

THE CAPE LIBERAL TRADITION - MYTH OR REALITY?

by

Phyllis Lewsen

All South African-born whites are descended from immigrants. They brought their cultural equipment with them; and they had then to adapt to a strange and complex human environment - a colonial situation with all its difficulties and prejudices. All white immigrants were altered by this experience. Some changed rapidly and (it seemed) fundamentally; some very little and slowly; while others developed extreme and persistent community traits which have remained unmodified for centuries.

To single out the responses of one white group and call this "the true South African tradition" does not make sense historically. There were no indigenous white South Africans. There is no innately South African way of life, white or non-white, and no single pattern of responses. To quote Sir James Rose-Innes, the great South African judge, who was of British settler descent:

"I should call myself an Afrikaner were it not for the tendency to confine that term to those whose ancestors landed here before the British occupation, and to such newer arrivals as are animated by 'the South African spirit'. I have neither Voortrekker nor Huguenot blood in my veins, and 'the South African spirit', as I understand by those who extol it, implies a view on the Native (1) question which I cannot share. But I am proud to be a South African, and I claim to stand on the same national footing as if my forbears had landed with Van Riebeeck or followed Piet Retief over the Drakensberg." (2)

Rose Innes was a Cape liberal (he was a cabinet minister before he became a judge) and what he writes defines the contrast between what is called the Cape liberal tradition and the colour-bar tradition of the North. The Cape Colony had a qualified franchise, which admitted anyone to the roll, irrespective of race or colour, who earned £50 a year or occupied land (or a house and land) worth £75, and could sign his name and write his address and occupation. This "civilized franchise" was retained by the Cape when it entered Union and was specially entrenched. (A two-thirds majority of the total of both Houses sitting together was needed to change it.) Mistakenly, the

Cape delegates at the National Convention and the Cape Parliament both believed they had obtained a permanent protection: for without this safeguard the Cape would not have entered Union. Originally, in 1854, the franchise had been even lower (£25 property, and no educational test). It was raised after nearly half a million more Africans, in tribal condition, were annexed in the Transkeian territories, with the aim - understandably - of preventing swamping by the "blanket" (tribal) vote. The principle of a non-racial franchise was not seriously challenged, however, in the Cape's 56 years of Parliamentary history. The law, too, was colour-blind, with very little in the way of what was called "class legislation".

By contrast, British Natal followed a policy of segregation and political exclusion, keeping non-white voters out by a test which had become a complete barrier. (3) The Transvaal and Free State had an absolute colour bar, political, religious and institutional, summed up by the clause in the Transvaal Grondwet of 1858:

"The people desire to permit no equality between coloured people and the white inhabitants, either in Church or State."

When the National Convention met in 1908, these divisions had not altered at all. A Cape proposal for a qualified franchise for Union "irrespective of race or colour" was flatly rejected by the other colonies' delegates. Moor, the Natal Prime Minister, argued dogmatically: "The history of the world proved that the black man was incapable of civilisation." (4) In the former Republics it was common cause that the purpose of Union was "to try to bring the whites of South Africa together, and then they would be in a position to keep the Natives in their place". (5) When the Cape politician F. S. Malan - a leader of the Cape Afrikaner Bond - appealed again for a general, non-racial franchise, General Louis Botha (the Transvaal Prime Minister) replied that he feared for Union if Malan tried to force the rest of South Africa to accept the principle of the Cape Native franchise. "If this is done I might just as well go home - I can go no further than recognize the rights of the Natives in the Colony." (6)

The conflict of viewpoint - in this case between two Afrikaners - is clearly demonstrated. But even more interesting is the criticism of the Union compromise by the Cape Afrikaner Bond when the Draft Act was considered. Led by "Onze Jan" Hofmeyr, the Cape Town branch passed two resolutions: the first that the protection was inadequate (a majority of Cape Parliamentarians should be demanded), and the second that a Parliamentary experience of 50 years "has not proved the necessity of the introduction of colour restrictions in respect of membership of the Cape Colony". (This was the condition imposed by the Convention for the Cape retaining its franchise.) The first resolution was repeated by the general Bond congress, and was strenuously argued in Parliament.

This apparent endorsement of Cape political liberalism by the Cape Afrikaners' political organization would seem convincing proof

of a coherent and firmly established tradition. Many historians accept that this was so, and use the term "Cape liberal tradition" without qualification. Others, however, are - and were - more sceptical. The English Liberal statesman James Bryce, who visited South Africa in 1895, was astonished at "the strong feeling of dislike and contempt - one might almost say of hostility" - towards Coloured persons, and drew no distinction, in this respect, between the Cape and other parts of South Africa. He believed that those feelings sprang partly from the old "contempt for the slaves ... which has descended to a generation that has ... [never] seen slavery ... partly from physical aversion; partly from an incompatibility of character and temper, which makes the faults of the Coloured man more offensive ... than the faults of members of his own white stock ... Even just men, who have the deepest theoretical respect for human rights, are apt to be carried away by the consciousness of superior strength, and to become despotic, if not harsh".

Bryce does, however, distinguish between legal treatment in the Cape and elsewhere, and attributes "the mildness of Cape colonial law ... largely to the influence of the home government, and to that recognition of the equal rights of all subjects which has long pervaded the common laws of England". He sees only two groups as free from reproach, the imperial officials and the missionary clergy, the latter "sometimes even carrying their zeal beyond what discretion could approve". (7)

Professor Hoernlé, in South African Native Policy and the Liberal Spirit, describes South African Native Policy as an "odd patchwork ... of parallelism, assimilation, separation ... subject to the over-arching fact of white domination". (8) Cape liberalism, he explained, was "not an indigenous growth of the experience of White Colonists in contact with non-white peoples ... but ... imported and imposed from the outside, by officials from overseas ... That, none the less, it should have been so effective during the 19th century at the Cape as to give rise to the 'liberalism' with which the Cape entered the Union and to which the Cape representatives then hoped to convert the three Northern Provinces, is due, on the one hand, to the example and educative influence of the missionaries, and, on the other, to the humanitarian liberalism which entered the Cape with immigrants from the British Isles or was brought back ... by South Africans who had gone to England for their higher education. Actually, Cape liberalism was never, in practice, as completely 'colour-blind' as it was in theory". D. V. Cowen, in his Hoernlé Memorial Lecture (1961) (9), agrees that Cape liberalism was an exotic growth, stimulated from outside, inconsistent in practice and often "transparently hypocritical".

The most important analysis is by T. R. H. Davenport in his book, The Afrikaner Bond (1966). He emphasizes the underlying social rigidities and prejudices, the social exclusiveness of the whites, and the greater strength of these attitudes among Cape Afrikaners and in the Bond, because of their historical experience and their belief in the God-ordained inferiority of all people of colour. He sees a constant tension between "the traditional social values and rigid

colour distinctions of Boer society on the one hand, and the equalitarian political system on the other". And while he notes "the careful and deliberate stress" by leaders, at the time of Union, against drawing a colour line for political purposes, he asks suggestively: "What of the rank and file?" He shows that the delicate political balances in the Cape - the rivalry between Dutch and English chiefly - helped to preserve the existing political system, but there is plenty of evidence of real and attempted inroads (the desire, for example, for rights of punishment over servants). Moreover, though the Bond had no colour-bar in its constitution, it had no Coloured or Native members, and did not want any. The fact that the Cape liberal tradition was not taken up and consolidated within the political parties meant that it "lacked substantial content, sufficient for it to withstand the buffeting which it received at the National Convention and afterwards". When the Afrikaner Bond, after Union, united with the other Afrikaner political organizations, Het Volk and Oranje Unie, "Northern parties committed in principle to the doctrine of racial inequality, made common cause with a Cape party which accepted racial equality in a limited political sense". (10)

While Davenport does not, like Cowen, see the Cape tradition as in decline, he does regard it as under constant stress, and relatively superficial. His view is confirmed by the contemporary evidence of John X. Merriman at the time of Union. The context was the mission of W. P. Schreiner to England to persuade the Imperial Government to reject "the blot on the constitution" (the removal of the non-whites' right to stand for Parliament in the Cape). Merriman, while a convinced liberal, was one of the chief makers of Union and an enthusiast for the cause: he felt that the restriction was unavoidable, and it would be deeply harmful to both Natives and Whites if Union were to be frustrated for this reason. He wrote, therefore, to the Cape Governor pointing out that this exclusion, while illiberal in principle, was in practice unavoidable; that it had in fact never been exercised and its abolition was "the logical corollary of the exclusion of the Coloured people from the franchise in the other three Colonies". The Cape had, however, been granted the right by the National Convention to elect Natives and Coloureds to the Cape Provincial Council. If Schreiner succeeded, he argued, Union would be abandoned,

"with all the bitter resentment towards the Imperial Government that will necessarily follow. In addition it will most undoubtedly set on foot a campaign in this country for a reconsideration of our Native policy and for the abolition of those rights, the logical enforcement of which will have led to the failure of an object [Union] upon which the whole European race have set their hearts. As Your Excellency is aware, these political rights are strongly supported by a minority only, and are rather acquiesced in than warmly approved by the majority, who hitherto have allowed themselves to be convinced by leaders that ... the grant of political privileges to

Native and Coloured is a safety valve. Habit has even made some of those who are not enthusiastic advocates of the policy take a pride in the superior liberality of the Cape Colony ... and Mr. Schreiner's own conversion is the best testimony to its educational force. I have no hesitation in saying that the success of the deputation would change this feeling, which is I hope a growing one ... and would put the vast bulk of the European population of the Colony on the same plane of intolerance that obtains ... in the greater part of His Majesty's Dominions." (11)

It should be added that Merriman believed that the Cape franchise was safe for the future. As a nineteenth century liberal, and thus a believer in progress, he was also convinced that the Cape example would act "as a leaven" in the Union Parliament and gradually liberalize it. He was soon disillusioned.

In view of these poor survival prospects, and the shallowness and fragility of the Cape system, is it possible then to speak of a "liberal tradition"? It is now time for more precise definition and analysis.

Firstly, a tradition is the transmission of beliefs, rules and customs from generation to generation; or (more vaguely) an established and universally accepted custom. "Universally accepted" is obviously not true of the Cape. However, there are also minority and majority traditions, popular and élitist, those passed on orally and by custom, or formally expressed in institutions. The continuance of institutions is especially important, for their change or destruction can very often lead to the decay of a related tradition. For example, one generation may participate in open universities, transport, libraries, etc.; the next know nothing of such things and feel that they bristle with difficulties. As Davenport has shown, the amalgamation of the South African ruling parties after Union, and the virtual submergence of the Bond, soon reversed the direction in which Cape Afrikaners had slowly been travelling. Habits of action, in short, do not easily survive the institutions to which they are related. Habits of thought and sentiment may be more enduring, but these, too, very largely depend on the teachings of a university or a church, for example - on intellectual and religious continuity - or on the overseas cultural renewals to which Hoernlé referred.

As for the meaning of liberal, the concept is wide and blurred at the edges, but at its core is the value of the individual and his right to freedom. The justification may be religious or humanist, or both; belief in the equality of all in the sight of God, or in the natural right of all individuals as persons endowed with reason and moral responsibility. Hoernlé writes: "Liberty is an

ideal which we may not restrict in application to men of one race or creed, of one blood or culture ... and which finds room for each in its distinctive individuality." (12) Politically, it is inseparable from civil rights and freedom and the rule of law, religious tolerance and constitutional government, while in John Stuart Mill's classic formulation it should protect minorities against majorities - and thus uphold the rights of conscience and the right to differ.

It should be remembered, however, that liberalism was not in the nineteenth century identical with democracy. It was often a conservative creed, linked with high property qualifications, with laissez-faire and the reluctance to tax the rich for the benefit of the poor. It did not intrude into social relationships or attack the class structure. It also accepted as axiomatic that the civilization of the West was superior to all others, that its creed of hard work and duty was inseparable from its values, that morally and technically its advantages were indisputable, and its duty to backward and lesser peoples was to guide, uplift them, and teach them its ways.

It is clear that there was much that was contradictory in the liberal creed, and that its application to a colonial situation could be expected to cause many anomalies. This was the case in the Cape.

To return to its origins, liberalism was unquestionably an alien import. It came to the Cape as the result of the philanthropic and humanitarian movement in England, mainly religious in its inspiration, which was most influential between 1820 and 1845. This movement affected the Cape directly through missionary activity and influence, and indirectly through the passage of the British law abolishing slavery throughout the Empire. Thus in 1828 the famous Ordinance 50, promoted chiefly by Dr. John Philip of the London Missionary Society, made Hottentots and other free peoples of colour equal before the law with the Europeans, repealing the pass laws and apprenticeship laws. Ordinance 50 opened the way in 1841 for a general masters and servants law, without restriction of colour, which also took in the former slaves who had been finally freed in 1838.

Ordinance 50, to quote J. S. Marais, was "a measure imposed from outside upon a hostile society". (13) So was the freeing of the slaves; and the refusal to permit a vagrancy act (14) further inflamed feelings. One result was the Great Trek. As Anna Steenkamp declared: "it is not so much their freedom that drove us to such lengths, as their being placed on an equal footing with Christians, contrary to the laws of God and the natural distinction of race and religion, so that it was intolerable for any decent Christian to bow down beneath such a yoke; wherefore we rather withdrew in order thus to preserve our doctrines in purity." The conflict between the unreformed Calvinism of the Trek and the new humanitarian religion has never been more dramatically expressed.

Twelve to fourteen thousand joined the Trek to the North, and those who remained behind were deeply aggrieved. But meanwhile the

Cape, in Marais' words, had "turned a sharp corner. A totally new direction was given to its legislation concerning non-Europeans. Henceforward its laws became colour-blind and what the philanthropists did in 1828 was not undone as long as the Cape was a separate colony." Unfortunately, the earlier of two momentous decisions - the importation of slaves in 1657 - could no longer be expunged in its effects. "It was impossible [Marais continues] by a single piece of legislation to destroy the slave-owning mentality, or to make the Hottentots and slaves worthy of the freedom which had been suddenly thrust upon them." Or, as Davenport puts it, "in economic terms emancipation involved not much more than the replacement of unfree labour by cheap labour", and the Afrikaners who remained behind carried on the same ideas on proper relations between master and servant as those who trekked northwards.

The institution supporting the new liberal "turn", however, developed rapidly, and, what is more important, survived the decline of philanthropy as a political influence in England. - a decline which explains why Natal received no such liberal boost. Elective municipal boards (1836), the Cape Town municipality (1839), elected road boards (1843), and elected divisional councils (1855) were based on a householder franchise without qualification of colour. In 1844 a Coloured ward-master was elected in Cape Town (he refused this troublesome office). Representative government - a true parliament to replace the governor's council - though an essential liberal institution, was for a time delayed through fear that the colonists, given power, would degrade and oppress the Coloured peoples. The imperial government's condition was a non-racial franchise; but the choice still lay between a high property qualification (excluding most Coloureds and some Afrikaners) and a low inclusive one. The popular party, favouring a low franchise, was led by liberals such as Fairbairn, but it was also backed by the leading Afrikaner municipal politicians, F. W. Reitz and C. Brand (whose sons both became Free State presidents). F. W. Reitz argued that "the low qualifications [recommended] cannot but prove ... that no caste antipathies have biased the colonists or their representatives". The radical Daily Mail in Cape Town insisted that "neither poverty nor a dusky skin" should be reasons for disfranchisement; and when the outbreak of a Hottentot rebellion on the frontier caused a scare and a revulsion, William Porter (then attorney-general) insisted that there was no better way to disarm the rebels: "I would rather meet the Hottentot at the hustings voting for his representative, than meet the Hottentot in the wilds with his gun on his shoulder." (15) Liberal ideas can now be seen taking root. Those who held them were the cultural and intellectual élite of the Cape, its leading Parliamentarians and, with the exception of Rhodes - who fell away from his earlier liberalism - its most brilliant men. The long parliamentary careers of such men as Saul Solomon, John X. Merriman, J. W. Sauer, W. P. Schreiner, helped to give continuity and to provide the educative example to which Merriman referred (in the letter quoted - he himself, like Schreiner, was a convert). The strength of liberalism was much less a matter of numbers than of the calibre of its adherents and their leading role in Cape affairs. The result was that whenever the colour-blind legal tradition was challenged - as it not infrequently was - the liberals could put up so forceful a case that they very often won.

Sometimes they did not. In Cape Town, where there was a four-member constituency and all four votes could be plumped on one candidate, the chance that the Cape Malay leader, Ahmed Effendi, might win election led to the hurried abolition of plumping in 1893; the liberals protested unavailingly at a "dangerous precedent to amend the constitution on personal grounds". They could not stop the franchise qualification being raised in 1892, but they were able to prevent the disqualification of any existing voters. They could not exclude the notorious labour tax clause from Rhodes's Glen Grey Act, though they fought it as "class legislation". (16) They did, however, manage to prevent the passage of a bill in 1888 amending the pass law (which would have made pass-carrying compulsory for all Natives: the pass law, which was undoubtedly "class legislation", arose originally from the passport carried by visiting Transkeian Natives before the Transkei was annexed). And they successfully defeated the Strop Bill (1890) to allow farmers to give corporal punishment to erring servants, although Rhodes supported it.

That such measures were introduced - and others urged which did not reach Parliament - proves Davenport's point. Mostly they were Bond measures, with much English frontier party support. The resistance, whether successful or not, on the other hand proves the vitality of the liberal counter-offensive.

The chief challenge to liberalism came not from assimilation of the Coloureds (descendants of Hottentots and slaves) who became a depressed and, in the main, docile proletariat, but with the annexation of tribal Native territory - Kaffraria (the Ciskei - 1865) and the Transkei (1872-90). New methods of government had to be attempted. In general, the Cape method - unlike that of Natal - was to replace tribal with paternal European control through magistrates, and to civilize through government help to mission schools and stations, and through encouraging Natives to work on public works, farms, etc. Sir George Grey, who initiated this policy, favoured intermingling - intermixed white and African settlement in Kaffraria. But he did not allow for overcrowding or the white pressure for farms in Native areas; and later liberal policy was more protective in this respect - it successfully checked "the land loot party" from further attrition of the reserves. This protection was, in a sense, class legislation. It was justified by liberals, like the restrictions on drink in tribal areas, by the paternal duty of the stronger to protect the weaker. The basis of the present reserves (Bantu "homelands") was thus established.

On the other hand, there were no restrictions in the Cape on Natives' hiring and buying land outside of the prescribed locations. If they could afford it, it was their citizen's right. (17) This was firmly defended, in 1904, by Merriman and Sauer when they gave evidence before the S.A. Native Affairs Commission (appointed, among other things, to investigate the need for segregation). (18)

Their evidence on this point makes interesting reading. On the one hand, it links free land purchase with the arguments for



individual as against communal land tenure in the reserves (both Merriman and Sauer stress this point). On the other, its implications are inescapable - an open as against a segregated society. These extracts from Merriman's evidence vigorously define the issues.

Commissioner: If individual tenure is introduced into the reserves what about the surplus for whom no land can be provided?

Merriman: What is done with any European for whom no land is provided? He has to go and work. And the more you can appeal to the Native by saying "You are on the same basis as a European", the better you can get on with him. When a Native asks me for land, I tell him that no one gives me land, but that I must buy land if I want it, and that he too has a right to go and buy land. Under the communal tenure you cannot do that.

Commissioner: ... the Native is not like a white man; he cannot go and live where the white man can.

Merriman: The whole object of our raising and elevating the Natives is to give them the same rights and teach them that they have the same obligations as we have.

[Freedom of land purchase led to questions on freedom of movement.]

Commissioner: Would there not be a fear of the towns becoming congested if you allowed that?

Merriman: I do not think so. Take Cape Town. We have 12,000 Natives down there, and they do not seem to congest Cape Town. And there is an unlimited demand for agricultural labour.

Commissioner: But supposing three or four times as many dumped themselves down here?

Merriman: Many people want to have three or four times as many here ...

Commissioner: Is it not necessary for a Native to have a place where he can pitch his tent? As you know, he is pure gypsy; he must have a place to camp in.

Merriman: If you want to keep a Native always as a pure gypsy - and there is no doubt that there is always that in the minds of some people. But our policy is to take him out of the pure gypsy stage and make him a useful member of society ...

Commissioner: ... what do you think should be done with the surplus population of Natives ...?

Merriman: What are the surplus population of European doing? There is a general demand for agricultural labour everywhere; why do they not fill that up?

Commissioner: Would you drive them out to the farms, for instance?

Merriman: I would not drive them, but they will drive themselves when they get congested in lands under individual tenure. And that is just the point. I do not want to drive the Natives at all. It is the gradual progress of civilization that will force them to work, and is forcing them every day ... We contend that our Natives have advanced in civilization very much indeed.

[Continued advance implied continued educational opportunity - both conventional education and increased industrial and agricultural training ...]

Commissioner: If taught trades would they not immediately begin to compete with the white man?

Merriman: What is the converse of that? Are you going to keep them back for the purpose of giving a monopoly to white men? (19)

Merriman's views on such matters were notably in advance of more conservative Cape opinions. The Cape farmer witnesses before the commission disliked land purchase, and usually objected to education for Natives. Several had reservations about the franchise. But, even so, though there is sometimes an approximation on particular questions, the tone is as a rule less adamant, the attitudes less absolute than in the evidence from the former Republics and Natal. Thus Mr. R. P. Edmonds, while he objects to farm purchase by Natives in the white districts, does not mind the "old Fingo" they all know buying a farm; wants to stop drink, but cannot be roused on the franchise question. G. F. Golding of Lady Frere says categorically: "We as farmers are against educated Natives." "Why?" "Because they are not good, and they do not suit us ... they always want their Sundays off, and they want to go to their prayer meetings, and therefore farmers do not hire them." But he is likewise negative on the franchise. On the other hand, P. R. Babie of Worcester (a Bondsman and a progressive wine farmer) prefers educated labourers, thinks that Natives "should pay taxes under the same conditions as we do", and is similarly permissive on the franchise. One compares the finality of J. M. van Reenen and C. H. Turvey, Farmers Association representatives of the Orange River Colony, who are equally adamant against land purchase and against any Natives having the franchise.

Commissioner: You object on the ground of colour?

Mr. Turvey: ... I object on principle.

Mr. van Reenen: They are our inferiors in every way.

Or the well known English Transvaaler (immigrant, not South African born), R. K. Loveday:

"I do not see it is possible to give the coloured races the franchise ... My idea is that the two races must be kept distinctly apart, black and white, if you wish both parties to be content, and if you do not wish to breed a mongrel race ... I also hold, I may tell you, and you cannot get away from it, that the negro races occupy the lowest position on the evolutionary scale ... they are a lower order of beings than ourselves, and ... is it not very foolish of us to try and force them into an impossible position? Are you not flying in the face of Divine Providence ...? (20)

To return to the land question, it is not surprising to find that the Cape was both more liberal in respect of individual ownership (and prospects of ownership) and in the amount of land set aside in the reserves. Accordingly, labour conditions outside the reserves were rather more advantageous, and the problem of squatting much less acute. Thus 1,057,610 Cape Natives in 1905 were living on 13,440,000 acres of reserves (in the Ciskei and Transkei). Outside these reserves, some 25,000 lived and worked in the Eastern Province, either as full-time labourers and farmers - in some few cases as proprietors or renters - or on licensed private locations owned by whites, where they held land in return for money rents or as labour tenants or share-croppers.

By contrast, in Natal there were more Natives squatting on private land than in the locations and mission reserves combined. Excluding Zululand, 228,000 lived in the reserves (2,193,000 acres), 421,000 on private farms, mostly as labour tenants, and still more squatted on Crown land, paying £2 p.a. rent to the government (plus hut tax). Natal labour tenants, as in the Cape, received some wage - usually 10s. a month; in the Transvaal and the Free State whole families had to work for nothing under this system.

In the Transvaal only 123,000 had a base in the reserves, while 438,000 squatted on land which had once belonged to their tribes, and 180,000 on Crown land; and some 130,000 had combined as tribes or parts of tribes to purchase 23 farms - a post-war tendency causing great resentment and alarm. The Free State (O.R.C.) allowed neither purchase nor leasing; it had only two reserves, for 27,000 Natives, and nearly eleven times as many squatted as share-croppers (the usual system) or labour tenants on private land. The bare figures, startling as the comparisons are, tell only part of the story. Reserves varied greatly in fertility - the best lands, though eroded and overstocked, were in the Cape. And only in the Cape was

there a consciously fostered movement away from tribal conditions - a process of differentiation in living standards that was apparent even in the reserves. Sauer tried to define it in his evidence before the 1903-5 commission.

Sauer: Yes, I think they have advanced ...

Commissioner: What is the nature of the advance or progress?

Sauer: There is less of what we commonly call the barbarian. Education has advanced a great deal and with it the ways of living ...

Commissioner: To what has their general progress been due?

Sauer: It has been greatly due to the fact that they are in contact with a European state, peace and a fairly sympathetic administration.

Merriman, when he went electioneering in the Fingo locations, was impressed with the solid houses being built, and the better implements used. He describes, at one of his meetings, how "the old headman asked me inside his house to have a cup of tea. The house was beautifully clean and plainly furnished and the tea was good and most scrupulously clean". (21) Liberals approved of such adoption of white standards, just as they approved of land purchase. "At the present time, every civilized man - if we treat him properly", Merriman said, speaking in 1913 against the Native Land Act, "... is becoming an owner of land outside Native reserves, and therefore he is an asset of strength to the country ... He is on the side of the Europeans." (22)

Educational opportunities were also much higher in the Cape. The impetus had come initially from missionaries, officials and the effort and enthusiastic sponsorship of Sir George Grey; but the Cape Government, in addition, gave grants-in-aid to mission schools, and founded new schools for aborigines. In fact, it was white education that lagged behind until the twentieth century. One result was that white children went to mixed mission schools, sitting on the same benches as Coloureds in the Western Cape and even in frontier districts. In 1883 there were 6,000 whites sharing classrooms with 32,000 Coloured children; in 1891 one out of 3 white children who were at school attended mission schools. The most famous mixed school was Lovedale, with its roster of distinguished white pupils (three judges, a cabinet minister, a chief magistrate) and of black nurses and teachers, preachers and artisans, magistrates' clerks and farmers. (23) After white schools were built in greater numbers, the mixing became less frequent. The Education Act of 1905, aimed especially at the alarming problem of poor whites, introduced compulsory white education where a school district opted for this. This separate legislation for white children was certainly a breach with liberal practices. It reflected the alarm of a community a third of whose children got no schooling at all, with a percentage as high as 72% and 76% in some districts. On the other hand, there was less unfairness in actual expenditure than might have been expected. The government subsidized