

CALVINISM IN THE CONTEXT OF THE AFRIKANER NATIONALIST IDEOLOGY

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Calvinism was a part of the mythic history of Afrikaners; however, it was only a specific interpretation of history that made it a part of the ideology of the Afrikaner nationalists. Calvinism came to South Africa with the first Dutch settlers. There is no historical evidence that indicates that the first settlers were deeply religious, but they were worshippers in the *Nederlands Hervormde Kerk* (Dutch Reformed Church), which was the only church permitted in the region until 1778. After almost 200 years, Afrikaner nationalism developed and connected itself with Calvinism. This happened due to the theoretical and ideological approach of S. J. du Toit and a man referred to as its 'creator', Paul Kruger. The ideology was highly influenced by historical developments in the Netherlands in the late 19th century and by the spread of neo-Calvinism and Christian nationalism there. It is no accident, then, that it was during the 19th century when the mythic history of South Africa itself developed and that Calvinism would play such a prominent role in it. It became the first religion of the Afrikaners, a distinguishing factor in the multicultural and multiethnic society that existed there at the time. It legitimised early thoughts of a segregationist policy and was misused for political intentions.

Key words: Afrikaner, Afrikaner nationalism, Calvinism, neo-Calvinism, Christian nationalism, segregation, apartheid, South Africa, Great Trek, mythic history, Nazi regime, racial theories

Calvinism came to South Africa in 1652, but there is no historical evidence that the settlers who came there at that time were Calvinists. Despite its status, Calvinism was strengthened by the immigration of French Huguenots.¹ Afrikaners themselves ascribed the importance and influence of Calvinism on Afrikanerdom with these five points:

¹ They were worshippers of the *L'Eglise Reformée de France* (French Protestant Reformed Church) – French Calvinists.

1. the first settlers were Calvinists (worshippers of the *Nederlands Hervormde Kerk* – Dutch Reformed Church, hereinafter referred to as NHK – which was the only permitted church until 1778);
2. Calvinism was the only factor that was differentiating them from the indigenous inhabitants and later from Britons;
3. it has a resemblance to the Calvinism of the *Synod of Dort* (1618) without any liberalising influences;
4. current Calvinism is the same as the Calvinism of the first settlers;
5. and the NHK was responsible for the spread of Calvinism in both political and social life.²

Therefore, one has to focus on all of the aspects of the Afrikaner social life. According to their point of view, Calvinism was an important element which connected *sacrum* and *profanum*. Thus religion as a basic social phenomenon fills a basic social need. Religion is based on the supposition that the differences between religions could be explained by different kinds of societies and that the society and culture project and code their values into religion. According to Johan Kinghorn a system had developed where "...religion universalises the relative and local character of values. Religion can not be religion; it can not be God-talk, without insisting on relating the present to the ultimate, the local to the totality. Thus religion opens the way for personal or local values to be linked to the universal, that is, to visions of the coherence of being. When it does this, religion establishes a *social cosmology*. This social cosmology functions as the absolute terms of reference for individual as well as societal self-understanding and praxis. It is the definitive formulation of the sense and purpose of society."³

It is possible to understand the culture as a whole through its religion; it is an external factor. This view is tenable due to the myths that are propagated via the conduit of religion. The myths also served for the dissemination of nationalist ideology in the 1930s. One can divide them into two types:

1. derived from the Afrikaner history, which arose in the 19th century by mythologisation of early settlement in Southern Africa;
2. biblical stories – especially the story of the Tower of Babel.⁴

However, it was not just myths that created apartheid but also historical developments. The story begins with the first European settlements.

The *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (Dutch East India Company, hereinafter referred to as VOC) established its station at Table Bay, which soon changed into a permanent settlement. The influx of new arrivals quickly

² HEXHAM, I. *Dutch Calvinism and the Development of Afrikaner Nationalism*, p. 197.

³ KINGHORN, J. *Social Cosmology, Religion and Afrikaner Ethnicity*, p. 395.

⁴ KINGHORN, J. *Social Cosmology, Religion and Afrikaner Ethnicity*, p. 397.

transformed the settlement into a colony. It is important to recall that until the 1770s, the NHK was the only permitted church on the *Cape*. Nevertheless, there was another important step in the historical development of the Afrikaner society. In 1657, the VOC, because of the high number of newcomers, allowed its employees to settle and trade in the surrounding region. A new 'nation' arose – they called themselves Boers. Some of them occupied the land of the Khoisans and established their farms there with permission from the VOC. The Trekboers⁵ had their own farms and their life-style did not differ from the African one, but they mistreated the indigenous people, whom they saw as a source of cheap labour. The situation didn't change until the end of the 18th century when the Britons assumed the governance of the *Cape Colony* for the first time and, then, in 1806 they took the colony under their governance for a second time; from that time it was under British rule.

It was at this time that the Boers and Trekboers understood that their identity was in danger and they wished to avoid Anglicisation; therefore, they moved further into the interior with the desire that the *Colony* would not have the power to control them. However, the Colony had its eye on these parts and tried to stop the Trekboers moving further. It published a restriction about establishing new farms beyond the *Orange River*. In 1835, Voortrekkers⁶ went on their first trek and the *Great Trek* started. It lasted until the forties of the 19th century. They moved to the northern parts of South Africa and established three states: *Natalia*, *Orange Free State* and *Transvaal*. *Natalia* was immediately annexed, and the Britons called it *Natal*.

The *Great Trek* has many interpretations; however one thing is definitely true, that the treks that began in the second quarter of the 19th century started because of confrontations with the Xhosas on the east and the restriction of migration beyond the Orange River. The treks ended in 1847, but migration continued. According to Mills, "This series of events ... came to be regarded as a heroic and defining moment in the history of the Afrikaner nationalism."⁷ The interpretations of this event differ depending on the point of view and by approach. Some of these interpretations are enumerated below:

1. flight from bondage in the land of Egypt – that means British rule in South Africa was construed to be like that of an evil Pharaoh; Voortrekkers considered as injustices – the Anglicisation policy, the distortion of the divine order by accepting equality between Christians and 'heathens', the abandonment of slavery, and many more;

⁵ It is a cognomen of Boers from the 17th century until the 19th century. 'Trekboers' were those who settled in the distant areas of southern Africa.

⁶ It is the name used for Boers who were part of the *Great Trek* in 1835.

⁷ MILLS, Wallace G.: *The Great Trek*.

2. meddling busybodies and do-gooders in London – they are the consequences, which came from *Exeter Hall*⁸;
3. incorrigible slave masters (again, an argument connected to slavery; however this one is about anger of Trekboers that their oppression of the indigenous population was stopped);
4. nationalist superheroes – Afrikaners (Boers, Trekboers, Voortrekkers) were afraid of being Anglicised or influenced by liberalism, which could lead to the disappearance of their identity. Voortrekkers went through wild Africa because they wanted to preserve their nation – their culture and religion – from ‘bad’ influences;
5. landless poor Whites – the migration, which was famous in the Boer milieu, was limited to a forty to fifty year period and was caused by an increase of landless Whites.⁹

All of the interpretations of the *Great Trek* are from the view of the Afrikaners. These views have religious, mythic, and political elements. However the exodus-like interpretation and the heroic stories come from the later era of Afrikaner nationalism, which was influenced by David Livingstone¹⁰ and his view of the event. There is no historical evidence about religious motives which led to the *Great Trek*. On the other hand, the influence of missionaries in the British government is very clear; because of them, slavery was abolished and migration was limited, both of which caused serious social problems.

The Afrikaners interpretations take into account various political, religious, and mythic factors; however the factors or elements of the *Great Trek* can also be divided into five main points:

1. shutting down the migration after the 1780s – there was still some land left on the fringes of the territory and after the wars with the Xhosas in the 19th century there were some ‘new’ free lands. This was enforced by landless of Whites in the thirties of the 19th century; therefore the *Great Trek* was just a cause of the early development of the *Colony’s* society;
2. law forbidding migration north of the Orange River – it is more than clear that the abandonment of migration was one of the causes, or elements which occurred in the context of the *Great Trek*;
3. disobedience of lawful authority – it came from Calvinistic teaching about a sin. It is a sin to rebel against God and government is a surrogate of

⁸ It was used for numerous religious and philanthropic meetings, but it was also a place where anti-slavery political meetings were held.

⁹ MILLS, Wallace G.: *The Great Trek*.

¹⁰ He was a Scottish Congregationalist, who lived from 1813 – 1873. He was sent to Africa as a missionary and explorer by the *London Missionary Society*. He was writing about Voortrekkers, and he was the first to call them the ‘Chosen people’.

God. However, the teaching allows for an exception: when the government is evil then disobedience and rebellion is justified. That meant that British governance in South Africa was understood as evil. It was compared to the rule of the Pharaohs. Therefore, they could rebel against it;

4. nationalist piety and sacrifice – F. van Jaarsveld was from the later period of Afrikaner nationalist, who argued that Boers (Trekboers, or Voortrekkers) had only a limited sense of national identity. He also further said that the real sense of identity emerged in the seventies of the 19th century after the First Boer War, and this only in *Transvaal*. He concludes that a sense of national identity spread amongst all Afrikaners just after the Second Boer War;

5. preservation of the Trekboers' ethos and way of life – they lived in the interior, cut off from the *Colony* without any liberalising influences. They developed a different ethos and different notions in regards to status and the relations between Whites and Blacks. The most important thing was that they were Christians and they had a feeling of superiority. They believed that it was God's will to use the 'barbarians' as a source of labour.¹¹

The interpretation about migration was supported by the reappearance of the 'landlessness' problem in the late 19th century, when some voices arose about trekking deeper into the interior lands, but it was blocked by Rhodes, who wanted the lands of what is today Angola and Zimbabwe for Britons. This fact, actually, is a counter-argument to the nationalist thesis; however, one cannot forget that nationalists had their own understanding of Afrikaner history and mythologized it, too. It cannot be put into the background of historical facts as a part of their heritage and identity. According to the interpretation regarding the preservation of the Trekboers' ethos and their way of life, Trekboers were highly in danger, because unlike the VOC, the British *Cape* wanted to control their treks and their farms even outside of the *Colony's* borders. Britons also implemented *Ordinance 50* in 1828, which introduced equality between all people, which was another step against the ethos. However Trekboers and Boers found the way to escape from the liberalising tendencies of Britons: they left the *Colony* and established their own states, in which the most important rule was – no equality in church or state.

The development in the two Afrikaner states had a similar direction. Boers or Afrikaners were not as liberal as Britons; the non-white population didn't have any political rights and was pushed to the edge of society. The Afrikaner society was rigid from its beginnings; therefore, it was predictable that from this society would arise some segregationist thoughts. In 1857, the representatives of the NHK made a decision to separate Whites and non-Whites in their church.

¹¹ MILLS, Wallace G.: *The Great Trek*.

An independent mission came into being in 1881. The reason was the fear of racial differences.

The eve of Afrikaner nationalism can be dated to 1881 after First Boer War. It was approximately in the same era when national consciousness and nationalism arose in many parts of the world. There is no evidence of a connection between Calvinism and Afrikaner nationalism until the 19th century. However, it was exactly in the late 19th century when the so-called mythic Afrikaner history developed, which was derived from David Livingstone. The main representatives among Afrikaners were S. J. du Toit and Paul Kruger; Kruger later became president of South African Republic (Transvaal). They maintained two streams of Afrikaner nationalism and of course they influenced each other, to be clear: du Toit worked as a consultant for Paul Kruger in his presidential function and this position afforded du Toit many opportunities to influence Kruger's thoughts. It was the time of the second half of the 19th century.

Du Toit in 1875 founded the first Afrikaner movement, in 1880 the first Afrikaner political organisation *Afrikaner Bond*, the first Afrikaner newspaper *Die Afrikaanse Patriot* and he was also its editor. In 1877 he wrote a work called *Die Geskiedenis van Ons Land in die Taal van Ons Volk*, by which he strengthened Afrikaner consciousness of South African history. Du Toit wanted to incorporate into the programme of the *Afrikaner Bond* the ideology of the neo-Calvinistic movement, which was spreading in the Netherlands under the influence of the theologian and statesman Abraham Kuyper.¹²

On the other hand, Kruger was a conservative politician, who had no interest in creating an ideology. However, he was a deep believer. He was a representative of the 'Afrikaner fathers' because he took part in the *Great Trek*, later considered to be one of the most important phases of Afrikaner history and nationality.

For better and easier understanding one can say, that on the one hand different, but on the other hand auxiliary elements of the Afrikanerdom – S. J. du Toit as an ideologist and theoretician, and Paul Kruger as the 'creator'. Kruger participated in producing the Constitution of the *South African Republic* in 1858 and he was also one of the founders of the new *Gereformeerde Kerk* (Reformed Church, hereinafter referred to as GK) in 1859. Through the medium of both these persons, du Toit and Kruger, arose the political and intellectual construct of the 19th century of the so-called *Calvinistic paradigm*, which

¹² Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920) was a Dutch politician and theologian, and founder of the Anti-revolutionary Party. He played a leading role in the development of neo-Calvinist teachings.

conceived the origins of contemporary Afrikaner thought as having developed from the supposed primitive Calvinism of the Trekboers and Voortrekkers.

Paul Kruger became a fountainhead of the Afrikaner civil religion through his *Paardekraal* in which he described the sacred history. The text had significant religious notions. One can say that this is one of the moments when religion was made to serve political intentions.

Du Toit was a propagator of the militant nationalist *Program of principles*, which "...explicitly elaborated a set of Calvinist principles for all the main areas of policy. ...was directly derived from the neo-Calvinist program of principles of Kuyper's Antirevolutionary Party (*Anti-Revolutionaire Partij*)¹³ in the Netherlands, adapted only in a few particulars to suit local conditions."¹⁴ The programme was not accepted, and *Afrikaner Bond* decided to choose a more pragmatic and secular nationalist: 'Onze Jan' Hofmeyer.

Du Toit's unsuccessful venture did not stop him; he did further work on his Calvinistic programme and published his thoughts in the newspaper *De Getuige*, where he for the first time clearly compared Afrikaners to the Chosen Israeli nation. He also influenced the *Potchefstroom* School, which was notable, but did not play a major role in the spreading of neo-Calvinistic ideology. Intellectuals of the *Potchefstroom* were part of the secret organisation, *Afrikaner Broederbond*, which gave direction to the Afrikaner cultural movement from the thirties of the 20th century. It was they who also published for the first time in the journal *Koers* (The Direction), on behalf of the *Federation of Calvinist Student Associations*, questions of race and nation. The main representatives of *Potchefstroom School* were L. J. du Plessis and his namesake, H. du Plessis. In summary, it was the era of du Toit and Kruger which originated the mythic Calvinistic history of South Africa.

Meanwhile there were established two Afrikaner states. The *Orange Free State* consolidated in 1854, later it annexed half of the *Lesotho*. Both Afrikaner states, the *Orange Free State* and *Transvaal*, had a different development; however, both of them moved in the same direction. Their policy was rigid and segregationist. In the first half of the 19th century arose two British colonies – *Colony of Natal* and *Cape Colony*. In 1856 Natalese Africans could qualified to election law, therefore they could hold office on the *Legislative council*. In 1853 representative government was established in the *Cape Colony*. It was much more open to Africans than the Natalese administration.

By the end of the 19th century the situation was becoming better. In 1867, they discovered diamonds in *Kimberley*, and from 1872 the *Cape* was able to

¹³ Reference of author. Antirevolutionary Party derived from neo-Calvinism and Christian nationalism.

¹⁴ TOIT, A. du, *Puritans in Africa? Afrikaner 'Calvinism' and Kuyperian Neo-Calvinism in Late Nineteenth-Century South Africa*, p. 229.

self-govern; it was no longer dependent on British governance (and thus the influence of British liberalism was much diminished), which opened doors to a more rigid segregation of the society. Blacks were gradually pushed to the edges of society, a fact which strengthened Afrikaners' ambitions. In 1879 – 80 a party called *Afrikaner Bond* arose, which had a major success in the Afrikaner republics. By 1881, Afrikaners were losing their political power, however their identity on the basis of *Afrikaans* was rising. In 1875, intellectuals developed *Afrikaans* into a written language.

Meanwhile Britons tried to establish a *South African Confederation*. They almost annexed *Transvaal* and in 1878 – 9 they subdued the Pedis, Zulus and Xhosas; Whites had successfully consolidated their dominance in South Africa.

As was mentioned previously, the discovery of diamonds had the effect of promoting the agenda of the segregationists. When the company *De Beers* started deep mining, Blacks could work only as a migrant labour force, which was checked by white controllers. A similar system was in operation in *Witwatersrand*, where in 1886 gold was discovered. The search for gold became a chief concern on the British side. They did not find any gold in their colonies; therefore, they searched in South Rhodesia, North Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The result was the same. Britons had just one chance to get gold: the takeover of the Afrikaner republics. They tried to rouse a rebellion amongst the British inhabitants, but it failed. However, they did manage to provoke the Afrikaners. In 1899, the British army commissioner in the *Cape Colony*, Sir Alfred Milner, forced the South African president, Paul Kruger, to declare an ultimatum. The ultimatum put the British cabinet into the Second Boer War; it was explained as a defence of the British position in South Africa. The Second Boer War ended with the signing of peace at Vereeniging in 1902.

After the Boer War, Afrikaner nationalism quickly spread among the people because of the fear of British imperialism. In the first decades of the 20th century, Afrikaner nationalism focused especially on determining the relationship between Whites and Blacks¹⁵ – the central questions were republicanism, language equality and the question of the poor Whites.

The signing of the peace treaty meant the surrender of the Afrikaners to the British government, but they still could self-govern and had language rights. Nevertheless, there were disputes about the functioning of the colonies. *Transvaal* soon achieved economic supremacy and the Britons realised that it could, if not checked quickly, have enough power to break away. This situation, and other economic reasons, led Britons to think about a union or federation. The concept of union was accepted by the majority on both sides. Afrikaners checked their own chances to win the election of 1908 and stood for creating a

¹⁵ Under the term 'Black', one has to understand all the oppressed non-white people.

union. In 1910 arose the *Union of South Africa* with three capitals – Cape Town, Pretoria, and Bloemfontein.

This situation gave an opportunity to the Afrikaners. They could work together among all the white people in South Africa, especially those Afrikaners who were in the ex-British colonies, to achieve their aims. In the twenties of the 20th century, they also introduced the 'Chosen people' idea, an idea which actually was a basic concept of every nationalist movement. Afrikaner nationalism was more or less based on a mythic political and religious history, but one cannot ignore the connection between all these myths.

The myths played a huge role in the formation of the opinions in the society because they were part of the people's belief system. The picture of what people are is in the myths, which have the secondary feature of what people dream about. They performed also an important role as a strengthening element of Calvinism in the Afrikaner society. There were many stories about the bravery of the farmers with Calvinist beliefs, who were chosen by God for spreading civilisation and Christianity. This myth came via the founder of the '*Purified National Party*' (hereinafter referred to as PNP) D. F. Malan onto the political scene. The myths' attraction lasted in the fifties of the 20th century. References to the Old Testament were found in the literature of the thirties regarding discussions about the society.

The references came especially from the first eleven chapters of The First Book of Moses. Genesis is the source of the cosmological ideas in Christianity, but Afrikanerdom mostly made use of the Tower of Babel story. It symbolised the creation of the society. It can be understood as a story of God's will to leave the existence of the nations, unchanged and in a fixed state; the story was included as part of the bill to parliament to investigate mixed marriages submitted by the *Free State Synod NHK*. The same argument was used by J. D. Vorster, but this interpretation of the biblical story was officially published by the council of the NHK in 1974, when the church discussed the social situation in the country. As was mentioned above, Reverend Vorster identified the story of Babel Tower as a creation story and as a beginning of human history. "Undoubtedly, Vorster assumed that the ideal world is one which is static. In a static cosmos, societies are fixed, clearly defined and immutable. It is a cosmos in which the contingent nature of modern society is absent."¹⁶

The NHK had a need to make Christian nationalism known to all the people, whether they wanted it or not. The defence of this behaviour was that Afrikaners had as one of their roles, a mission to guard the weak.

The Tower of Babel story was used as an example of an authentic godly society; it became a picture of the apartheid society. By the use of religion,

¹⁶ KINGHORN, J. *Social Cosmology, Religion and Afrikaner Ethnicity*, p. 402.

apartheid acquired a general level of legitimacy and became a servant of absolutism. From this point on, segregation was above even morality; it was God's will. This is because the Tower of Babel personified the creation of the unwanted world, and later, the destruction of it by God. The story about the Tower of Babel was the basis of apartheid, especially because of its social order. The preference for segregation in the story of the Tower of Babel enhanced the status of the *National Party* (hereinafter referred to as NP), which wished to demonstrate that it was able to provide law and order to society. It continued until the eighties of the 20th century, when the NP purified society of alternative voices, which were associated with revolution such as communism and radical liberalism. The God in the story was anti-modern, anti-cosmopolitan, anti-pluralistic and, therefore, the story seemed to signify, Christianity should be the same.

There is a palpable fear of the 'foreign' in society. The individual unconsciously and spontaneously divides the world into two: his or her 'world' and another one, which is unknown, and therefore dangerous. Afrikaners lived in this kind of fear and their fear shifted to political and social life. Hence, nationalism was a reaction to this circumstance. It seemed, according to this mindset, to be the way of ensuring societal order.

J.B.M. Hertzog and J.C. Smuts developed the interwar segregationist policy. It was they who prepared the legislative steps for D. F. Malan to bring the idea into reality. Their thinking began to gradually radicalise after World War II, when the development of the economy allowed African and Coloured people the possibility of work at the expense of qualified Afrikaners.

During this time, the influence of the trade unions became a force for change and African and Coloured people started to protest: bus boycotts, the *Squatting movement* and a strike by miners in 1946 were some of the most significant protests. Different African and Coloured organisations became important through their fight for rights. The *African National Congress Youth League* was one of the most fundamental organisations: it transformed the *African National Congress* into a mass democratic movement. These actions and the expansion of these movements were regarded as a possible danger in the view of Afrikaners. Indeed, there was pressure from the side of the indigenous and Coloured population.

In 1933, the *Afrikaner Broederbond* formulated a document, which recommended the beginning of segregation as an immediate solution to the racial question in South Africa. "This called for the settlement of 'different tribes' in separate areas which, over time, would assume an increasing degree of self-government under the supervision of the *Native Affairs Department*. In such areas Africans could live and develop themselves in the political, economic, cultural, religious and educational spheres. Temporary migrants

would be permitted to work on farms or in towns. 'Detribalized' urban Africans would be encouraged to move to their own areas and those who refused would be compelled to live in separate locations where they would enjoy no political and property rights."¹⁷

It can be said that this document specified the same rules as apartheid, and, therefore, it was a kind of predecessor to it.

In the middle of the thirties of the last century, the *Afrikaner Bond* transformed into a Christian-national organisation. *Afrikaner Bond* was in opposition to the alliance between Britons and Afrikaners, which was symbolised by the fusion of Smuts and Hertzog's parties. Bond was the centre of the intellectuals and of the Afrikaner nationalist culture by *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge* (Federation of the Afrikaner Cultural Associations, FAK) and many others groups, which were influenced by it. Dubow states that the "Broederbond focused attention upon the plight of poor whites, the economic dominance of English-speakers and the centrality of Christian nationalism as an organising creed."¹⁸

Afrikaner nationalism was enriched by the return of intellectuals such as Nico Diederichs, Piet Meyer, Geoff Cronjé and H. F. Verwoerd from Germany and the Netherlands. It enhanced self-consciousness and collective consciousness about a heroic Afrikaner history. It was in the thirties of the 20th century that the main impact of Kuiperian neo-Calvinism was felt.

Kuiperian and German nationalists shared organic interface of culture and nation, what means "...the idea that the creativity of the individual is best expressed through the collectivity of the group, and the belief that nations are subject to divine historical destiny."¹⁹ It can be said that there were no differences according to a context of Christian nationalism. However, Afrikaners emphasised an organic metaphor in a collective sense – *Volk* (people) is a natural, pure and integrated entity. Indeed, Germans saw in a nation something deified and gave it priority, an element of their approach which was in contrast with the neo-Calvinist tradition. On the other hand the metaphysical comment of nation granted Afrikaners a 'legal' supremacy without any biological nationalism. However, Germans and Kuiperians could not achieve consensus on the status of 'nation'. At last, in 1935–1936, Kuiperians H. G. Stroker and L. J. du Plessis accused Nico Diederichs of subordinating the authority of God to that of nation.

¹⁷ DUBOW, S. *Afrikaner Nationalism, Apartheid and the Conceptualization of 'Race'*, p. 211–212.

¹⁸ DUBOW, S. *Afrikaner Nationalism, Apartheid and the Conceptualization of 'Race'*, p. 215.

¹⁹ DUBOW, S. *Afrikaner Nationalism, Apartheid and the Conceptualization of 'Race'*, p. 220.

This development in the nationalist movement was significant because one can see that God and God's position in Christianity was given pre-eminence. Therefore, one can say that churches were also important elements in the sphere of social development. There were three main churches in South Africa; the main church was the NHK in the *Cape* and *Orange Free State*, but there were two churches in the *South African republic – Nederlands Hervormde Kerk in Afrika* (NHK in Africa) and GK. The GK had the goal to perpetuate Calvinism in its pure form and to promote the doctrines of Dort. The Calvinist teaching originated from GK; however, its real origin was from the thoughts expounded by du Toit – a mix of Afrikaner nationalism with Calvinist elements. As can be seen, Calvinism is connected with Christian nationalism which is connected to Afrikaner nationalism.

GK accepted the interface with Christian nationalism in order to attract *Doppers*.²⁰ The connection with Christian nationalism is closely related to du Toit and Paul Kruger. It was also a conjunction of Christian nationalism and conservatism that can be better understood through three main elements:

1. the origin of the Christian nationalistic ideology,²¹
2. the relation between GK and Dutch Calvinistic recovery,
3. and the approach used by the GK to influence the nationalist movement following the Second Boer War.²²

The main representatives of Christian nationalism came from the Dutch environment and were students, or supporters, of Abraham Kuyper's Christian nationalism. That meant the situation in the Netherlands affected the historical development of South Africa. Afrikaners mostly studied at the *Vrije Universiteit* (Free University) of Amsterdam in the Netherlands established by Abraham Kuyper. In 1913 the NP of J. B. M. Hertzog came into being, which later attracted *Doppers*. The *Doppers* were an idea-isolated group, but they were able to make their ideas and presence felt during the rise of Afrikaner

²⁰ They were conservative believers in both the social and religious meaning. Paul Kruger was also *Dopper*.

²¹ Christian nationalism arose in the 19th century as a reaction to the revolutionary changes in the Netherlands. It had two main streams – aristocrats and lower labour class. Aristocrats founded the two main parts – a culture-literary movement (the main representative was Isaak da Costa) and a political movement (the main representative was Groen van Prinsterer, who developed a theological interpretation of European history, in which he ascribed to the spirit of revolution an anti-religious character). After his death he was replaced by Abraham Kuyper. Kuyper constructed a mass movement from neo-Calvinism and established the first political party *Anti-Revolutionaire Partij* (Antirevolutionary Party), through which he became the Prime minister and Dutch society began to be transformed by an aggressive Calvinism.

²² HEXHAM, I. *Dutch Calvinism and the Development of Afrikaner Nationalism*, p. 204.

nationalism on the basis of the issue of *Afrikaans* – the language of the Afrikaners – acting as a rallying point which made Hertzog a winner in the elections of 1924. *Doppers* were for a total segregation of Whites and Blacks and for the securing of the Afrikaners' distinctive identity through their common language.

"The first extensive pronouncement of the 'native problem' by the NHK²³ was published in pamphlet form in 1921."²⁴ It reacted to the question of segregation ambivalently and emphasised the status of the white population. However, it did not work the topic out as Christian nationalism did so in its influence on Afrikaner nationalism and GK.

In 1930, the segregationist supporter and theologian from Stellenbosch, Johannes du Plessis, was expelled from NHK for the rising affect of neo-Calvinism. Until 1935, the central protagonists of the racial question were the NHK, *Suid-Afrikaanse Bond vir Rassestudie* (hereinafter referred to as SABRS)²⁵ and the *Afrikaner Broederbond*. In 1935, the NHK adopted a 'Missionary Policy', which was believed would make the 'colour' question more clear. It was the first time when nationalism was seen in a Christian context, and an individual became a part of the collective. The concept of nationalism came into religion through neo-Calvinism. A strict division between the church and the state was important to it. W. J. van der Merwe mentioned for the first time biblical evidence about the functioning of this type of society in 1942. However, his colleague J. D. du Toit (Totius), in 1944, presented one of the most important religious documents, which had a significant influence in 'biblical' apartheid. In his *Religious Basis of our Race Policy*, he discussed the religious arguments of this policy. According to Dubow, "Du Toit adopted a wide-ranging approach, mixing biblical exegesis with a global conception of Afrikaner history and philosophy."²⁶ His basic argument was in the understanding of God as a 'Divider'. God divided light from dark, sky from land, man from wife, but also nations. The division of the nations was one of the basic themes of this whole system of thought, which was based on the story of the Tower of Babel. God destroyed the Tower, which had the potential to unify all nations and as a result create one nation. The Tower was destroyed and nations were forever prevented from understanding each other.

²³ Reference by author.

²⁴ DUBOW, S. *Afrikaner Nationalism, Apartheid and the Conceptualization of 'Race'*, p. 212.

²⁵ It was an organisation which created a kind of opposition to the liberal *South African Institute of Race Relations*.

²⁶ DUBOW, S. *Afrikaner Nationalism, Apartheid and the Conceptualization of 'Race'*, p. 217.

Boers, who went from the 'liberal' *Cape* to the country of the 'black' continent, met the Black inhabitants and compared them to the descendants of Ham. They established their nation in God's will in this area; therefore, Afrikaners were created as a nation by God. That meant:

1. what God created, humans cannot divide – unity of the nation;
2. humans cannot put together what God has divided, higher unity is possible only in Christ and has only a spiritual character – there is no equality.²⁷

Totius cited Reverend J. G. Strydom and F. G. Badenhorst. Badenhorst wrote a dissertation thesis about South African the racial question in reformed theology. The biggest source of Totius' inspiration was Abraham Kuyper. Afrikaners were influenced by Kuyper's antipathy toward modernism and secular humanism, which were compared to British imperialism. Kuyper's understanding of Calvinist history assisted in the creation of a heroic mythology in which they, the Afrikaners, were God's Chosen people.

In 1936 SABRS adopted the idea of total racial segregation, in other words a policy of apartheid. The idea was referred to by D. F. Malan in his speeches till 1943. The rise of white poverty caused critics on an Anglo-Jewish capital together with anti-black feeling. The inception of the *United Party* by Hertzog and Smuts provoked radical members to leave the parties and gave an opportunity to Malan and his PNP. In 1939, Afrikaners were again divided due to sympathies with the Nazi regime in Germany and the concept of a totalitarian *Volksrepublik* (People's Republic). The environment was prepared for racist ideas. The conflict arose because of the position of the Union of South Africa during World War II. The indigenous question was also raised after the war; however, it was caused by the rise of African nationalism.

The FAK played a prominent role in the promulgation of the concept of apartheid in the Afrikaner nationalist movement. In a 1944 meeting, the chief principles related to racial policy were discussed:

1. the policy of apartheid should be accepted in the interest of the white and non-white population of Union of South Africa in the way, that non-white inhabitants should have the opportunity to develop on their own land with self-governance;
2. it was a Christian duty to guard non-white races until they reached a level that they would be able to make decisions about their interests;
3. they should not mix in the interest of all the races;

²⁷ DUBOW, S. *Afrikaner Nationalism, Apartheid and the Conceptualization of 'Race'*, p. 218.

4. there is a call and a duty of the white race in the Union of South Africa to assure that full control of all the aspects of governance in white areas would be held in white hands;

5. any effort of turning an individual from his or her environment should be rejected, that means the turning away from his or her people or tribe;

6. the real wealth of non-white people is in the development of the individual according to Christian principles, with the feeling of value and pride in his or her own group, tribe, or people.²⁸

All of these efforts were connected to the biblical story of Babel: God in the story wanted a plurality of society and not one nation. There are three contentions for this thesis – biblical order, the historical background of Afrikanerdom and scientific research. One of the most important defenders of apartheid, A. B. Preez, was trying to prove that there is a major connection between race and culture, and that therefore racial differences were more fundamental than the colour of the skin.

Apartheid had biblical 'evidence' on its side; however, this was downplayed by representatives of nationalism such as Ben Marais and Prof. Ben Keet. Despite this, they considered segregation as a necessary step. Another defender of segregation was Preller who argued that the evolution of an indigenous individual stopped after puberty, as he or she was not able to develop like Whites. His thoughts were followed by C. W. Prinsloo and Geoff Cronjé.²⁹ They said that "...the voortrekkers had an instinctive aversion to racial mixture."³⁰ Geoff Cronjé stressed the biological differences of races.

From the thirties of the 20th century a new tradition, supported by Nazi ideas on racial supremacy, was associated with the so-called eugenic approach. During this period Boers identified themselves with a new biological racial type. According to the eugenicists, the Boers were "a unique combination of Nordic (Dutch and German) and Alpine (French Huguenot) racial traits."³¹ Nevertheless, there were voices about the instability and impurity of races, but these were about the internal mixture of different races. On the other hand, the mixing of Whites and Blacks was rejected because according to these theories a mixed individual is physically, mentally and morally unstable. Already, in

²⁸ DUBOW, S. *Afrikaner Nationalism, Apartheid and the Conceptualization of 'Race'*, p. 216.

²⁹ He was influenced by Nazism and he was also a member of *Ossewabrandwag* (Watch of Ox Wagon), which rejected the position of South Africa on the side of the Allies during World War II.

³⁰ DUBOW, S. *Afrikaner Nationalism, Apartheid and the Conceptualization of 'Race'*, p. 225.

³¹ DUBOW, S. *Afrikaner Nationalism, Apartheid and the Conceptualization of 'Race'*, p. 227.

1933, an anthropological study, *Die Rehebother Bastards und das Bastardierungsproblem beim Menschen* (Bastards from Reheboth³² and the Problem of Bastardisation among People) was written by Eugen Fischer³³ of the University of Freiburg and it became a chief source of information on this subject. The main supporter of this theory was Geoff Cronjé who successfully systematised it in a series of influential publications. According to him the theory had three main thoughts:

1. preserving the purity of Boer blood,
2. God's order of the division of nations,
3. and the function of Whites as a protector of non-white races.³⁴

As is clear, Nazi and also Christian 'evidence' was used by supporters of apartheid, which in turn was used to support the development of a racist form of governance. Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany influenced the radical ideas of the Afrikaners and helped them to find a solution to their 'bad' situation. One cannot with certainty say that Christian nationalism and neo-Calvinism were pillars of apartheid, but the fact that their ideologies and ideas were reinterpreted for political purposes remains.

It is obvious from the history of apartheid that with the rise of resistance to its policies there was a concomitant radicalisation of the regime until it culminated with the tragic events of the last decades of the regime's existence. Apartheid government made sure that social, economic and political power would stay in the hands of Whites. After increasing international criticism, Afrikaners decided to propagate apartheid as a 'positive' policy. They argued that Africans have an opportunity to develop themselves without any white interference through this system. The *South African Bureau of Racial Affairs* (SABRA) played an important role. It formulated and simplified the theory of apartheid in the fifties of the 20th century.

Dubow describes the organisation's founding in this way: "Founded in 1947–8 as a Stellenbosch-based intellectual think-tank, SABRA maintained a discreet distance from the theological politics emanating from Potchefstroom and Pretoria."³⁵ It presented apartheid as the only possible solution to South Africa's racial question. From the forties of the 20th century the United Nations were criticising the situation in South Africa. In defence, the reaction of the

³² Reheboth, Namibia.

³³ He was an eminent person in Germany linked with racial hygiene and he was also the chief of the *Das Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut für Anthropologie, menschliche Erblehre und Eugenik* (Institute of Anthropology, Genetics and Eugenics of the Kaiser Wilhelm).

³⁴ DUBOW, S. *Afrikaner Nationalism, Apartheid and the Conceptualization of 'Race'*, p. 229.

³⁵ DUBOW, S. *Afrikaner Nationalism, Apartheid and the Conceptualization of 'Race'*, p. 230.

SABRA chairman and theologian from Stellenbosch, G. B. A. Gerdener, was to say that the problems between groups of inhabitants are not about the colour of skin, but in the culture and level of development. Furthermore, he argued that the policies of the South African regime had nothing to do with the Nazi era of Germany.

Similar thoughts were coming from the *Secretary of Native Affairs*, specifically, from Werner Eiselen, who had an important role in the development of the theoretical and practical apartheid. "He denied that South African racial sentiment was based on the notion that darker skin pigmentation meant intellectual inferiority. Rather, it was founded on the notion that physical differences between blacks and whites rendered it desirable that each group should develop, so far as practicable, within separate spheres."³⁶

He tried to specify that the system is based on cultural differences and that culture is not part of race. As a member of SABRA, Prof N. J. Olivier, too, rejected that South African policy was based on racial grounds. He stressed that segregation should help relations between all of the inhabitants.

On the other hand, in 1955–1956 the *Tomlinson Commission* came out, which published an announcement which went into meticulous detail about the features of a South African indigenous individual. Moreover, biological differences were combined together with cultural and 'spiritual' differences and served as more evidence for the necessity apartheid. The reasons for this announcement were due to the fear of racial mixing. The announcement was made on the basis of an anthropological study made by R. F. A. Hoernlé which demonstrated that "...in the absence of racial separation, cultural assimilation would inevitably be followed by economic assimilation, thereafter social assimilation accompanied by political assimilation and finally biological assimilation."³⁷ This conclusive process would continue and Whites would lose their rights. A future that included the possibility of such a scenario was unanimously rejected.

Since 1933, J. Albert Coetzee had been working on the psychological aspects of nation-building, in which he mentioned the problematic nature of the Afrikaner fight against British supremacy – this struggle could not be separated from the preservation of white civilisation as a whole. The defense of white supremacy was a model for the survival of the Afrikaner people. In 1949, the son of S. du Toit Totius defined the differences between race and people. According to him, English-speaking inhabitants of South Africa were the same race as Afrikaners; however, they were not the same people. People are

³⁶ DUBOW, S. *Afrikaner Nationalism, Apartheid and the Conceptualization of 'Race'*, p. 231.

³⁷ DUBOW, S. *Afrikaner Nationalism, Apartheid and the Conceptualization of 'Race'*, p. 233.

connected by blood, culture, land, religion and language. Eloff didn't accept this interpretation and he argued that "...it was inaccurate to describe race as a biological, *Volk* and nation as a political concept. The difference between race and *Volk*, he argued, was only temporary."³⁸ However, even though Afrikaners were not united in all of the theories, they were all confident about the segregationist regime, which seemed to them to be the only solution of this question. There is no doubt that it was all about political intentions, but Calvinism and Christian nationalism legitimised it on the moral level.

Christianity is well-known as a religion of love and forgiveness, but it served the purposes of hatefulness, oppression and violence in South Africa. It became through Paul Kruger and S. J. du Toit a weapon in the hands of the politicians and convinced South African Whites that segregation, as enforced by the regime, was God-required and just and that indigenous Africans would have a chance to live life as the Bible describes.

Theologians from the pre-apartheid era in South Africa used the Bible and Christian doctrines for legitimising oppression and supporting their own supremacy. Different anthropological, psychological and biological studies were later initiated there (and elsewhere), which confirmed for them only one way of solving the situation. However, it all began with Calvinism and a mythical history, which both came to be influenced by historical developments in the European immigrants' new homeland in South Africa and in Europe.

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³⁸ DUBOW, S. *Afrikaner Nationalism, Apartheid and the Conceptualization of 'Race'*, p. 234.

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