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"Are we Afrikaners getting too rich?"[1] Cornucopia and change in Afrikanerdom in the 1960's.

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The 1960s are usually characterised in South African history as the time when apartheid flourished under the ever-watchful and all-knowing eyes of Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd, who for many whites was the symbol of an inspirational leader until his was assassination in 1966. The historical markers of this period are well known: Verwoerd led South Africa to becoming a Republic and he acted forcefully against the Pan Africanist Congress and the African National Congress by banning them following the events at Sharpeville on 21 March 1960 when 69 black protesters died after the police shot at them. Apartheid gradually encompassed more and more facets of South African life and the National Party went from strength to strength at the polling booths. At the same time the African National Congress had to re-establish itself in exile.

These events were obviously of great import and rightly attracted the attention of numerous historians. The constant emphasis on apartheid and formal Afrikaner politics has, however, led to historians neglecting the simultaneous socio-economic undercurrents in Afrikaner society and assessing their wider cultural and political impact. Whites are usually viewed as the agents of a repressive society during this period but, as the historian William Beinart has remarked, they too have a complex social history.[2]

This article thus seeks to explore some of the dynamics that helped to shape a new Afrikaner social world during a period of unprecedented economic growth. The notion of a social world in this context is intended to encompass the repercussions of economic growth as expressed through societal differentiation, changes in cultural lifestyle and youth practices, as well as the impact on political permutations over time.

At the same time, the 1960s are also known for the emergence of the literary works of authors such as André P. Brink and Breyten Breytenbach, which challenged existing norms. As this development has already received ample attention from literary scholars, it will not be rehearsed here.[3] Another omission from this paper is an account of the significance of race. It can be argued that race was an integral part of the Afrikaner world at the time and should therefore also be included. While one can hardly deny the obvious importance of race, under the illusionary spell of apartheid the race issue was considered "solved". White thinking on race in the 1960's remained by and large deeply stereotyped.[4]

Economic prosperity and the growth of a consumer culture

The sixties had an inauspicious start. The events at Sharpeville reverberated internationally and had a negative impact on the South African economic markets.

Overseas investors lost their confidence and withdrew capital on a large scale. The country's gold and foreign exchange reserves decreased from R315 million in January 1960 to R142 million in June 1961.[5]

This, however serious, turned out to be a short-term capital flight. The government quickly imposed controls on imports, foreign exchange and hire-purchase agreements. Moreover, with the imposition of strong government measures to curtail unrest, the banning of the ANC and the PAC, and the incarceration of leaders such as Nelson Mandela, circumstances appeared to return to that which the majority of whites in the country and many overseas investors regarded as normal. "To most white South Africans the ANC now appeared finally broken", Anthony Sampson wrote; "Mandela was out of sight and out of mind. And the way was clear for the biggest boom in South Africa's history since the gold-rush."[6] Writing on these developments at the time, the economist, JL Sadie, came to a more nuanced assessment of the mindset which underpinned the restored business confidence. According to him, there was a more calculated understanding at work that, although the political situation could probably not be fully resolved, it was unlikely that it would deteriorate to such an extent that profit margins would be seriously compromised.[7]

Local investors now started buying up shares and, once it was clear that the government was fully in control, the economy picked up very rapidly, outpacing nearly all Western countries by registering an average growth rate of 6% during the rest of the 1960s. It was particularly from the mid-sixties that foreign investors piled in faster than ever before, not only bringing in new money, but also adding new technology which could fuel future growth. By the end of the decade foreign investments amounted to $7.9 billion as opposed to a mere $3 billion in 1960. On an annual basis the net inflow of capital was $343 million which was six times more than the yearly rate before Sharpeville.[8] This period also saw greater collaboration between English and Afrikaner conglomerates, and a general reorganisation of the ownership of the urban economy.[9]

Although Afrikaners still lagged behind English speakers in terms of total income (45% against 55%), overall they made significant strides in the 1960s.[10] This was accompanied by a new sense of achievement and self-confidence. Thus an Afrikaner businessman could assertively declare in 1968: "We are no longer under the impression that we are other men's inferiors as far as business acumen is concerned --- while we certainly have not beaten them, I think I am justified in claiming that our inferiority complex is a phenomenon which no longer plagues the new generation that is now arising."[11]

In general there was a trend among Afrikaners away from unskilled or semi-skilled relatively poorly paid labour to skilled and better remunerated positions with stable careers prospects. This process was accelerated by the National Party government's purposeful policy since 1948 of promoting Afrikaner education in a variety of ways, including establishing technical schools and, at tertiary level, medical and engineering faculties.[12]

The majority of Afrikaners benefited materially during the boom, albeit differentially. The main beneficiaries were a new class of urban financial, industrial and commercial capitalists, who made their presence felt.[13] Amongst these "new men" were leading

lights such as CR Louw of Sanlam and Santam, CH Brink of Federale Volksbeleggings and Jan S Marais of Trust Bank.[14] Trust Bank in particular was the embodiment of the new found entrepreneurial spirit. It started in 1955 with capital between R 10 000 and R 15 000, two officials and a single office in Cape Town. In 1964 it had total assets of more than R 200 million, a staff of more than 2000 and 50 branches. Trust Bank not only showed exponential growth, but also made major changes to the physical appearance of banking halls; instead of the usual heavily wood panelled interiors, Trust Bank interior designs were light and airy, and in the place of traditionally conservatively clad and dowdy bank officials came young and attractive bank tellers dressed in the latest fashion. Trust Bank deliberately projected itself as "modern" and wished to create a new "banking image" with an avowed aim of being "publicly orientated".[15] In tandem with the general growth of Afrikaner businesses such as Trust Bank, Afrikaner networks proliferated and a marked trickle-down effect became apparent in the shape of a rapidly expanding urban Afrikaner managerial and clerical stratum.[16]

These developments had considerable implications "There is no such thing as economic growth which is not, at the same time, growth or change of a culture", the British historian, EP Thompson, has observed.[17] Writing on consumer culture and modernity D Slater has argued that in its mature form "modern commerce --- dissolves the social bonds and values that previously held society together and gave the individual a place within it. In their place, the forces of --- modernization leave mere material self-interest and economic calculation---."[18] Although these dynamics also impacted on Afrikanerdom, the entrenchment of consumer-orientated mentality over a wider front was not a straight-forward process and it only happened gradually.

An imaginative strategy adopted in Afrikaner circles to underscore the new sense of business, without wishing to appear to abandon earlier traditions entirely, was to fuse a contemporary understanding of commercial acumen with the standard history of 19th century Voortrekkers. To the well worn epic tale of farmers who tamed the "wild" interior, was added a new dimension of "Voortrekkers as business entrepreneurs" in the Transvaal and Free State.[19] Similarly, the media presented the life stories of well-to-do Afrikaners as examples to be followed; businessmen now joined politicians, sportsmen and cultural leaders as heroes in the Afrikaner hall of fame.[20]

In order fit this changing milieu, there had to be gradual change in the way in which money was perceived and assigned symbolic value and significance. A new rallying cry started to reverberate in the 1960s. In contrast to the early 1950s, when the general call under rather difficult economic conditions was to "save for stability", by the 1960s this changed to "spend for success".[21] This was a rather strange exhortation for those whose memories of the devastating economic depression of the 1930s were still fresh. But that was precisely the issue that had to be addressed and the thinking that had to be reversed. As the *Financial Mail* put it: "To the old fashioned, saving is curiously equated with virtue and spending with sinful extravagance."[22]

While some Afrikaners who had come through the depression of the early 1930s would certainly have had qualms about the culture of freer spending that was evolving, on the whole Afrikaners became willing participants in the emerging consumer patterns. A marked feature of this decade was the ready availability of credit. The pronounced historical shift in spending habits was neatly outlined in 1967:

> "Before World War II it was mainly buy now, pay at the end of the month or stretching it to the next month. Now, says a new survey of local consumer habits, repayment periods have greatly lengthened and with the advent (since 1964) of self-service supermarkets, credit cards, more commercial bank consumer lending and more spending on luxuries and "conventional" rather than "basic" necessities, many of the old credit patterns have changed."[23]

Concurrent with this development and feeding into and off it was the considerable expansion of the advertising industry. The industry also became more professional in its approach through research into consumer behaviour and motivation.[24]

At the end of the decade consumer spending patterns had changed irrevocably. The business press could report, with a thinly disguised sense of triumphalism:

> "Credit through our banking institutions is becoming part of the consumers' way of life today. Credit is no longer associated with misfortune and struggle for existence. Rather it is a means to earlier use of those consumer goods and services which are important symbols of status in our society. In the process consumer credit plays an essential role in transmitting status into effective mass consumption. It is a concrete aid to the pursuit of happiness which our forefathers associated with life and liberty. The psychological value of consumer credit cannot be over-emphasized. Consumer credit helps the consumer to translate wants into realities."[25]

In addition to easier access to credit, ordinary Afrikaners increasingly also showed an interest in the stock market. In 1964 a journalist reported that

> "it was not so long ago that some Afrikaans newspaper did not even publish share prices. Today a well-known Afrikaner said to me that, since he became interested in the stock market some years ago, a new world opened up for him and that the first thing he usually reads in the newspapers these days is the share prices".[26]

Significantly, five years later "business awareness'' as reflected in Afrikaner participation in the stock market was described as "the first great change in Afrikaans lifestyle of our new world".[27]

At the same time there was also a change in the nature of the 'ethnic capitalism' of earlier decades in the sense that ethnicity became less decisive as a determining factors in the business sector. Even though the umbilical cord linking Afrikaner national sentiment and Afrikaner companies was not completely severed, purely commercial considerations became increasingly paramount. Whereas the Rembrandt tobacco company, for example, had formerly geared it primarily towards the Afrikaner market, its interests gradually expanded and it acquired control over the Rothmans group in London. The quip among Afrikaners that you should "Smoke Rembrandt and cough for the nation" lost its force as the Rupert group expanded beyond national boundaries.[28]

According to surveys conducted at the time, ordinary Afrikaner shoppers were also less inclined to support Afrikaner businesses just because Afrikaners were running them. For rank-and-file shoppers in the greater Cape Town area, for example, considerations of prices, quality, credit terms and location carried far greater weight than ethnic ties. It was only the more affluent shoppers who were prepared to go out of their way to support Afrikaner enterprises.[29]

Status differentiation and lifestyle changes

Greater disposable income, fuelled by a new consumer culture, led over time to clear shifts in the Afrikaner social order. In the build-up to the National Party's victory at the polls in 1948, Afrikaner nationalism had advocated a levelling of class and status differences for the sake of unity and in order to gain political power. Obviously these differences were not eliminated entirely, but they remained latent for the sake of advancing the cause of Afrikaner nationalism. They emerged more overtly again only once Afrikaner political aspirations had been satisfied and the prosperous economic conditions of the 1960s created new opportunities and the possibility of a more openly differentiated society. It was noted: "Status seekers, like the poor, have always been with us, but not in their current manifestation, or in such large numbers. They are a product of the Afrikaner's more forceful entry into commerce and industry in our own country."[30] These new possibilities were embraced enthusiastically, so much so that it was claimed in 1968 that "a large portion of the Afrikaner people, and in particular its more well-to-do class, are becoming worshippers of Mammon. Among many Afrikaners swaggering behaviour and status symbols have become all-important."[31]

It seemed to many social commentators of the time that the "competition" to achieve social and economic success had become almost a new way of life. "Status is everything" and the striving was for "greater prestige, a greater reputation and more conspicuous display". Everything was focused on achieving these: "overtime work, women had to earn money – children in crèches or left in the care of servants, debt and repayments over many years. As long as the display of prosperity could be sustained and the impression of being modern could be created."[32]

In the course of time these developments led to a growing gap between wealthy Afrikaners and their less prosperous ethnic compatriots. It was with some dismay that JS Gericke, Moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church, commented on this phenomenon:

> "The city has seriously deepened the chasm between prosperous Afrikaners and their less well-off countrymen, between those with status and those of more humble station, between the learned and the uneducated. Contact between the upper echelons and the lower classes has disappeared almost completely. Even in the church we no longer engage with one another, because we have good neighbourhoods and poor neighbourhoods, and the boundaries between our congregations are determined by these residential areas. The city has in fact created class divisions among us and even a considerable degree of snobbishness".[33]

This snobbishness was directed at, among others, less prosperous Afrikaners. The latter were deliberately excluded from social networks and friendship circles. Although the wealthier Afrikaners did not necessarily want to cause any harm to their poorer fellow countrymen, they were also not prepared to lend a helping hand. "In short", it was reported, "the less they had to do with Joe Soap, the poor white, the higher their shares in the status market." A marked maintenance of social distance became increasingly common: "Mrs Helen Highclass smiles superciliously when she speaks of her less well-to-do compatriots. And to invite them to her elegant birthday dinner – the idea does not even occur to her. After all, the Afrikaner is prepared to defend the social status he has achieved at any cost."[34]

This kind of characterisation can obviously be exaggerated. Although a definite trend was observed and repeatedly reported in the press, there were also those who handled their status with more grace and managed their new disposable income with the least amount of display and with a sense of social responsibility.[35]

But for many the new clarion call to join an unbridled consumer culture was just too strong to resist. The rhythms of their lives were increasingly geared towards conspicuous display. The materialistic values and social patterns that were now given free rein were described as follows:

> "Persian carpets, caviar, private swimming pools, caravans, 'doing Europe', status symbols and the party circuit, cars, holiday plans, fashions and social contracts, surrounded with hordes of 'dear old friends' who are always approached with a 'hello darling' smile that has as its subtext: 'I need you for my social standing, but I really can't stand you.'"[36]

Each one of these interwoven markers of materialism and status made its particular contribution towards an emerging culture of demonstrative display of the new tokens of prosperity. One of the most conspicuous aspects of this system was the ownership of modern cars. The association of cars with status was (and remains) a widespread phenomenon. In America, for example, the strong revival of the economy in the late 1950s was accompanied by an intensified drive for status. The contemporary sociologist, Vance Packard commented on the linkage between cars and status during this period:

> "Over the years the automobile makers succeeded in building up a status hierarchy for automobiles that was well understood by the public. And it was well understood … that one could enhance one's own status if he was able in his car buying to move up the hierarchical ladder: from Ford, Chevrolet, or Plymouth; up to Pontiac, Dodge, Mercury, Studebaker, etc; perhaps to Buick, Oldsmobile, Chrysler, etc; then up to Imperial, Lincoln, or Cadillac."[37]

Many of these models were also popular in South Africa, and as in America, the Cadillac represented the pinnacle of status. It was the designated car for cabinet ministers, "black in colour with a copper knob in front of the nose where the orange, blue and white South African flag could be attached."[38] Outside the top government circles, slightly lower down the scale, were solid German Mercedes Benz cars, usually black or ivory-coloured. Noting the popularity of Mercedes cars among the

Afrikaner elite, Beinart commented: "A small-town funeral, when a procession of cars followed the hearse to the cemetery, could be an extraordinary display of wealth that far exceeded the wildest pretensions of the small Wabenzi classes in independent African states".[39] Cars were also replaced on a regular basis – sometimes (it was alleged somewhat tongue in cheek) as soon as the ashtray was full.[40]

Car ownership increased in general in South Africa during the 1960s: from 895 000 cars at the start of the decade to 1 553 000 in 1970 – an increase of 42%, with whites buying the lion's share. By the middle of the 1970s car ownership among whites in South Africa (386 vehicles per 1000 people) was exceeded only by that in America, where the population owns more cars per person (507 per 1000 people) than anywhere else in the world.[41] During this period car ownership extended beyond just the wealthy classes and it became possible for some members of the lower income groups to acquire cars too (usually second-hand models). The lower classes were often associated with specific models, such as used Ford Zephyrs (hence the colloquial expression "zef" in Afrikaans, meaning lower class) and later on three-litre Ford Cortinas, reflected in the stereotyping of working class lifestyle and drinking habits in the trinity of "one-litre brandy, two-litre Coke and three-litre Ford."[42]

In addition to cars, houses also featured prominently in the status hierarchy. In the United States Packard found in the later 1950s that, as the economy grew, houses overtook cars as status symbols and that pressure increased to buy "in the right neighbourhood" for snob value.[43] In South Africa the same pattern became evident a few years later as a greater insistence on, and demand for, custom-designed houses in wealthy suburbs developed.[44]

It was not only the design of the house that was important, but also the interior decoration. The pretentious way in which homes were appointed and the manner in which the owners entertained were often an indication that their wealth was newly acquired. "Because" it was reported:

> "the silver is too new; the brocade too ornate; in the foyer there are *prints* of Tretchikoff's work in laminated frames, or of Thinus de Jongh; there is just slightly *too much* whisky, too many cocktails; the flower arrangement is just a bit *too* jaunty; in the study there are just too many books bound in half-leather; the overseas glossy fashion books and magazines are displayed *too* conspicuously."[45]

Recreational patterns also showed a greater social differentiation and there was a deliberate attempt to master news kinds of sports. Especially golf, a sport with an elitist reputation, became increasingly popular. In the industrial period it was the preferred sport of top industrialists, businessmen and politicians; it was on the golf course that influential leaders in the various professions could extend their respective networks informally.[46] As Afrikaners distinguished themselves in the professions, they saw golf as the way in which they could relax on an equal footing with English speakers and new connections could be made. Golf is also an individualistic sport par excellence and for Afrikaners who were now emerging as individuals – to some extent outside of the framework of Afrikaner nationalism – this sport held specific attractions and challenges.[47] This upward mobility of the "new Afrikaners" was reflected in their "being members of country clubs and exclusive golf clubs; they do not play golf, or tennis, on municipal facilities."[48]

During this period women increasingly entered the labour market. There was a trend away from poorly paid factory work towards administrative or sales positions, nursing and teaching.[49] Although greater gender equality was still a very distant prospect, there was a new found confidence among women and a rejection of the more traditional role of "mothers of the nation". As noted in the media, this found expression in a more sophisticated mode of dressing, among other things:

> "We must also take account of the *new* Afrikaners in their feminine aspect. Sarie Marais no longer wears a corset, printed frock and a bonnet; their place has been taken by foundation garments and mink coats, and mink coats and diamonds were never intended to be locked away in a cupboard. … The smartly dressed Afrikaner woman of today is second to none."[50]

Fashion consciousness and the desire to dress "correctly" for every occasion began to figure more prominently in the minds of Afrikaner women and books on "women's issues" devoted special attention to these topics.[51]

From time to time this greater prosperity and the concomitant materialistic attitudes led to concerns being raised in cultural circles about the consequences of this for the unity of Afrikanerdom. An old idiom was quoted as a warning: "One needed strong legs to carry the weight of wealth".[52] It was argued that "wealth, whether in abundance on a large scale, or a few small random windfalls, can be a serious threat to the individual, the family and the nation."[53] According to one observer, the Afrikaner was in the process of changing visibly: "He is becoming more of a South African than an Afrikaner; he is even becoming a world citizen; and this will increasingly be the case in a world where the trend is towards uniformity in thought."[54]

This discourse was taken further by JL Gouws, a sociologist at the Rand Afrikaans University (currently the University of Johannesburg). According to him, a society based on wealth has "liberalisation" across the board as a consequence, and those things that give life "value and direction" will ultimately be engulfed by the profusion of material things. Material gain is emphasised to such an extent that the "whole rhythm of life becomes geared towards status symbols such as luxury cars and similar displays of wealth to create in this way the impression of being modern and 'with-it'."[55] One consequence of this is that, as the profit motive is elevated above the desire to render service, social life is in danger of crumbling. Troubled commentators noted, for example, that as soon as Afrikaners had ascended the status ladder, they became less prepared to do routine party political work: "How many school principals, lawyers and businessmen are still prepared to venture into the streets with political subscription lists and registration forms for their party?"[56] The "danger signals were flashing," Prof HB Thom, Rector of the University of Stellenbosch, admonished in 1966.[57]

This kind of discourse displayed a somewhat alarmist element. Even though greater individualism and personal wealth may in fact have the potential to bring about disintegration and fragmentation, these effects do not manifest them overnight. There is very little evidence of decay in Afrikaner organisations in the 1960s. Nevertheless, despite the fact that these concerns were cast in hyperbolic terms, they did touch on a central issue, namely the need for Afrikaner identity to be re-negotiated in a different

material context. In the medium term the process was well managed. HF Dickie-Clark has summed it up succinctly:

> "The outcome of the interplay between material and ideal interests was indeed a most successful one for the collective goals of Afrikaner independence and hegemony. This combination of material well-being and the achievement of ideal goals was a remarkable, if temporary 'success story' and in part explains what happened in the period between 1948 and Vorster's fall [in 1978]".[58]

This assertion underscores the notion that tensions generated between "pure" Afrikanerhood and the disaggregating impulses of greater wealth were effectively defused till the end of the 1970's. But once a range of other variables entered into the equation in the wake of mounting anti-apartheid pressure during the 1980's, it became more difficult, as will be argued later, to sustain that balance.

The youth

Running alongside concerns about the impact of greater prosperity on what was considered traditional Afrikaner culture, was an increased awareness of the possible effects of new cultural trends on Afrikaner youth. Globally, of course, the 1960s were a decade of considerable turbulence, with the dominance of rock and roll music, unprecedented adulation of pop groups such as the Beatles, student protests, the hippie movement, anti-Vietnam war demonstrations, and daring changes in women's fashions with the appearance of the mini-skirt, as well as gradual changes in sexual mores with the availability of the birth-control pill.[59]

In mainstream Afrikaner circles these cultural tremors sparked some foreboding. Although Afrikaners were wealthier than before and increasingly part of a wider world, there were concerns that the Afrikaner youth, not having first-hand experience of the hardships their parents had to endure and the cultural battles they had to fight, needed – in the interests of the "volk" – to be protected against foreign cultural influences.[60]

For the cultural and moral guardians of the time the fashionable miniskirt was deemed particularly reprehensible. In an extreme condemnation Gert Yssel, a school teacher and lay preacher in what was the Western Transvaal, held the most bizarre opinion that women who wore "these shameless dresses" incurred the wrath of God. Consequently God had decided to intervene in rugby – "our god with a small letter"- and thus ordained, as a warning to the "volk" to mend their ways, that South Africa should loose rugby tests in the United Kingdom in 1970. [61]

More mainstream opinion did not make such outlandish connections, but was not necessarily less concerned about the impact of the new fashion. It was seen to represent an assault on perceived Afrikaner morals, to promote loose sexual behaviour and undermine the integrity and standing of women in society. "Many of the modern fashions", it was argued, "lead to a loss of shame and the result is a shortcut to debauchery."[62] All cultural organisations were therefore urged to adopt a strong stand against "sexually suggestive clothing".[63] While this appeal certainly reflected a concerted attempt to stave off influences considered to be at variance with more staid

Calvinist mores, its impact on the dress code of the youth was somewhat more ambivalent. Under strong parental influence some may indeed have heeded the call, but to take one's cue from photographs of how young women dressed on Afrikaans campuses in the 1960s, the anti-miniskirt lobby certainly had fewer adherents than they might have wished for.[64]

Another area of concern was rock and roll music – the emblematic music of the 1960s abroad. Already at the beginning of the decade this music had established itself firmly in South Africa. Elvis Presley, the king of rock and roll, had sold two million records by then, handsomely beating the sedate crooner Bing Crosby, who had sold 1 million copies in the preceding 30 years of his popularity. The South African Broadcasting Corporation, under the watchful eye of conservative Dutch Reformed Churches and the omnipresent state, at first did not play rock and roll music, but the music could be picked up on shortwave, albeit with some static crackle from nearby Lourenço Marques (Maputo) on what was called LM radio.[65]

In evaluating the reception of rock and roll among white youths, it is revealing that young Afrikaners were just as keen, if not more so, than their English-speaking counterparts on music that opened up new ways of self-expression and held out the promise of unrestrained merriment. While white English-speaking youths were generally deemed to be more connected to Western trends than their Afrikaans equivalents were, this did not seem to be the case as far as rock and roll music was concerned. Extensive sociological surveys done by the University of Pretoria in the mid-1960s showed that slightly more Afrikaans youths, 48,5% against 46,7% English-speaking youths, listened to LM radio – the main source of rock and roll music at the time. As a matter of fact, LM radio was significantly more popular than the Afrikaans radio station of the South African Broadcasting Corporation, which in comparison attracted 32, 3% of Afrikaans youths in the survey.[66]

These findings run counter to the notion that Afrikaans youths were so suffocated and cocooned by prevailing Christian-National Education at the time that outside influences failed to penetrate.[67] At the level of popular culture, currents from abroad certainly made an impact. Rock and roll and other similar kinds of light music were not only the music of choice among Afrikaner teenagers, but they also outstripped traditional Afrikaans "boeremusiek" by a considerable margin (38, 9% against 9, 4%).[68] These developments can be regarded as signifiers of a more porous Afrikaner culture than often assumed and one that was at a certain level responsive to global impulses.

Given the popularity of rock and roll, it is not surprising that established and conservative cultural brokers in Afrikaner society were more than a little perturbed about this phenomenon. They sought to portray rock and roll music as alien, hedonistic "jungle" music, which encouraged licentious behaviour.[69] David Kramer, the popular South African musician, recalled in 1982 that as a young musician playing rock and roll in the sixties in Boland towns, the town fathers "met the embrace of rock and roll with folded arms."[70] In Pretoria the city fathers went one step further and disallowed the British rocker, Tommy Steele, from playing in the City Hall. Steele was somewhat bewildered by this. "Blimey, we've got some stuffed shirts in Britain", he said, "but nothing like some of the chaps you seem to have here. If I am good

enough to appear before the Queen, surely I am good enough for the Pretoria City Council?"[71]

This kind of opposition to rock and roll was not restricted to South Africa; in the United States of America and in Britain the music of Elvis Presley and the Beatles also initially evoked similar responses.[72] What did give the South African opposition its distinctive edge, though, was that it was seen not only as part of a debasing counterculture, but in more extreme forms of criticism as being communist inspired and directed at the very heart of Afrikanerdom.[73] There was a neat irony at work here; while the music was considered as part of a communist plot to soften up Afrikaner youth, in the Soviet Union itself rock and roll was distinctly frowned upon as an import from the "decadent West."[74]

What further influenced attitudes towards rock and roll was its association with white youth gangs and a "ducktail" subculture ("ducktails" were identified by their distinctive hairstyles and behaviour considered to be anti-social)[75]. Amongst other reasons, some "ducktails" were stigmatised because at the high point of apartheid they dared to fraternise across the colour line. A contemporary social science researcher into the underworld of Johannesburg noted disapprovingly:

> "white ducktails in jeans and colourful shirts have been known to take their --- tarts to brothels in African areas. Here they meet the African tsotsis [gangsters] dressed in zoot suits and their black molls [women] dressed in 'Suzie Wong' skirts. They are sometimes joined by Indian boys and girls from Fordsburg. --- Rock and roll records are played, to liven up the party and when brandy is taken and 'giggleweed' smoked, the colour line in sex is speedily forgotten.' We were informed that this experience was supposed to represent a 'new sort of thrill for the degenerates of both sections of the population.'"[76]

In the popular Afrikaans press these interactions were described in lurid terms as "shocking" transgressions of apartheid laws. Just underneath the surface was the tacit message that rock and roll music was irredeemably tainted by being linked to a social world that rejected a range of core Afrikaner values. As rock and roll was an essential component of such "repulsive interracial mixing", it was regarded as the first step on the slippery slope to ultimate "debauchery." [77]

Although not all criticism was as condemnatory, there certainly was a consensus that rock and roll was generally undesirable for the youth of the "volk". This perception was heightened by the provocative comment of John Lennon of the Beatles in 1966 that the Beatles were more popular than Jesus Christ. This remark produced ripples worldwide, and in South Africa it was grist to the mill of the anti-rock-and-roll lobby, which saw it as a clear vindication of the validity of their implacable opposition.[78] Yet the observation also elicited a more thoughtful appraisal in certain quarters of the Dutch Reformed Church. Thus Johan Heyns, a theologian from the University of Stellenbosch, made the point that it would be short-sighted for the church to condemn Lennon without considering the reasons why the Beatles attracted such a huge and enthusiastic following. Perhaps, he argued, the church should try and understand the frustrations and aspirations of the youth better.[79]

While rock music sparked off a discourse centring on the direction of Afrikaner culture, much of this discourse was presented in hyperbolic fashion, particularly in view of the fact that, as far Afrikaner youth were concerned, music and possible wider social critique were not linked in any way. In contrast, abroad rock music and variations on it were an integral part of, and closely associated with, the revolt of some sections of the American youth against middle-class values, the triumph of technology, and the war in Vietnam. Afrikaner youths, though, showed no such dissident inclinations. Arguably for some of them, their middle-class status was of too recent origins against which to revolt, and – more important – the hold of the school, church and state was still too powerful to allow the emergence of oppositional anti-status-quo Afrikaner youth movements.[80] A fair section of Afrikaner youth may have embraced rock and roll, but that was where it stopped. It was a state of affairs which more pragmatic commentators found acceptable. WJ de Klerk of Potchefstroom who in the late 1960's coined the phrases "verlig" (enlightened) and "verkramp" (conservative) in the South African political lexicon, commented that parents should not be too concerned about those Afrikaner youths with long hair, chains and jeans who enjoyed rock music and strobe lights, provided that the behaviour of the youth does not evolve into "degenerative" social protest where authority is being challenged and moral and religious values rejected.[81].

The situation changed some 20 to 25 years later when, in quite a different context, with formal Afrikaner nationalism in its terminal phase, the first full-blown Afrikaans rock bands under the banner of *Voëlvry (*literally free as a bird) toured the country, linking anti-apartheid protests to rock music in Afrikaans and openly questioned the apartheid authorities. This gave rise to an unprecedented, albeit a minor, social movement in the late 1980s.[82] Although it took a long time to germinate, one is tempted to claim that what happened and the end of the 1980s was in a small way the fruit of the seed which was planted in the 1960s. Afrikaner youths showed their interest in rock music early on, but the soil for linking rock to political protest only became fertile when a new generation of Afrikaner youths made the connection and tilled the ground.

Political repercussions

At the height of the economic boom of the 1960's Piet Cillié, editor of *Die Burger*, pondered what the broad political outcome of the unprecedented prosperity would be. He was particularly concerned about the growth of the black labour force, which had no political representation in the urban areas. The issue had to be taken seriously, he warned, otherwise "we are still going to see the day when we shall curse our highly praised prosperity."[83] These were certainly not idle musings; 20 years later the black labour movement played a prominent part in the resistance against apartheid.[84]

The repercussions of economic growth not only impacted on a macro level, but also had an effect on intra-Afrikaner politics. Tensions generated by a "new" and "old" Afrikaner world view came to a head, particularly during the late 1960s. On the face of it the in-fighting since 1967 between so-called "verligte" and "verkrampte" Afrikaners centred on issues such as immigration policies, the question of housing for black diplomats, Maoris in the New Zealand rugby team and the role of English speakers in the National Party.[85] These differences led to a relatively small section

under Albert Hertzog hiving off to form the Herstigte Nasionale Party (HNP). These issues were real enough at the time and led to bitter recriminations.

It can, however, also be argued that the divisions in Afrikaner ranks had an underlying class dimension brought about by increasing affluence. The Hertzogites were aghast at the ostentatious display of wealth by the newly arrived Afrikaner bourgeoisie and were scornful of the near disdain with which the *nouveau riche* treated their less fortunate brethren. The HNP drew support mainly from the white working class on the Reef and in Pretoria, but was ultimately unable to develop into a more potent force than a poor-white protest party.[86]

In another development, ever greater co-operation between white English speakers and Afrikaners developed during the 1960s. During the general election of 1966 English speakers joined the ranks of the National Party in greater numbers than ever before.[87] The reason for this, however, was not that the National Party became more liberal as a consequence of the greater prosperity in order to attract more English speakers, but rather that English speakers became increasingly convinced that the Party could provide stronger guarantees for their safety and security than the struggling United Party could.

Besides these trends, there is a case to be made that in the longer term economic changes during the 1960s had a fermenting effect on Afrikaner politics. Structurally, a consumer mentality had became entrenched which, over time, brought a new set of subjectivities into play. Consumer practices assumed a more prominent role in the formation of identity, while individualised materialism rendered group boundaries more brittle, placing greater emphasis on re-inventing the self in a new environment.[88] This does not imply a complete disintegration of Afrikaner identity, but a new re-imagining of this identity in the light of changed circumstances.

Some commentators extrapolate this trend to the circumstances that led to the negotiations with the African National Congress in 1990. For Heribert Adam the issues of wealth and declining ethnic affiliations were factors that expedited the negotiations. According to him, material possessions and a particular lifestyle had a higher priority over other considerations: "It has yet to be proven anywhere that a BMW-owning bureaucratic bourgeoisie with swimming pools and servants readily sacrifices the good life for psychologically gratifying ethnic identities."[89] Dan O'Meara also attaches particular significance to the effects of wealth on national unity since 1960 and the implications of this in the early 1990s. He argues: "De Klerk and the Afrikaner establishment could jettison their entire political past with relative ease after 1990 precisely because the creation of Afrikaner business and a wealthy Afrikaner middle class had forever separated their interests and their futures from their less privileged 'volksgenote'".[90] For Heribert Adam, Frederik van Zyl Slabbert and Kogila Moodley it was also clear that class divisions among the Afrikaners were being played out during the negotiations:

> "To put it bluntly, the affluent Afrikaners sold out the poorer Afrikaners because they felt more confident about their ability to either survive in, or leave, the 'new South Africa'. The poorer Afrikaners … would have liked to prevent the abdication, but they lacked the very instruments that the affluent Afrikaners were negotiating away."[91]

For the journalist Alistair Sparks there was little doubt about this when he wrote in only slightly hyperbolic fashion in 1990 that for a number of years already "the spread of capitalism was doing its corroding, corrupting work. The ethnic fire in the Afrikaner cracker's belly was going out, to be replaced by the acquisitiveness and consumer culture of an urban bourgeoisie."[92]

Of course, these perspectives only highlight one dimension of the complex circumstances that were brought to bear on the South African transition. In an overall evaluation issues such as the imposition of international sanctions, on-going black resistance which necessitated several states of emergency and the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe which allowed more room to manoeuvre have to be taken into account. Nevertheless, if one wishes to gain a better understanding of the relative acquiescence of a large section of Afrikanerdom in FW de Klerk's bold moves to break the impasse, one has to look at the nature of the white middle class as a subsidiary factor in the process. Already in the preceding years the National Party has increasingly represented itself as a bourgeoisie party, emphasising economic growth and portraying whites as a modernising and adaptive elite.[93] In this respect the ground was well prepared for the middle class to condone De Klerk's initiative as an admittedly huge step, but nevertheless logically in line with earlier notions of flexibility.

This class had incrementally started to realise that the dwindling numbers of whites as an overall percentage of the total population (in contrast to a ratio of 20% whites in the 1960's, in 1991 the ratio was 14.1% with projections that it would fall to 11.4% in 2000[94]) rendered them increasingly vulnerable. More importantly, international pressure increased and their survival seemed threatened by strong and unrelenting black resistance to apartheid – ironically the very policy that was supposed to provide them with security. Although analysts have pointed out that there was considerable apprehension and ambivalence among the Afrikaner elite about what the future may hold, there was also an awareness that the old policy had simply failed them and that a new departure was urgently required.[95] One of the reasons for this realisation, it can be argued, is to be found in the dynamics of a well-established consumer class in the private sector, which had over a period of time developed considerable self-confidence and which was no longer primarily dependent on ethnic or related networks for their financial wellbeing. The civil service component of the middle class as opposed to that in the private sector was, admittedly, more vulnerable to a change in government.[96] Their concerns were accommodated, however, during negotiations by means of so-called 'sunset clauses', retention of pensions and significant retrenchment packages.[97]

In the post-apartheid period, the Afrikaner middle classes increasingly became part of the globalising world and there are commentators who claim that economically Afrikaners have done better overall under a predominantly black government than before.[98] If that is indeed the case, it can be argued that the firm foundational level of the skills and expertise which equipped them and a younger generation to survive and assert themselves in the post–1994 world, can be located especially in the cluster of conditions in the 1960s: apartheid, the South African economic take-off, new lifestyle options and opportunities, and embryonic changes which started to permeate Afrikaner youth culture and drew them into a wider world.

The salience of the Afrikaner middle class as one factor in the transition process places the 1960s into a new perspective as the cradling decade for the emergence of a particular class whose starring historical role as support actor still lay in the future. In a sense, then, the sixties can be regarded as the "fons et origo" for that which was destined to play itself out in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Conclusion

"The future enters into us in order to transform itself in us long before it happens," wrote the poet Rainer Maria Rilke.[99] In several respects this observation resonates with the nature of fundamental changes wrought in the Afrikaner social world during the 1960's. The growth of a stable middle class and its enthusiastic embrace of consumer values gradually altered the configuration and perceived vision of a single-minded, abstemious "volk" prepared to make considerable sacrifices on behalf of a greater ideal.

The logic of underlying socio-economic processes and concomitant cultural changes did raise, as we have noticed, a sense of unease in certain Afrikaner circles. Opponents of "modernisation", however, short of creating a self-enclosed Afrikaner territorial enclave, were over time simply powerless to undermine the dynamics of capitalism and its cultural correlates. While initially there was still space to be a "good" Afrikaner and also partake of the "good life", in the long run and as the cost of apartheid mounted the choice was whittled down.

Although it was probably insufficiently realised at the time, a crucial phase in this process played itself out in the 1990's. Multi-party negotiations about the future dispensation left capitalism intact, but Afrikaner negotiators failed to secure watertight guarantees relating to the preservation of Afrikaans language and cultural rights.[100] The origins of this outcome can be traced back to the 1960's and particularly the exponential economic growth during that decade which also started to make slow cultural inroads into Afrikaner self-perceptions and world views.

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