

J.H. Hofmeyr and the Afrikaner Bond: A challenge to William Milton's "Englishness" and the advance of the "coloured" cricketer

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Introduction

It is possible that the British played cricket when they first occupied the Cape from 1795 to 1802. Charles Anguish, a former Surrey and Middlesex cricketer, was appointed comptroller of customs in 1797, but there is no reference to his playing the game during his brief term in office.¹ The earliest matches were between military teams, with the first recorded details appearing in the *Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser* on 2 January 1808. Civilians from each of the region's major population groups – African, coloured, Indian and white (both Afrikaans and English speaking) – became increasingly interested in playing the game and it gained popularity when the Cape Town/Wynberg rail link opened in 1864. The same year, the Western Province Cricket Club was formed and it assumed the task of overseeing cricket in the region, a process that grew in significance when William Milton – a product of Marlborough College and an English rugby international – arrived at the Cape in 1877. The editor of the *Cape Times*, Frederick York St Leger, saw the young sportsman's value in reinforcing the "Englishness" that the newspaper advanced, and within a short time of his arrival, Milton made a name for himself by persuading clubs to switch football codes from Cape Rules to Rugby Union. However, cricket was his preferred game and he sought to establish the Western Province CC as the "MCC of southern Africa". The club became a meeting-place for those who counted in Cape society, as well as a retreat where the English could escape an alien culture and celebrate an imperial lifestyle with fellow expatriates.

This article will build on work I have published on the Milton era² and takes into account Professor Albert Grundlingh's recent reference to the "surprising omission" of the Afrikaner from "a lively historiography pertaining to the history of cricket in South Africa".³ Grundlingh addressed the vast gap in his article, "From J.J. 'Boerjong' Kotze to Hansie Cronje: Cricketers and Afrikaners in 20th Century South Africa – Diffusion and Representation". In turn, this investigation examines

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1. J. Winch, *Cricket in Southern Africa: Two Hundred Years of Achievements and Records* (Windsor Publishers, Rosettenville, 1997), p 16.
2. See J. Winch, *England's Youngest Captain: The Life and Times of Monty Bowden and Two South African Journalists* (Windsor Publishers, Rosettenville, 2003), pp 259–273; and J. Winch, "I Could a Tale Unfold: The Tragic Story of 'Old Caddy'", in B. Murray and G. Vahed (eds), *Empire and Cricket: The South African Experience 1884–1914* (Unisa Press, Pretoria, 2009), pp 63–80.
3. A. Grundlingh, "From J.J. 'Boerjong' Kotze to Hansie Cronje: Cricketers and Afrikaners in 20th-Century South Africa – Diffusion and Representation", *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 28, 1, 2011, pp 98–114.

the contribution that J.H. “Onze Jan” Hofmeyr and his Afrikaner community made to the game in the latter part of the nineteenth century. It aims to demonstrate that Hofmeyr’s involvement was affected by his wider political interests, with the research recalling key events from the late 1870s to early 1890s. It was a period when the Cape’s Afrikaner community produced fine cricketers – notably fast bowlers – and through Hofmeyr and their political arm, the Afrikaner Bond was able to exert a strong influence over the administration of the game in the Western Cape. The subsequent alliance of the Bond with mining magnate and politician, Cecil John Rhodes – and his by then private secretary, Milton – saw cricket drawn into both the ideal of a unified South Africa and the imposition of a segregationist structure at the Cape.

The Afrikaner and cricket

There is evidence that players of Dutch descent were an important part of the cricket scene during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The *Cape Times* recalled the prominent players of the early 1850s as being the “Van Renens, Cloetes, Hornes, De Smidts ...”⁴ Their participation reflected the anglicisation which was taking place: “There were Afrikaners”, wrote historian, Mordechai Tamarkin, “who played cricket, dressed in white, and those who preferred to mount a horse and hunt with veldschoene on their feet”.⁵ D.P. Faure, a club player at the time and later editor of *Het Volksblad*, wrote:

Cricket was the outdoor game in my boyhood. The star of football had then not yet risen. Our field was the Green Point Common, then a grass field extending from the lower end of Bree Street to Three Anchor Bay, on which only two buildings were to be seen, a powder magazine and the race stand.⁶

The influence of English settlers “fanning out from the coastal towns”, wrote T.R.H. Davenport, “could be seen through newspapers which described a world where debating societies and horse-racing and cricket matches between ‘Home-born and Colonial-born’ or shooting matches referred to as Wimbledon were among the leading recreational pastimes”. By the 1870s, isolated conditions no longer protected the platteland Boer from the influence of anglicisation as increased commercial activity in the interior saw the English and other immigrant settlers gain control of the towns.⁷

At Stellenbosch, cricket had from the earliest years been “the most popular sport in the town ... there were no special fields or facilities and any open area would be used for matches”.⁸ In 1871, the Stellenbosch and District team entertained the Western Province CC when it made its first venture into the country districts. Stellenbosch became the focal point of a flourishing cricket environment that penetrated deep into the countryside to villages such as Ceres, Worcester, Paarl, Riverdale, Somerset West, Swellendam, Robertson and

4. *Cape Times*, 4 February 1880.

5. M. Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners: The Imperial Colossus and the Colonial Parish Pump* (Routledge, Abingdon, 1996), p 46.

6. D.P. Faure, *My Life and Times* (Juta, Cape Town, 1907), p 144.

7. T.R.H. Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond: The History of a South African Political Party, 1880–1911* (Oxford University Press, Cape Town, 1966), pp 5, 24.

8. N. Hendriksz, *The History of the Van der Stel Club*, at <http://www.vanderstel.co.za> accessed 27 January 2010.

Wellington. Blessed with space, good weather and a healthy, outdoor life, athletic young farmers developed an instinctive fondness for the English game. A report of the match played on Easter Monday, 1876, stated:

This noble game is becoming exceedingly popular in the Worcester district ... The village-green swarmed with spectators of every sex, age and colour assembled to witness the much talked of cricket match between a Worcester XI and employees on the extension line.⁹

William Milton soon discovered in his first season at the Cape that the most feared team was the Stellenbosch CC. Comprised almost entirely of players from the Dutch-speaking sector of the white population, their impressive deeds occurred at a time when S.J. du Toit established the Afrikaner Bond, “the first fully fledged political party representing Cape Afrikaners’ interests”.¹⁰ He also wished to promote the idea of “Afrikaners” being whites of Dutch, French or German origin who had since the seventeenth century been bound together by common experience and the Afrikaans language.¹¹ J.H. Hofmeyr, the editor of the *Zuid Afrikaan*, provided a broader definition of the Afrikaner as “anyone who, having settled in this country, wishes to remain here to help to promote our common interests and to live with the inhabitants as members of one family”. In time, the term would refer to Afrikaans-speakers as distinct from English and other nationalities.¹²

Mowbray and Rondebosch sent a combined team to Stellenbosch in early 1877 and were dismissed for 10 and 22 – L. Neethling and E.L. Schröder sharing the twenty wickets. When Sea Point visited Stellenbosch two weeks later, they bolstered their side with several star players from outside clubs. Their action prompted the *Cape Times* to comment: “In fact we have not seen such a strong eleven for some time and it was thought that the men from the Cape would gain an easy victory.” It was not to be, because Schröder and Neethling made short work of the visiting batting line-up.

The bowling of Neethling in particular caught the eye – “first-class”, said one report, “he is considered by good judges to be one of the best bowlers in the colony”. It then added: “with the bat he can do nothing.”¹³ To an extent this summed up Stellenbosch’s cricket. No side could match their attack but at times their batting proved brittle, and against the South African College they went down in a low-scoring game by 14 runs. Later in the year Stellenbosch demolished the Diocesan College, a team that had defeated the South African College comfortably the previous week. Stellenbosch dismissed the students from “Bishops” for 22 in their first innings with Neethling claiming six wickets for no runs in seven overs. He and Schröder then completed the humiliation by bowling out their opponents for 20 runs in the second innings.

9. *Cape Times*, 21 April 1876.

10. Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners*, p 6.

11. J.H. Hofmeyr with F.W. Reitz, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr (Onze Jan)* (Van de Sandt, Cape Town, 1913), p 195.

12. V. Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town: Group Identity and Social Practice 1875–1902* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995), pp 48–49.

13. *Cape Times*, 23 February 1877.

Not long afterwards, the match of the season was played when the Western Province CC travelled to Stellenbosch to play the local team in early December 1877. Milton did not play but the *Cape Times* reported that “considerable interest was taken in the match, and numbers of people were on the ground to see the cracks of Western Province play”.¹⁴ No one was left in doubt as to the strength of a Stellenbosch side that won by nine wickets thanks largely to devastating bowling by the formidable Neethling (6/13 and 5/6) and Schröder (4/31 and 4/17). The Stellenbosch pair bowled unchanged and Western Province’s second innings of 27 was over in 50 minutes – a matter of nineteen four-ball overs.

Neethling left Stellenbosch at the end of the year, having taken 66 wickets for 117 runs (average 1.77) against the area’s top sides. He appeared to drift away from the game before resurfacing some years later at Worcester where he clean bowled six batsmen in the course of helping dismiss Wellington for a paltry 9 runs.¹⁵

Milton played matches against Stellenbosch in the late 1870s and early 1880s. Of particular note was that he came up against Hofmeyr, who had broadened his interests to form the Dutch-speaking farmers’ protection association, the Boeren Beschermings Vereeniging, and in 1879 won a seat in parliament from Stellenbosch. Hofmeyr had also maintained a strong interest in cricket since learning to play the game at the South African College and like Milton, believed strongly in the benefits of manly exercise. The two men would meet regularly over the years on cricket fields, in boardroom meetings and later, in the political sphere. They had much in common but like other English-speaking South Africans in the late 1870s and early 1880s, he was probably suspicious of Hofmeyr and might well have shared in the belief that the influential Afrikaner was “one of the hottest agitators, anti-English to the backbone”.¹⁶

For a time, the editor of the *Cape Times*, Frederick St Leger adopted a cautious standpoint with regard to the Afrikaner and “for all his English jingoism, argued in an editorial that whites should take pride in their common heritage”.¹⁷ St Leger’s attitude would change, however, and during 1881 his newspaper attacked Afrikaner republicanism and accused Hofmeyr of “stirring up sympathy for the Transvaal in the Cape”.¹⁸ *The Lantern* went further and called for the Hofmeyrs – the “reigning family of Cape Town” – to be “toppled from their throne”.¹⁹

Despite the strength of Stellenbosch cricket, the Western Province CC did not see the country team as a priority when arranging matches and seasons went by without the sides meeting. Milton wrote of the “native talent of South Africa ... which lacks nothing but opportunity for development” but did not appear to have the time or the inclination to attend to the needs of those clubs and players outside the suburbs.²⁰ He designed the fixture list to suit the Cape elite. The Western Province CC programme for 1880/81 included Batchelors versus Benedicts; Civil

14. *Cape Times*, 19 December 1877.

15. *Cape Times*, 6 March 1888.

16. Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners*, p 87.

17. Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice*, p 63.

18. Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice*, p 61.

19. Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice*, p 50.

20. *Cape Argus*, 18 October 1879.

Service versus All-Comers; Mother Country versus Colonial-born; Veterans versus Juveniles, as well as club games against the Diocesan College, South African College, Mowbray, Claremont and the South African College Past and Present. Effectively, it was a relatively short season – 13 November to 24 March – which involved matches within the suburbs, minimal travelling and the attraction of the 91st Regiment Band at all fixtures. The Western Province CC thus distanced itself from the town and country districts.

An inability on the part of Milton and the Western Cape’s premier club to cater satisfactorily for the country districts pointed to a reluctance to play and encourage Afrikaners. It was a situation which Hofmeyr tried to prevent. He argued: “Only if both elements [Dutch and English] learn to respect one another, will the cohesive force of true national feeling be acquired”.²¹

A letter to the *Cape Times* called for a cricket association and complained that “cricket is simply ruled by about four members who live in Wynberg”.²² The *Cape Argus* published a letter that stated: “No club should call itself the ‘Western Province’ unless it represents every club in the province.”²³ The situation was not unlike that prevailing at the MCC of which it was once written that “to legislate for the vast cricket-playing community was ... too great a task for a single club”.²⁴ The organisation under Milton resembled the MCC of the mid-nineteenth century: “... the run-down gentlemen’s club straining to put its own house in order ... new carpets and curtains and better facilities for the surge of new members which would bring in welcome new subscription money”.²⁵ In both cases, the primary concern was for the club; the MCC relied on “the glitter of the great social fixtures between the schools and universities”,²⁶ while the Western Province CC also focused on its annual representative matches.

Despite the flawed administration, cricket continued to gain in popularity throughout the Cape Town region with numerous teams being fielded. Frustration was expressed that it was difficult for town clubs to break into the elite group that resided in the suburbs. There was also concern that the “mother city” showed a lack of interest in the cricket played in other centres of the colony, with the Western Province CC reluctant to enter teams in the Champion Bat tournaments during the 1880s.

Hofmeyr, cricket and politics in the mid-1880s

Pilloried as being autocratic and self-interested, the Western Province CC had to bear much of the responsibility for a troubled period in Cape Town cricket. It had “established itself as the premier club and bid fair to become the MCC of South Africa”, but said local player, Archie Difford, it would be “a promise unfulfilled owing to the transfer ... of the cricket strength and prestige of the sub-continent to

21. Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners*, p 54.

22. *Cape Times*, 22 August 1884.

23. *Cape Argus*, 4 September 1884.

24. S. Rae, *W.G. Grace* (Faber & Faber, London, 1998), pp 44–45.

25. T. Lewis, *Double Century: The Story of MCC and Cricket* (Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1987), p 133.

26. Lewis, *Double Century*, p 111.

Kimberley and later to Johannesburg”.²⁷ The apparent indifference displayed by cricket’s governing body towards teams in the town and country districts contrasted with the attitude of the progressive and democratic Western Province Rugby Football Union. Led by Carlo Douglas-de Fenzi, the Union actively encouraged the participation of the Afrikaans-dominated districts and introduced the successful Country Challenge Cup.

Developments in cricket and rugby did not go unnoticed by Hofmeyr. His interest in cricket was well-known but “football he admired no less”. He recognised the power of sport in not only “building up the youth of the nation” but in “unifying the two [white] peoples”. Described as having “too nervous a temperament ever to have excelled at any branch of sport”, Hofmeyr became a respected cricket administrator.²⁸ As president of the town-based Leeuwenhof CC from 1883, he was well acquainted with the strong bias in favour of the elite clubs that resided in the suburbs. His close ties with Stellenbosch also meant that he was suitably informed about cricket developments in the country districts. He therefore began his campaign to end the imbalances which existed by establishing an active club that welcomed both English and Afrikaans-speaking players. He had sufficient influence to make this possible.

In the mid-1880s, Hofmeyr was said to be the “the most powerful of all the Cape politicians ... an ideological leader, with long-term aims which he cautiously yet tenaciously pursued”.²⁹ He had been credited with countering the militant, anti-English rhetoric of the more extreme elements evident in Afrikaner mobilisation during the 1870s and early 1880s.³⁰ In the same year as he took control of the Leeuwenhof CC, he merged his Boeren Beschermings Vereeniging with Du Toit’s Afrikaner Bond to create a vibrant organisation that grew rapidly. Hofmeyr was then able to outmanoeuvre Du Toit and unite the majority of the Afrikaner members of the House of Assembly.

Away from his duties as a parliamentarian and community leader, Hofmeyr assembled his committee at Leeuwenhof CC. He had his brother-in-law, fellow Bondsman and member of the Legislative Assembly, D.C. de Waal, as vice-president for several years, while gathering together an active support group. They comprised former Stellenbosch stalwarts in Paul van Coller, William Tindall and Marthinus Neethling, and included a diligent secretary in James Barry Munnik, who was the son of the godfather to James Barry Munnik Hertzog, a Boer general during the Anglo-Boer War and future prime minister of South Africa.

The key appointment to the committee was James Sivewright, the “Afrikaner from Aberdeen”,³¹ who left the Western Province CC to work under Hofmeyr, a man he deeply admired. Sivewright became the Leeuwenhof vice-president, joined the Afrikaner Bond and was elected a member of the Legislative Assembly. He introduced himself to the constituents of East Griqualand West as an “independent”, but according to one report, “Hofmeyr carries the measure of

27. *Cape Times Weekly*, 4 January 1909.

28. Hofmeyr, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr*, p 31.

29. P. Lewsen, *John X. Merriman: Paradoxical South African Statesman* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1982), p 99.

30. Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice*, p 42.

31. Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners*, p 179.

the independence in his pocket book”.³² Sivewright nevertheless emerged as a major player in South African politics, not only serving as a link between Rhodes and Hofmeyr but between the Cape and the Transvaal. His biographer, Kenneth E. Wilburn, points out that Sivewright was able to use “the Bond as a vehicle to gain access to Boer leaders”,³³ while historian, Phyllis Lewsen, notes that Sivewright became “prominent in the Bond’s extreme illiberal faction and was very rich and influential ... Rhodes used him for his secret financial and political transactions but like Hofmeyr was aware of the mischief-making potential of this clever unscrupulous politician”.³⁴ “As a Dutchman”, writes sports historian, Dale Slater:

Hofmeyr’s espousal of the English game has wide and deep political resonances, foreshadowing his accommodation with Rhodes, but also pointing towards its limits in that he uses his political skills and influence not only to prevent the game becoming solely a vehicle for Englishness, but also to forge a place within the game for the Afrikaner.³⁵

With the advent of organised Afrikaner politics from the late 1870s, they “were well poised to take advantage of their numerical superiority and to make their mark on the colonial state”.³⁶ Hofmeyr sought Afrikaans solidarity in creating a party with moderate views that became the “most powerful single force in parliament”.³⁷ Rhodes acknowledged the English to be “hopelessly divided” in the Cape assembly and endeavoured to gain the support of the Bond. It was not a straightforward task.

Tamarkin writes that between the parliamentary sessions of 1885 and 1886, Rhodes “more or less, completed his strategic volte-face, becoming converted more clearly to Cape sub-imperialism”. It was a “conscious, concerted effort to win over Hofmeyr”, a move that would “bewilder and frustrate his friends from the opposition ... who could not figure out where exactly he stood politically”. In time, Milton, who had become the officiating clerk to the Executive Council, would work closely with Rhodes and understand the arrangement with the Bond but in the 1880s it is likely that he would have been as puzzled as politicians on all sides. He observed from close quarters the irony of Rhodes trying to appease the Bond. The mining magnate was, after all, “among the founders of the jingoistic Imperial League which agitated for imperial intervention and provoked rage and resentment among Cape Afrikaners”.³⁸

Hofmeyr’s position was no less complex, one in which he sought to secure equality between the white races but turned down a Colonial Office offer of a knighthood – “nothing would persuade him to take it”.³⁹ He was prepared to

32. *Cape Times Weekly*, 5 October 1887.

33. K.E. Wilburn, *The Life of Statesman and Industrialist Sir James Sivewright of South Africa, 1848–1916* (Edwin Mellen Press, Queenstown, 2010), pp 134, 147.

34. Lewsen, *John X. Merriman*, p 135.

35. Correspondence with Dale Slater, 11 April 2010.

36. Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners*, p 63.

37. F. Walsh, *A History of South Africa* (Harper Collins, London, 2000), p 288; T.R.H. Davenport, *South Africa: A Modern History* (Southern Book Publishers, Bergville, 1989), pp 103–104.

38. Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners*, pp 95–96.

39. *Cape Times Weekly*, 4 May 1887.

remain a British subject “in the sense of subjection to law and authority and attachment to the cause of order” but with it all he was “not prepared to become an Englishman”.⁴⁰ He was attracted to cricket because he appreciated the virtues of the game and wanted his people to play it. And, in order for this to become possible, he strove to provide the game with an administration that served as a chamber of fair debate. Politically, Hofmeyr “wanted at all costs to eliminate the Imperial factor in South Africa, that is the power of the British government to interfere in South African affairs to the embarrassment of a self-governing colony”,⁴¹ and on the cricket front he wished to curtail efforts to establish a governing body in the style of the MCC. A complacent Milton did not appear to realise until very late that Hofmeyr’s involvement in the game would result in his club’s cricket hegemony being challenged.

Confronting the Western Province CC

Hofmeyr’s opening move towards ending the Western Province CC’s monopoly of the game was to establish a strong rival club through the amalgamation of Gardens and Leeuwenhof. At meetings to discuss the issues involved in the new arrangement, Gardens expressed the need to “have a name which would stamp it as a representative club of Cape Town”⁴² and Thomas Lawton emphasised the Leeuwenhof view that the new club should be “on par with the Western Province CC and give them a voice in South African cricket”.⁴³ In September 1888, 53 members of the two clubs met under the chairmanship of Sivewright and agreed to form the Cape Town Cricket Club.⁴⁴ The clubs shared key posts in the new committee with Leeuwenhof providing Hofmeyr as president, Sivewright vice-president and Munnik treasurer. The Gardens’ representation included John J. Graham (vice-president), Louis Smuts (secretary), W.V. “Billy” Simkins (captain) and Carlo Douglas-de Fenzi (committee), all well-known personalities in Cape sport. As if to signal its intentions, the new club proceeded to outdo the Western Province CC in the quality of its patronage by featuring Sir Hercules Robinson, the high commissioner, as patron and the mayor and bishop of Cape Town as vice-patrons.

The Cape Town CC was the product of meticulous planning. The meetings ensured smooth execution, and their ultimate success could be measured by the fact that of the combined 85 members only five declined “to join the new club through dissatisfaction with the amalgamation”.⁴⁵ There was a genuine desire on the part of club leaders to improve cricket’s administration in the area. Hofmeyr’s commitment to the Cape Town CC could never be questioned. He served as its president for 21 years with his biographer recalling “how by means of his assistance the club managed to pull through many a financial difficulty ... he would rather enter the bankruptcy court than allow the club to go under”. And, it should

40. Hofmeyr, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr*, p 84.

41. C.F.J. Muller (ed), *Five Hundred Years: A History of South Africa* (Academica, Pretoria, 1981), p 190.

42. *Cape Argus*, 11 September 1888.

43. *Cape Argus*, 18 September 1888.

44. The first Cape Town CC was formed on 28 December 1857.

45. *Cape Times*, 18 September 1888.

be added, he was “eventually at his own desire carried to his grave by members of the club”.⁴⁶

Towards the end of 1888, the Cape Town CC decided to occupy a ground next-door to the Western Province CC. Several members of the club were active within the Western Province Rugby Football Union and able to facilitate an arrangement whereby the cricketers would sub-rent the proposed new rugby facility at Newlands during the summer.⁴⁷ It meant that the Cape Town CC had effectively reached a stage whereby it offered members a similar environment to that of the Western Province CC. The progress had been impressive and demonstrated organised, sometimes aggressive management that would challenge the dominant role of the region’s senior club. For Hofmeyr, it was also a matter of bringing the white races together through creating cricket opportunities for those outside the orbit of the Western Province CC. His methods in administering cricket were consistent with his political stance where he regarded the recruitment of Englishmen as testament to the Bond’s success. Addressing the May 1888 Bond Conference, he referred to progress in securing equality between Dutch and English: “If we ... follow this path we shall become one volk”.⁴⁸

During 1888/89, the first-ever English team visited South Africa. Milton was in charge of an enterprise which saw the tourists travel widely through southern Africa. Rhodes and Hofmeyr gave their support throughout: the significance of two Test matches against a unified South African team was not lost on them. Equally appealing were calls for cricket associations to cater not only for the Western Cape, but the wider population of southern Africa, an area encompassing the British colonies, Boer republics and high commission territories. Ironically, Milton was seen as the Cape’s stumbling block insofar as unification was concerned. He opposed suggestions that cricket’s administration be shared with other clubs, believing strongly that it was the Western Province CC’s duty to set an example that other clubs should follow. He strove to build a bigger and better centre of cricket with its appropriate social conformity and racial exclusivity. Milton was secure in the knowledge that there would always be a steady supply of players as the club was traditionally first call for new arrivals and also had the pick of local talent.

The new challenge presented by the Cape Town CC was to be a vastly different proposition from previous criticism in the form of letters to the press. There were political undertones to Hofmeyr and Sivewright forming a club, and Milton and his committee were forced to react to the threat. They brought about some radical changes in order to improve the image of the Western Province CC and help maintain its position of authority. A notable shift in policy was the adoption of a different fixture list. There was a concerted move to play teams that the Western Province CC would not previously have considered worthy of a game. Battling, impecunious clubs such as Leytons, Darling, Wasps and St Mary’s were granted matches as Milton’s committee agreed to play two or three times every

46. Hofmeyr, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr*, p 84.

47. Milton was largely responsible for the new cricket ground at Newlands, which was opened on 2 January 1888.

48. Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners*, p 73.

week. The policy was not unlike that of the MCC which had recognised the need to spread interest in the English game by playing as far afield as possible.

There were also efforts to embrace Afrikaans-speaking cricketers. The fixture against Stellenbosch in 1889 was referred to in the press as “this annual match in which considerable interest is taken”, while the regular appearance of Nicol Theunissen and Pieter de Villiers suggested a change of heart in the club’s selection policy – quite apart from an immeasurable strengthening of the bowling attack. Theunissen had a great reputation: his impressive 34 wickets at an average of 9.23 was the key factor in the early defeats that were inflicted on Warton’s team. His “considerable pace, and great knee-shaking, rib-roasting, finger-mangling bump” were considered essential to South Africa’s cause in the Tests, but cricket’s authorities failed to take into account a by-passed community’s lack of interest in the matches. The fast bowler was refused time off from lectures in order to play in the inaugural Test at Port Elizabeth because his professor thought “*sulke speeltjies* (sic)” (such little games) were a waste of time.

Taking Theunissen and De Villiers on board made the Western Province CC well-nigh unbeatable in a season which heralded the onset of an important rivalry. Hofmeyr realised that his team would have to prove itself in the most demanding of clashes and he offered to treat his players to dinner if they should gain a victory. The first three encounters were lost although the *Cape Times* admitted “the losses did not represent the true strength of this rising club”.⁴⁹ The Western Province CC relied heavily on the bowling prowess of its two Afrikaners. A five-run win in the second match was attributed to Theunissen’s impressive 7 for 45 in 24.2 overs, while De Villiers set up the third success with a match analysis of 10 for 25. The tide eventually turned in January 1890 when Cape Town declared at 147/ 8 and then bowled out a full-strength Western Province CC for 68.

The victory was relevant from a cricket point of view but Hofmeyr knew the groundwork was not complete. His club wanted a say in the administration of the game and their opportunity came in response to events that were taking place. The Wanderers Club of Johannesburg was arranging a tour by the Australian team and contacted the Western Province CC in order to assess interest at the Cape. Milton’s spokesman, Advocate Lynedoch Graham favoured “the adoption of a bold course, and stated that the [Western Province CC] should guarantee the whole sum themselves”. He failed to see what “good could be done by the calling of a general meeting of cricketers” as his club would simply be asked to make all the arrangements. Displaying surprising naivety towards the state of affairs in local cricket, Graham felt convinced that the majority of cricketers “trusted the Western Province CC and were glad to leave their interests in the hands of the club”. Ned Steytler, who was also a member of the Claremont CC, thought Graham’s interpretation was provocative. He said that “the Western Province CC was usurping its authority to a certain extent in taking this thing entirely in its own hands”. He argued that there had been “numbers of letters” and articles in the papers on the subject of the Western Province CC’s tendency to make decisions without consulting the other clubs.⁵⁰

49. *Cape Times Weekly*, 14 February 1889.

50. *Cape Times Weekly*, 26 February, 1890.

The Cape Town CC responded at a special meeting on 12 March 1890. There were complaints that the Western Province CC was making no effort to consult with Cape Town clubs in preparing for the proposed tour. Simkins called for a meeting of clubs to protest against the Western Province CC's actions but Hofmeyr avoided confrontation at that stage by declaring there was insufficient time for such action. Instead, a resolution was drawn up which read:

During the past season the necessity has been frequently urged on members of your committee by members of the club and of other clubs to take some steps to wrest from the Western Province Cricket Club the apparent monopoly which they hold in regard to the administration of cricketing matters in the Western Province, and obtain equal representation for all first-class local clubs on some duly constituted board in whose hands the sole management of such matters should rest.⁵¹

The *Cape Argus* commented that the “undignified squabbles only go to emphasise the long felt want of a cricket association”,⁵² but its establishment depended on Hofmeyr and Sivewright gaining the co-operation of Milton and his committee. There was no clear indication as to how much discussion was taking place behind the scenes but Hofmeyr with “a natural gift for lobbying and for grass-roots organisation”,⁵³ was able to make use of his vice-presidents, Sivewright (who knew Milton well) and John J. Graham (older brother of Lynedoch) in ensuring the Western Province CC fell into line.

Although Milton was keen to maintain the Western Province CC's position of significance, the attraction of sport as a vehicle for nation-building was being spelt out to him by Sivewright who was acting “as the major facilitator between Rhodes and Hofmeyr”.⁵⁴ Milton's narrow cricket world stood for little when he realised that Hofmeyr and Rhodes shared the vision of unifying southern Africa into a single political and economic system. It determined much of their political strategy, with sport giving impetus to their plans through the establishment of the South African Rugby Football Board in 1889, and the move towards a similar body for cricket.

The formation of the South African Cricket Association at a meeting held at Glover's Athletic Bar in Kimberley on 9 April 1890 was a breakthrough and given wide publicity at a time when dramatic developments were taking place. The boom experienced on the Witwatersrand in the previous two years was over, with rising unemployment and a general collapse in morale which ended plans to invite the Australian cricketers. Monty Bowden, a bankrupt stock-broker who had captained England in the Second Test during the 1888/89 tour, joined other provincial players in Rhodes's Pioneer Column which hoped to take advantage of the fabled riches of ancient Ophir. The Mashonaland venture was made possible through the grant of a Royal Charter; the setting up of the British South Africa Company and the financial strength of De Beers. Together, they gave Rhodes immense powers in forging ahead with his northern objectives although he later admitted that he could not have done it without the support of Hofmeyr's Afrikaner Bond.⁵⁵

51. *Cape Argus*, 18 August 1890.

52. *Cape Argus*, 1 August 1890.

53. Lewsen, *John X. Merriman*, p 83.

54. Wilburn, *Sir James Sivewright of South Africa*, p 150.

55. Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners*, p 86.

Sivewright was not only involved in the consummation of the relationship between Rhodes and the Bond but would help negotiate the construction of the railway through Bechuanaland, an important factor in securing the Charter.

The new political alliance that Rhodes formed with Hofmeyr secured him the Cape premiership after the fall of the Sprigg cabinet in mid-July 1890. Rhodes was seemingly fully converted to the Bond’s point of view “on vital issues affecting it, like agricultural protection and ‘native policy’”.⁵⁶ Hofmeyr was content to turn down the opportunity to form a government, stating he was not prepared to head “an irresponsible majority”. He preferred to back “men with good sound *Afrikaner* views” who were able to make judgements themselves.⁵⁷ The *Afrikaner* Bond did not have an absolute majority – in 1890 it could call on 37 out of 76 members in the House of Assembly – but an alliance with Rhodes was to their “mutual advantage” because he was largely dependent on Hofmeyr. Once in power, Rhodes put together a broad coalition that included liberals and members of the *Afrikaner* Bond but it rarely happened that “a proposal was submitted to the House without having been placed before the *Afrikaner* leader”.⁵⁸

Hofmeyr masterminds the formation of Western Province Cricket Union

Less than two months after Rhodes became prime minister, Hofmeyr turned to the next stage in the reconstruction of the Cape’s cricket administration. His aim was to establish a cricket association that would represent the clubs. Hofmeyr worked closely with Sivewright, one of two Bondsmen in Rhodes’s cabinet and, as a former chairman of the Western Province CC, familiar with its methods. An agreement was reached whereby the Western Province CC was allowed a full role in proceedings and therefore seen as a key participant in orchestrating a new cricket structure at the Cape. Hofmeyr aimed to use Milton who was not only the best-known personality in Cape cricket, but had recently been appointed acting secretary in the Prime Minister’s Department. The “worldly *Afrikaner* leader” as Phyllis Lewsen described Hofmeyr “took men as he found them and readily exploited their weaknesses”.⁵⁹ The presidency of the proposed new provincial union was thus offered to Milton who was handily placed to be kept in check by Rhodes and Hofmeyr.

Progress was rapid. At the Western Province CC’s annual general meeting on 4 August 1890, members were asked to approve “the formation of a local cricket union and that the committee be authorised to consult with the representatives of other clubs with regard thereto and elect representatives”.⁶⁰ Advocate Graham, who was in the process of winning fame as a criminal lawyer, was then nominated to represent Milton at a meeting to consider the establishment of a provincial body. They were positive steps forward and when the Cape Town CC met again on the 18 August 1890, Sivewright was able to report that the Western Province CC “readily fell in with the idea of unification”. The Cape Town CC was by this stage driving the changes that were taking place, which

56. Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners*, p 127.

57. R.I. Rotberg, *The Founder: Cecil Rhodes and the Pursuit of Power* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1988), p 341.

58. Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond*, p 105; Lewsen, *John X. Merriman*, p 139.

59. Lewsen, *John X. Merriman*, p 98.

60. *Cape Argus*, 5 August 1890.

prompted Louis Smuts to state that it had “won for itself a position ... which has exceeded the expectations of the most sanguine members”.⁶¹

The formation of the Western Province Cricket Union became a reality at a gathering of delegates from leading clubs at the Thatched Tavern on 5 September 1890. Graham chaired a straightforward meeting as delegates from the clubs had already met to frame rules for the governing body so that the new constitution could be “regarded as an accomplished feat”. It had been agreed that the Western Province CC should have four delegates to the Union; the Cape Town CC two; Claremont two; and Sea Point one. A quorum would consist of representatives from at least three different clubs. It was further unanimously agreed that Milton be elected president of the Union with Pieter de Villiers as the secretary and treasurer.⁶² The appointment of De Villiers, who was also a paid assistant secretary of the Western Province CC, meant Milton and Lynedoch Graham had engineered an effective six votes against the five of the other delegates.

The composition of the committee might have been contentious but the general mood in cricket circles was one of optimism. Hofmeyr could be credited for masterminding the unification of Western Province cricket and, to an extent, reining in Milton. It reinforced John X. Merriman’s description of Hofmeyr as “the Mole – an industrious little animal ... You never see him at work, but every now and then a little mound of earth, thrown up here and there, will testify to his activities”.⁶³ The remark offended Hofmeyr but the methods he used to “unite” cricket had ensured a smooth transition. Clubs would at last have their say in the administration of cricket in the region, while Hofmeyr was in a position to oversee Milton’s leadership.

Cricket’s administrators realised that they would have to prove themselves, particularly against their progressive rugby counterparts. Theunissen did not stay long at the Western Province CC because he turned to rugby and led Stellenbosch to victory over the Villager Club at the opening of the Newlands rugby ground in May 1890. In one of his last cricket appearances, he agreed to play for a Stellenbosch XI against Hofmeyr’s team in a fixture that would become an annual affair. The president of the Afrikaner Bond saw his “family” side build a large first innings lead, only for Theunissen to enter the fray in the second innings and take eight wickets (all clean bowled) for 7 runs.⁶⁴

Hofmeyr also saw Stellenbosch come close to defeating the British Isles rugby team that toured South Africa in 1891, but an English cricket tour the following summer did not produce similar encouragement. Milton hoped to satisfy the country districts by arranging for their best 22 to take on William Read’s team at Stellenbosch. A side was selected that included players from Stellenbosch, Worcester, Swellendam, Paarl, Robertson, Ceres, Caledon and Malmesbury, but Milton deemed it necessary to ask Captain Townley Wright, the archetypal Englishman and secretary of the Western Province CC, to lead the largely Afrikaans-speaking team. Wright offered little as a player and local supporters,

61. *Cape Argus*, 19 August 1890.

62. *Cape Times*, 6 September 1890.

63. Lewsen, *John X. Merriman*, p 98.

64. *Cape Times*, 9 February 1892.

who had seen their rugby men give the British a fright, were most disappointed by the performance of the cricketers. The *Midland News and Karoo Farmer* reported that “scathing criticisms have been penned” on a match which drew “public disgust”.⁶⁵

The position of the Cape’s “coloured” cricketers

At a time when English and Afrikaans-speaking cricketers sought to unify the game, there was also the question of the “coloured” cricketers. They had for many years been an active part of Cape cricket. As early as 1873, reference was made to the “cricketing glories of the Parade”. It was there that Her Majesty’s servants would fire “blank cartridge in the mornings at the Masonic Hotel, and round shot at one another in the shape of cricket balls in the evenings”. And, said the writer, “skirmishing round their serried ranks on every patch of green [were] crowds of small boys of all colours playing cricket”.⁶⁶ The Parade provided much enjoyment but the authorities were conscious of mounting opposition to the games being played there. Complaints were voiced such as that of “Vally” who wrote to the *Cape Times* in 1884:

I have no wish to interfere with certain “darkeys” who play what they call “cricket” on the Parade every afternoon; but I would be glad if some arrangement could be made whereby passers-by – especially ladies – would be protected. No matter how many or who passes, they stop for no-one ...⁶⁷

In no time, restrictions were placed on where games could be played. By 1890 the “cricketing glories of the Parade” were over because ball-playing was prohibited altogether. An article in the *Cape Argus* commented: “The stern Town Council has decreed that little boys shan’t play cricket or football on the Parade any longer [and the youngsters] may now seek other means for letting off steam even more objectionable to the City Fathers.” It concluded, “It is an unwise thing to place too heavy restrictions on youthful sports”.⁶⁸

The situation was a little more complicated than simply preventing children from having fun. The “coloured” Star of South Africa and other clubs that made use of the space for practices were targeted by one councillor who referred to them as “great hulking fellows who ought to be at work”. Attitudes hardened as cricket became part of the discriminatory tendency of Empire. The Council led the way and pressure was placed on the clubs to demonstrate where they stood with regard to the colour question. It was well-known that the Western Province and Cape Town cricket clubs allowed Malay cricketers to play on their respective grounds at Newlands. It brought in much-needed revenue.

An important issue arose when the Malays asked their white counterparts to assist them in preparing for an inter-town tournament in mid-February 1891. The Cape Town CC committee chaired by Joe Lodge acceded to the request, only for the hierarchy – Hofmeyr and Sivewright – to veto the arrangement. Four days after the meeting was held, the *Cape Times* announced that the newspaper was

65. *Midland News and Karoo Farmer*, 22 March 1892.

66. “An Old Peripatetic: Cape Town and Cricket”, *Cape Monthly*, 6, 1873, pp 162–163.

67. *Cape Times*, 29 January 1884.

68. *Cape Argus*, 1 November 1890.

“authorised to state that the club have declined to play their team against the Malays”. It continued: “To us there appears no reason whatever why the well-behaved cricketers of the Malay community should not be occasionally met by European exponents of the British national game, which our coloured neighbours show such a commendable desire to emulate.” It went on to mention that the English had welcomed the Parsees; the Eclectic Club in Kimberley had played fixtures with the Malays and “in Natal the natives play European colonists”.⁶⁹

While Hofmeyr valued cricket for its integrative powers insofar as the white races were concerned, he also made use of it as a divisive force. “In sport, he repeatedly declared there was no politics”,⁷⁰ yet his Cape Town CC provided the first indication of an “official” position being taken on mixed cricket. Hofmeyr’s approach to cricket was in line with his political standpoint because the Afrikaner Bond had already established a “guidance of Providence clause” that excluded coloureds and Africans from its membership.⁷¹ A number of white cricketers opposed the decision taken by the Cape Town CC and fielded “European XIs” against Malay teams. The fixtures attracted interest and the Malay community attended in considerable numbers, but the arrangement did not last.

When Rhodes and Hofmeyr came out in support of segregation in the 1890s, cricket was soon linked with official racist ideologies and policies. Hofmeyr worked for some time during 1892 and 1893 on the Franchise Bill that initially “aimed at a direct restriction of the non-tribal African vote” and would go on to question “whether coloureds were to be embraced as part of the ‘South African’ dominant grouping or would join Africans in the political cold”.⁷² The debate was “long and strenuous” but thanks to co-operation between Rhodes and Hofmeyr, the Bill received the support of the Cape parliament and, significantly, the press in England who saw it as “a matter of policy” rather than a race question. It would be “the precursor of a better understanding between the two great European races ... they could talk of a United South Africa in its best sense”. Furthermore, the line of demarcation could be “drawn between the coloured barbarian and the civilised European”.⁷³

Cape “liberalism” was “always a minority creed”, writes historian, Shula Marks, “and a rather frail one at that”. It was increasingly challenged, largely because of white alarm at the influx of “migrant workers into the colony’s towns”, the influences of “Social Darwinism”, and “the strains of rapid social transformation”. By the 1890s, people of colour who had become westernised were beginning “to find the foundations of their world shaken, their dreams of incorporation into a common colonial society betrayed”.⁷⁴

69. *Cape Argus*, 15 February 1891.

70. Hofmeyr, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr*, p 31.

71. Wilburn, *Sir James Sivewright of South Africa*, p 132.

72. R. Parry, “Black Cricketers, White Politicians and the Origins of Segregation at the Cape to 1894”, in Murray and Vahed (eds), *Empire and Cricket*, pp 40–41.

73. Hofmeyr, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr*, pp 436–437.

74. S. Marks, “Class, Culture, and Consciousness in South Africa, 1880–1899”, in R. Ross, A. Kelk Mager and W. Nasson (eds), *The Cambridge History of South Africa, Volume 2, 1885–1994* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011), p 144.

The Hendricks affair

Harry Cadwallader, a Cape Town journalist and the secretary of the South African Cricket Association, arranged the first cricket tour to England in 1894. He was keen to select H. “Krom” Hendricks, a coloured fast bowler, but was well aware that any decision to include a player of colour in a “national” cricket side flew in the face of political developments taking place. The Cape, however, was preoccupied with preparations for an election at the beginning of 1894, whilst Milton had resigned as president of the Western Province Cricket Union in order to take on new responsibilities. In late 1893, Milton was maintaining the prime minister’s office because Rhodes had travelled north to monitor progress in the war that was looming in Matabeleland. On 1 November – three days before Bulawayo fell to Dr Jameson’s troops – Cadwallader sensed the momentum was with him. He initiated controversy with guns blazing by nominating the sixteen players he thought should tour England. He chose Hendricks as one of a quartet to spearhead the bowling and then followed up his shadow selection by suggesting “the inclusion of a Malay may cause rabid colonists to change colour”.⁷⁵

The issue sparked widespread interest. Hofmeyr, the power behind the Cape government and Western Province cricket, was immersed in election matters but no doubt debated the position of Hendricks at one of the “little conferences” in which he participated most mornings. Hofmeyr and Rhodes were “early risers, and it was the usual thing for the two men, often joined by Mr Sivewright, to take a ride on horseback together before the town was astir”.⁷⁶ Not long after Rhodes’s return from Matabeleland, it was decided that Milton should return to active cricket administration and ensure the imposition of segregationist policy was not obstructed by the individual advancement of a coloured cricketer. Milton was appointed chairman of the Western Province Cricket Union selection committee and thus responsible for a final decision on the nomination of Hendricks.

In early 1894, the Cape government was moving towards a clear segregationist policy highlighted by the “momentous and complicated” Glen Grey Act which regulated the lives of black dwellers in the Eastern Cape. Historian, Robert I. Rotberg, writes that it was “conceived by Rhodes ... drafted by Milton”, but that there had been “extensive consultations” with Hofmeyr.⁷⁷ It is further reported that “the ideals embodied are those of Hofmeyr rather than those of Rhodes”.⁷⁸ The Act which promised “to extend the Cape’s net of ever-tightening segregation”,⁷⁹ reduced the size of properties owned by blacks and provided a means through which they would work for whites, thereby fostering an increased labour force for the mines. According to historian, Saul Dubow, it was “freighted

75. *Cape Times*, 1 November 1893. Hendricks was not in fact Malay. He regarded himself as coloured because his father was born of Dutch parents in Cape Town and his mother was from St Helena.

76. Hofmeyr, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr*, p 440.

77. Rotberg, *The Founder*, pp 476–477.

78. Hofmeyr, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr*, p 469.

79. Rotberg, *The Founder*, pp 476–77; R. Parry, “In a Sense Citizens, but not Altogether Citizens ...: Rhodes, Race and the Ideology of Segregation at the Cape in the late Nineteenth Century”, *CAAS Newsletter* (University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, 1983), p 384.

with political symbolism ... a decisive native policy that was broadly attractive to whites would facilitate the creation of a united white nation capable of expanding”.⁸⁰

Segregation was designed to include the “coloured” communities of the Cape.⁸¹ Of particular relevance to the debate taking place on Hendricks’s inclusion in the touring team was the concern on another front that a Muslim teacher, Ahmed Effendi, would benefit from a constitutional peculiarity and be elected a member of the House of Assembly. Rhodes reacted by leading a move to amend the system but his intervention made little difference because Ahmed Effendi was well beaten in the election. The episode strengthened the Cape government’s resolve to oppose the selection of a “coloured” cricketer for an overseas tour. Rhodes later claimed: “They wanted me to send a black fellow called Hendricks to England ... but I would not have it. They would have expected him to throw boomerangs during the luncheon interval”.⁸² The reference to Aborigines – treated as “curiosities” during their 1868 tour of England⁸³ – gave Rhodes good reason to blame the English for the Cape government’s reluctance to send a “coloured” player overseas.

Shortly before the meeting to select the 1894 side, the former South African player, Charles Finlason, warned cricket administrators that the tour was “not only of sporting importance but of political importance as well”. He was concerned that the Hendricks issue had obscured the fact that players of “Dutch descent” were not being considered. In calling for a representative team, he noted that “several players who were likely to be selected were of Dutch descent”.⁸⁴ Stressing that the tour should “assume its true importance as a national affair”, Finlason – then editor of *The Press* – made a point of calling upon President Paul Kruger to contribute towards the tour funds. He believed a donation from the president of the Transvaal Republic would “show the *uitlanders* that he sympathises with their old national game ... a game which will do more to merge Boer and *uitlander* into good Transvalers than any elaborate political measure that can be devised by the Volksraad”. He stressed that “Boers and *uitlanders* must not only work together, but play together ...”⁸⁵ It is not known whether Kruger responded to the editorial but General Piet Joubert was reported to have headed the list of Transvaal subscribers.⁸⁶

There is no evidence to suggest that Hofmeyr pushed for players of Dutch descent. He had not been actively involved in cricket affairs for some months. The election period and its aftermath were not only time consuming for him but particularly unpleasant in that he suffered “internal upheavals in the Bond and

80. S. Dubow, “South Africa and South Africans: Nationality, Belonging, Citizenship”, in Ross, Kelk Mager and Nasson, *The Cambridge History of South Africa*, p 32.

81. Marks, “Class, Culture, and Consciousness”, p 144.

82. P. Warner, *Lord’s 1787–1945* (Sportsman’s Book Club, London, 1951), p 60.

83. A. Mallett, *The Black Lords of Summer: The Story of the 1868 Aboriginal Tour of England and Beyond* (University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 2002), pp 89–101.

84. *The Press*, 5 February 1894. Names referred to at the time included Charles Fichardt, Pieter de Villiers and Frederick Kuys.

85. *The Press*, 5 February 1894.

86. *The Press*, 17 February, 1894.

personal attacks”. Two weeks before the side to tour England was announced, he wrote that he wished to leave politics: “I am dead tired of the whole business.”⁸⁷

The alienation of groups other than English-speaking whites was a feature of the final selection committee meeting that Milton chaired and dominated at De Aar on 25 February 1894. The brief minutes that were published do not mention the question of “Dutch” representation and say little about Hendricks. Newspaper reports recall that in deliberations lasting more than five hours, Milton had his way on virtually every issue, most notably in the rejection of Hendricks. There was bitterness that the fast bowler, “pure South African as he is”, was overlooked. “The coloured race,” explained *The Standard and Diggers News*, “should be kept in their proper sphere in this country, but in this particular instance it would be a very great mistake to allow any such abstract consideration to stand in the way of success”.⁸⁸

Conclusion

In 1895 Hofmeyr, suffering from ill-health, carried out his threat to “retire from the Bond and parliament”. Tributes followed including the offer of the presidency of the Free State but Hofmeyr steered clear of the limelight. He also remained oblivious to Rhodes’s involvement in a conspiracy aimed at overthrowing the government of the South African Republic. On 29 December 1895, the Hon. Charles Coventry, second-in-command of the Bechuanaland Border Police and a member of the England team that overwhelmed Milton’s South Africans at Newlands in 1888/89, told his men: “We are going straight to Johannesburg ... It will be a short trip, everything has been arranged.”⁸⁹ The Jameson Raid was a disaster from the outset with its participants arrested some 20 miles from Johannesburg, on 2 January 1896.

Hofmeyr immediately informed the *Cape Times* that “if Rhodes is behind it, then he is no more a friend of mine”.⁹⁰ Rhodes resigned, having been the aggressive imperialist all along, and left for Matabeleland soon afterwards to play his part in suppressing the first of two rebellions in Rhodesia. Milton is thought to have had no knowledge of Jameson’s impending invasion,⁹¹ but joined Rhodes in order to reorganise the civil service in Rhodesia and ultimately head its administration.

The unfolding events “meant the loss of much of [Hofmeyr’s] direct power and influence”,⁹² but he remained a respected figure and continued to lead the administration of the Cape Town CC. On the surface, cricket appeared largely unaffected by the impact of the Raid. Afrikaner involvement in the game had been in decline since the 1880s, although Tamarkin remarks that “the feeling of betrayal and abandonment by their trusted English-speaking ally certainly pushed them

87. Hofmeyr, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr*, p 473.

88. *Standard and Diggers News*, 27 February 1894.

89. E. Longford, *Jameson’s Raid: The Prelude to the Boer War* (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London, 1982), p 61.

90. Marks, “Class, Culture, and Consciousness in South Africa”, p 149.

91. P. Jourdan, *Cecil Rhodes: His Private Life by his Private Secretary* (John Lane, London, 1910), p 27.

92. Hofmeyr, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr*, p 501.

towards their more exclusive ethnic *laager*.⁹³ Events, however, had notably little effect on rugby which had taken a firm hold within the Afrikaner community, as illustrated by the success achieved through Stellenbosch not only winning the Western Province Rugby Union’s premier competition – the Grand Challenge – for the first time in 1896, but also securing the Junior Challenge for the third successive year.

Milton’s departure brought little change to the position of the “coloured” cricketer. If anything, attitudes hardened and in 1896/97 the Western Province Cricket Union issued a racially discriminatory resolution stating: “... no coloured professional or member shall be allowed to compete in championship matches”.⁹⁴ When Hendricks was controversially selected to play for an All-Comers XI against the Western Province CC at Newlands, an unusually large crowd saw him deliver 21.3 overs of sustained pace to capture 6 wickets for 20 runs.⁹⁵ Billy Simkins, the Western Province Cricket Union president, and one of Hofmeyr’s disciples, complained that “someone was guilty of a grave error in having selected Hendricks for the All-Comers”. He told his committee that they should use all means at their disposal to ensure the two classes “be kept distinctly separate”. This was a powerful indication of the direction in which cricket at the Cape had moved.⁹⁶

The pattern being set for the future of cricket was clearly in place despite the *Cape Times* concluding that white South Africans “were not blind to the wrong that was committed” over Hendricks. The writer – probably Edmund Garrett who had succeeded St Leger as editor – believed sports administrators had neglected their roles in the dissemination of the imperial games. He referred to youngsters “ranging from the lighter of brown looks to the darkest of black ones, going forth to various open spaces [to play sport]”, and asked: “Can the English who carry their cricket and football to the uttermost parts of the earth look with disfavour on such a phenomenon?”⁹⁷

Milton, as a key figure in the diffusion of cricket, had for the most part failed to allow opportunities to evolve fairly for all the Cape’s ethnic groups. The advent of the Western Province Cricket Union did mean that he was for a while relegated to the position of nominal leader – the front man – with Hofmeyr possessing the real authority, but it was a complex situation. Milton had been unmoved by Afrikaner enthusiasm for cricket, whilst Hofmeyr checked the grand plan of a “MCC of southern Africa”, yet they came together to ensure the game followed developments that were taking place on the broader political stage.

This important formative period undoubtedly laid the foundations for South African sport deep into the twentieth century. Hofmeyr spoke in 1893 of athletes providing “an example which politicians are all too slow to follow in the aim for a united South Africa”.⁹⁸ Yet only whites were being considered, and even then cricket became essentially an Englishman’s game.

93. Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners*, p 294.

94. *Cape Times*, 6 November 1897.

95. *Cape Times*, 1 November 1897.

96. *Cape Times*, 6 November 1897.

97. *Cape Times*, 13 November 1897.

98. *SA Review*, 1 December 1893.

Abstract

In the late nineteenth century, the Western Province CC – with William Milton dominant – strengthened its position as Cape cricket’s controlling power. Their intention was to become the “MCC of southern Africa” in keeping with press-led initiatives to promote “Englishness”. Such developments were opposed by J.H. “Onze Jan” Hofmeyr, who championed Afrikaner sport and wished to create a cricket administration that served as a chamber of fair debate for all white clubs. He challenged the hegemony of the Western Province CC through the establishment of the Cape Town CC, and then engineered a new governing body, the Western Province Cricket Union, which would be headed – controversially – by Milton. The developments mirrored the wider political events taking place. As leader of the influential Afrikaner Bond, Hofmeyr was able to secure the Cape premiership for Cecil John Rhodes. That Milton should be appointed as the prime minister’s secretary helped consolidate a process through which Hofmeyr became the major force behind Cape politics and Western Province cricket. Milton would in turn ensure cricket’s administration adhered to the official racist ideologies and policies of the Cape government, notably when threatened with plans to include a player of colour, “Krom” Hendricks, in the national cricket side.

Key words: Cape cricket; Englishness; William Milton; Afrikaner Bond; J.H. Hofmeyr; Cecil John Rhodes; racist ideologies; “Krom” Hendricks; player of colour.

J.H. Hofmeyr en die Afrikaner Bond: ‘n uitdaging tot William Milton se “Englishness” en die bevordering van die “gekleurde” krieket speler

In die laat negentiende eeu, het die Westerlike Provinsie KK – met William Milton dominant – hulle posisie versterk as die beherende mag in Kaapse krieket. Hul doelwit was om die “MCC van suidelike Afrika” te word in ooreenstemming met pers-gelei inisiatiewe om “Englishness” te bevorder. Sulke ontwikkelinge is teengewerk deur J.H. “Onze Jan” Hofmeyr, wat Afrikaner sport ondersteun het, en hy wou’n krieket administrasie vorm wat diens sou gee as’n raad vir eerlike debat vir alle wit klubs. Hy het die heerskappy van die Westerlike Provinsie KK uitgedaag deur die verstiging van die Kaapstad KK, en dan het hy ’n nuwe beheerliggaam ontwerp, die Westerlike Provinsie Krieket Unie, wat onder die omstrede leiding van Milton sou wees. Die ontwikkelinge het die breër politieke gebeure weerspieël. As die invloedryke leier van die Afrikaner Bond kon Hofmeyr die posisie van die Kaapse Premier, Cecil John Rhodes, beïnvloed. Die feit dat Milton aangestel was as die eerste minister se sekretaris het gehelp om Hofmeyr te konsolideer as die groot krag agter Kaapse politiek en Westerlike Provinsie krieket. Op sy beurt sou Milton verseker dat die administrasie van krieket sou vasklou aan die amptelike rassistiese ideologieë en beleid van die Kaapse regering, veral wanneer dit bedreig is met planne om ’n gekleurde speler, “Krom” Hendricks, in die nasionale krieket span in te sluit.

Stelutewoorde: Kaapse krieket; Englishness; William Milton; Afrikaner Bond; J.H. Hofmeyr; Cecil John Rhodes; rassistiese ideologieë; “Krom” Hendricks; gekleurde speler.