

## **Black resistance in the Orange Free State during the Anglo-Boer War**

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### **Introduction**

The relationship between Boers and blacks in the Free State before the Anglo-Boer War may be characterised in terms of the paternalistic element of quasi-kinship, an ethos that developed where mutual dependence was accompanied by submission on the part of the blacks to superordinate white males, who in turn, accepted a measure of responsibility for the welfare of their clients, and where the cultural isolation of the farm promoted some commonality of material culture.<sup>1</sup>

In the early stages of the war, black workers assisted the Boer women in carrying on farming operations. The commandos made use of labour levies, employed, for example, as drivers and diggers of trenches and, in a different category, some trusted workers accompanied their employers as *agterryers*. In addition to the burghers who had personal retainers, black men were commandeered as communal servants. At this stage, according to Pretorius's estimate, there was a ratio of one *agterryer* for every four burghers,<sup>2</sup> although, according to burgher J.L. Labuschagne, virtually every member of the 1 200-strong Harrismith commando had an *agterryer*.<sup>3</sup> Later in the war, the *agterryers* largely disappeared from the ranks of the Boer forces, both as a result of desertion and because the guerrilla band was a more focused fighting machine.

Despite the common context of the racial attitudes that prevailed among whites, both anecdotal and iconographic evidence points to a lack of social distance between the Boers and their black *agterryers*.<sup>4</sup> In these

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1. The concept of genuine or onerous paternalism is explored in S. Dagut, "Paternalism and Social Distance: British Settlers' Racial Attitudes", *South African Historical Journal*, 37, November 1997, pp 3–20. This perspective is disputed by R. Ross, "Paternalism, Patriarchy and Afrikaans", *South African Historical Journal*, 32, May 1995, pp 34–37.
2. F. Pretorius, *Life on Commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Human & Rousseau, Cape Town, 1992), p 294.
3. J.L. Labuschagne, "Platrand", in P.H.S. van Zyl, *Waar en Trou: Waar en Trou as Afrikaners, Kinders van Suid-Afrika* (Afrikaanse Pers-Boekhandel, Johannesburg, 1948), p 7.
4. Grenadier Guards Archives (AGG), Boer War, Diary of Lt E.G. Spencer Churchill, 30 June 1902, quoted by W. Nasson, "Africans at War", in J. Gooch (ed.), *The Boer War: Direction, Experience and Image* (Frank Cass, London, 2000), p 137; S. Izedinova, *A Few Months with the Boers: The War Reminiscences of a Russian Nursing Sister* (Perskor, Johannesburg, 1977), p 88; B. Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War: A Black South African War in the Cape 1899–1902* (Cambridge University

circumstances, the Boers were not only taken aback but also outraged when vast numbers of blacks shook off their subject status. Boer survival had historically depended on the subordination of blacks,<sup>5</sup> and now, all of a sudden, they were losing control and their social world was tumbling about their ears.<sup>6</sup>

The shock and outrage is evident not only in violent overreaction, but also in the pained memory of the mockery experienced by women on their way to the camps and by prisoners of war. Most searing of all was the taunt: "Where are your passes?" This triumphing of blacks over whites has entrenched itself in Afrikaner folklore.<sup>7</sup> In the stories told, the nature of the abuse hurled at the Boers may vary, along with the projectiles sometimes hurled by the Boers in retaliation, yet the salient features are invariable, suggesting that these stories reflect not only actual occurrences but also deep anxieties within Boer society, defused by such narratives.<sup>8</sup>

It is a commonplace of history that subterranean black labour resistance can be discerned from the time when white people first appeared on the South African scene. This manifested itself in instances of sullenness, insolence, theft, desertion, laziness or deliberate damage to farm implements, but it needed the intrusion of new factors for such

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Press, Cambridge, 1991), p 99; and P. Labuschagne, *Ghost Riders of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902: The Role and Contribution of Agterryers* (Unisa Press, Pretoria, 1999), pp 39, 46 and 52.

5. D.J.N. Denoon, "Participation in the Boer War: People's War, People's Non-War or Non-People's War", in B.A. Ogot (ed.), *War and Society in Africa: Ten Studies* (F. Cass, London, 1972), p 110.
6. S. Marks, "White Masculinity: Jan Smuts, Race and the South African War", *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 3 (2001), pp 218–220.
7. Examples abound: J. Grobler, "Haat, Vrees, Afsku: Boerevroue se Houding teenoor Swart Mense soos Weerspieël in Dagboeke tydens die Anglo-Boereoorlog, 1899–1902", *Joernaal vir Eietydse Geskiedenis*, 27, 2, May 2002, p 37; M.C.E. van Schoor (ed.), "Dagboek van Rocco de Villiers en Bylaes", *Christiaan de Wet-Annale*, 3, 23 December 1901, p 48; M.C.E. van Schoor (ed.), "Dagboek van Hugo H. van Niekerk", *Christiaan de Wet-Annale*, 1, 1 March 1900, p 39; C.J. Barnard, *Die Vyf Swemmers: Die Ontsnapping van Willie Steyn en Vier Medekrygsgevangenes uit Ceylon 1901* (Bienenell, Pretoria, 2004), pp 35, 39; W. Heberden, "The Diary of a Doctor's Wife during the Siege of Kimberley, October 1899 to February 1900", *Military History Journal*, 3, 4, December 1975, p 10; D.H. van Zyl, *In die Konsentrasiekamp: Jeugherinneringe* (Nasionale Pers, Bloemfontein, 1944), p 20; Oorlogsmuseum van die Boererepublieke (hereafter OM), 5301/2: Dagboek van J.J. de Klerk; L.A. Visagie, *Terug na Kommando: Avonture van Willie Steyn en Vier Ander Krygsgevangenes* (Nasionale Pers, Cape Town, 1932), pp 21, 28, 34; J. Bottomley and C. Luijks, "The Diary of Susarha Nel and her Ordeal in the 'Death Camp' at Mafeking", paper delivered at the *Afrikanerperspektiewe op die Anglo-Boereoorlog 1899–1902* conference at the OM, May 1988, p 6; C.A.R. Schulenburg, *August Carl Schulenburg: Krygsgevangene, Medikus, Boer* (Van Schaik, Pretoria, 1985), p 40; T. van Rensburg (ed.) *Oorlogsjoernaal van S.J. Burger 1899* (HSRC, Pretoria, 1977), p 96; and many examples in S.P.R. Oosthuizen, "Die Beheer, Behandeling en Lewe van die Krygsgevangenes gedurende die Anglo-Boereoorlog", DPhil thesis, University of the Free State, 1975, pp 78–82.
8. See D. Wylie, *Myth of Iron: Shaka in History* (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, Scottsville, 2006), p 31.

resistance to take on a more overt form that shattered the mould of subservience.

**“Revolution from above; rebellion from below”**

The war itself, and, more specifically, the arming of blacks by the British, was clearly the predominant influence in this regard and was identified by Smuts as “the predominating political factor” in ultimately bringing the war to an end.<sup>9</sup> The British, for their part, had not intended to arm black people, for they shared the racial presuppositions of the Boers,<sup>10</sup> but increasingly they resorted to this expedient, arming perhaps as many as 50 000 blacks,<sup>11</sup> in order to accomplish their ultimate aim.

The war achieved the British objective of destroying the obdurate landowning leadership of the Transvaal and replacing it with a more compliant class of progressive farmers and professional men.<sup>12</sup> This was the “revolution” of which Jeremy Krikler speaks, but this aim could only be achieved at the cost of permitting and even fostering a “rebellion” from below.<sup>13</sup> With British concurrence, if not encouragement, blacks refused to work for the Boers; were armed and fought against the Boers; harassed their wives; looted their cattle; destroyed their possessions; and occupied their farms. Once the British aim of “regime change” was achieved, however, the black people they had empowered were very speedily disempowered once more. Krikler’s focus is on the Transvaal, but events followed a similar course in the Free State.

When Bloemfontein was occupied, blacks thought their deliverance was at hand. However, strict control over them was exercised by the British military authorities. To this end, a police force was immediately created, followed by the South African Constabulary in May 1901, and republican laws were applied with greater severity than before.<sup>14</sup> Blacks were disarmed; they had to return the Boer cattle that had fallen into their

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9. P. Warwick, *Black People and the South African War 1899–1902* (Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1983), p 194.
  10. H.T. Siwundhla, “White Ideologies and Non-European Participation in the Anglo-Boer War, 1899–1902”, *Journal of Black Studies*, 15, 2, December 1984, pp 225–226.
  11. A. Wessels, *Die Militêre Rol van Swart Mense, Bruin Mense en Indiërs tydens die Anglo-Boereoorlog (1899–1902)* (OM, Bloemfontein, 1998), p 18.
  12. J. Krikler, “‘A Class Destroyed, a Class Restored’: The Relationship of Agrarian Class Struggle to the Destruction of the Boer Landowning Class during the South African War and its Reconstitution thereafter”, paper delivered at a seminar on African Affairs, UCT, Cape Town, 13 August 1986, p 3.
  13. J. Krikler, *Revolution from Above, Rebellion from Below: The Agrarian Transvaal at the Turn of the Century* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1993).
  14. C.J.P. le Roux, “Die Verhouding tussen Blank en Nie-Blank in die Oranjerivierkolonie”, *Archives Yearbook for South African History*, 50, 1 (Government Printer, Pretoria, 1986), p 11. See also Free State Provincial Archives (hereafter FSPA), Archives of the Colonial Secretary, Orange River Colony (hereafter CO), 93.3388, Report on South African Constabulary, 22 August 1902.

hands.<sup>15</sup> They were obliged to leave the urban locations,<sup>16</sup> the camps in which they had been interned, and the farms they had occupied,<sup>17</sup> and they were coerced into returning to the employ of their pre-war masters.<sup>18</sup> The difficulty of their doing this is well articulated in a petition from Morakaba Moletsane to the resident magistrate of Winburg:

I ... humbly beg you to look into the necessity of getting us say, a Government farm, for I think you are quite aware yourself that some of us (natives) are really now afraid of going to the boers, as you are aware most of our people have been scouts, guides, drivers and leaders for the Imperial Troops, for which work the boers are really bitter against us. They laugh and jeer at us, saying: you niggers thought you would get our farms. I shall not trouble you sir by long and useless explanation suffice it to say we can't agree with boers as we used to do...<sup>19</sup>

While politically conscious blacks supported the British cause from an idealised perception of British non-racialism that they hoped would be to their future benefit,<sup>20</sup> the masses were in large measure motivated by more basic considerations, such as wages and provisions. Yet the degree of politicisation among ordinary black people has generally been underestimated by whites. Krikler argues that in contrast to Edward Thompson's view that class consciousness is the touchstone of class, a class struggle does not necessitate class analysis.<sup>21</sup> The Boers did not credit their black employees with any understanding that they were oppressed by insecurity of tenure and labour exploitation and were therefore very surprised when those blacks turned against them.

### The African Methodist Episcopal Church

The "Ethiopian" movement that swept the country in the years immediately prior to the war was no doubt a powerful agent of conscientisation. The Ethiopian Church had been founded by Mangena Mokone in Marabastad in 1892. Mokone heard about the American-based African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church from his cousin's daughter, Charlotte Maxeke, the founder of the Bantu Women's League (now the Women's League of the African National Congress).<sup>22</sup> In 1898, the Ethiopian Church merged with the African Methodist Episcopal Church after the black AME bishop, Henry

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15. S.V. Kessler, "The Black Concentration Camps of the South African War 1899–1902", PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, 2003, p 381.
  16. Compare FSPA, CO 74.1874, Resident Magistrate Winburg - ORC Colonial Secretary, 20 June 1902.
  17. See, for example, FSPA, CO 68.1347, Letters from Carl Schwartz, dated 10 May 1902, and M.C. Terblanche, dated 14 May, 1902; FSPA, Archives of the Director of Land Settlement (hereafter LDS) 29.2105, Letters from George B. Plumtree and K.P. Aphorpe, dated 21 October 1903.
  18. Kessler, "The Black Concentration Camps of the South African War", p 419.
  19. FSPA, CO 157.2308, Petition to His Excellency the Lieut Governor, Bloemfontein, received 30 March 1903.
  20. A. Odendaal, *Vukani Bantu! The Beginnings of Black Protest Politics in South Africa to 1912* (David Philip, Cape Town, 1984), p 30.
  21. Krikler, *Revolution from Above, Rebellion from Below*, pp 2–3.
  22. J.M. Jackson, "Charlotte Makgoma Manye Maxeke: Her Legacy Lives on", *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 34, April 2008, p 75.

Turner had visited South Africa. "Ethiopianism" speedily became a dreaded word in white South Africa because of the political awareness of these churches.<sup>23</sup> Officialdom associated it with insurrection, most notably the Bhambatha Rebellion of 1906,<sup>24</sup> while the disquiet and distaste of whites is evident in a number of early South African novels.<sup>25</sup>

Although the AME, in common with other Pentecostal churches, was apolitical in the narrower sense of the word, it offered a vision of hope and restored human dignity by providing opportunities for leadership, independent action, social reintegration and upward mobility in a structured community free of white control. Such a vision is profoundly political and could inspire resistance. A minimalist estimate of the political impact of the church is adopted in James Campbell's appraisal of the role of the AME;<sup>26</sup> however, André Odendaal concludes that the religious and political movements "evolved in tandem and that there was a direct, mutually reinforcing connection and synergy between them".<sup>27</sup> Tim Keegan goes further and contends that the AME church "was born out of black nationalist ideals".<sup>28</sup>

As a minister of the church, the Rev. Jacob Morapedi felt enabled to offer resistance to the Boer authorities, even before the British appeared on the Free State scene. In 1899, Rev. Samuel Mabote of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (Ethiopia) wrote to the landdrost of Winburg claiming that the church enjoyed state recognition and that its minister in Winburg, Rev. Jacob Morapedi, could therefore not be commandeered for service (under Dr Caleb Schnehage) in terms of the Military and Commando Law, which empowered landdrosts to place a vagrant or unemployed person of colour at the disposal of any burgher who applied for his services.<sup>29</sup> Landdrost van Zyl disdainfully referred the matter to the government secretary:

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23. J. de Gruchy, "Christianity and the Modernization of South Africa 1867–1936", 2, *The Social History of Christianity in South Africa 1487–1994*, <http://web.uct.ac.za/depts./ricsa/projects/sochist/read-volume-2-chapter-1.html> Accessed 29 June 2007.
  24. British Parliamentary Papers, C2909, No. 26, McCallum - Elgin, 16 February 1906, quoted by J. Guy, *The Maphumulo Uprising: War, Law and Ritual in the Zulu Rebellion* (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, Scottsville, 2005), p 248.
  25. J.A. Kearney, *Representing Dissension: Riot, Rebellion and Resistance in the South African English Novel* (Unisa Press, Pretoria, 2003), chapter 1.
  26. J.T. Campbell, *Songs of Zion: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and South Africa* (University of South Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1998).
  27. A. Odendaal, *The Founders: The Origins of the ANC and the Struggle for Democracy in South Africa* (Jacana, Johannesburg, 2012), p 201. On the convergence of religious and political impulses, see M.T. Moeti, "Ethiopianism: Separatist Roots of African Nationalism in South Africa" (University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, 1981).
  28. T. Keegan, *Facing the Storm: Portraits of Black Lives in Rural South Africa* (David Philip, Cape Town, 1988), p 22.
  29. M.C.E. van Schoor and J.J. van Rooyen, *Republieke en Republikeine* (Nasionale Boekhandel, Cape Town, 1960), p 118.

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... I don't know whether this new church is recognised or tolerated. What I do know about it is that the aforementioned Jacob J. Morapedi (better known as drunken April) causes dissension amongst the members of existing churches. April (whom I do not and will not recognise as a minister of religion) was commandeered to take a wagon to Harrismith for Dr Schnehage along with another black. ... The sooner an end is put to this church in this country the better. I have no intention of replying to Mr Samuel J. Mabote.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to the Winburg congregation of the AME, there was probably one at Senekal, because R.J. van der Spuy reports the existence of no fewer than five African Independent Churches in the area in 1900 without specifying their identity.<sup>31</sup> There was certainly an AME Church in Ventersburg, served by Rev. John Kubedi. Other Free State congregations were to be found at Kroonstad (Samuel Mabote),<sup>32</sup> where the church "virtually swept the location",<sup>33</sup> Vrededorp (John Phakane); Bloemfontein (Solomon Magau and Edward Mpela); Ladybrand (Miller Ndlebe),<sup>34</sup> with several hundred adherents;<sup>35</sup> Parys (A.P.J. van der Poel); Viljoensdorp (A.J. Melato and Jacobus Gilead Xaba);<sup>36</sup> and Springfontein, where the missionary Christof Sandrock regarded their activities as political, fuelled by the conviction that Britain had won the war.<sup>37</sup> There were also AME churches at Wepener, Thaba 'Nchu and Rouxville. Others were Lindley (Nicholas Makone); Smithfield (A.A. Mareka); and Bethulie (Joseph Chou).<sup>38</sup> In addition to the ministers already referred to, mention must be made of Marcus Gabashane, an itinerant preacher, and Benjamin Kumalo, who took over from Jacobus Xaba as head of the church in the Free State.<sup>39</sup> When Xaba applied for exemption from carrying a pass in March 1903, the ORC commissioner of police advised that Xaba was "a big man in his own sect" and that if his request was refused, "his Church which is politically active will probably make a fuss".<sup>40</sup>

### Black gangs

Following the British invasion of the Free State, some blacks availed themselves of the unsettled condition of the country to band together in armed gangs that posed a serious threat to the Boers. However criminal

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30. FSPA, Archives of the Government Secretary (hereafter GS), 2113.8699 (translated).
  31. R.J.R. van der Spuy, "Profiel van die Afrika Onafhanklike Kerke onder die Suid-Sotho in die Senekalse Distrik: 'n Empiries-Historiese Studie", DD thesis, University of Pretoria, 1995, p 121.
  32. FSPA, GS 2160. R262, dated 10 January 1900; FSPA, CO 183.4424.
  33. Odendaal, *The Founders*, p 170.
  34. FSPA, CO 150.1726, 1727, 1728, 1729, 1730.
  35. Odendaal, *The Founders*, p 170.
  36. FSPA, CO 198.5748; CO 49.4482; Keegan, *Facing the Storm*, p 3.
  37. D. Britz, "The Life and Times of Christof Sandrock, Missionary of the Berlin Missionary Society during the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902) at Springfontein, South Africa", *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 38, 2, December 2012, p 239.
  38. Campbell, *Songs of Zion*, pp 172, 166 and 174–175.
  39. Odendaal, *The Founders*, p 170.
  40. FSPA, CO 100.3863/03: Note from Commissioner of Police to Colonial Secretary.

their intentions or actions, the solidarity of such gangs was also conducive to political conscientisation. These gangs were sometimes alleged to be under white command. Although every possible lead was followed up, this allegation could not be substantiated. This contention may have been a back-projection of the Bergh's Scouts phenomenon, reinforced by the familiar colonial topos of contented indigenes stirred up by agitators. Regrettably, the available evidence regarding the gangs is riddled with contradictions, inconsistencies and improbabilities.

As early as June 1900 there was a gang of from 50 to 60 blacks who occupied cave hide-outs near Bethlehem. According to Christiaan de Wet, this gang was led by "a certain Grobler, a Free State subject". De Wet does not say that he was a white man, but this is perhaps implied by saying that he "used 50 or 60 armed natives".<sup>41</sup> M.H. (Tewie) Wessels concurs that the gang, known as the Klaasbende, was led by Gert Grobbelaar, as he spells the name, but there is nothing in his account to suggest that this Grobbelaar was a white man.<sup>42</sup> The leader of the gang was believed to have guided the Imperial Light Horse when Lieutenant-Colonel C.J. Briggs made an attack on Reitz from Bethlehem in an attempt to capture De Wet.<sup>43</sup> De Wet believed that the column was guided by the son of a member of the Volksraad, whom he does not identify,<sup>44</sup> but the regimental historian says that it was "a native named Klaas."<sup>45</sup>

In the most circumstantial account of the gang's activities, that of H.C.J. Mostert,<sup>46</sup> the gang leader was a black man and his name was Klaas. According to this version, Mostert's father, Jacobus Mostert, and a policeman called Jan Fourie were killed by gang members in June 1900. On 21 September, the Winburg commando launched a protracted attack on their fortified caves. However, the approach of British troops from Senekal obliged the Winburgers to withdraw. That night two blacks and two British soldiers burnt down the Mostert farmhouse. The next afternoon two burghers, Frik Heymans and a certain McCarthy, were murdered. Possibly that same night, Everdina Cilliers, wife of Daniel Cilliers of the farm Fraaiuitzicht, managed to hold members of the gang at bay with a hand axe as she, her mother, two sisters and their children escaped to the farm of her brother-in-law, Hendrik Pienaar.<sup>47</sup> When two members of the Bethlehem

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41. National Archives of South Africa, Pretoria (hereafter NASA), Photocopies of War Office documents in the National Archives, Kew, London (hereafter FK) 1905 (War Office 1019), General C.R. de Wet to General W.G. Knox, 6 October 1900.

42. FSPA, Accession (hereafter A) 119.15, Letter from M.H. (Tewie) Wessels, dated 18 March 1949.

43. See L.S. Amery (ed.), *Times History of the War in South Africa*, 5 (Sampson Low, Marston & Co., London, 1900–1909), p 393.

44. C.R. de Wet, *De Strijd tussen Boer en Brit: De Herinnering van den Boeren-Generaal C.R. de Wet* (Höveker & Wormser, Amsterdam, 1902), p 330.

45. G.F. Gibson, *The Story of the Imperial Light Horse in the South African War, 1899–1902*, p 239, quoted in A. Grundlingh, *The Dynamics of Treason: Boer Collaboration in the South African War of 1899–1902* (Protea Book House, Pretoria, 2006), p 245.

46. FSPA, A 119. 418, dated 28 November 1951.

47. OM, 5591/2, "Die Wel en Wee van die Cilliers Familie".

commando, Frans van Wyk and Steven van Deventer, were set on and killed, Commandant A.M. Prinsloo resolved to wipe out the gang. After a night-long fight (28/29 September), the gang surrendered, although Johannes van Wyk, brother of Frans van Wyk, had to enter the caves to bring the leader out. At this stage the Winburgers appear to be back in the picture because Tewie Wessels says that Frederik (Frikkie) Cronjé was present when Grobler (or Klaas) was captured, and H.S. van der Walt provides what is clearly a first-hand description of the gang leader's distress.<sup>48</sup>

The gang's fate is instructive in revealing the way in which past events are re-contextualised in subsequent memory. According to accounts written by M.J. Grobler, Tewie Wessels and others in the 1930s and 1940s,<sup>49</sup> twelve blacks were killed in the battle and 43 prisoners were taken, 25 of them minors. In pursuance of a Krygsraad decision, the adults were sentenced to death and the juveniles to 25 lashes with a stirrup leather and these sentences were immediately carried out.<sup>50</sup> According to Tewie Wessels, the gang leader was interrogated by Frikkie Cronjé. The death sentence pronounced on him was confirmed by General J.B.M. Hertzog and was carried out the night after the latter's departure for the Cape Colony.<sup>51</sup> However, both Grobler's and Wessels's versions of events are substantially incorrect because in a letter to General W.B. Knox dated 6 October 1900, Christiaan de Wet says the gang was "dispersed" while the leader was "caught and shot".<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, Grobler has Major-General Rundle protesting against the executions "a day or two later" in a letter dated 12 September 1900,<sup>53</sup> while Hertzog's departure for the Cape followed only three months later. Significantly, according to the contemporary report, only one person was killed, while the later narratives speak of some 30 killed and 25 beaten. This would be in conformity with the subsequent "horizon of expectation" on the appropriate treatment their conduct merited.

The reminiscences of Catharina van den Berg (1888–1960) recorded in 1952, correspond in some respects with the above account, but differ in others. They also tell of a black gang that took refuge in a cave and agree that twelve of the gang were shot in an engagement with a Boer force; that a brave burgher entered the cave to bring the leader out; and that eighteen adult survivors were executed. However, the encounter is located in the Kroonstad district and the small commando led by Dolf Brits, a Cape rebel, which appears to have consisted of Kroonstadders ("ons kommando") and

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48. FSPA, A 119.15: Letter from M.H. (Tewie) Wessels, dated 18 March 1949; J.H. Coetzee (ed.), "H.S. van der Walt Oorlogsdagboek 1899–1902", *Christiaan de Wet-Annale*, 8, 1990, 135 Dag [21 September 1900?], p 126.

49. M.J. Grobler, *Met die Vrystaters onder die Wapen: Generaal Prinsloo en die Bethlehem-Kommando* (Nasionale Pers, Bloemfontein, [1937]), p 68; FSPA, A 119.15, Letter from M.H. (Tewie) Wessels, dated 18 March 1949; FSPA, A 119.1060, P.J. Marx, "Vryheidsoorlog Herinneringe".

50. Grobler, *Met die Vrystaters onder die Wapen*, pp 68–69.

51. FSPA, A 119.15: Letter from M.H. (Tewie) Wessels, dated 18 March 1949.

52. NASA, FK 1905 (WO 1019.C 5094).

53. Grobler, *Met die Vrystaters onder die Wapen*, p 69 (translated).

the eighteen blacks were sentenced to death by a recently constituted court of law and were, implausibly, executed by hanging.<sup>54</sup>

Dot Serfontein also reports on a black “commando” led by a certain Croucamp, presumably a white man, at Holfontein, south of Kroonstad. In this narrative, the mythological accretion is so substantial that the factual substratum is difficult to discern. Two burghers, Sewis Martins and a certain Van der Westhuizen, are said to have attacked the black commando, now referred to as a “gang”. Severely wounded, the burghers surrendered and were, in the manner of a Gothic novel, tied to horses’ tails and torn asunder. When a white commando “exterminated” the gang, a survivor reported that they had acted under orders of Croucamp.<sup>55</sup>

### Bergh's Scouts

The ultimate armed band organised in resistance to the Free State Boers was Bergh's Scouts. Oloff Martin Bergh was born in the Cape Colony on 1 November 1865.<sup>56</sup> He joined the Cape railway service as a mere boy and was placed on the permanent establishment on coming of age. He rose rapidly through the ranks and was transferred to the Free State in 1889. In 1897 he became secretary to the director general, stationed at Bloemfontein. Two years later he was serving in this capacity in Kroonstad when the war broke out. He was pensioned from the railways service in March 1900.<sup>57</sup> Bergh was a Free State burgher but did not go on commando. When Kroonstad was occupied, he was paroled to the Cape.<sup>58</sup>

Bergh subsequently returned to the Free State and became a storekeeper near Trommel in the Winburg district. In August 1900, he was attached to Military Intelligence.<sup>59</sup> He managed the 4 000 blacks employed by the department and arranged for them to graze their stock and cultivate crops on farms within an 8 km radius of Winburg.<sup>60</sup> In January 1901, he served for a month in the colonial police. His imposing height (1.9m) and smart appearance made for a commanding presence.<sup>61</sup> By this time, Bergh's Scouts must already have been in existence, because Frederik

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54. “Ouma se Stories”, <http://www.boerevryheid.co.za/forum/archive/index.php?t-3799.html> Accessed 29 April 2009.
  55. D. Serfontein, *Keurskrif vir Kroonstad: 'n Kroniek van die Ontstaan, Groei en Vooruitsigte van 'n Vrystaatse Plattelandse Dorp* (Perskor, Kroonstad, 1990), p 194; N.G.J. Venter, *Murasies: Herinneringe uit die Tweede Vryheisoorlog* (Nasionale Pers, Bloemfontein, 1942), pp 102–103..
  56. FSPA, Archives of the Master of the High Court (hereafter MHG), 28671.
  57. FSPA, Archives of the Colonial Treasurer, Orange River Colony (hereafter CT) 97.133/09/2.
  58. FSPA, CO.1894, Application for appointment.
  59. NASA, Archives of the Central Judicial Commission (hereafter CJC) 688.85.
  60. FSPA, CO 74.1818; S.V. Kessler, “The Black and Coloured Concentration Camps”, in F. Pretorius (ed.), *Scorched Earth* (Human & Rousseau, Cape Town, 2001), p 135; NASA, TAB, A 2030.66, Report of Wilson Fox, March 1902.
  61. FSPA, Archives of the Deputy Commissioner, Orange Free State, South African Police (hereafter FSP) 26.461.

Gouws became a member of the unit on 14 January 1901.<sup>62</sup> Although many of the white members moved on to Vilonel's Orange River Colony Volunteers when that body was formed at the end of 1901, Bergh's Scouts was not disbanded, as we know that Christiaan Pienaar served in it for the last thirteen months of the war.<sup>63</sup> Bergh's Scouts were not only spies but also helped to round up the civilian Boer population, raided livestock, looted farmhouses and clashed with Boer guerrillas operating in small bands in their home districts, and, in the course of doing so, they achieved enduring notoriety.

Used by the British for such tasks as conducting Boer women to the camps, the Scouts were able to assert themselves, so that on every side the "insolence" of previously docile blacks was remarked upon.<sup>64</sup> "Insolence" is, of course, a common topos of colonialist discourse. It can be deconstructed as self-assurance. Self-assured black scouts treated white women with disdain in the presence of British officers and were allowed to take loot as remuneration. They shook off subservience and gloried in the dignity, assurance and self-importance of independent men, uniformed and under arms and associated with the winning side.<sup>65</sup> They were, in the words of Sarah Wilson, "proud men [who] stalked the streets with their precious rifles, evidently feeling such a sense of security as they had never experienced before."<sup>66</sup> It was a proud black man who reprimanded a Boer woman for addressing him as "Outa"<sup>67</sup> and self-assertive black men who on occasion manhandled<sup>68</sup> and sexually abused<sup>69</sup> Boer women.

In all of this, blacks felt they had the support of their British superiors. When blacks raided the farm Morgenzon in the Winburg district, their spokesperson said that they were fighting for land as they had been

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62. NASA, CJC 697.261.

63. NASA, CJC 700.333.

64. For example E. Hobhouse, *War without Glamour: Women's War Experiences Written by Themselves 1899–1902* (Nasionale Pers, Bloemfontein, 1924), p 51; L. Marquard (ed), *Letters from a Boer Parsonage: Letters of Margaret Marquard during the Boer War* (Purnell, Cape Town, 1967), p 109; P. Lewsen (ed.), *Selections from the Correspondence of John X Merriman 1899–1905* (Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1966), Merriman - James Bryce, 21 July 1902, 3, p 354.

65. See Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War*, p 61.

66. S. Wilson, *South African Memories: Social, Warlike and Sporting* (Edward Arnold, London, 1909), p 61.

67. "Outa" is defined as a polite term of address for an elderly coloured or black man. However, the lexicographers hasten to add that these days it is not seen as polite by those who are addressed in this way. See *HAT: Verklarende Handwoordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal* (Perskor, Midrand, 1994). When a Boer POW addressed a coloured man in Touws River in this way, he earned the rebuke (translated): "I am not your 'outa', you should call me Mr Fouché". See Van Schoor (ed.), "Dagboek van Hugo H. van Niekerk", p 40. These episodes indicate that the perception of political incorrectness already applied a century ago.

68. See, for example, NASA, CJC 1710.1529; CJC 1711.1572; CJC 1716.1763; CJC 1702.1215.

69. T. Jackson, *The Boer War* (Macmillan, London, 1999), p 137; FSPA, A 69, N.C. Havenga Collection.

promised a redistribution of white farms when the war was over.<sup>70</sup> Mrs J.H. van der Merwe, raped on or about 26 November by a black man with Rimington's Column, reports him as saying that his officer had authorised the black members of the force to do with the women as they pleased, while Catharina Koen, wife of Commandant J.J. Koen, testified that Colonel T.D. Pilcher had told her that if her husband harmed the eighteen blacks he had captured the previous day, Pilcher would allow the other thousand under his control to do what they wished with Boer women.<sup>71</sup> This threat was repeated in a letter from Pilcher to Koen dated Mequatlingsnek, 21 January 1902.<sup>72</sup>

### **Murders in the Winburg district**

In examining the black rejection of Boer authority we are confronted by the double jeopardy, not only of what has been called "the tyranny of available evidence,"<sup>73</sup> since the provenance of the archive is almost exclusively white, but also the hidden agenda of those from whom it derives, for, as Michel Foucault pointed out, history functions as a legitimating mechanism for exercising power in society.<sup>74</sup> There are numerous accounts of white people who were murdered by blacks in the Free State, but in spite of the fact that murder is a heinous human interaction seldom perpetrated without a motive, the sources are not concerned with the motives that may have induced such extreme actions. Instead the killings are contextualised in terms of colonialist perceptions of the colonised as brutal and barbarous. In order to explore this theme, it will be helpful to look more closely at the nineteen murders said to have been perpetrated in the Winburg district, as this was the Free State district in which such allegations most commonly occurred.

On 25 September 1900 – prior to the formation of Bergh's Scouts – Pieter Jacobus du Plessis and Dirk Jacobus Kotze were allegedly murdered by blacks at Schoemanskop near Theron station, about 10km north-east of Winburg, although their bodies were apparently never found.<sup>75</sup>

On 28 March 1901, the 17-year-old Hendrik Bresler of Mooimeisiesfontein and Matthijs van Wyk of Paardevelei, were killed by "those who helped the English".<sup>76</sup> Another witness is specific in stating that this happened when Bergh's Scouts trapped some Boers at Vredeplaats on the Vet River, south of Theunissen.<sup>77</sup> According to the sworn testimony of Willem and Jeremias Cronjé of Brakspruit, their bodies were horribly

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70. A.W.G. Raath, *Die Boerevrou, 1899–1901: Deel 1, Moederleed* (Volkskomitee vir die Herdenking van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog, Nylstroom, 2002), p 131.

71. FSPA, A 69, Sworn testimony before C.C. Froneman, 26 February 1902.

72. Quoted in J.D. Kestell, *Met die Boere-Kommando's* (Protea Boekhuis, Pretoria, 1999), p 202.

73. L.D. Ngcongco, "Problems of Southern African Historiography", in *The Historiography of Southern Africa: Proceedings of the Experts' Meeting held at Gaborone, Botswana from 7 to 11 March 1977*, p 17.

74. A. Munslow, *Deconstructing History* (Routledge, London, 1997), pp 12–13.

75. FSPA, A 119.1060: Marx, "Vryheidsoorlog Herinneringe", p 11.

76. FSPA, A 119. 1060, Marx, "Vryheidsoorlog Herinneringe," p 11 (translated).

77. FSPA, A 119.89, Mrs A.C. Meyer.

mutilated.<sup>78</sup> The remains of Bresler and Van Wyk were reinterred at the Dingaansfeeshuis in Theunissen,<sup>79</sup> their memorialisation thus locating their fate in the metahistory of the meaningless massacre of whites, exemplified by the treacherous killing of Piet Retief and his followers.

Another cause celebre in the Winburg district was the encounter between blacks and Boers on the farm Welgevonden, near Tabaksberg, about 25km south-west of Winburg. A group of Boers led by Field Cornet William Marthinus Scott had spent the night of 25 May 1901 within the perimeter wall of the farmyard, when at dawn the next day they were surprised by a patrol of Bergh's Scouts, comprising approximately 200 blacks under a British officer.<sup>80</sup> The attackers ensconced themselves in the spruit, 200 metres to the east of the house, from where a withering fire was directed at the defenders. William Edward Scott, a nephew of William Marthinus, was killed and Johannes Scott of Deelfontein, a younger brother, was wounded. At about 10 o'clock the defenders ran out of ammunition and fell back to the wagon house. At this stage, the Scouts charged them, and Izak Vivier of Welgevonden, a son-in-law, was killed, allegedly with a white flag in his hands. Tobias Singleton, two burghers surnamed Jooste and Greyling and Jan Koen of Verkeerdevlei made good their escape, but Koen was killed by blacks at Josephinasdal that night.<sup>81</sup> The inscription on William Scott's tombstone, "Died at the hands of traitors",<sup>82</sup> suggests that he may have been killed by surrendered Boers serving in Bergh's Scouts, rather than by blacks.

On 17 August 1901, a section of Haasbroek's commando was surrounded by Bergh's Scouts at Doornberg, 48km north-east of Winburg. Four burghers died, Johannes du Preez, Philippus Potgieter, Abraham (Ampie) Botha and his uncle Ampie van Schalkwyk, the last three so hacked or bludgeoned, according to Gert van den Heever, who saw their bodies, that their death was described as murder.<sup>83</sup> How such a story grew in the telling is evident from the version recorded by G.D. Scholtz in the 1970s:

In one way or another it was learnt that a small group of Boers was again taking cover in the Doornberg. Early one morning, while they were still asleep, they were attacked by a commando of non-whites and killed to a man. Most of their bodies were horribly mutilated.<sup>84</sup>

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78. Sworn statement dated 17 March 1902, in C.C.J Badenhorst, *Uit den Boeren-Oorlog. 1899–1902: Ervaringen en Aantekeningen* (Höveker & Wormser, Amsterdam, 1903), pp 130–131.
79. FSPA, A 119.1060, Marx, "Vryheidsoorlog Herinneringe", p 11.
80. What follows is based on J. Scott, *Die Scotte van Winburg: Nasate van William Edward Scott* (self published, Pretoria, 1990), pp 12ff.
81. OM 6166/1, Herinnering van Wessel Scott se voorouers.
82. Quoted by Grudlingh, *The Dynamics of Treason*, p 238.
83. By De Wet and Nierstrasz; confirmed by the evidence of G.J.S. van den Heever, who saw the bodies, in FSPA, A 119:1099: "Herinneringe van G.J.S. van den Heever", 1944, pp 60–62; W.H. Venter, "Die Geskiedenis van Winburg tot 1902", MA dissertation, University of the Free State, 1974, p 180.
84. G.D. Scholtz, *Die Geskiedenis van Ventersburg en sy Omgewing 1873–1973* (Sentrale Eeufeekomitee, Ventersburg, 1973), p 22 (translated).

However, in Anna Barry's version, which was apparently also based on the testimony of Gert van den Heever, there is no mention of blacks and Ampie van Schalkwyk suffered five bullet wounds.<sup>85</sup> Ampie Botha's brother, D.W. Botha, confirms that 70 men of Haasbroek's commando were surrounded by a "gang" and that the fleeing Ampie Botha and his friend, Ampie van Schalkwyk, were shot, "one could almost say murdered," the former suffering two wounds and the latter three.<sup>86</sup>

On 16 September 1901 Bergh's Scouts visited the farm Morgenzon, about 38km south-east of Winburg, which was occupied by Johanna Mynhardt and her three daughters, Stoffelia, Johanna Elizabeth (Bettie) and Cornelia. The Scouts, who had come looking for Boers, hid in the garden and ambushed Bettie's husband, David, and his brother, Daniel Janse van Rensburg. Dawie's horse was killed under him and he was shot in the head at close range.<sup>87</sup> This would suggest instantaneous death, in contrast to another version of the story, according to which he was tortured.<sup>88</sup> There is no mention of Daniel's death, but his name appears on the Anglo-Boer War memorial in Winburg.<sup>89</sup> According to another source, one Erasmus Janse van Rensburg also died on this occasion.<sup>90</sup>

Josephus du Plessis was killed some time in 1901 on the farm Rietfontein, 15km south-east of Theunissen, by blacks led by Jan Viviers, Stoffel Heinecke and Carl Tempelhof, white members of Bergh's Scouts.<sup>91</sup> Leendert Haasbroek was killed on the farm Natal, about 25km north-east of Winburg, in December 1901 and Jan Johannes Maartens at Bloemhoek, near Ventersburg, sometime in 1902.<sup>92</sup>

Before dawn on 4 January 1902, about 130 Boers, laagered on the farms Valsfontein, Vaalkoppies and De Kruis at the confluence of the Vet and Sand Rivers, 40km north-west of Theunissen, were surrounded by 600 to 700 soldiers. Some burghers got away, but between 50 and 60 Boer prisoners were taken, including the assistant field cornet, David Jacobus Pretorius of Doornfontein.<sup>93</sup> According to the sworn testimony of Johannes Jacobus Erasmus, he was informed by some of the prisoners that Pretorius was led away by his captors, that shots were heard and that his body was

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85. A. Barry, *Ons Japie: Dagboek Gehou gedurende die Driejarige Oorlog* (Afrikaanse Pers-Boekhandel, Johannesburg, 1960), 30 August 1901, p 67.
  86. FSPA, A 119.419, D.W. Botha, "n Geval by Doornberg" (translated). Van der Hoven is an error for Van den Heever; Jan Human would have been Commandant Johannes Bernardus Human.
  87. Raath, *Die Boerevrou*, 1, pp 131–134.
  88. FSPA, A 119:75: Letter from Mrs S. Venter, dated 7 June 1948.
  89. D.A. van der Bank, *Burgermonumente van die Anglo-Boereoorlog in die Oranje-Vrystaat* (Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein, 1995), p 78. See also NASA, Republikeinse Sterfgevälle (hereafter RS) 13, pp 188 and 191.
  90. NASA, RS 13.
  91. FSPA, A 119.1060, Marx, "Vryheidsoorlog Herinneringe", p 23. According to NASA, RS 13, p 155, Du Plessis died on the farm Zwavelfontein.
  92. NASA, RS 13. p 191.
  93. FSPA, A 119.1060: Marx, "Vryheidsoorlog Herinneringe", pp 38ff.

later found by Commandant Theron.<sup>94</sup> With typical verbal economy, H.S. van der Walt merely records that Pretorius "... was shot by the enemy".<sup>95</sup> However, in P.J. Marx's account we are told that when Pretorius's body was found, it bore no bullet wounds but his arms and legs had been broken.<sup>96</sup>

From the above descriptions we see that no fewer than thirteen of the nineteen deaths listed here occurred in the course of encounters with Bergh's Scouts. Being killed by blacks in the employ of the British army was therefore simply equated with murder. In a number of cases, extreme brutality is alleged, but often the evidence is contradictory. The stereotyping of blacks in the historical record is redolent with tales of barbarity, and such historical habituation made for greater credibility. When Johanna van Warmelo heard of eight Boers who had been mutilated with knives and their eyes cut out or of 30 Boer families exterminated by blacks, she took these reports at face value, because of all the stories she had heard over the years of the terrible wars against blacks.<sup>97</sup>

Two disparate observations are necessary to contextualise these killings. The first is that black violence against the Boers was the exception rather than the rule.<sup>98</sup> Attacks that were feared from the Basotho never materialised and although Hintrager's comment on the peaceable behaviour of blacks<sup>99</sup> was made before the scorched earth policy was fully implemented, General Froneman could claim as late as May 1902 that in the districts of Winburg and Ladybrand, blacks were "well disposed and ... of great service to the burghers."<sup>100</sup>

The second observation is that the killings must be seen in the context of a brutalising war, for as Van Warmelo observed, "very few men are proof against the demoralizing influence of war".<sup>101</sup> The British records list 235 incidents of unarmed blacks being killed by Boers in the field,<sup>102</sup> including the shooting near Virginia, as early in the war as November or December 1900, of two men accused of showing British troops the road to

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94. Badenhorst, *Uit den Boeren-Oorlog*, p 132.

95. Coetzee (ed), "H.S. van der Walt: Oorlogsdagboek", 591 Dag [4 January 1902?], p 141 (translated).

96. FSPA, A 119.1060, "Vryheidsoorlog Herinneringe", p 45. See also M. Schoeman, "Abraham", in J. Ferreira (ed.), *Boereoorlogstories*, 2, 32 *Verhale oor die Oorlog van 1899–1902* (Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2012), pp 11–22.

97. Quoted in Grobler, "Haat, Vrees, Afsku", p 38.

98. Le Roux, "Die Verhouding tussen Blank en Nie-Blank", p 11.

99. J.J. Oberholster (red.), "Dagboek van Oskar Hintrager: Saam met Christiaan de Wet, Mei tot September 1900", *Christiaan de Wet-Annale*, 2, 26 August 1900, p 118.

100. Quoted in C.R. de Wet, *Three Years War (October 1899–June 1902)* facsimile edition (Galago, Alberton, 1986), p 345.

101. D.S. van Warmelo, *On Commando* (Ad. Donker, Johannesburg, 1977), p 10.

102. T. Pakenham, "Africans in the Boer War", Review of Warwick, *Black People and the South African War*, in *Journal of African History*, 27, 3, 1986, pp 574–575. In this regard, see also C. de Wet and J. Moll, "Die Betrokkenheid van Swart Mense by die Anglo-Boereoorlog in die Vrystaat: 'n Historiografiese Studie", *Acta Academica*, 30, 3, 1998, pp 25–27.

Ventersburg.<sup>103</sup> In July 1901, General P.H. Kritzinger served notice that any black in the service of the British army who was caught by the Boers would be executed, whether or not he was armed<sup>104</sup> and towards the end of the war there was little chance of a black prisoner being spared.<sup>105</sup> As a result of the British policy of clearing the land, any black man encountered was assumed to be a spy and if he was armed, the evidence was regarded as conclusive. As one burgher wrote, no meeting of the Krygsraad was necessary; if an armed black was caught, he was summarily shot.<sup>106</sup> On 29 June 1901, Commandant Sarel Haasbroek reported to De Wet that his Winburgers were shooting blacks on a weekly basis.<sup>107</sup>

## Conclusion

The war created an opportunity for blacks to challenge Boer hegemony in the Free State. The rise of Ethiopianism offered a model of self-reliance and the formation of armed bands an exercise in solidarity. Most significantly, the British army created the means and the space for black men to hurt their erstwhile masters with apparent impunity. In spite of these circumstances, black resistance proved futile for three reasons.

Firstly, because the Boers were so vulnerable as a result of the blacks' knowledge of the land; because they felt betrayed by the rebelliousness of their subjects; and because they were outraged by the treatment of their womenfolk; they retaliated with vigour bordering on savagery. Secondly, nothing came of British blandishments and black people's hopes. British victory over the Boers meant a reassertion of their common racism. As a result of the scorched earth policy, thousands of blacks were sucked into a vortex of destitution and misery. The British reneged on their assurances to the contrary and the Peace of Vereeniging effectively dashed all hope of black amelioration. Thirdly, in the circumstances of a humiliating defeat, the Boers' impotent rage against the British conquerors was all too easily displaced onto their helpers, and it is not surprising that the concentration camp writings display more negative sentiments towards blacks than towards the British.<sup>108</sup> It is as Heathcliff says in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*: "The tyrant grinds down the slaves and they don't turn against him, they crush those beneath them."<sup>109</sup> While it is absurd to hold the blacks of the Boer republics responsible for the evolution

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103. British Parliamentary Papers, Cd 821, *Correspondence Relative to the Treatment of Natives by the Boers, 1901*, p 5. See also NASA, FK 1849.

104. Warwick, *Black People and the South African War*, p 23.

105. R.D. McDonald, 'n *Terugblik op my Oorlogsjare* (OM, Bloemfontien, 1995), p 49.

106. OM, 51071/1, Herinnering van H.L. Claassen van Middelendam, Rooiwal.

107. Pretorius, *Life on Commando*, p 273.

108. E. Jansen, "'Ek ook het Besluit om van my Bittere Lydingskelk te Vertel': Het Meervoudige (Post)Koloniale Vertoog in Autobiografische Vrouwenteksten over de Zuid-Afrikaanse Oorlog (1899–1902)", *Tydskrif vir Nederlands en Afrikaans*, 6, 2 (December 1999), p 8.

109. E. Brontë, *Wuthering Heights: An Authoritative Text, Selected Poems, with Essays in Criticism* (Norton, New York, 1963), p 87.

of apartheid,<sup>110</sup> there is no doubt that a mutual sense of betrayal bedevilled race relations in the wake of the war.<sup>111</sup>

In sum, as Silas Molema lamented in 1920, “the position of the Bantu after the South African War was worse than before it ... their condition has grown worse and worse every year, their rights, never many, nor mighty, have been curtailed systematically from then to now; and the future is dark and dreary”.<sup>112</sup>

### Abstract

This article examines black resistance in the Free State during the Anglo-Boer War. The previously existing patriarchal relationship between the Boers and their black subjects was disrupted by the chaos of war. At the same time, the rapid spread of Ethiopianism, in the shape of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, offered black people a model of self-reliance and dignity, and the formation of armed criminal gangs served as an exercise in solidarity. Employment by the British army promoted disloyalty to the Boer cause, a situation that was aggravated by the arming of blacks. The formation of the Bergh Scouts, a Winburg-based black unit under white officers, which was attached to the British army, led to allegations of murder, often accompanied by savagery. Nineteen encounters of this nature are chronicled and contextualised and the enterprise of resistance evaluated.

**Key words:** Anglo-Boer War; black resistance; Free State; Winburg district; Ethiopianism; African Methodist Episcopal Church; armed gangs; Klaasbende; Bergh's Scouts.

### Opsomming

In hierdie artikel word daar gekyk na swart verzet in die Vrystaat tydens die Anglo-Boereoorlog. Die patriargale verhouding wat vroeër tussen die Boere en hul swart onderdane bestaan het, is deur die chaos van oorlogvoering ontwig. Terselfdertyd het die wye verspreiding van Ethiopianisme, in die gedaante van die African Methodist Episcopal Kerk, swartes van 'n model van selfvertroue en menswaardigheid voorsien, terwyl die totstandkoming van gewapende bendes 'n gevoel van solidariteit bevorder het. Indiensneming deur die Britse leër het ontrou aan die Boeresaaak meegebring, en dié stuasie is vererger deur die bewapening van swartes. Bergh's Scouts was 'n swart eenheid onder wit offisiere wat in Winburg deel van die Britse leër gevorm het en hulle optrede het tot aantygings van moord en moordadigheid aanleiding gegee. Neëntien sodanige gevalle word in oënskou geneem en gekontekstualiseer; die versetonderneming is ook geëvalueer.

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110. See for example, M. van Bart and L. Scholtz (eds), *Vir Vryheid en vir Reg: Anglo-Boereoorlog Gedenkboek* (Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2003), p 39.

111. A. Wessels, “Afrikaners at War”, in Gooch (ed.) *The Boer War*, p 104.

112. S.M. Molema, *The Bantu, Past and Present*, p 292, quoted in Warwick, *Black People and the South African War*, p 184.

## Black resistance in the Orange Free State

**Sleutelwoorde:** Anglo-Boereoorlog; swart verset; Vrystaat; Winburg-distrik; Ethiopianisme; African Methodist Episcopal Kerk; gewapende bendes; Klaasbende; Bergh's Scouts.