorities. This led him to emphasise certain aspects of the frontier situation. The settlers on the edge of the colony were deeply involved in the frontier situation and they could see only that the Xhosa were responsible for frontier tension and strife.

This dichotomy was greatly exaggerated by misrepresentation of Fairbairn's reproduction of a news item on the outbreak of war in December 1834. Fairbairn's comments were misinterpreted by the panic-stricken refugees in Graham's Town in January 1835 and his subsequent comments made matters a good deal worse. Where Fairbairn found a lack of information he used speculation. For the most part, however, his reporting of the wars of 1834-5 and 1846-7 were unobjectionable to the frontier colonists.

Fairbairn's change of attitude to the Xhosa in 1846 is quite consistent with his avowed position prior to the incident of the Axe. If one side or the other broke the treaty relationship, he said, it would mean war. The colonists had proved during the period of the operation of the treaties that they were innocent of aggression. The Xhosa should be severely punished.

Fairbairn's opinions were almost indistinguishable from Dr. Philip's. They shared an outlook which was common to many outside of the Cape at the time. On one thing Fairbairn differed from Philip, and that was the matter of Xhosa independence. Fairbairn was close to Andries Stockenstrom in his estimation of the best course to be pursued, but no direct connection can be proved between the

two men. The ideas which were current in books about the Cape written in the 'twenties and early 'thirties could have supplied Fairbairn with his ideas on the independence of the chiefs, and certainly his visit to the frontier in 1830 indicated that Fairbairn was not a stranger to the idea that any relations with the Xhosa should be conducted on the understanding that the chiefs were responsible and independent.

The rejection by the Xhosa of the system of relations which Fairbairn thought most favourable to them, left him with no solution to the problem of frontier conflict and he was henceforth more a spectator of events on the frontier than a commentator upon them.

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APPENDIX I.

(Report of Aborigines Committee 538 of 1836 pp. 211-213)

SUGGESTIONS of the Commissioner-general relative to the Policy to be adopted with respect to the Caffres and the occupation of the Ceded Territory beyond the Genappe, submitted to his Excellency the Governor.

I consider it highly inexpedient in the present circumstances of the colony and the Caffre nation to drive beyond the frontiers those kraals, which still occupy part of the ceded territory; but at the same time must recommend that no part of the said territory be entirely ceded to any party of Caffres whatever.

It must be clearly understood by that people that such occupation can only be tolerated as long as their conduct justifies such indulgence on the part of the colonial government, whose title to the said territory must remain undisputed, nor should any other boundary between the colony and Caffreland be acknowledged except that agreed on in 1819 and 1820. The territory from which Macomo and his followers have lately been expelled must be kept clear of Caffres, and no kraal of the said tribe be thereto admitted, but the locations just begun should be extended up to the highest sources of the Kat River.

A conference being likely to take place between his excellency the governor and the Caffre chiefs, the admission of our right to the said territory must be made the basis of all further discussion or treaty, and this question be placed beyond all doubt and future dispute.

I should recommend that the Caffres be liberally dealt with; that the country which they will be allowed to occupy be pointed out to them and marked by clearly-defined natural boundaries; that they be not only allowed to graze their cattle thereon, but also to cultivate the land, in order to attach them the more thereto, and to render the loss thereof a matter of greater dread.

With regard to Pata, Kama and Longa<sup>1</sup>, this concession should

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1. Conga.

be rendered as a reward for the manner in which they have conducted themselves in repressing depredations on the part of their people, though it were well that they be informed that the manner in which those Caffres who have been admitted into the colony with passes for the purpose of taking service, have abused that indulgence, has given great displeasure to the government, and contributed to render necessary the proclamation of the 25th August last, and that government refrains from severer measures only because it is believed that these chiefs have not countenanced that conduct in their subjects. To Luno<sup>2</sup>, Botwan<sup>3</sup>, and the Caffres on the Muncasana, the favour should be extended, with the declaration that several complaints having been made of depredations committed by the people of their kraals, and even suspicions having existed that the chiefs connived at, if not encouraged, these depredations, his excellency had determined upon immediately expelling the said kraals from the ceded territory altogether; that as, however, those proofs were not sufficiently strong to convince his excellency of the guilt of the chiefs, and instances having come to the knowledge of his excellency of exertions having been made by them to recover cattle stolen from the colony, and to punish murders committed by Caffres, his excellency is disposed to try lenient measures for some time longer, and to allow the said kraals to continue to occupy the said territory (within certain limits to be clearly pointed out) under the following restrictions and conditions, which are to be applicable to all the Caffres within the ceded territory:

If stolen cattle be traced into the territory occupied by the said Caffres, every effort is to be used by the chiefs through whose kraals the spoor leads, and by their people, to assist the party pursuing such cattle in recovering the same and seizing the plunderers, if they can be found out; but no Caffre cattle should be given or taken in lieu of the cattle stolen; and if the evidence

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2. Eno.

3. Botma.

of Caffres shall be necessary to convict the plunderers before a court of justice, the chiefs must enforce their appearance.

Plunderers thus convicted should be sentenced to hard labour for long periods, and they can be usefully employed on the high roads.

Criminals of a different description, such as murderers, incendiaries, housebreakers, etc. must be searched after and delivered up in the same manner.

The chiefs and other Caffres in the ceded territory discovering plunderers passing through their kraals coming from the colony with cattle, shall be bound to seize those plunderers, together with the plunder, and deliver them over to the nearest military post, accompanied by the necessary witnesses; and should any Caffre chief or kraal be disturbed or threatened in consequence of their thus checking depredations, they should be protected by government.

Parties from the colony, under an authorized officer, in search of stolen property, are to be allowed free access to the several kraals, and should be instructed to use violence if they be in any way resisted; but if Caffre cattle be taken contrary to orders, or any other aggressions be committed by these parties, complaint may be made at the nearest post, whence it must be forwarded to the proper quarter, in order that satisfaction may be made.

If it be found that depredations continue, and that any of the chiefs encourage the same, or connive at them, or allow plunderers from other kraals to pass through theirs, or otherwise screen or assist such plunderers, or resist or oppose the parties sent under proper authority in search of them; or if it become evident that any chief has so far lost all influence over his people as to be unable to prevent them plundering, such chief and his people should be expelled from the ceded territory forthwith.

With respect to the Caffres residing in Caffreland, it should be explained that plunderers will invariably be followed, and

the chiefs will be expected to do as has been above required from those in the ceded territory, as otherwise they can only be dealt with as encouraging the depredations, and any kraals or chiefs clearly proved to carry on a regular system of plunder against the colony must be considered as enemies, and treated accordingly, inasmuch that a commando shall be sent against them, their cattle taken in order to indemnify the sufferers in the colony, and every resistance punished with severity.

It should be explained to the chiefs, that no Caffres will be allowed to advance beyond the limits to be prescribed to them in the ceded territory, except with such permission as his excellency may in time deem it expedient to grant; with which permission, even if granted, they are not to go anywhere except on the direct high roads to the places specified, or to sojourn where they are in service according to law. It must be understood (as the chiefs all wish it to be understood,) that every Caffre found in the colony beyond the limits, not on the high roads, with legal permission, or in service, is considered an enemy watching an opportunity to plunder or murder, and that consequently every such Caffre will be seized and punished as a vagrant, or fired upon, if he do not surrender; which latter expedient they should know will invariably be resorted to when the Caffres attempt to plunder or commit any other sort of violence.

With respect to that part of the ceded territory beyond the limits just referred to, I beg leave to recommend that wherever the localities admit thereof, where land to any extent can be cultivated, and where sufficient water can be found, the arable land be divided into small proportions of two or three morgen each, and granted to applicants at the rate of one such plot of arable land for each man capable of bearing arms, which such applicant will bind himself permanently to keep upon such land well armed; with the right of pasturage on the circumjacent grazing ground, in proportion to its extent as compared with the arable land or number.

If the grazing farm should be granted on conditions that the grantee keep thereon permanently a man well armed for every 750 morgen to be granted to him, the armed men thus maintained in the ceded territory to be bound strictly to comply with the regulations to be framed by the commissioner-general for their employment in the protection of the frontier, and to be ready to turn out either to act as a burgher commando or patrol, or to co-operate with the military force in such proportions as shall be deemed expedient. The grant to be revocable in case of non-compliance. These conditions must not be understood to interfere with the expenses connected with the granting of the land, or the quit-rent to be fixed thereon.

The necessary burgher officers to be appointed, who are to watch that the burgher force be kept effective, and under whose directions parties entering Caffreland are to be conducted, according to regulations to be framed by the commissioner-general, except where accompanied by a military officer, who in such case would command and act according to his orders.

In case of actual and sudden invasion these burgher officers shall call out the burghers under their orders, upon the requisition of any military officer commanding a post, if the commandant be not on the spot; but under no other circumstances shall the armed burghers be called out into the field, except by the authority of the commissioner-general, or the civil commissioner of the district, or by their own officers, for the purpose of patrolling, checking depredations, or pursuing stolen cattle.

No cattle taken from Caffres to be returned to the person claiming the same before the officer in command of the party taking the cattle shall have satisfied himself by hearing from the herds, or other servants or witnesses, that those were the cattle lost by the claimant: in case of doubt or dispute the matter to be referred to the civil commissioner. Positive orders to be issued to the military, that in no case Caffre cattle be taken in lieu of cattle alleged to have been stolen from the colony, except when special

orders shall have been given to that effect; and whenever there is any dispute between colonists and the Caffres, relative to cattle claimed by another party, the question invariably to be referred to the civil power.

Individuals on the spoor of lost cattle may apply to the chiefs, but shall not be allowed to use any violence or threats, and recovering any cattle shall be obliged to produce them to his field cornet, with proofs as above specified of their being his.

It is desirable that a village be established on the Kat River, between Fort Beaufort and the Poorl at Williams' School; the water may be led out of the said river, over an extensive tract of fertile soil. Hottentots, who have no other means of subsistence, may be employed in this work, and fed and paid by the government; the expense to be recovered out of the sale of ground. A magistrate and minister should be appointed to reside on the place, which from its favourable localities, and contiguity to a strong military post, will soon rise to importance, and draw to itself a great share of Caffre trade. The Rev. Mr. Thompson, already in the pay of government, employed in a situation where he can be of no use, could be conveniently removed to this new parish, if he would agree thereto.

Similar villages should be established (if the localities of the country admit thereof,) near the other military posts, as they are there likely to prosper, being protected by those posts, and a support to the same.

In other situations along the frontier, where villages are likely to thrive, they should be encouraged, in order to obtain the desired objects of a dense population and disposable force in the immediate vicinity of the Caffres.

The commissioner-general should be authorized, when the safety of the frontier appears to him to require it, to call out for command and duty such numbers of those inhabitants, who have no visible domestic occupation (which would include the wandering Hottentots), as the emergency may call for, to post them in eligible situations, to make them co-operate with the military; arm those who

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have no muskets out of the government stores, victual them at  
the expense of government, and relieve them according to  
circumstances.

A P P E N D I X 2

Manifesto in Support of Fairbairn's Frontier Policy

10 January 1835. Unpublished. Fairbairn Correspondence

H.E. Rutherford	W. Collins
J. Dixie	E. Christian
A.G. Robertson	J. Osmond
G. Kemp	W. Anderson
S.B. Venning	A.I. Robertson
T. Christian	J. Lawton
W. Hamilton	W. Currey
J. Pears	T. Jones
A.J. Jardine	J.R. Innes
D. Steedman	E.R. King
H. Tennant	P. Wright
A. Chiappini	A. Waterboer
G. Greig	J. McIntosh
J. Smith	L. Lingard
J. Blore	A. Merrington
J. Simpson	W. Hutchons
E.P. Amyott	F. Roesch
T. Thwaites	W.S. Bridelkirk
N. Wollaston	J. Chapman
G. Hodgskin	W.S. Brook
H. Sherman	W. Thompson
Jas. Smith	R. Eagar
E. Flaherty	G. Home
J.D. Gregory	J. Saunders
J. Ward	G. Christie
G.W. Prince	E. Hull
	J. Abercrombie

A P P E N D I X 3

Manifesto in Support of Fairbairn's Frontier Policy

South African Commercial Advertiser, 20th January 1835

H.E. Rutherford	J. Townsend
J. Dixie	E.J. Townsend
A.G. Robertson	J. Dyason
G. Kemp	E. Harrington
S.B. Venning	E. George (Sen.)
T. Christian	W. Parker
W. Hamilton	E. George (Jun.)
J. Pears	G. Pike
A.J. Jardine	J. Hawkins
D. Steedman	W.C. Cairncross
H. Tennant	J. Bauman
A. Chiappini	A. Miller
J. Smith	J.D. Filmalter
J. Elore	J.H. Collard
J. Simpson	W. Buchanan
E.P. Amyott	J. Solomon
G. Hodgskin	B. Solomon
H. Sherman	J. Syme
E. Flaherty	E. Christian
J.D. Gregory	T. Thwaites
J. Ward	J. Osmond
G.W. Prince	W. Anderson
W. Collins	J. Lawton
T. Elliott	W. Curry
W. White	T. Jones
J. Poultney	J.R. Innes
Rob. Miller	E.R. King
D. Buchanan	P. Wright
E. Buchanan	A. Waterboer
R. Clarence	J. McIntosh

APPENDIX 3 (Continued)

L. Lingard	W.S. Cooke
J. Barker	W. Hutchons
J. Luxton	W.S. Bridekirk
A. Merrington	W.S. Brook
F. Roesch	R. Eager
J. Chapman	J. Saunders
W. Thompson	E. Hull
G. Home	J.B. Ebden
G.Christie	T. Tennant
E. Thompson	F. Campbell
F. Collison	R. Waters
R.H. Kennedy	J. Craigie
W. Hawkins	W. Billingsley
A. Brown	G. Clarke
T. Ansdell	C. Bridges
H.E. Henderson	G.M. Pedder
I. Titterton	R. Powrie
H. Orchard	A. Cope
R. Reeves	P. Stigant
J. Powrie	D. Williams
J.J. Mathew	J. Abercrombie
R. Chambers	J. Stuart
R. Arderne	W. Gillmer
H. Dyke	J. McDonald
J. Chisholm	H. Hull

A P P E N D I X 4 .

Extracts from a Copy of a Despatch from Lord Glenelg to Governor  
Sir B. D'Urban, 26 December 1835 (279 of 1836 p.71)

... For the due regulation of the future relations between the Caffre tribes and the Colonists, as well as for other purposes of local convenience, His Majesty proposes immediately to appoint a lieutenant-governor of the eastern districts of the Colony. On the lieutenant-governor will be devolved the administration of the executive government within the boundaries to be assigned to his command. It is further proposed to appoint a civil commissioner, or protector of the native tribes, who shall reside within the colony, probably at the seat of the lieutenant-governor's residence. To this officer will be entrusted the duty of protecting the borderers on either side against mutual aggressions. It will be his office to inform himself of every inroad and act of plunder committed against the colonists, and of every outrage or injury offered to the Caffres; to investigate the truth of every allegation of that nature; to report all such occurrences to the lieutenant-governor; and to superintend in person the execution of all measures which may be necessary for obtaining redress; and to take charge of all cases in which the subjects of native chiefs are brought before the Colonial Courts of justice. It is also intended to appoint a government agent to reside in Caffreland, with the requisite powers to make him an efficient guardian over the rights as well of the natives as of European traders.

All communications with the Caffres on what, in the absence of a more simple word, may be termed international subjects, must be carried on through the government agent for Caffreland.

The following is a statement of the principal rules which it is intended to prescribe to the lieutenant-governor and civil commissioner, for the guidance of their conduct.

1. A treaty, fixing the boundaries of the colony, must be made in writing, in English and in the Caffre language, and, being explained to each border chief, must be signed or attested by each. Copies of this treaty must be delivered to each of the contracting chiefs.
2. A separate treaty must be made, in the English and in the Native languages, with the chief of every tribe to which a portion of territory is assigned within the British dominions; defining the limits of his allocation, the degree of his responsibility, and the nature of his relations with the British Government; and all other particulars admitting of specification. A copy of this treaty in the native tongue must be preserved by the chiefs.
3. A separate treaty must be made in the Native and English languages with the chief of every tribe in alliance with us, or in any degree under our protection; defining also in each case all that can be specified in such an instrument. A copy of the treaty must be preserved by each chief.
4. The rules of mutual restitution, and those which relate to the prevention of inroads, and the redress of the injury occasioned by them, must be particularized in each of the above treaties.
5. The responsibility of particular kraals, or villages, for the acts of individual Caffres, must no longer be enforced. But
6. The chiefs must be called upon to bind themselves to make restitution for plundered cattle, on sufficient proof of the reality of the theft. They must be left to detect the offenders, or to indemnify themselves at the expense of the tribe collectively for such losses as they may sustain by being required to make these compensations. In other words, we must look to the chiefs, and to them alone, and must no longer take upon ourselves to make reprisals upon the people. The chiefs to enter into securities, or pledges, of such a nature as may be deemed sufficient, and not inconvenient for the due fulfilment of these stipulations.

7. Fairs for the interchange of commodities should be re-established at convenient places on the frontier.
8. The wounding or killing of a Caffre, or otherwise injuring his person or property, will be made liable to the same punishment as if the sufferer were one of His Majesty's subjects. This of course would not apply to times of actual war, nor prevent the compulsory removal back into their own territory of any Caffres who might re-appear within the boundaries with purposes apparently hostile or fraudulent, or in opposition to any existing laws. No violence must, however, be used in effecting their removal, which is not strictly required by the necessity of the case, and for the effective execution of the service.
9. No European or Hottentot, or any others but Caffres, to be located or allowed to settle east of the Great Fish River. Those Hottentots who were placed in the ceded territory prior to the late war, and all Christian teachers, are exempted from this rule. I may observe here, that in the above rules, under the general name of Caffres, I include the Fingoes.



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