

**GOVERNMENT**

**PERCEPTIONS OF**

**CAPE MUSLIM**

**EXILES : 1652-1806**

A mini-thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Religious Studies, University of Cape Town.

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## ABSTRACT

This essay examines how the Cape government thought and felt about certain prominent Muslims, exiled from present day Indonesia to that colony, in the period 1652 to 1806. It has both descriptive and analytic functions. Descriptively, it seeks to find out what these thoughts and feelings were. Analytically, it seeks to explain why they came about.

The essay contends that the way in which the exiles were perceived can only be understood by locating them in the wider Cape social, economic and political context. Accordingly, it describes elements of this context such as the Dutch colonial rationale, the Cape social structure, its culture and pertinent legal practices. Against this background, it then describes these perceptions. The description is general and specific. It examines perceptions of exiles in general by a study of the social class to which they belonged, namely the free blacks. It particularly focuses on the demography, the legal status and the economic position of this class. The final chapter of the essay is ties empirical backbone, being a specific and detailed examination of what the Cape government thought and felt about prominent individual exiles. As far as possible, it elicits all the evidence concerning these exiles, pertinent to the topic at hand, that is available in the prevailing historical literature.

This essay's central thesis is that the exiles were peripheral to the concerns of the Cape government. Perceptions of individual exiles were nuanced and encompassed various attitudes, but at the core the exiles were not seen as important to their vital interests. The class to which the exiles belonged, the free blacks, were always at the demographic, legal, and economic margins of Cape society. The essay contends that the reason the exiles were peripheral in government perceptions was because of the general marginality of Muslims in the Cape context. They lacked numbers, and their role as a religious constituency

was undermined by a society that subsumed such a constituency under various other concerns. The thesis is a departure from other studies on Cape Muslim history which this essay contends, tend to emphasise the “differentness” and centrality of the Muslim contribution.

# INTRODUCTION

## AIMS AND STRUCTURE OF THE ESSAY

Europeans brought Muslims to the Cape, who lived under their rule from 1652 to 1994. Politically, Islam was a dominated religion. This is why writers on Cape Muslim history cannot but touch upon relations between the government and Muslims.

The prevailing historical literature views the Muslims as "different" to other segments in the Cape context. Further, some of it asserts that Muslims were viewed as central to this context. This essay argues that an important section of these Muslims, the exiles, were **peripheral** to this perception. Their perceived "difference" was subsumed under various elements of this context, and they were only of marginal concern to the authorities.

The aim of this essay is to establish the argument for '**peripherality**'. It is **our** description and understanding of the way in which the Cape government, in the period 1652 to 1806, perceived the Muslims exiled to the colony.

Chapter One presents the prevailing historiography of Muslims in the Cape. We suggest that much of it regards the Muslims as different and important. We also present our point of departure from this view.

Chapter Two presents the social context in which the exiles were perceived. An examination of various elements of this context, such as demography and the nature of Cape society, reveal that it was only partially concerned with an Islamic threat. It was a society oriented to

political and economic issues concerning which Muslims, as an identity-conscious religious group, played only a **marginal** role.

Against this context, Chapters Three and Four deal with the perceptions themselves. Chapter Three deals with them in a **general** manner by examining the position of the free blacks, the social class to which the exiles belonged. It shows that this class was not only always marginal in a demographic and economic sense, but was further marginalised by legal restrictions.

Chapter Four deals with **actual** perceptions : it is a detailed examination of the way in which the most prominent exiles were individually perceived. This is the empirical core of our essay. It is cognisant of the different perceptions held by the government with regard to various exiles. For example, some were respected and others not. But it argues that an underlying **peripherality** was at the core of perceptions in each of the various cases.

# CHAPTER ONE

## THE PREVAILING HISTORICAL LITERATURE

### "Differentness" and "centrality" : The prevailing literature

Our title assumes a subject, i.e. the existence of a Muslim exile. This is not inherently problematic. We know for sure that the Dutch periodically exiled certain East Indians to the Cape. It is also known that they were largely Muslim. The assumption becomes problematic if we hold that they were perceived as **Muslim** exiles. The problem arises from the almost natural attempt to seek and locate the **Muslim identity** when examining the role of Islam in Cape history. We suggest that this is precisely the tendency in the historical literature on Cape Islam. This literature views "Muslims" as a constituency in themselves. Consequently, they are perceived as "**different**" from other groups, and somewhat apart from them. Moreover, some of this literature deems this Muslim constituency to have been a unique threat to Cape colonial authority, and thus a central focus of government concerns during the period under study.

The question of identity has of course been a pre-eminent one in both the popular and academic discourses of South Africa. The identity of the 'Cape Muslim' has not been an exception in this regard and there is a comparatively substantial literature that deals with this subject (1).

Briefly, the questions that have confronted Cape Muslims, especially in the twentieth century, were : Do they define themselves as Muslims, with adherence

to Islam transcending ethnic and class barriers? (2). Were they 'Malay' with Islam an integral part of their make-up, but not obfuscating cultural consciousness? (3). Were they 'Cape Muslim' (in a normative sense) with religion taking precedence over culture, but with an awareness of their particular historical circumstances? (4). Or were they 'coloured', transcending religious differences to make common cause as an oppressed group? (5). Stances on these issues have influenced the way writers, not necessarily Muslim, have approached the history of Cape Islam.

Achmat Davids is widely acknowledged as the foremost scholar of nineteenth century Cape Islam, having written two well-known books in this regard. Nevertheless, in providing the background to his studies he has made forays into earlier periods, where he has contributed substantially to our knowledge of the secondary sources. His historical method is steeped in the von Rankean tradition, with close scrutiny of empirical fact and detail, and the concomitant distrust of theory. Davids is also a prominent member of the Cape Muslim community, being long involved with its social welfare.

Calling the term Cape Malay 'repugnant', Davids provides reasons for his preferred employment of Cape Muslim :

The term cuts across artificial racial barriers and more accurately describes the origin of their culture, and their religion. One might mention that Islam does not recognise the distinction of man on the basis of race. Then, too, these people did not at all originate from the Malay Peninsula. They have strong roots in India and the islands of the archipelago (Davids, 1980:7).

The 'differentness' becomes more marked in the following passage :

One wonders if Afrikaans as a National language would have developed without their input or if their life-style which makes Cape Town so different from other

South African cities, would have emerged without their presence or cultural contribution (Davids, 1980:7).

Davids is not claiming that the Dutch colonial authorities perceived Muslims in this way or that these were the self-perceptions of Muslims themselves. He is far too empirically grounded for such assertions. What emerges from his discussion is a distinct community with a historical identity not readily subsumed under categories of class and race in operation at that time.

The 'differentness' of the Cape Muslims is given an ethnic bent in an early work of Robert Shell. While also preferring to employ 'Muslim', he argues that for the period 1652 to 1838 the word "Indonesian" was the most accurate in describing the type of Muslim. Shell conceded other geographic origins but argued that though "some slaves came from India, Ceylon and Macao, their religious influence was so slight that the broader term "Asian" was not warranted." (Shell, 1974:1). And indeed in the body of his essay he speaks almost exclusively of "Indonesian" exiles, convicts and slaves.

Shell's marking of an ethnic differentness finds resonance in works with more conscious agendas in this regard. Shamiel Jeppie describes how I.D. du Plessis attempted to construct a fixed Malay identity apart from other colonial and apartheid subjects such as the 'native'. I.D. du Plessis was a "poet, writer authority on and friend of the Cape Malays." ( Grobbelaar and Kannemeyer, 1987:217; Jeppie, 1988:217). He wrote two well-known works "The Cape Malays" (1944) and, in collaboration with C. Luckhoff, "The Malay Quarter and its people" (1953). He was especially interested in Malay songs as reflected in his doctoral research. From 1953 to 1963 he was secretary and

adviser for Coloured affairs, and advocated the preservation of the Bo Kaap as a Malay group area (6).

Du Plessis constructed an ethnic model of Cape Malay origins in present day Indonesia. This served the purpose of giving the Malays a pure ethnic past whose "'purity' was to be preserved". (Jeppie,1988:4 - 5). In line with this, he considers the exiles the most important of the three categories of Muslims of the Cape (the other two being slaves and free blacks). This was so because though few in number, they contributed richly to the 'Malay traits', and due to their social status in their homelands, possessed 'purer' blood than the slaves. Hence, they could ensure the 'purer' features of the Malays (Jeppie,1988:6).According to Jeppie, du Plessis' political project was to represent the Malays as **different and unique**, and indeed occupying a materially distinct locale. The differentness was not only in relation to other religions and cultures, but also other Muslims, designated "slamse" or "slamaaiers", and who were not quite as ethnically pure as the 'Malays'(Jeppie,1988:24).

The appropriation of these ethnic ideas, however,were not confined to the colonial and apartheid eras. The 1994 Tricentenary Celebrations in honour of Shaykh Yusuf, the "father" of Islam at the Cape, subtly, and perhaps unconsciously, incorporated such perceptions. The celebrations were marked by elaborations of local 'Malay' themes, and the establishment of symbolic and physical links with present-day Malaysia. This was shown, for example, in the prominent presence of Malaysian dignitaries, and the mode of dress which local South African Muslims adorned during the key ceremonies (7).

Adiel Bradlow, a University of Cape Town graduate,has written on the history of Muslims during Dutch colonialism.He was a member of the Muslim Student

Association (MSA) in the 1980's. The MSA was closely aligned to the Muslim Youth Movement. For much of this period these organisations were committed to "Islamism", a paradigm which sought to integrate all aspects of life-religious and secular, private and public-under a perceived Islamic Weltanschauung. (Tayob, 1995:34-35, 139ff). This particularity was, inter alia, reflected in their political stances of this period. Unlike certain other Muslim organisations they preferred not to align themselves with inclusive anti-apartheid groups such as the United Democratic Front. "Muslims have an important role to play in the struggle" affirmed the Movement's newspaper, "but from an Islamic premise." (Tayob, 1990:38).

Bradlow was vocal in calling for such an exclusive response in the writing of history. His significant essay bears an imprint of Islamism. Bradlow consciously rejects ethnic and cultural appellations and conceives his subject in terms of the 'universal' Muslim and a 'universal' Islam. Moreover he argues that they were also recognised as such by the authorities of eighteenth century Cape Town. He employs the concept of Islamization to explain the religious development in this period (Bradlow, 1989:4). The term is significant, implying as it does not only dissemination, but a conscious adherence to 'Islamic' values rather than any other social or cultural norms. According to Bradlow, resistance to oppression was an important value of Islam and it is this that characterised Muslim activities in that period. Islamization was consequently not a cultural anachronism, but a "historical process permeated by profound political and ideological considerations..." (Bradlow, 1989:4). Most tellingly, he takes contemporary historiography to task for not conceiving Islam in terms of resistance (Bradlow, 1989:3). The authorities were well aware of this resistance and specifically passed legislation to restrict the religion. The authorities thus

perceived a specific Muslim identity that had to be countered: linked, but different to resistance from other sections of the colonised.

While certainly diverse in views and agendas, all the writers reviewed so far share

a common perception : **Muslims are 'different' and somewhat apart from other sectors of society** - be it because of a particular history, or a particular ethnicity, or particularly Islamic values. It is of course not axiomatic that because Muslims were "different", they were **important or central** to government concerns in this period. It is notable that the empirically careful Achmat Davids does not make this assumption. But there is a trend in popular perceptions of the Muslim community that **does** think early Cape Islam was an important and central challenge to the government of the day. This trend finds expression in a work by Achmad Cassiem.

Achmad Cassiem was a prominent anti-apartheid activist and leader of the radical Muslim organisation, Qibla. In his "Intellectual roots of the oppressed and Islam's triumph over apartheid" he presents the view that Islam in the Cape was a crucial and strong opponent of colonialism, and thus engendered the fear of the Cape authorities. He states the intellectual roots of the oppressed in South Africa reveal the influence of three streams of thought : firstly, indigenous African culture; secondly, Western, Christian influences and; lastly, the influence of Islam that arrived with the political exiles and slaves. The majority of historical works, however, seems to have totally ignored this last influence (Cassiem, 1992:9). According to Cassiem, the Islamic influence was extremely important :

If this struggle of the oppressed people has a history then Muslims are the focal point of that history. They were enslaved and in exile whilst they were on board the ships

of the conquerors. They arrived in chains whilst the indigenous Africans were still to be chained (Cassiem:1992,10).

Cassiem believes that Muslims were a central threat to the authorities. In their homelands they had resisted European colonialism with armed force, and at the Cape they were prepared to do so again. Since the slaves were fearless and understood "the dynamism of the ideology of Islam", they were greatly feared by the authorities. So much so, in fact, that the death penalty was imposed for propagating Islam (Cassiem, 1992:10,12).

This type of popular perception is by no means confined to "radical" elements of the Cape Muslim community. Kerry Ward has indicated how they formed part of the Tricentenary celebrations. Here, the image of Shaykh Yusuf, which is widely seen as the "father" of Islam in South Africa, is additionally constituted as one of the founding fathers of South Africa- "one that fulfils the credentials of the liberation movement."(Ward,1995?:8-9). A Tricentenary press statement declared the Shaykh "a symbol of freedom for the slaves and others who suffered under the yoke of oppression" (quoted in Ward,1995:21). Writing on the general tenor of the celebrations, Ward remarks :

By organising events that centred on symbolic spaces in Cape Town and capitalising on some of the invented tradition of the liberation struggle, including a mass march through the city centre and a rally in one of the city's largest concert venues, the Tricentenary firmly rooted the origins of the Muslim community in opposition to colonialism (8).

Adiel Bradlow, writing for an academic audience, argues that post 1750 Islam posed a vital challenge to the Cape authorities. He sees the dramatic spread of Islam in the eighteenth century as an expression of resistance to the prevailing structure of social relations and ruling class hegemony (Bradlow, 1989:3-4). Its

increasing visibility thus necessitated punitive measures by the authorities. These measures were contained in various plakkaaten (edicts). Among these plakkaaten was one banning the importation of male Indonesian slaves. It was apparently promulgated because of their perceived volatile character (Bradlow, 1989:20-23). Another plakkaat shifted the responsibility of the religious instruction of slaves away from the state towards the masters. He believes that the effect of this measure was to give the masters the right to coerce their slaves into Christianity, up to the point of absolute compulsion. The fostering of Christianity was to check the spread of Islam (Bradlow, 1989:23-25).

He also holds that restrictions upon the free blacks, who formed the backbone of the Muslim community, was for this reason as well. This is evidenced by the increasing cost of manumission which he believes was aimed at restricting their growth. They were also subject to police harassment. Further, he opines that the passes which they became obliged to carry, were designed at restricting the spread of Islam into the countryside (Bradlow, 1989:26-29). In Bradlow then, Muslims are not only "different" to other segments of society, they were also viewed as a specific and important challenge to the prevailing hegemony.

### **De-specifying identity : the departure point of this essay**

The notion of identity is crucial to understanding why the authorities perceived Muslims in the way they did. If they were indeed seen as Muslims, this would set them apart from other subjects in the purview of the authorities. If not, their religious identity is more readily subsumed under the wider social identities and realities of that period. As we have seen, the established histories on Cape Islam have veered towards the former standpoint. This work seeks to point out that a specific and important "Muslim" identity is not readily yielded by the sources.

This essay's chief purpose is to describe and understand the authorities' perceptions of the exiles. But it contends that what is described can only be understood by departing from the established histories. We should not look for the Muslim identity wherever it is mentioned, simultaneously highlighting it. Rather, it should be located within the Cape context and then its relative importance judged. The assumption that Muslims are somewhat 'different' is a priori subject to an empirical enquiry.

The 'de-specification' of identity is not novel. Writers on Cape slavery have subsumed the "Muslim" under this broad social category. And it cannot be countered that they were looking for the slave rather than the Muslim : slavery unambiguously and very visibly existed as a Cape institution, and was seen as such by the authorities. This study is novel in that we are concerned with Muslims, but believe that they were not necessarily seen in such terms.

Dealing with secondary literature as much as it does, this essay is also an assessment of that literature. Certain facts, points and scenarios are the subject of debate. On occasions we are required to 'take sides' on particular issues. So as well as being a departure, it will also serve to consolidate certain viewpoints in currency.

# CHAPTER TWO

## THE LOCATION OF MUSLIMS IN COLONIAL CAPE TOWN

### Introduction

The prevailing historical literature suggest that Muslims were "different" to other segments in the Cape context. Some further argue that they were a central segment in that context. In this chapter we argue that , on the contrary, Muslims were **peripheral** to this context. Rather than being a constituency, they were subsumed under the rationale, social categories and culture of that context. Moreover, various elements in this context suggest that Muslims were of only marginal concern to the authorities in this period. It is also our essay's contention that an analysis of the various elements of this context will provide the understanding for the descriptive conclusions reached in the following two chapters.

What are the elements of this context that we have to take into consideration? In our view they should involve elements pertinent to "locating" Muslims in Cape society i.e. elements that help us understand the position of Muslims as part of that broader society. These can be earmarked as follows, and will be dealt with accordingly :

1. the colonial rationale : what role did the Muslims as a religious entity play in the colonial mindset? Were they specifically confronted in this respect?

2. the structure of the colonial population : what proportion of the population did the Muslims form? In purely demographic terms, how prominent were they in that society?
3. the social structure : was this structure conceived in class, racial or religious terms? In other words, did it allow Muslims as a religious constituency to play a prominent part?
4. the Cape culture : did this culture allow for the establishment of a separate 'Muslim' identity, or was it a more inclusive one?
5. legislative practices : did legislation passed against Muslims suggest that they were considered an important threat?

### **The rationale of Dutch expansion 1652-1795**

Our purpose is to show that the Dutch, in their colonial endeavour, were motivated by economic rather than religious or political factors. They did not purposively set out to encounter "Muslims" in a religious capacity, nor was their intention to establish dominion over Muslim lands. Rather, the Dutch aimed at gaining wealth through trade. From their perspective, it was primarily an economic encounter with people who happened to be Muslim. Dutch settlement at Cape Town was not any different.

One of the characteristics of this period is that colonisation was led by large Companies rather than direct government involvement. Thus, in the East Indies, the French had the "Compagnie des Indes", Britain the "English East Indian Company" and the Netherlands the "Verenigde Oostendische Compagnie" (VOC) (Fieldhouse, 1966:143-144).

The VOC was founded with private capital in 1602. Its function was to break the Portuguese monopoly on oceanic trade with Asia. It also served to end competition between the merchants of various Dutch towns, who

were taking advantage of the war with Spain and Portugal to trade in the East. The States General of the Netherlands examined the VOC's accounts and periodically renewed its charter, but it did not attempt to influence its policy (Fieldhouse, 1966:144-145).

In its early phases the VOC only acquired trade bases, establishing a monopoly on certain commodities. This pursuit led to occupation of places not previously employed by Portugal. The VOC controlled its Eastern empire through the establishment of relatively small bases or through alliances with rulers. Indonesia was their main centre of trade. The VOC bounded its states by treaties that required them not to make foreign alliances or allow other Europeans to trade. The relationship often involved their payment of tribute in local products such as pepper or spices. The only important exceptions to this policy of avoiding territorial commitments were the Banda Islands, Amboyna and Ceylon. But even the occupation of these areas involved economic motives such as the desire to force the production of nutmegs and preserve the cinnamon monopoly (Fieldhouse, 1966:144-146).

The VOC's administrative system was organised so as to facilitate trade rather than govern. With the exception of Ceylon, its bases and factories were centred on Batavia rather than with the mother country (1). The VOC virtually operated autonomously in Dutch East India with that area's affairs run by its officials :

Government by officials was natural because these were not settlement colonies and in theory only Europeans and Asians in company employment lived in them (Fieldhouse, 1966:146).

Their purpose was chiefly to control the internal affairs of commercial centres. Consequently, they adopted a policy of indirect rule, leaving the indigenous laws and forms of government largely unchanged. This “hands-off” policy was also reflected in their tolerant attitude towards religion. Apparently, with the exception of Roman Catholicism, there was freedom of religion. Calvinist ministers that were sent out by the Company did not place critical importance on missionary work (Fieldhouse, 1966:147; van Klaveren, 1953: 53-54).

The VOC’s establishment of a station at Cape in 1652 was to facilitate this economic enterprise. It was to serve as a refreshment station for the Company’s ships on their outward or homeward-bound journeys. Most of the citizens of Cape Town lived off the passing population directly or indirectly, and the town could be relatively empty for most of the year (Ross, "Occupations": 1-2;Fieldhouse, 1966:135). This function is reflected in the appellation “de Indische Zeeherberg” or Tavern of the Indian ocean (Boxer, 1965:242). As late as 1772 Thunberg describes the Cape thus:

(the Cape) may with propriety be stiled an inn for travellers to and from the East Indies, who after several months’ sail may here get refreshments of all kinds...(Quoted in Boxer, 1965:242).

Immigration, then, was not the initial policy of the VOC, and was only reluctantly encouraged when it seemed its advantages may outweigh the disadvantages. Still, the VOC wanted its ships provided with fresh provisions as cheaply as possible. To this end the VOC imposed trade restrictions upon the burghers (settlers) : they were not allowed to trade freely, charge high prices for their produce or barter stock with the Khoi (Boxer, 1965:248-249).

The Company was bankrupted in 1795, probably because of the maintenance of a high dividend rate. Its East Indian possessions and debts reverted back to the Dutch government (Fieldhouse, 1966:148).

To summarise : the Dutch colonial motive did not reside in confronting Muslims in a religious capacity. Neither were they necessarily interested in political control of their trading areas. From the Dutch perspective, Islam was not the issue. The issue was gaining wealth through trade, and anything concerned with facilitating this aim.

### **The Muslim population vis-a-vis Cape Society**

We will show that for the period under consideration, Muslims only formed a small segment of the Cape population. The class with which many of them were associated, the free blacks, remained numerically marginal in comparison to other classes in Cape society. They were also a clear minority of the slave populace. Not only were they small in number, their division into two social groups militated against their functioning as a "religious" constituency.

The first census of the Muslim population was only taken in 1825. In that year, according to figures submitted by Cape Town Imams, there was a total of 2167 Muslims (Shell, 1974:41). If we consider that the total population of the colony numbered approximately 95000 in that period, it can be seen that Muslims were a small group of less than three percent. Moreover, as will soon be seen, intensive conversion to Islam only occurred from the 1790's onward. Upto this period their numbers were even more negligible.

Three classes demographically dominated Cape society in this period, namely, the freeburghers, the slaves and to a lesser extent, the Khoi-Khoi. The free blacks did not constitute a numerically significant group. The following table bears this out.

YEAR	EUROPEAN FREEBURGHERS	BURGHERS' SLAVES	FREE BLACKS	FREE BLACKS AS % OF POPULATION
1670	125	52	13	6.84 %
1690	788	381	48	3.36 %
1711	1693	381	48	2.26 %
1730	2540	4037	221	3.25 %
1750	4511	5327	349	3.42 %
1770	7736	8200	352	2.16 %
1798	c.20 000	25 754	c.1700	3.58 %
1820	42 975	31 779	1932	2.5 %

(Extracted from Elphick and Giliomee, 1989:524)

These figures exclude the Khoi/Bastaard population which was not enumerated till 1798. They approximated more than ten thousand throughout the period. If this figure was included, the demographic position of the free black would be even more marginal than is indicated.

There was a proportional decline in the number of free blacks vis-a-vis the freeburghers and slaves during VOC rule. In 1670 they numbered 5.7 % of the non-VOC population, in 1770 2.1 % (Elphick and Shell, 1989:217). A low fertility rate could be largely responsible for this. In 1760 the free black ratio of children to women was 0.86:1; while it was 2.7:1 among the Europeans (Elphick and Shell, 1989:218). While their

numbers were increasing due to manumission and the freeing of exiles and convicts, the rate of replenishment was too low to sustain a sizeable community in the Company period. (Elphick and Shell,1989:219).

It seems clear that the majority of slaves in this period were not Muslim, and that significant conversion to Islam really started to be felt from the 1790s onward.

Sixty five percent of slaves from Company Voyages, the largest source for slaves at the Cape, were from Madagascar and thus unlikely to be of Muslim origin (Armstrong and Worden, 1989:112). About thirty percent or more of slaves on these voyages were from other parts of Africa, predominantly East Africa, Mozambique, Delagoa Bay and Dahomey (Armstrong and Worden,1989:112). It seems difficult to establish, though, how many of them were Muslim in origin.

Slaves from the East Indies arrived at the Cape on VOC fleets bound for Europe. They were sold here by VOC officials. We may presume that the majority of the slaves were Muslim. But their numbers were never very large as space on these return fleets was limited. Armstrong and Worden calculate an average of twenty to thirty slaves a year procured in such a manner, exclusive of clandestine trade (Armstrong and Worden,1989:117). Moreover, this trade was hindered by the plakkaat referred to above, as well as one promulgated as early as 1716. The Company had become concerned about the growth of such traffic from the 1680's onward. It represented an unwelcome utilisation of Company ships for private profit. Covert transportation nevertheless continued (Armstrong and Worden,1989:116-117).

That Muslims remained a small number for much of this period is also supported circumstantially by the seeming lack of concern regarding Muslim activities prior to the 1790's. From this period onwards, we come across a number of statements expressing concern at the seemingly sudden growth of Islam. References to communal Islam before this period are scattered and limited. One of the more oft-quoted references is the traveller Thunberg's description of a Muslim ceremony that he had attended in 1772. According to Davids (1989) this was probably the Mawlid. The description is matter of fact, and makes no reference to his or the authorities perceptions of such events.

Bradlow takes Shell and Davids to task for dating the observable phenomenon of Islam from about here onwards. He appears to suggest that this assumes the religion to be exoteric rather than esoteric. (Bradlow, 1989:10). Yet it does seem remarkable that this is seemingly the earliest European cognisance of such Islamic practices that can be found.

References to Islam become more urgent with the perceptible impact of Tuan Guru's activities. In the first decade of the nineteenth century the Earl of Caledon expressed alarm if slaves were left to the "zeal of Mohammedan Priests". Concrete measures were taken to counteract this influence. Writing in 1822, an observer, W.D. Bird, considered the prevalence of Islam among the slaves as a "political evil" (quoted in Armstrong and Worden, 1989:149). Islam's growth at the Cape was not gradual and early, but sudden and late. In summary, Muslims were not a demographically significant element of Cape society during the Dutch occupation.

### **The dynamics of Cape society**

Cape society was geared along class and racial lines. Religious affiliation did not play a central role in this discourse. This limited the impact of Islam as a social force. In accounting for increasing white exclusivity in the VOC period, Elphick and Giliomee argue that it was the Company's distinctions between legal status groups that initially structured Cape Society, and that remained in place until the 1830s (Elphick and Giliomee, 1989:528).

These status groups were four : Company servants, freeburghers, slaves, and Khoisan (although free blacks, ostensibly on par with burghers, should be seen as a fifth group). Colonial authorities discriminated among these groups in many areas of daily life such as domicile, right of marriage and movement, taxation, land ownership, etc. It was one's legal status, rather than race or religion, that determined opportunities for advancement (Elphick and Giliomee, 1989:529).

But, importantly, each of the legal status groups corresponded almost exactly to a culturally and somatically distinct group :

The Company servants and the freeburghers were almost all Europeans and so from the beginning economic and political power was monopolised by Europeans. By contrast, no European was ever part of the slave force. Slaves were readily distinguishable on sight from free Europeans and also from Khoisan; the slaves cultures and languages were also different, underscoring the legal distinction between them and the indigenous peoples. This initial correlation of race and legal status was constantly reinforced by the further incorporation of new individuals in Cape society (Elphick and Giliomee, 1989:532).

The period from c. 1770 to c. 1814 saw an intensification of the racial factor in this legal-racial order. This was in response to various crises the Colony faced at this time. These crises sprang from accelerated economic development resulting in a shortage of land and labour, as well as the resistance met to frontier expansion :

These threats to the old Cape order and the labour supply caused the elaboration and frequent expression of sentiments among Europeans, that slaves, free blacks, Khoisan and Xhosa were intrinsically inferior to the colonists (2).

These sentiments were reflected in a rampant hostility towards miscegenation, and discrimination in the church and militia. Tellingly, there were increasing restrictions placed on Khoisan and free blacks. The Khoisan, for example, were subject to restrictions on movement, forced labour, forced apprenticeship, and the gradual demeaning of their status to that of slaves (3). By the turn of the nineteenth century, the ideology of European supremacy had become widespread (Elphick and Giliomee, 1989:550).

We conclude that the identity of Muslims as "Muslims" was adversely affected by the class and racial orientation of society. As was seen in the previous section, they were classed either as slaves or free blacks. In addition we have established that the central social issues of the day concerned class and race. Muslims were simply not confronted in terms of a religious constituency.

### **The nature of Cape culture**

Non-white Cape Town culture was Creole. It was an amalgamation of

different languages and peoples, without any specific group or religion enjoying a hegemony.

Regarding the conditions of slaves in the urban areas, Armstrong and Worden write :

Circumstances in Cape Town were very different. There were variations between slaves who worked entirely as domestic servants, and those who were hired out, as well as a variety of occupational specialisations and skills. The organisation of labour was much less rigidly controlled than on farms... Domestic slaves were much more directly under the supervision of the master and his family and slept on their owners premises. There was a greater measure of mobility among them than was the case with rural slaves, especially for those who were employed selling provisions, although the profits of their trading had to be returned to the masters and closely checked by them. Some Cape Town slaves were better provided with clothing than their rural counterparts... (Armstrong and Worden, 1989:146).

Armstrong and Worden also point to the emergence of an urban subculture of slaves, free blacks, political exiles, Chinese traders and visiting soldiers and sailors. This was centred around the town's taverns, and involving dagga, prostitution and illicit trade. Here, the slave was given the opportunity to "make contact and forge some patterns of existence which were not immediately subject to the direct control of the masters" (Armstrong and Worden, 1989:148).

Cape Town's culture itself was Creole rather than stratified. Elphick and Shell point out :

The prevailing trend in the cultural history of the period we are discussing

was towards homogeneity within regions. Various European cultures (Dutch, French etc.) and various slave cultures (Bengali, Indonesian, Madagascan etc.) were merging with one another and with the culture of the Khoikhoi. By the late eighteenth century the main cultural cleavages were no longer ethnic or status groups (European versus non-European, or slave versus Khoikhoi) but between regions. In Cape Town a mixed European and Asian culture was shared by Company officials, some burghers, and slaves, though some of the latter managed to retain more traditionally Asian traits, especially through conversion to Islam. In the agrarian South-western Cape, slaves and Europeans shared in a culture which was predominantly European in origin (Elphick and Shell, 1989:230).

The impress of this Creolisation was very prominently seen in language, and, to a certain extent, in architecture and cuisine. The lingua francae at the Cape were Malayo, Portuguese and Dutch Creoles. This was indicative of the impact of East Indian culture (Elphick and Shell, 1989:225; Davids, 1989:15). Davids in fact, makes a case for the significant impact of Creole on Afrikaans (see Davids, 1989: pp.4, 16 and 18). 'Malay' masons contributed the gables which are characteristic of old Cape homes. They also had a stylistic influence on furniture-making in this period. (Elphick and Shell, 1989:222). In addition, slaves introduced some familiar dishes of South African cuisine, such as sosaties, bredie, boebootie and koeksusters (Davids, 1989:4).

Islam, then, was part of the subculture but did not define it. The culture was not conceived in specifically religious terms. On the contrary, "unIslamic" elements such as gambling were also essential to its matrix. In addition, the very existence of a polyglot urban culture, with Islam an

important constituent element, appears to belie the repressive picture found in some analyses.

### **The 'anti-Muslim' plakkaaten (legal edicts)**

Bradlow makes a spirited case of "anti-Muslim" plakkaaten promulgated by the VOC. Two plakkaaten are in question here. The one concerns the ban on the importation of Indonesian slaves; the other is a plakkaat appearing to promote baptism as a counter to Islam. The plakkaaten bolster the view that Islam was considered a considerable threat. But we argue that these plakkaaten were, in practice, only partially implemented: the economic benefits accruing from slavery outweighed any perceived threat from Muslims and thus regulations were bypassed. In addition, the lack of implementation may have created an environment conducive to furthering Islam.

The 1760's legislation regarding the ban on the importation of male Indonesian slaves, was indeed again promulgated in 1784 and 1787 respectively, with the stipulations of a substantial fine if any such be found, as well as closer scrutiny of incoming ships to see if they carried such persons (Armstrong and Worden, 1989:117). But the extent to which their reputedly incendiary natures were actual rather than potential is arguable. That they were more the latter is indicated by Armstrong and Worden's comment that confiscation of these slaves rarely took place, suggesting that the practice of sending male slaves to the Cape was winked at by officials both at Batavia and at the Cape (Armstrong and Worden, 1989:117).

Bradlow's discussion of the second plakkaat is more problematic. Contrary to what he suggests, other historical writing views the

legislation as a step that inhibited, rather than promoted, the growth of Christianity. Firstly, the legislation is far from radical, and did not oblige the colonists to free their slaves upon baptism. It merely moved closer to the Synod of Dort's identification of Christianity with freedom (Elphick and Shell, 1989:190). Secondly, the local application of this legislation met opposition not only from the colonists, but from Cape authorities themselves. Elphick and Shell write :

The tensions between Christianity and slavery became stronger at the Cape. In practice this did not result in higher manumission rates, but it did result in lower baptism rates. Slave-owners were now aware that Christianity posed a threat to their property... they now had added incentive to neglect their slaves' formal Christian instruction (Elphick and Shell, 1989:190-191).

And :

By the beginning of the nineteenth century it had become obvious to travellers that the spread of Christianity had been inhibited by the colonist' knowledge that they could not sell their Christian slaves, and by fears that they might lose them altogether. By 1800 the benches in the Groote Kerk, which in recent decades had been set aside for Christian slaves, were empty (Elphick and Shell, 1989:191).

In fact, in the early nineteenth century Sir John Cradock, the governor, repealed the statute due to its counter-productive effects (Elphick and Shell, 1989: 191).

There is also circumstantial evidence to suggest that the authorities colluded in the suppression of slave Christianity by raising manumission

prices i.e. the price at which the slave could purchase his or her freedom. In 1767 the price was twenty six dollars, in 1770 the sum was increased to fifty six dollars and in 1783 the authorities extended the bond period by twenty years. The fact that the Cape authorities had a considerable number of government slaves, together with the personal slaves of the various officials, almost surely helped motivate the regular tightening of manumission prices (Elphick and Shell, 1989:204). In fact, there is an argument that suggests that the legislation resulted in the implicit toleration of Islam at the Cape, facilitating the work of Muslim missionaries such as Tuan Said Alawie and Tuan Guru (see chapter four for details).

In conclusion, the implementation of the plakkaaten suggest that, in practice, Islam was not deemed a significant threat. It may have also created an environment conducive to propagating Islam. Most tellingly, these plakkaaten have to be seen in the light of the wider aspects of Cape society discussed in this chapter, which suggests that Muslims were at the periphery of this society.

### **Conclusion**

Our analysis suggest that Muslims were closer to Cape society's periphery than to its centre. Further, rather than functioning as a constituency in their own right, they were subsumed under various elements of the Cape context. We believe that certain key contextual features of this society-involving its rationale, social structure, culture and legislation-support this view.

The colonial rationale was primarily economic and strategic. In theory, Muslims were not confronted in their religious or political capacities. The

exile, especially, is defined in terms of his religion and land. Immediately, then, this group operates on the margins of the colonial outlook.

The situation in Cape Town coincides with this perspective. Muslims were on the demographic margins of the town and their presence was not felt till late in this period. Moreover, the authorities are unlikely to have regarded Muslims as a religious constituency. Cape social dynamics operated in terms of class and race. Religious affiliation does not appear to have been a crucial concern. The exiles themselves were subsumed under the free black category.

The Creole culture in Cape Town meant that a certain social space existed for Islam. It may not have been as repressed as is made out to be in some of the literature. But while Islam was part of this urban subculture, it did not define it. The composite nature of the culture militated against religious specificity. The "anti-Muslim" plakkaaten appear more muted when seen in this general context. Moreover, their effects belie their apparent aim : in practice Muslims were not seen as an important threat, and their religion may have even received covert support.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE EXILES AS A CLASS : AN OVERVIEW OF THE FREE BLACKS**

#### **Introduction**

The exiles were members of a Cape Town social class called the free blacks. In fact they are considered to be the elite of this class. In this chapter we examine the position of this class in Cape society. We argue that they formed a small, endogenous, and legally and economically marginal class. As such, they operated on the periphery of Cape society.

#### **Composition and manumission practices**

As shown previously, the free blacks were always a demographically limited constituency in Cape society. Moreover, as we shall argue here, their composition was largely endogenous, insuring group insularity. This was particularly due to manumission practices.

The bulk of the free black population consisted of manumitted slaves and their descendants, with a number of exiles and convicts (Elphick and Shell, 1989:216). According to the estimates of Elphick and Shell, the number of exiles, together with their retinues, could not have amounted to much more than 250 in the period 1652 to 1795 (Elphick and Shell, 1989:216). These figures seem to be inclusive of a reputedly large retinue attributed to one De Rottij, who is said to have had one hundred slaves (Elphick and Shell, 1989:216). But Victor de Kock, who is their source for the information, only mentions that this oriental aristocrat

offered such a sum of slaves to the Company in lieu of his freedom (De Kock, 1950:194). He might not have had them at the time in question. So these figures could even be less than estimated. Elphick and Shell also estimate that the Company landed “200 or 300” convicts at the Cape during the eighteenth century, who trickled into the free black community upon the expiry of their sentences (Elphick and Shell, 1989:216).

A major reason in accounting for the relatively small number of free blacks at the Cape is the low rate of manumission. It has been calculated that the average rate of manumission between 1715 and 1791 was 0.165 percent of the slave force per year (Elphick and Shell, 1989: 206). In contrast, Brazil and Peru, for instance, had rates of one percent, six times higher than that of the Cape. Tellingly, twenty-five percent of the manumitters were free blacks themselves, a number far out of proportion to their population. The cost of manumission was one of the reasons why the manumission rate was generally low.

The origins of those who were manumitted are, representatively, :

Year	% of manumitted	Origin
1705	61%	Asian (East Indian and Bengali)
1735	60%	Asian
1770	48%	Asian

The other manumitted consist of those with European names, Africans, those whose origins are unknown, and especially in 1770, 'van der Kaaps'. This last appellation is indicative of the number of Cape born slaves. In 1770 they numbered twenty-five percent of the manumitted. Of these, a considerable number was most likely of Asian descent (1).

Clearly, these figures indicate racial preferences. There was a tendency to liberate Asians rather than Africans, even though the Madagascans in this latter category formed the largest slave grouping at the Cape : sixty-five percent of the slaves obtained from Company shipping ventures, the chief source for slaves at the Cape, were of Malagasy origin (2). The liberation of Asians had a domino-effect. They, in turn, would liberate other Asians (families, friends and co-religionists).

An economic reason is the likely explanation for this preference, which may have been reinforced by somatic prejudices. According to Elphick and Shell :

The bulk of the rural slave force was probably Madagascan or African while almost all skilled artisan slaves in the city and on the large farms of the southwestern Cape were certainly Asian. Thus the low manumission rates for Madagascans might be rooted in the labour-intensive nature of Cape farming (Elphick and Shell, 1989:208).

But the evidence also suggests that the Europeans had a penchant for freeing slaves who were closer to their 'physical type'. Half the slaves manumitted between 1715 and 1791 were Cape born, and thus more likely to be of mixed origin than imported slaves (Elphick and Shell, 1989:208). In fact, Goske in 1671 and Van Reede in 1685 declared that slave children of European fathers had the right of manumission (Elphick and Shell, 1989:188). By inference, Asians, who were closer to the European physical type than Africans, were given preference in the practice of manumission.

In summary, the number of exiles and convicts in the class of free blacks

were marginal in relation to the number of manumitted slaves. Moreover, manumission practices meant the maintenance of endogeneity : the free blacks remained a small, insular Muslim grouping.

### **The legal status of the free blacks**

The legal position of the free blacks gradually eroded during the course of the eighteenth century. Their peripheral status, already constructed in terms of demography and endogeneity, was translated into a social one because of these legal liabilities.

In the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century there seems to have been no legal discrimination against the free blacks who ostensibly enjoyed the same rights as burghers. They were in fact identified with burghers as it appears that the burgher rolls made no official distinction between them and freemen of European origin (MacCrone, 1957:71).

Their rights and duties are enumerated by Elphick and Shell :

... the colonial authorities provided free blacks with land they were free to buy and sell; they gave them responsibilities by organising them in a citizen fire fighting brigade (a dubious privilege); free blacks were entitled to the services of the church and baptism, communion and marriage; they could borrow from the Church Council; they initiated cases in court; they owned livestock and slaves; they were free to return to Asia if they asked permission and paid costs; they apparently could carry weapons; and in 1722 they were given their own militia company (together with the Chinese) under free black officers (Elphick and Shell, 1989:215).

There is also evidence of an attitude of familiarity between white and black in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, at least. MacCrone quotes an incident, most probably in 1708, where a free black, Pieter Harmensz went to an inn and accused a freeburgher Jacob Bourbannis of stealing his whip. Provoked by Bourbannis' teasing, Harmensz stabs the burgher saying "You hell hound, you have enough now, there is blood" (MacCrone, 1957:72-75). As trivial as this incident may appear, it is a pointed indicator that the free black had not, in MacCrone's words, 'lost caste' in the eyes of the white. (MacCrone, 1957:73).

The second half of the eighteenth century witnessed a gradual erosion of some of their rights. In 1765, the authorities noted a growing tendency among freed females who not only considered themselves the equal of 'respectable burghers wives', but actually "surpass that standard of apparent indulged in by them." (De Kock, 1950:220). The authorities decided to stop this practice. De Kock writes :

Thenceforth the female slaves were prohibited from wearing "coloured silk dresses, crinolines, fine lace, trimmings on bonnets, hair that has been curled, also earrings, whether made of imitation or precious stones." Only garments of chintz could be worn, but, provided these women conducted themselves well, they were permitted on their bridal days, and other ecclesiastical occasions, to don as a special privilege black silk gowns (De Kock, 1950:220).

Patterson also mentions restrictions placed upon their funeral ceremonies, use of livery and size of their umbrellas (Patterson, 1975:185-186). These types of legislation speaks much for actual European perceptions. Despite their apparent legal equality, free blacks were not to forget their origins in slavery and act accordingly.

A 1771 plakkaat drawn against the purchase of clothing from Company slaves instanced another discriminatory procedure. Europeans were to pay fines for the first two times this was done, and punished on the third; free blacks were to be treated as slaves, that is, thrashed and sentenced to work in chains for ten years (Elphick and Shell, 1989:215). In the 1790's the free blacks were compelled to carry passes if they wished to leave town (Patterson, 1975:216).

This increasing exclusivity may also be seen in the devolution of burgher status. This status was originally inclusive of the few free blacks (De Wet, 1981:204). For example, the only requirement to serve on the Council of Justice, the body representing burghers, was membership of the Dutch reformed Church (3). But the passage of the eighteenth century increasingly reflected exclusive attitudes on the part of the white burgher class. In the last decades of the eighteenth century, one had to be free, of parents who were free, Christian, and of pure European descent to be classed as a full burgher (Patterson, 1975:185).

We conclude that the legal liabilities imposed on the free blacks ensured that any equality in social status they enjoyed, was steadily eroded. This could only serve to underscore their peripherality.

### **Economic status**

The free blacks did not constitute a moneyed class at the Cape. They made no effective inroads into farming and intercontinental trade, its primary sources of wealth. Rather, their economic activities were confined to small trades and petty retailing.

In the seventeenth century, a small group of free blacks were granted land at Stellenbosch, not long after the arrival of governor Simon van der Stel (Elphick and Shell, 1989:220; Patterson, 1975:189). In 1688 there were six free black farms listed as owning livestock, planting crops or both. But most of these ventures were short-lived and by 1690 almost all free black farmers were back in the Cape district. (Elphick and Shell, 1989:221).

In lieu of land, the main form of registered property in the eighteenth century were slaves. In 1735 the 132 free blacks owned 139 slaves. Considering that most possessed neither house nor land, their "property" appear to have been acquired for filial rather than economic reasons. Many seemed to have purchased their children and aged parents with a view to manumission (Elphick and Shell, 1989:221).

Throughout the eighteenth century the free blacks engaged in two main activities : handicrafts and petty trading. Many were tailors, shoemakers, coopers, saddlers, furniture makers or involved in the building trade (Elphick and Shell, 1989:221-222; Patterson, 1975:190). They also hawked fruit and vegetables, ran inns, and on a fairly substantial level, engaged in fishing. (See Elphick and Shell, 1989:221-224; Patterson, 1975:190).

There were complaints lodged by colonists affected by this competition. In 1727, European bakers asked the authorities to prevent the sale of cakes in the street by boys employed with certain other Europeans and free blacks (Elphick and Shell, 1989:223). In 1745, certain colonists charged that the retail activities of free blacks were injurious to their interests, and that they 'corrupted' the slaves by purchasing stolen

property from them, thereby encouraging thieving. The writer Mentzel defended the free blacks against this accusation, arguing against generalisation. He also pointed out that it was European sailors who provided the stolen goods, smuggling them from ships (Elphick and Shell, 1989:223-224).

Despite these protestations, the economic role of free blacks clearly did not pose any threat to the prevailing hegemony. This was because they failed to penetrate agriculture and the wholesale trades in any significant measure:

...the retreat of the free blacks to Cape Town, and their failure to participate in the town's leading wholesale trades, was of crucial importance in the shaping of the entire colony. For the free blacks were left behind in a society where agriculture and intercontinental commerce provided the only avenues to great wealth. (Elphick and Shell, 1989:224).

There is little evidence to suggest that they were legally or forcibly restricted in these spheres. The most likely reason for their marginal role is demographic : their numbers were too inconsequential to shape economic forces.

### **Summary**

The free blacks, of whom the exiles were a part, always formed a minuscule percentage of the Cape Colony's population, and were a visible minority only in the Cape district itself. But even here their numbers were far less consequential than other sectors of the population. Their proportional decline vis-a-vis the burghers and slaves, induced by their

low birth rate, prevented them from forming a sizeable community in this period.

They were composed largely of manumitted slaves, with smaller proportions of convicts and exiles. Their homogeneity lay in their origin and religion. The majority were from the East and Muslim. This was the outcome of manumission practices, which for logistic and somatic reasons favoured the Easterners. In turn, the manumitted slaves would free their kith and kin. This suggests the formation of a group insularity.

At first they enjoyed ostensible legal equality with the burghers, and were given a number of rights and duties. There is also a suggestion of familiar intercourse between the groups. The second half of the eighteenth century witnessed an erosion of some of their rights. The nature of this erosion was psychological as well as formal. For example, the restrictions on dress reinforced European dominance at the psychological level; discriminatory punishment was a formal extension of their dominance in the political sphere. The disjuncture between white and black, originally hazy, became more pronounced with the passage of time. This served to marginalise the status of the free black.

For the most part the free blacks engaged in handicrafts and petty trade. Their capital assets were mainly slaves, usually not purchased for economic reasons. While their small businesses evoked some reaction from European competitors, the authorities did not appear too concerned. They had no reason to; the failure of the free blacks to significantly penetrate agriculture and wholesale trade meant their permanent consignment as an economic subclass.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## PERCEPTIONS REGARDING MUSLIM EXILES : TOWARDS A DESCRIPTION

### Introduction

Through a critical consideration of the available literature, this chapter seeks to describe government perceptions of the most prominent exiles. It argues that while these perceptions involved various nuances and differed from one exile to the other, the exiles were essentially considered peripheral to government interests.

"Prominence" is defined in two ways : firstly, they were exiles documented in the standard secondary literature; and secondly, by the significant status these exiles have been generally accorded. As regards to the first consideration, secondary sources have highlighted the activities of a limited number of exiles. These reasons include the availability of primary evidence, as well as a popularly induced orientation to explicating the lives of exiles who are considered saints. Our analysis reflects this historical bias. But popularly induced orientation does not imply arbitrariness in deciding which exiles were prominent, and this brings us to our second consideration. Most of these exiles were acknowledged as having been the spiritual leaders of the Cape Muslim community. Most were prominent personalities in their homelands, and were acknowledged as such in the Cape. They consequently had a significant status. Government perceptions of these exiles, then, reflect not only perceptions of individual exiles per se, but simultaneously that of the Muslim community's chief representatives.

Who then are these exiles? They originate from a cross-section of islands now known as Indonesia. In the period under study this country and a few adjoining regions were collectively known as the Dutch East Indies. The East Indies, while subject to extensive Dutch influence, located its political power mainly in a number of island and regional sultanates that composed the area. Dutch political power was physically located at Batavia in north Java. From this base, they directed their trade operations throughout the East Indies. These sultanates were invariably embroiled in internal political rivalry, competing with other sultanates, as well as the Dutch. If the Dutch felt sufficiently threatened by these intrigues and conflicts they would, amongst their stratagems, displace those who they believed were fanning the trouble. It was thus that exiles came to the Cape.

Individually the prominent exiles were a heterogeneous group :

- (1) the "Polsbroek three" were from Sumatra, in the western part of the Indonesian archipelago;
- (2) Shaykh Yusuf's homeland was Makassar, in its northern part;
- (3) the Raja of Tambora, Prince Achmet of Ternate, and Tuan Guru of Tidore were from its eastern part;
- (4) Loring Passir, Tuan Said Alawie and Tuan Nuruman were connected to the central region of Java and Batavia.

Despite coming from this range of geographical regions and local states, these individuals shared two characteristics: they were Muslims, and they merited importance from the Cape Muslim perspective. It is government perceptions concerning each of them that is the subject of our analysis.

### **The 'Polsbroek' Three**

The "Polsbroek three" refer to a group of exiles from Sumatra. Two of them are buried in Constantia, a suburb of Cape Town, and the other on Robben Island. They are venerated as saints by local Muslims, who visit their "kramats" (tombs) in the hope of accruing blessings and spiritual aid. Be this as it may, the evidence suggests that from the perspective of the Cape government, they were largely anonymous.

The Cape became a place for the official confinement of prisoners in 1681 (Davids, 1980: 37). But it had played this de facto role for at least fourteen years. The inscription at the "Islam Hill" tomb at Constantia reads :

...on 24 January 1667, the ship Polsbroek left Batavia and arrived on 13 May following with three political prisoners in chains, Malays of the West Coast of Sumatra, who were banished to the Cape until further orders on the understanding that they would eventually be released. They were rulers :  
 "Orang Cayen", men of wealth and influence. Great care had to be taken that they were not left at large as they were likely to do injury to the Company. Two were sent to the Company's forest and one to Robben Island."  
 "Man is but a shadow and life a dream." (Quoted in Jeffreys, 1936:86).

The governor of the Cape at that period, Cornelius van Quaelberg, is seemingly unaware or consciously disdainful of this status. His entry in the 'Journal' on the date of arrival reads :

May 13th - Arrival of the Amesfoort, with four others later on. The Zuyt Polsbroek carried the Admiral, the Hon. Joan van Dam, and the Nieuw Middleburgh had on board Knibber as Vice-Admiral. They had encountered a severe storm in the latitude of Mauritius, and nearly a month struggled with bad weather and adverse winds off the coast. Had, however, suffered little damage. Commander Quaelbergh proceeds on board, and shortly afterwards returns with the admiral, who was properly saluted and escorted in.

Death of the soldier Martin Gillisz : left here by the Cagge  
(Leibbrandt, 1901:220).

When van Quaelbergh does allude to the prisoners, it is several days afterwards and in these terms :

May 21st - Violent gale and heavy rains and hail during the night causing the West curtain of the fort to collapse.

The three Malays who arrived here as convicts in the return fleet, were sent by us, two to the Company's forest, and one to Robben Island in order to be set to work there each provided with a good chain (Leibbrandt, 1901:220).

The apparent flippancy of van Quaelbergh's reference, or lack of it, regarding the three prisoners may be due to two reasons : the importance of other events mentioned; and his own character.

The coming of an admiral was no minor event, especially as he reported on the state of the colony to its VOC overseers. It is natural that this event's significance would temporarily sideline other concerns. With regard to the governor's character, Theal writes that he was "harsh towards his dependants, cringing towards his superiors."  
(Theal, 1964:161). The burghers considered him a tyrant (Theal,

1964:161). Presumably, he had even less time for those under Dutch subjugation, especially if they were classed as convicts.

The last term is significant. In the Journal the Dutch equivalent “banditen” is used (Journal, Vol.5:96). This seems to indicate that whatever their status in their native land, and perceived as such by the Dutch stationed there, it would be reduced to a common convict’s one here.

Another significant item indicating lack of recognition is the omission of their names. In contrast to the case of Shaykh Yusuf, for example, oral evidence has to be relied upon to ascertain their identities. Jeffreys, writing in 1936, found this to be so conflicting as to be unreliable (Jeffreys, 1936:91).

We can only speculate as to the conditions in Robben Island at that time. But a reasonable speculation might assist in assessing the motivation the Dutch might have had in placing the prisoner there. By 1667, Robben Island had developed into a small community of about twenty-five burghers, soldiers and convict labourers whose primary function was to maintain the place as an emergency complementary station to the mainland. It was a source of food supplies such as cormorants and penguins; a source of train-oil derived from seals; and the provider of shells for the making of lime required for building work (Penn, 1992:13-19) The convicts were needed for this last function, which also had, from the authorities’ point of view, a cathartic effect upon their temperaments. Governor Zacharias Wagenaar is quoted as writing in 1666 :

.... the island makes a very good penitentiary where a rogue, after one or two years work in carrying shells, begins to sing very small (Penn, 1992:19).

The dispatch of the prisoners to Constantia had a labour motive as well. By December 1652, the area of Hout Bay was already demarcated as a source of wood for the main station. This was a scarce commodity in the Fort area. Given the means of transport at that time, this was an area at a considerable distance from the main station. So what originally started off as a temporary destination (the first woodcutters were given enough provisions for eight to ten days) had by 1670 become a permanent settlement in its own right. This was when the Company authorised that potatoes be planted in the area, and its pigs sent there (Sleigh, 1993:268). Up to 1674, at least, there had been a regular supply of wood from the Bay (four cargoes per month) which indicated that the settlement was, in its early phases, strictly regimented (Sleigh, 1993:268).

According to Davids, the isolation of exiles was a deliberate policy. He believes that Cape authorities found it inconvenient to accommodate political exiles in Cape Town from the outset. Escape was always possible, and this, together with their troublesome conduct, led them to being posted to the Company's outstations (Davids, 1980:37). However, as we have suggested, the Company was also motivated by a need for labour. In fact, there may be arguments put forward that the prisoners may have preferred an isolated location. Firstly, there appears to have been a greater possibility of escape when stationed at the periphery than in the centre. Sleigh notes that the relative isolation of Hout Bay and consequent lack of strict supervision may have led to the escape of six Malabar slaves in 1677 (Sleigh, 1993:268).

Most intriguingly, Adiel Bradlow argues that such isolation may have helped the development of Islam. He notes the existence of graves around the present-day shrines in Constantia, arguing that these could have been the ‘mureeds’ (disciples) of the two prisoners. So, while they may have been isolated from Cape Town they were not isolated from all the people of the town. Moreover, “it also gives one an insight into the kinds of social practice evidenced during this period. Indeed it is highly likely that the burial places of the two shaykhs were respective points of habitat during their incarceration at the Cape” (Bradlow, 1989:45-46).

Aside from labour and isolation, there is another possibility as to why the exiles were so dispatched. Their banishment bound in chains, may have physically reinforced the lack of mental recognition accorded to them by van Quaelbergh’s journal and its significant omissions, as well as the professed aim of ‘making them sing small.’

We may encapsulate the attitudes to the Polsbroek three. The governor, van Quaelbergh, seemingly considered them unimportant. He does not mention them on their day of arrival and when he does, it is in a flippant manner. This lack of recognition is reinforced by their description as ‘banditen’ (convicts), and the omission of their names. That they were isolated is not necessarily an indication that they were considered a political or religious threat. The Cape was in need of labour. This isolation was also regarded as a way to break a convict’s will. In fact, one may even argue that this isolation was suited to fostering Islam. But given these exiles’ general marginality, this would have not posed a challenge.

### **Shaykh Yusuf (d.1699)**

Shaykh Yusuf is possibly South Africa's most famous Muslim personality. He is seen as the founder of Islam in this country. He was an outstanding "Sufi"-or Muslim mystic-and for this reason is venerated both in South Africa as well as his native Indonesia. His "kramat" at Faure, outside Cape Town, is a regular site of pilgrimage.

The Cape government was aware of his status as a saint. The Shaykh warranted their courtesy and, together with his entourage, was accorded a degree of preferential treatment. However, as we shall argue, it did not see the Shaykh as a political or social force at the Cape.

By the early 1680's the Cape had become the dispatch area for exiles. An apologetic dispatch in 1681 reads :

Though you do not like to be burdened at the Cape with many convicts, and we shall act as sparingly as possible in this matter, the service of the Company and present circumstances have demanded from us to send you a considerable number of exiles and evil spirits, who for reasons, dare not be trusted in this country or left here... Among this lot are Princes, etc...(Quoted in de Kock, 1950:194).

According to de Kock, this tacitly betrays the fact that the advent of Eastern people had been viewed with disfavour in the colony (De Kock, 194). This, though, appears to be an extrapolation. Eastern exiles may have been regarded with disfavour, or indifference as we suggested was the case of the Polsbroek three, but slaves were specifically imported (Davenport, 1991:22-23). Moreover with the arrival of Shaykh Yusuf and his entourage in 1694, these perceptions became more complex.

By 1694, the Shaykh had already achieved wide fame throughout the East Indies. There were two reasons for this. He was a prominent Sufi and scholar, being the head of the Khalwatiya mystical order and the author of some fifteen books (Dangor, 1982). He was also linked to the Royal House of Bantam, through his marriage to the sister of one of its kings (Leibbrandt, 1887:176). There seems little doubt that it was the former reason which accounted for the extraordinary reverence with which he was held. Leibbrandt says that he was “worshipped as a saint” to describe how the inhabitants viewed him, and quotes a source who writes that they “most reverentially picked up as a holy relic his **sapa** or **pinang** [chewed betel nut] which he spat out, after having chewed it dry” (Leibbrandt, 1887:177; see also Dangor, 1982:32).

That his reputation had spread far and wide may be ascertained from the circumstances around which the Dutch were forced to relocate him to the Cape. After his capture he was originally exiled to Ceylon but his influence was such that the Company feared he would be given aid to escape (Dangor, 1982:32). Moreover, they had reason to believe he was instigating revolution in the region from that island. He was then sent to the Cape.

Shaykh Yusuf and his forty-nine followers were settled at Zandvliet (now Faure) and reportedly given a liberal allowance. A letter, dated the 1st July 1699 and written presumably by Willem Adriaan van der Stel to the Batavian government, complains :

Until the end of August they [i.e. Shaykh Yusuf and his retinue] and others of their kind have cost the Government in pay and maintenance F24, 421: 12sk: 12st: or, including this years outlay, F26, 2z1: 12sk: 12st., a heavy burden indeed on our revenue (Deeds, 1913:5).

According to Jeffrey's the actual amount given the Zandvliet community was twelve rixdollars a month (Jeffreys, 1939:195). But it is significant to note that the amount accorded to him in Ceylon was twenty four rixdollars. The discrepancy may suggest that he had now become a less crucial concern for the Dutch in the furtherance of their East Indian interests.

That they were deliberately isolated and cut off from contact with other exiles is a view implied by Davids and stated by Dangor (Davids, 1980:40; Dangor, 1982:37). But they may have actually preferred the isolated area where they could have followed their religious duties relatively unhindered. A relative freedom of activity was another favourable factor. Had they been stationed in Cape Town, they would have been most likely jailed. The case of another exile, the Raja of Tambora, appears to support this view. The Raja was originally housed in the stables of the castle, but was transferred to Stellenbosch upon Shaykh Yusuf's intercession. where he even had the opportunity to write the Quran from memory (Davids, 1980:40).

Of course, it suited the Dutch to prevent an obviously influential person from close contact with the slaves and exiles of the town. But there is apparently no report of the Zandvliet community complaining against their isolation. Otherwise, Willem Adriaan van der Stel would likely have mentioned it in his previously quoted letter of 1699. Perhaps the isolation was alleviated by the women and the children in the party (Deeds, 1913:2). It is significant that Shaykh Yusuf was sent with an entourage of 49 members and followers in contrast to the Polsbroek three. This was probably in deference to his position. The community was also able to

receive parcels at various times from Indonesia (1). For these reasons we say the Shaykh was located, rather than isolated, at Zandvliet.

As far as the personal relationship with the Dutch went, he is said to have been "royally welcomed" by Simon van der Stel (Davids, 1980:38).

Dangor points out that Shaykh Yusuf maintained friendship with the Cape Governors, despite being a thorn in their side, indicating the respect he commanded (Dangor, 1982:56). Dangor's source appears to be Ian D.Colvin. Colvin writes on the Dutch treatment of Shaykh Yusuf :

the Dutch appear to have used him with the consideration due to his rank and greatness... And doubtless also Simon Van der Stel, that wise, enlightened and gracious old man, took no little interest in the visitor, and he treated him handsomely, if we may judge from the bill of maintenance, "a heavy burden on our revenue," as it is ruefully represented to the Company by Simon's successor." (Colvin,not dated:170).

This is a moot point. Colvin relies upon a character assessment of Simon van der Stel to suggest the friendship. Theal indeed presents van der Stel as courteous and exceedingly hospitable to strangers, traits "dwelt upon by more than one visitor." (Theal, 1963:248). However, he was also very patriotic : "In his eyes everything that was Dutch was good, and whatever was not Dutch was not worthy of regard.... The Dutch language, Dutch laws, Dutch institutions, Dutch customs, being all perfect in his opinion, he made it his business to plant them here uncorrupted and unchanged" (Theal,1963:248). So while a royal welcome may fit in with his character, assuming that he cultivated a friendship with a staunch East Indian Muslim and Dutch opponent is a less likely state of affairs. Moreover, the basic problem in Colvin's assessment remains : there appears to be no actual evidence of a close association.

Dangor has implicitly claimed that the Shaykh's activities at the Cape were viewed as a threat by the authorities. The important piece of primary evidence presented in this regard is an extract from the letter of the 1st July 1699. After complaining of the burden on the revenue, it continues : "Besides, the Mohammedans are multiplying rapidly, and increasing in numbers." There are two factors to consider when this statement is taken into account. Firstly, it is unlikely that Willem Adriaan van der Stel was specifically concerned with Shaykh Yusuf's entourage. The statement follows the outline of the revenue spent upon exiles as a whole (refer to the extract quoted earlier). So it seems to refer to the Muslim population as a whole rather than any dramatic increase in the Shaykh's followers.

Secondly, on the basis of this quotation, Dangor suggests proselytisation on the part of Shaykh Yusuf. Da Costa, who presents a précis of Dangor in 'Pages from Cape Muslim History', writes: "...he became the focus of a gradually growing Muslim community" (Da Costa, 1994:23). However, we suggest that the statement indicates a concern for the Muslim birth-rate, not any proselytisation activities. The original Dutch of the relevant statement reads : "behalven dat dese Mohametanen, door geboorte in getal, hoe langer, hoe meerder, zyn toenemende" (Deeds, 1913:1). The key phrase here is "door geboorte" which I interpret as "through birth." Unfortunately, the English equivalent employed, "multiplying", is capable of being employed differently.

Moreover, other evidence that is presented in support of proselytisation is also problematic. Da Costa goes on to say that "Zandvliet became the rallying place for slaves and exiles who rallied around him.... They also did a considerable amount of missionary work amongst the Khoi-Khoi

and slaves at the Cape” (Da Costa, 1994:23). This statement seems to be based upon secondary sources, the articles of Jeffreys and Lewis, and it is these we have to look at.

In her articles in the ‘Cape Naturalist’ of 1939, Jeffreys does not quote her sources but their tenor and references to the entries in the Governor’s journal suggest that primary evidence is her main source of information. However, she relies on inference to suggest that Zandvliet was troublesome to the Dutch. The passage is :

It [Zandvliet] proved a rallying point for fugitive slaves and other oriental, **who no doubt** swelled the rank of the priest’s following, and brought them somewhat into disrepute with the authorities. (emphasis mine)  
(Jeffreys, 1939:195).

It is almost certain that the Muslim slaves and exiles of Cape Town were aware of a Sufi teacher and his entourage at Zandvliet. And it is likely that they would have wanted to establish contact, both for reasons of Muslim fellowship and spiritual solace, the last given the strong ‘tariqa’ traditions in the East Indies at the time (2). This is confirmed by a memorial of 1838, submitted by Imam Achmet of Bengal to the governor, Napier. It concerns Shaykh Yusuf’s tomb in Faure. In it the Imam states that ever since the Shaykh’s passing away, his resting place has been a pilgrimage site for local Muslims (3).

Yet, whether any contact would have “swelled” the ranks of the Shaykh’s followers is clearly an inference, indicated by the interspersion of “who no doubt” in the quoted statement of Jeffreys. Further, by the use in the statement of “somewhat”, any incipient movement that may have resulted was surely a minor rather than a substantial threat. The word would

hardly have been used had the Dutch a serious problem on their hands. Moreover, the Dutch would have been uneasy at any contact as they maintained a surveillance on the community (Dangor, 1982:56). Presumably, they would have acted had matters gone out of hand. Finally, it is of note that Jeffreys, unlike da Costa, does not mention activity among the Khoi-Khoi or non-Muslims in general. The passage refers to fugitive slaves and other Orientals.

David Lewis, in his article on the religion of the Cape Malays, is concerned with Islam as a living tradition. His reference to history is consequently subsidiary, relying upon Theal, Jeffreys and, apparently unnamed oral sources. The following important statement is not substantiated in the text or by reference :

During the remaining years before his death, he (Shaykh Yusuf) organised religion at the Cape and established Islam on a sound basis. With the imams in his following, he conducted religious services in the few slave lodges and private houses where Muslims were able to meet, and in lodges where meetings were illegal (Lewis, 1949:587).

Besides this statement being unsubstantiated in the article, it is unlikely that the Shaykh could have moved to and fro between Zandvliet and Cape Town since, as was mentioned, the Company most likely kept a surveillance upon him (see above). Considering that they did not want him to escape to Makassar in the East Indies, it is not unreasonable that they would have done so.

Lewis's statement is also incongruous with a previous one he makes, where the Shaykh was said to be "understood and esteemed by the

Company's white officials, and befriended by the Governor." (Lewis, 1949:587). Would this be the case if he was known to be involved in covert and illegal activity?

But while the Dutch may have not been too concerned about his influence here, they still appeared to have trepidation about his effect back in the East Indies. This may be inferred from the ambiguity surrounding the decisions arising before and after his passing away on 23 May 1699. In 1698 the council of Batavia refused requests, such as one by the King of Gowa, Abdul Jalil, that Shaykh Yusuf be allowed to return from exile. This was despite the fact that the Dutch, with the aid of the Bugis, had defeated the Makassarese in 1669 and had effective control of the region. In the words of Ricklefs : "This time the defeat of the Makassarese Sultan and his nobility was final" (Ricklefs, 1981:130). This is confirmed by the King of Gowa's petition which mentions Dutch dominance of the area as a reason to return the Shaykh - there was nothing to fear. (Jeffreys, 1939:195 - 196). In all likelihood, though, the Dutch feared not his presence in his native area, but rather his influence in places such as Bantam and Mataram, which had more recently come under Dutch control - 1683 and 1677 respectively- and where considerable numbers of Makassarese were present.

Upon the Shaykh's passing away, there was a written request by the principal residents and officers of Gowa that the Shaykh's entourage be allowed back. Initially, it seems that the Governor General and his Council allowed his wives, daughters and sons and grandsons under the age of six years to return (See Deeds, 1913:2)

However, the Resolutions state :

...it is further decided to keep the slaves of the aforesaid Sheikh Joseph for the Company and have them valued so that they may serve out their cost in maintaining the said priest and his retinue; and further to reduce the salary of those remaining in proportion to the increasing number and that they may be comfortably maintained with (Deeds, 1913:2).

By early 1705 most of the retinue, with the exception of two who chose to stay, were back in the East Indies (Davids, 1980: 39).

It is difficult to establish what happened to the Shaykh's body after his passing away. Dangor writes that the Company had also granted permission to family members for his body to be exhumed and returned to Gowa. Accordingly, he was buried in Lakiung on the 5th April 1705 (Dangor, 1982:48). But Davids and da Costa argue that there is strong evidence to indicate that he was indeed buried at the Cape.

What may be elicited concerning perceptions of the Shaykh? Shaykh Yusuf was indeed considered an important person, and the Dutch feared his influence in the East Indies, hence his exile to the Cape. But it is doubtful whether he was so influential in the Cape and concomitantly, whether he, his entourage and any of their activities were considered a threat here. He was apparently well-received by Simon van der Stel but there is little corroborating evidence to suggest a friendship developed between the two. But that he was in contact with the authorities, and that they granted him a degree of respect, may be evidenced by the intercessory role he is said to have played in the transfer of the Raja of Tambora.

It is a moot point whether the exiles were isolated against or because of their wishes. There would be a wariness about the Shaykh's influence. On the other hand, such a setting seemed conducive to greater religious freedom and may have been preferred by the exiles. In addition, Willem Adriaan van der Stel's complaint about cost does indicate that they were obliged to maintain the retinue by the Batavian authorities, rather than horde them with the slaves and convicts.

It is also doubtful whether the authorities saw the Shaykh and his activities as a religious threat. The primary evidence presented in this regard is scanty and capable of a different interpretation while the secondary evidence is speculative. That they did not consider him a prominent influence here is suggested by the denial of permission for him to return home, and the fact that he was not transported elsewhere. That the government regarded the Shaykh's presence here out of obligation to the Company is suggested by their stated intention, after his passing away, of recuperating their maintenance costs by putting the retinue's slaves to labour. But it is also a measure of respect shown to the Shaykh by the authorities that they, even after his death, intended that the remaining retinue be comfortably maintained.

All in all, a different picture from what is portrayed in current historical literature emerges. Shaykh Yusuf was an exile that was located rather than isolated at Zandvliet. He was respected and enjoyed cordial, though not necessarily friendly, relations with the authorities. The authorities did not perceive the Shaykh and his community as a threat, and allowed it go about its activities. It tolerated and maintained the community because of its obligation to the VOC. But the authorities were not concerned about any marked impact they may have had on Cape life. The authorities

viewed the community as peripheral to their interests at the Cape. The location at Zandvliet emphasised this peripherality.

### **The Raja of Tambora, Achmet of Ternate and Loring Passir**

The Raja of Tambora (d.1719), Achmet of Ternate and Loring Passir are singular in certain respects. In contrast to the other exiles they are not commonly regarded as saints. They were all princes in their homelands. Significantly, for our purpose, the Dutch attitude towards them indicates the way in which certain idiosyncratic features were crucial to shaping perceptions.

The Raja of Tambora (Abdul Basi Sultania) was a contemporary of Shaykh Yusuf. Tambora was originally part of the Majaphit Kingdom of Jauc but had fallen under the domain of the Macassarean Sultanate. The defeat of Gowa brought Tambora under Dutch control (Shell, 1974:23). The Raja was exiled to the Cape in 1697, for fomenting revolution against the Dutch and their vassals (Shell,1974:23).

He was originally sentenced to serve as a convict in chains but was treated more leniently , it is said, upon the intercession of Shaykh Yusuf (Shell,1974:23). Accordingly he was transferred from the Company's stables to the Governor's residence in Stellenbosch.

In 1705, Willem Adriaan van der Stel invited Francois Valentyn to accompany him to his estate 'Vergelegen', in Stellenbosch. A passage from Valentyn's "Description" provides an illuminating account of an encounter with an exile. After describing the beauty of the estate, he continues :

To my surprise I found here the King of Tambora and his wife, of whom we writing out the Coraan or Alcoraan very neatly for H.E, and his wife had some sort of oversight over the household. He was banished here because of his bad behaviour on Bima (on zyn quaade bedryven op Bima) and she followed for love of him. They were glad to see me, so that they could speak with me there for some time in the Malay tongue, and the governor was much astonished to hear how , after being so long out of the Indies, I still spoke so fluently (Valentyn,1971,volume one:151-153).

A somewhat idyllic portrait emerges. Clearly the Raja had the leisure and opportunity to write the Quran. If this was the case, he was probably not subjected to exertion through work. That the couple appeared to have freedom of religion and movement is deducible by the very fact that he was allowed to write the Quran. No discomfiture is mentioned in these respects. It is likely that they were accorded respect in the household, given the wife's position of responsibility.

This idyllic picture is reinforced when Valentyn's description of the estate is examined :

I viewed this lovely homestead, around which was an eight-sided, ornamental, high and thick wall against the wild beasts. I found the gallery in the centre 80 feet long and 6 wide. This gave an exceptionally lovely view in the direction of the False Cape; in addition there was a flower-garden laid out in 4 sections, and a fine river which divided into two branches. This lovely and unusually pleasant gallery was very airy and high, and on each side of it were 4 lovely rooms, and close to them on each side another 4,

very neatly furnished, worthy to have been preserved for ever  
because of their great beauty and great amount spent on them...

(Valentyn, 1971, volume one, 151).

Vergelegen was in fact what led to van der Stel eventually being recalled to Amsterdam. At Vergelegen "he was soon producing wheat, fruit, wine and vegetables in such quantities that the freeburghers felt their livelihood threatened. This led to agitation against him" (Tijmens, 1979:184).

Being such a major source of produce, Vergelegen probably had a good deal of contact with the town. The image of an isolated exile painted by Davids should be modified by an awareness of this (See Davids, 1980:40). Moreover, whether there was psychological isolation is also a moot point. It appears that the Raja most likely went there on his own volition (See above).

The Raja was not allowed to return to his native land and throne, and passed away at the Cape in 1719. It may be said that the Raja was firstly regarded with apparent disdain by being housed in the stables, but he and his wife were later accorded respect and tolerance as seen by their position at Vergelegen.

Achmat of Ternate and his family arrived at the Cape most probably in the early 1720's. He had been banished for being involved in a plot to undermine Dutch domination (Shell, 1974:26). Despite this, he was allowed to possess slaves and, it appears, initially given freedom of movement. According to de Kock he was charged with misusing this freedom :

The potentate and his slave, "whom he uses as a pointer to find his own game," were sentenced to be thrashed by Caffres and afterward relegated to Robben Island, there to work for his food. The Prince had been guilty of admitting to, and harbouring in the house, by day and by night, Europeans as well as slaves of both sexes for gambling, whoring and other irregularities (De Kock, 1950: 193-194).

According to Shell, he stayed till 1788 when he asked permission to take his family and slaves back to Batavia (Shell, 1974:26).

Prince Loring Passir of Java who, with his family, arrived in 1723, claimed his exile was the result of malice by his mother-in-law (Botha, 1962:279). Botha points out, though, that he had an earlier fall-out with his father, and took refuge with the Company. The father, Sultan Pakabuana, prevailed over the Company to send his son to the Cape. The Company was only prepared to offer a residence, and the Sultan provided the allowance of 300 reals per year. The residence was in Stellenbosch, located in land "where he could remain under supervision and find no opportunity to conspire with the English, the French or other foreigners to escape and thus return to Java and create more disturbance."

(Botha, 1962:279). Passir was given a former burgher's house whose suitability lay in it being near water "so greatly needed by that nation."

(Botha, 1962:279). This appears to be out of consideration to the bathing habits of the Indonesians (4).

His requests for permission to return to his homeland seems to have gone unheard. He languished at the Cape long after his father and mother-in-law had died (Shell, 1974:25).

In summary, idiosyncratic factors such as intercession, personal liability and court intrigue resulted in significantly changed circumstances for these three exiles. The Raja was regarded with apparent disdain and housed in the stables. He and his family were later accorded respect and tolerance. Achmat of Ternate was originally accorded tolerance : he had at least one slave, and appeared to have freedom of movement. Later, he was accused of misusing this freedom, considered a rogue, and banished to Robben Island. The case of Loring Passir may indicate that general political processes and tensions, rather than any specific act, also motivated exile to the Cape.

### **Tuan Said Alawie**

Tuan Said Alawie lies buried in one of the three famous ‘Kramats’ (shrines) of the Bo-Kaap, the other being that of Tuan Nuruman and Tuan Guru. He is esteemed by local Muslims for the missionary activities he is believed to have undertaken among the slaves. The prevailing view is that this must have occurred against considerable odds. We argue that the Tuan did not enjoy the esteem of the authorities. Moreover, any missionary activities he may have engaged in were carried out in an environment that just happened to be conducive to such activity.

He arrived with Hadjie Matarim in 1744. The two were originally condemned to life sentences in chains on Robben Island. After eleven years of imprisonment, the Hadjie passed away and the Tuan was given his freedom. The “Bandietenlijse” has described them as ‘Mohamedaansche Priester” and the Tuan is said to have carried on activity in this vein upon his release (Davids, 1985:49ff). Oral history records that he used to enter the locked slave quarters at night to propagate Islam. Shell is of the opinion that his profession as a policeman

might explain this tradition. Indeed, G.C. Botha, a chief archivist, mentions that upon his release, the Tuan became attached to the Fiscal, who was Chief of Police (Botha, 1962:280).

The status of a policeman was seemingly not highly-regarded. Their duty was to take drunken slaves to the tronk (jail) and execute “the lowest work of the law, such as the flogging of criminals.” (Botha, 1962:25). Their ranks were taken from the bandieten of the East Indies, sent to the Cape for a term of imprisonment (Botha, 1962:280). They were generally not considered to have good characters because they were often found drunk. In addition, this menial status was reinforced by restrictions on touching or arresting Europeans, except when caught in an act of crime (Botha, 1962:280). Although the Tuan’s own personality is esteemed by oral tradition, European perception of the class to which he belonged was somewhat different. By being granted such a position he was not “honoured” by the Europeans, as were some other exiles.

According to Davids, the Tuan’s propagation of Islam must have been against considerable odds. The Cape was governed by the Statutes of India which forbade the propagation of any religion other than the Dutch Reformed Church. Burghership rights were granted only to those who were members of that church (Davids, 1994:60). Yet this does not imply that Islam was not tolerated. On the contrary, Davids himself believes that it was (Davids, 1994:60). In fact, there is evidence that Islam was implicitly encouraged. As Davids writes :

... the real growth of Islam only started late in the eighteenth century, and, strangely enough, it was the white colonists who were responsible for this growth. This was because of the White reaction to the 1770 regulations for the Statutes of India, and in particular their concern over the regulation which

prohibited the sale of Christianised slaves. The colonists interpreted this as interference in the slave ownership rights, and instead of leading their slaves towards Christianity, encouraged them to become Muslims. Therefore these regulations, which had been specifically designed to promote Christianity among the slaves population, in reality led to the promotion of Islam. The result was that by 1800, the benches set aside for slaves in the Groote Kerk were empty (Davids,1994:59).

This is confirmed by Shell who provides primary sources such as a statement by Sir John Cradock and a dispatch by the London Missionary Society, to support this view. Indeed, in 1812 Cradock repealed the above mentioned proclamation of 1770 due to its lack of success (Edwards, 1942:55). Despite the legal difficulty, therefore, the Tuan's actual propagation was most likely facilitated by this atmosphere. In summary, the Tuan was an exile the authorities did not 'honour' and about whose activities they were not seemingly concerned. Though acknowledged as a "Mohamedaansche Priester", his status was initially that of a convict. Upon release, his occupation as a policeman did not markedly improve this status. A policeman was considered to be doing the "lowest work of the law" and their ranks taken from convicts of "not too high a character".

They also could not have been too concerned about the missionary activities he is widely believed to have undertaken. In fact, circumstantial evidence suggests that the authorities may have implicitly allowed these activities as it helped keep slavery intact.

### **Tuan Nuruman (Paay Schaapie)**

Tuan Nuruman, more popularly known as Paay Schaapie, initially had a frictional relationship with the VOC authorities. Later however, he enjoyed the friendship and patronage of the Cape Batavian government. While this patronage indicated an increasing awareness of a growing Muslim community, it was largely generated by factors internal to that government.

Tuan Nuruman was a Batavian exiled to the Cape in 1770. According to the Colonial Secretary, S.E. Hudson he was a manumitted slave who resided in the slave lodge (Quoted in Davids, 1985:35). He is portrayed as a simple man whose piety found expression through service to others. His talismans (“azeemats”) were also believed to protect against evil and misfortune. In 1786 he was accused of assisting a group of runaway slaves by giving them azeemats, and was subsequently incarcerated on Robben Island (Davids, 1985:35-36). Davids infers that it was for this reason that Hudson calls him a “troublesome character.” (Davids, 1985: 36). After his release the Tuan is said to have continued the role of Imam in the Muslim community. During the rule of the Batavian Republic (1801 - 1804) he was close to General Janssens, the governor. As a token of this friendship, the governor granted him a plot of land as a burial ground for him and his family (Davids, 1985:36). This land was situated in upper Cape Town and is now known as the Tana Baru. The primary evidence for this is provided by a notice in *De Verzemelaar* of 21 June 1842. It concern a civil action taken by Rammelan, an ‘onderling’ or member of Imam Carel Pilgrim’s congregation, against Magmoud, an ‘onderling’ of Imam Samoudien. Rammelan accused Magmoud of breaking down the wall of Rammelan’s father’s grave in the Tana Baru. Magmoud’s defence against the action was reported as follows :

The accused completely rejects the claim, and stated that he was the adopted son of the Malay Imam, Norman, also known as Paai Schaapie, who was a respected servant of General Janssens,, the one time governor of the Cape during the era of the Batavian Republic, who allied with him during the troubles with the English; and that the Governor granted the piece of land in question as a burial ground for his family.

(He states) that he was the only heir of Paai Schaapie and his property, and could prove this through the evidence of elderly people, one of whom was a hundred years old... and that Paai Schaapie took an assurance from him upon his deathbed, that no wall will be built around his grave (5).

As to why Paay Schaapie had good relations with the governor despite his earlier incarceration, two reasons present themselves. One that has been inferred from the extract just quoted is because he assisted against the English. This is further suggested by the existence of a "Javaansche Artillery" consisting of Muslims who supported Janssens in his foreign troubles (See Davids, 1980:90). However, this is chronologically problematic. The relationship between the governor and the Tuan would then have been established after the defeat of Janssens, where he would have been in an unlikely position to grant the land. According to Theal one of the provisions of the peace treaty was that while the Batavian troops could retain their private property, public property of every description had to be given up (Theal, 1964:124).

It should be mentioned that the article itself makes no precise mention of chronology, and does not say that the piece of land was granted for this purpose.

A more plausible explanation are the overtures made by Janssen's to enlist Muslim support in the event of an English invasion. This was clearly seen in 1804 when religious freedom was promulgated at the Cape. Similarly, fostering ties with one of the more esteemed Imams would enhance the governor's standing in the Muslim community.

However it would be unfair to characterise the granting of religious freedom as a purely strategic manoeuvre. On the contrary, the evidence indicates a genuine liberality. De Mist, the Commissioner who accompanied Janssens was strongly influenced by Enlightenment ideas, especially that of Rousseau's. The Dutch were allied to Revolutionary France at the time (1803 - 1806). In addition to the promulgation of this act, Janssens also introduced reforms in bureaucracy, marriage, education, and the economy, as well as taking steps to abolish slavery (van Aswegen, 1970:202-204). The nature of these measures helped Muslim interests. Marriages were to be contracted before civil authorities, not the Church (van Aswegen, 1970:203). Education was similarly divested from the Church, and its control given to a Council of Scholarchs. The system was geared to the principle of humanism rather than Calvinism.

But what probably touched Muslims the most were the measures concerning slavery. Regarding this, it is written : "... De Mist entertained certain definite ideas. He wanted to liberate them gradually by freeing their children at birth, and he prohibited the further importation of slaves (van Aswegen, 1970:204) It is most likely for these reasons that Paay Schaapie and other Muslims extended their co-operation to the Batavian regime.

Thus, in the authorities' perceptions, this Tuan was considered “troublesome” by the VOC, but with whom the Batavians cultivated cordial relations, both for strategic and principled reasons. He was initially not highly regarded : although an exile, he was apparently consigned to slavery. His “troublesome” nature arose because he gave azeemats to runaway slaves, and not because of any sustained resistance to the VOC. The Batavians made use of his later prominence, enlisting Muslim support in the event of an English invasion. But their cordiality with the Tuan also reflected a genuine respect for other religions, engendered by the ideas of the French Revolution.

### **Tuan Guru (d.1807)**

While Shaykh Yusuf may be seen as the pioneer of Islam in South Africa, Tuan Guru was responsible for its formal establishment. The Tuan, by establishing Cape Town's first mosque and Muslim school, ensured that the ritual requirements of Islam were facilitated and its teachings formally communicated from generation to generation. While his activities were indicative of an increasing Muslim assertiveness, government responses wavered between support and concern and were determined by practical rather than ideological reasons. Tuan Guru, along with three other prisoners, was banished to the Cape in 1781. He hailed from Tidore and was known as a “State Prisoner” for allegedly conspiring with the English against the Dutch (Davids, 1985). He was released from Robben Island in 1793.

Davids's use of “allegedly” may seem to cast doubt upon the reason for banishment, introducing an element of Dutch injustice. But the allegation is offhand not unlikely. Dutch relations with the English were precarious at the time. The merchants of Amsterdam were inclined to embark upon

trade with the new republic of America, and in 1779 prevailed upon their government to provide naval support to the commercial fleet trading there. The news also leaked out that the Dutch were to adopt a neutral attitude in the Revolutionary War. In doing so, they effectively reneged upon a frequently renewed agreement of 1678 whereby they agreed to support England wherever the latter was the assailed party. The last straw was when a draft commercial treaty the Dutch entered into with America, fell into the hands of the English. England declared war on Holland towards the close of 1780 (De Klerck, 1938, Vol. 1:425 - 426). While the Dutch had effective control over Eastern Indonesia (where Tidore is located) from the 1680's onward, they intermittently experienced problems with breakaway rulers. Arung Singkang is a case in point (See Ricklefs, 1981:66-67; see also De Klerck, volume one, 1938:423-424). It is then not inconceivable that individual princes may have tried to take advantage of Dutch external problems. It may also be mentioned that the Sultan of Batjan was also banished to the Cape in the same period and for the same reason. (De Klerck, 1938, Vol. 1, 424).

Tuan Guru's most significant activities upon his release was the establishment of a madrasa and mosque. Tuan Guru established the Dorp Street madrasa in 1793 (Davids, 1992:10). Davids argues that permission to open the madrasa bespeaks the atmosphere of partial tolerance existing at the Cape. This he ascribes to a traditional toleration of Islam in practice, despite the harsh tenor of the Statutes of India. This was instanced in the treatment of Shaykh Yusuf as well as the covert encouragement of Islam in the post 1770 period (Davids, 1992: 4 - 8).

The school rapidly gained students and by 1795, a mosque was required (Davids, 1992:10). However, a letter of Abdul Barick written in 1836,

provides a more fundamental reason : the number of Muslims had simply increased (Quoted in Davids, 1980: 219). The letter is significant. It confirms the strong oral tradition that regards the Tuan as the first Imam of the first formal mosque at the Cape.

I declare that when I was still a scholar of Prince Emaum Abdulla there was no church for our religion. But later there were so many Muslims at the Cape that it became necessary to have a church. Then Prince Emaum Abdulla made a church of the house of Achmat - this still stands (6).

The mosque can almost certainly be considered the present-day Auwwal Masjid in Dorp Street, Bo-Kaap. The Achmat in question was Achmat of Bengal, a student of the Tuan and a freed slave of Coridon of Ceylon. In 1794, Coridon had purchased two properties in Dorp Street. When he passed away in 1797, Achmat became the patriarch of the household and a property was made available to be used as a mosque (Davids, 1980:100).

What were the attitudes of the Europeans to the school and mosque? The school was perceived to have made a considerable impact upon conversion to Islam amongst the slave population. This may be discerned from the statements and actions of authorities and missionaries.

In 1809 Governor John Cradock set up a Bible and School Commission, and on its recommendation a system of free education for slave children and Whites of the poorer classes was introduced (Horrell, 1970:10). This seems to have been in reaction to Tuan Guru's school. According to Horrell:

...the Earl of Caledon who preceded Sir John Cradock as Governor, had been concerned that , if slaves were left in a state of ignorance, they would fall prey to the zeal of Mohammedan priests, who at that time were conducting a school in Cape Town that was attended by 372 slave children. They were taught the precepts of the Koran, and to read and write Arabic (Horrell,1970:10).

It is revealing, though, that despite the concern no effort was apparently made to close the school or curtail its activities, and that Sir John Cradock's Commission was only set up 16 years after the madrasa was established. In addition, it was only from the 1820's onward that missionary schools in Cape Town started taking hold (See Davids, 1992:13 - 15).

Various probable factors may account for this. With Europe in turmoil after the French Revolution, and the Cape experiencing three foreign occupations in eleven years (1795 - 1806), the emergence of Islam may not have immediately concerned the authorities. The British and Batavian Republic seemed to have tolerant approaches to religious diversity. The Batavian attitude has been noted already. The British, as will be seen, were amenable to the idea of a mosque. The increasing Muslim population and the influential personality of the Tuan may have also deterred any clamp down on religious activity. Finally, until the 1820's, missionary activity in Cape Town was ineffective, in part due to its internal structure (See Davids, 1992:13).

As regards the mosque, there seems to have been ambiguity regarding its establishment. Writing in 1797, the traveller John Barrow remarks that "the Malay Mohammedans, not being able to obtain permission to build a

mosque, perform their public service in the stone quarries at the head of the town” (Barrow, 1806, volume two: 146). In about 1799, a petition by one Frans van Bengalen to the British Governor, Sir George Younge, for permission to erect a mosque was sympathetically received but ultimately, it appears, denied. (See Bradlow, 1978: 12 - 13). That this petition was after 1798 is almost certain. Sir George Young’s reply reads : “Approved, Report being first made by the Proper Officer as to the piece of ground in the said petition described, **Jan’31 1800**” (my emphasis, see Bradlow, 1978:13)

This is in conflict with the assertion that the mosque was built in 1798, a view supported by Davids. It is also supported by the testimony of Achmat of Bengal, given to the Colbrooke and Brigge Commission in 1825. Achmat is reported as saying : “My predecessor... was the first who had been allowed to officiate and build a place of worship in Dorp Street, where I reside. General Craig permitted him to erect it, and allowed the exercise of Mahometan worship.” (Bradlow, 1978:20).

Can this conflict in primary evidence be reconciled? One way is to suggest the Frans van Bengalen was actually petitioning for a second mosque, especially since he refers to a Van de Leur residence (See Bradlow, 1978:12-13). But this is unlikely since the petition clearly states that it speaks for “the inhabitants of Cape Town professing the Mahometan faith” and that they labour under the “greatest distress of mind by having no place of worship in which they may pay their adoration to God...” (Bradlow, 1978:12). Surely such a place would have been alluded to had it existed. Moreover it is conjectural whether he is indeed speaking of a second mosque since this residence and its location are not known with any certainty.

A more plausible explanation may result from plugging a historical gap. Why did Frans van Bengalen need to re-apply for permission after it had originally been granted by General Craig? The solution may lie in seeing this permission revoked after the General left in 1797. This view is supported by another statement reportedly made by Achmat of Bengal in 1825 : “This [i.e. the establishment of a mosque and the exercise of Muslim worship] had not been permitted by the Dutch government, but General Janssens gave authority for it when the Dutch resumed the government ...” (Quoted in Bradlow, 1978, 20). He further stated that the Muslims had certificates from both Craig and Janssens granting this permission, but they had been taken by the fiscal (Bradlow, 1978:20). That Janssens had to renew the permission could only mean that it had been revoked in the intervening period, from about the end of 1798 or early 1799 till at least 1803.

But this does not mean that Muslims had not been performing prayers in this period. Oral tradition tends to support such a view (See Davids, 1980:100). We may also recall Barrow’s statement suggesting Muslim assertiveness. Frans van Bengalen’s petition may then also be seen as the Muslim search for legal recognition. This finally came when religious freedom was promulgated at the Cape in 1804.

As the evidence stands, the most we can see in the European attitude towards the mosque is diffidence. Initially no permission for its establishment was granted and Muslims had to pray in the stone quarry. Then followed permission for it under Craig. However, as we have suggested, this was withdrawn after he left. Finally, permission was granted again under Janssens.

Why the diffidence? When permission was granted, similar reasons to the case of the madrasa present themselves : the fear of provoking the Muslim community, and, the more tolerant attitude of the British and Batavians. When permission was refused, the reasons, after 1795 at least, seem to be practical rather than ideological. In the case that we know, Younge's reply to Van Bengalen was initially in the affirmative, subject to the relevant officer approving the land suggested as a mosque site . Two members were to examine the ground "and to report thereon if it may be granted without injury to the public or to any individual" (quoted in Bradlow, 1978:13). As mentioned, the report was said to have been unfavourable and it was likely for this reason permission was refused (Bradlow, 1978:13).

It may be seen that opposition to the mosque was not implacable. The very act of petitioning indicates Muslim willingness to employ legal channels, and in turn implies that they were aware that Europeans could be sensitive to their interests.

How may we summarise the attitudes adopted towards Tuan Guru and his activities? The authorities most likely had an ambiguous attitude towards him: they were initially wary of his political and, later, religious activities. Simultaneously, however, his activities were given considerable leverage and were not viewed as a direct threat. He was banished to the Cape as a 'State Prisoner' for his political activities in his homeland. From the Dutch perspective this imprisonment was probably justified. That he could have actually started a Madrasa after his release from Robben Island, is indicative not only of the implicit tolerance of the time, but also that the authorities could not have perceived the school as a

direct threat to the order of things. Certainly, as the madrasa's activities started to expand, concern was expressed and action taken, but this action was indirect rather than direct. Alternative educational avenues were initiated, but the madrasa was not closed down or its activities curtailed. The authorities' attitude to the building of a mosque was diffident rather than ideological. Muslims and Islam were not implacably perceived as a threat. Rather, the diffidence may have arose from more immediate and practical considerations.

The Tuan was not a political and religious figure at the same time. He seems to have moved from a political activist to a religious quietist. The mosque and madrasa were seen as religious necessities, not as challenges to the government. And as far as is known, he did not take on a political role here. This attitude of Cape Town's premier Muslim figure of the time must have considerably allayed European fears of a direct Muslim threat.

### **Conclusions**

As studied, and as occurring in the literature three issues were contended with in dealing with the topic at hand :

- (1) Were Muslim exiles respected?
- (2) Were they viewed as a threat?
- (3) How important were they in the general estimation of the authorities?

- (1) Some exiles were seemingly not perceived with respect (the Constantia three, Tuan Said). Some were (Shaykh Yusuf- with a reverential respect; Tuan Guru - with a guarded one). In other cases the move from lack of respect to respect, and vice versa, occurred regarding a particular exile himself (Paay Schaapie and the Raja were elevated; Achmet of Ternate's star waned). Regarding Loring Passir,

respect and lack of respect existed co-terminously - he appears to have been a political pawn but was simultaneously provided a residence.

No uniformity, then, exists in this regard. Attitudes were determined by particularities: the social status of the exiles, the personalities and outlook of those doing the perceiving, and the situation on the ground, whether in the Cape or in the East Indies.

- (2) On the other hand, the exiles, were uniformly perceived as largely non-threatening to the authorities interests. We have argued that the isolation of certain exiles was not necessarily a reflection of their possible threat. Where evidence of a threat is presented, it is scanty and dubious. Muslims were in fact allowed a degree of religious tolerance and may have been encouraged to proselytise.
- (3) Perhaps the dominant impression that arises is that of peripherality : until the 1790's the exiles were simply not viewed as a factor in the Cape setting.

Hegemony in Cape Town was being established on racial and class lines rather than in terms of religion and culture. Consequently, Muslims were just a part and a numerically small one at that, of the poor, non-white, constituency of slaves, Khoisan and free blacks. Again, the class to which the exiles belonged tended to insularity and was incapable of making inroads into the economic or governmental spheres.

The individual exiles, until the 1790's, were not regarded as important. They were tolerated out of obligation to Company interests.

There is little to suggest that they demanded something other than the routine attention of the Cape authorities. From the vantage-point of the authorities, the Polsbroek three were anonymous; and Shaykh Yusuf's community was contained and did not have an overt Islamic impact. The issues regarding the Raja of Tambora, Achmat of Ternate and Loring Passir were parochial. To be sure, with Paay Schaapie and Tuan Guru, Muslims emerged from this peripheral sphere. But this heightened importance was a passive importance. To a large measure, it was extended by the authorities themselves, and its passive nature was aided by the quietist and supportive bent of the Muslim community.

## CONCLUSION

Our analysis of an important section of the Cape Muslim population, the exiles, conclude that they were **peripheral** to government concerns throughout this period. This peripherality was reinforced by enveloping their distinctive identity under the category of free black.

This peripherality may be seen in both the general and actual perceptions of the exiles. As a class, they were demographically marginal, economically disadvantaged and legally restricted. They had no effective impact on the political dynamic of the Cape, and manumission practices destined them to being a small, endogenous and somewhat picturesque group in this period.

More tellingly, the peripherality is also conveyed in the way the government actually perceived individual exiles. From 1667 to the 1790's, they simply did not warrant state concern because of any religious activity they may have been engaged in. From the 1790's onward, the state made overtures to two of these exiles, but the new consciousness of the religion represented a lessening of Islam's anonymity, rather than cognisance of a perceived centrality.

The actual treatment of exiles also reflects, at the core, peripherality. Though their treatment encompassed a variety of different postures - including isolation, toleration, respect and diffidence - there is a clear sense in which these were adopted within the ken of government largesse, rather than forced by factors intrinsic to the exiles.

This view is not in consonance with the prevailing literature which suggests that Muslims were "different" and even important in the Cape context. But we are of the opinion that the prevailing literature cannot account for **why** the exiles were perceived in the way they were. In our view the peripherality accorded to the exiles was because of the general peripherality of Muslims in Cape society. We believe that various elements of the context support our thesis and is more indicative of the actual role that Muslims played. These elements concern the rationale for colonialism, Cape demography, the structure of Cape society, the nature of its culture, and its attitude towards religion.

We have argued that the rationale of Dutch colonialism was economic rather than political. It concerned the quest for 'wealth through trade' and not the imposition of Dutch political and religious hegemony.

Muslims, then, were not confronted in primarily religious terms. More especially, a 'Muslim exile' is defined in terms of his religion and land. Innately, he is not central to this rationale.

The peripherality of Cape Muslims was undermined by demography. They formed a minority of the slave population. The class of free blacks, with which many of them were associated, was in this period a minuscule percentage of the general population.

However, the most significant reason for their peripherality lay in the very structure of Cape society. This structure was conceived in terms of social class and race. Such a structure militated against the formation of identity based on religion. As was seen, even exiles, prominently noted for their religious status, were subsumed under a class defined in racial terms.

The subsumation of a religious consciousness under categories of class and race was reinforced by the nature of Cape urban culture. The Creole nature of this culture militated against specific religious or other hegemonies. Islam and Muslims were **part** of this culture, but did not **define** it. The culture also compromised non-Muslim as well as specifically unIslamic activities such as prostitution and gambling.

Finally, religion was not the vital issue in Cape society. The lax attitude of the slave masters towards baptism is indicative of this, and of the fact that the key issue was economic. The implicit toleration of Islam is not only reflective of the general peripherality accorded to religion, but also indicates that any threat the religion may have posed was most likely regarded as inconsequential.

# ENDNOTES

## CHAPTER ONE

- (1) See Adikhari : 1989; Jeppie : 1988; Taliep : 1982. We define "Cape Muslim" non-normatively as a Muslim who happens to be of Cape Town.
- (2) This is the view of South African Muslim organisations such as the Muslim Youth Movement and Qibla, or for that matter any Muslim who insists on the universality of Islam. See Tayob : 1995, ch.1.
- (3) This was portrayed in the outlook of organisations such as the Cape Malay Association. On this group see Taliep, 1982 : 97
- (4) Achmat Davids has been particularly insistent on this term.
- (5) See Taliep, 1982 : 44-45 for discussion on Muslim intellectuals who adopted this position.
- (6) See Grobbelaar and Kannemeyer, 1987 : 217-219 on details of his career.
- (7) See Jeppie : 1995 for a critical discussion of the Tricentenary. I thank Dr Abdulkader Tayob for lending me a copy of Jeppie's paper.
- (8) Ward, not dated : 4. I am indebted to Dr Achmat Davids for lending me his copy of Ward's paper.

## CHAPTER TWO

- (1) Fieldhouse, 1966 : 146. Batavia was located in northern Java, and is the present day site of the Indonesian capital Jakarta.
- (2) Elphick and Giliomee, 1989 : 532. See pp 544-546 of that article for discussion.

- (3) Elphick and Giliomee, 1989 : 546-548. See chapter three of this essay for a discussion on this discrimination.

### **CHAPTER THREE**

- (1) See Elphick and Shell, 1989 for full figures and details.
- (2) See Armstrong and Worden, 1989 : 112 for an analysis of this composition.
- (3) Patterson, 1975 : 184. She notes however that there appears to be no record of non whites in these administrative positions.

### **CHAPTER FOUR**

- (1) I am indebted to Dr Achmat Davids for this information.
- (2) See Ricklefs, 1981 : chapters 6 and 7 for hegemonic struggles in this period. 'Tariqa' refers to an order of Muslim mystics.
- (3) The Memorial of Imam Achmat of Bengal to General Napier, Cape Archives Depot, CO 3996, no.7. I thank Dr Davids for referring me to this source.
- (4) I am indebted to Dr Davids for this information.
- (5) De Verzemelaar, 21 June 1842. This is my translation of the original Dutch.
- (6) This is a letter in the South African Commercial Advertiser, 27 February 1856. It is quoted from Davids, 1980 : 219-220 and is translated there by Naseegh Jaffer.

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