

CHAPTER 1

AFRIKANERS IN NATAL UP TO THE OUTBREAK OF THE ANGLO-BOER WAR: EXPERIENCES AND ATTITUDES PREVALENT AT THE TIME

By the late 1870s, Natal constituted the only European political entity in South Africa in which Afrikaners formed a minority group amongst the white inhabitants. This community was shaped by events spanning half a century which included: living under British rule in the Cape Colony, embarking on the Great Trek, experiencing strained relations and subsequent military engagements with the Zulu, marked especially by the Battle of Blood River on 16 December 1838, witnessing the creation of the Republic of Natalia and its subsequent annexation and destruction by the British after the Battle of Congella in 1843.¹ The cycle was completed when Colonial rule was instituted in 1845² and the subsequent attempt in 1847 by Natal Afrikaners to resurrect a republic, the Republic of Klip River, failed.³

The Afrikaners who remained in Natal throughout these events increased in number as immigrants from the Cape Colony joined them,⁴ and slowly evolved into a united community, trapped in an agrarian economy.⁵ Their socio-political world was characterised by complaints of preferential treatment afforded to Africans, and a lack of access to land. A predominant sense of injustice prevailed, exemplified by acts such as the execution of Hans Dons de Lange,⁶ and the community experienced a general feeling of disempowerment and unfair treatment under British rule. They had no voice to express their feelings of dissatisfaction since Dutch newspapers had not proved profitable,⁷ Dutch had become a marginalised language,⁸ and the Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk or Dutch Reformed Church (hereafter DRC) which was caught up in a constant struggle for survival, both financially and in terms of recruiting members, lacked power.⁹ As a result, by the early 1870s, the Boshof(f) brothers, JN and JC, were the only Afrikaner members of the Natal Legislative

1. AJ du Plessis, Die Republiek Natalia, *Archives yearbook for South African History*, 1942 (1), *passim*; JH Breytenbach (ed.), *Suid-Afrikaanse argivale rekords, notules van die Natalse Volksraad (Volledig met alle bylae daarby) (1838-1845)*, *passim*.

2. BJ Liebenberg, *Andries Pretorius in Natal*, *passim*.

3. MM Behn, *The Klip River insurrection, 1847*, MA-thesis, Natal-South Africa, 1932, *passim*.

4. PAR, Natal Colonial Publications (hereafter NCP), 7/1/24: Annual report magistrate Newcastle, 1878.

5. *The Natal Almanac and yearly register*, 1878, pp.189-209. Only 17 Natal Afrikaners were economically active outside agriculture: ten were involved in the military, four were justices of the peace (hereafter JP), two were ferry men and one a pound keeper.

6. AJ van Wyk, Hans Dons de Lange - skuldig of onskuldig?, *Historia* 18 (1), March 1973, pp.18-29.

7. AJ van Wyk, Die Afrikaanse koerantwese in Natal, *Neon*, 18, August 1975, pp.95-101; GS Nienaber, *Honderd jaar Hollands in Natal (tot 1928)*, *passim*.

8. GS Nienaber, *passim*; BR Buys, Onderwys in Natal, pp.208-215, in JC Coetzee (ed.), *Onderwys in Suid-Afrika, 1652-1956*.

9. GBA Gerdener, *Ons kerk in die Transgariëp. Geskiedenis van die Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerke in Natal, Vrystaat, Transvaal*, *passim*; Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk van Natal Argief (hereafter NGKA), Pietermaritzburg: Lidmate registers vir die gemeentes van Pietermaritzburg, Ladysmith, Greytown en Weenen tot 1878; PAR, NCP 7/1/24: Report on religious activities in the Colony of Natal, 1876.

Assembly.¹⁰ The marginalised position the Natal Afrikaners found themselves in is best summarised by Brookes and Webb: "...an incompatibility of temperament and outlook (existed) between the rough, vigorous, land-hungry frontiersmen who conquered Dingane and the just well-meaning officials with limited sympathies who governed Natal, some from London, some from Cape Town and some from Pietermaritzburg."¹¹

Against this background it was predictable that the Natal Afrikaners, especially those who resided in close proximity to the South African Republic (hereafter ZAR) or Transvaal, and the Republic of the Orange Free State (hereafter OFS), should speak, dress and behave in ways similar to that of their Republican kin.¹² The lack of representation and participation in political and economic matters in Natal resulted in the local Afrikaners gravitating towards the Republics with whose people they formed an ethnic community, shared a common history, and subscribed to the same political philosophy namely, Republicanism.

Eventually a significant event in the history of the group, the Anglo-Transvaal War of 1880-1881, spawned by the imperialist federation policy of the secretary of state for colonies of the time, Lord Carnarvon, succeeded in challenging the status quo.¹³

1.1_ Natal Afrikaners and the impact of the Federation Policy of Lord Carnarvon

One of the steps required for Carnarvon's federation scheme to succeed, was to bring about an end to the Zulu Kingdom. When war was forced on King Cetshwayo in 1878, it posed a threat to the Colony of Natal.¹⁴ In the three so-called "Dutch Districts",¹⁵ the counties of Umvoti, Weenen and Klip River, Natal Afrikaners were conspicuous in their lack of commitment to the defence of Natal. In the vast majority of cases they reacted by trekking to the Transvaal or OFS or congregating in laagers. The enduring recollection of the war for Natal Afrikaners was neither their lack of participation, nor memories of their lack of co-operation with the Natal Government in defence of the Colony, but they recalled their lack of reliance on the authorities to address their need to defend themselves. To the Natal Government and British colonists on the other hand, the Natal Afrikaner attitude in the face of a war with their traditional enemies, the Zulu, smacked of treason which bordered on subversion, especially when the British defeat at Isandlwana was welcomed by for example some Afrikaners in Greytown.¹⁶

10. AC Swanepoel, *Die rol van Johan Christoffel Boshof in die geskiedenis van Natal*, D Phil-thesis, UOFS, 1985, *passim*; AN Smit, *Die lewe van J.N. Boshof*, D Phil-thesis, UOFS, 1970, pp.330-339.

11. EH Brookes and C de B Webb, *A history of Natal*, p.62.

12. PAR, NCP 7/1/24: Annual report magistrate Newcastle, 1876.

13. AJH van der Walt *et al*, *Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika*, pp.280-323.

14. For a comprehensive outline of the Anglo-Zulu War see JPC Laband, *Rope of Sand. The rise and fall of the Zulu Kingdom in the nineteenth century*, pp.161-325.

15. This usage consistent with the time frame of the text will be adopted for convenience of reference.

16. JPC Laband and PS Thompson, *War comes to Umvoti: The Natal-Zululand Border 1878-1879*, *passim*; JPC Laband

The eventual British victory in the Anglo-Zulu War was the prelude to the second war arising from the federation attempts, namely the Anglo-Transvaal War of 1880-1881. The first step in this confrontation was the annexation of the Transvaal by Britain in 1877, a move that reminded Natal Afrikaners of the demise of their own successful, but short lived Republic, Natalia. After the annexation of the Transvaal, resistance slowly began to build up. By late 1880, events came to a head when the Transvaal issued an ultimatum to Britain demanding that their forces withdraw. This was ignored and during the ensuing clashes the British did not only lose every battle but the governor of Natal, Sir George Pomeroy-Colley, lost his life at the decisive Battle of Majuba on 27 February 1881.¹⁷ To the British Empire and British Natal, the Anglo-Transvaal War, and specifically the Battle of Majuba which restored partial independence to the Transvaal, came to be viewed as a blot on their history. Even as late as 1897 a visitor noted that the English in Natal were of the opinion that the "... disgrace of Majuba Hill ought to have been wiped out by a march to Pretoria, and ... the Boers should have been made to recognise that Britain is and would remain the paramount power in fact as well as name."¹⁸

Although the *Times of Natal*, in late 1899, recorded that Natal Afrikaners participated with enthusiasm and without any judicial repercussions in the war on the Transvaal side,¹⁹ authors such as JH Lehmann and M Flemmer refute this claim. If rebellious activities existed at all amongst Natal Afrikaners, it was possibly limited to communications of information to Boer forces by individuals, for the patrols of General PJ (Piet) Joubert in fact ventured as far as Ladysmith without receiving military or logistical support. According to Lehmann: "Boer intelligence, which was quite sophisticated, had alert agents and excellent means for transmitting the news of every new arrival and the exact location of each detachment and gun on the roads of Natal."²⁰ If the communication and intelligence activities of the Boer forces were as effective as Lehmann states, then the *Natal Mercury* was probably right when it recorded in February 1881: "We have so many treacherous friends and concealed enemies among the Natal Dutch colonists that it is high time to proclaim martial law."²¹

The reactions of the Natal Afrikaners to the Anglo-Transvaal War were decidedly pro-Transvaal and

and PS Thompson, *Kingdom and Colony at War. Sixteen studies on the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879*, passim; JPC Laband and PS Thompson with S Henderson, *The Buffalo Border 1879. The Anglo-Zulu War in Northern Natal*, passim; PAR, A 743, Herrineringe van Jan Jonathan Maré: 17-18.11.1952.

17. For an comprehensive outline of the Anglo-Transvaal War see amongst others: JH Lehmann, *The First Boer War*; FA van Jaarsveld, APJ van Rensburg and WA Stals (eds), *Die Eerste Vryheidsoorlog. Van verset en geweld tot skikking deur onderhandeling 1877-1884*.

18. Quoted in HW Whysall, *The response of Natal to the annexation of the Transvaal and the subsequent Anglo-Boer War of 1880-1881*, BA Hons-thesis, UNP, 1964, pp.64-65.

19. *Times of Natal*, 9.10.1899.

20. JH Lehmann, pp.160-161.

21. *Natal Mercury*, 15.2.1881.

pro-Republican. This was specifically the case in Umvoti county where several meetings were held in support of the Transvaal. During the first meeting, the purpose of which was “to express sympathy with the present agitators in the Transvaal,” no English-speaking person was admitted.²² The second meeting in Umvoti county was held in Greytown in February 1881, and was chaired by the resident magistrate. According to the *Natal Witness*, the meeting was attended by “leading Boer Farmers together with a fair number of Englishmen.”²³ The purpose of this meeting was to consider the “expediency of procuring the services of a surgeon to proceed beyond the borders to attend to the sick and wounded among our relatives, the Boers.” Subscription lists were opened to pay the doctor’s salary and to provide medical supplies. £200 was immediately raised. The “moderate Dutch element”, as the Afrikaners present signed themselves, took a step which was not in line with their expressed policy of being non-radical, when they petitioned the secretary of colonies, the Earl of Kimberley, to restore peace, by rescinding the annexation of the Transvaal.²⁴ In an act of defiance the Umvoti Afrikaners also vowed not to sell wagons and oxen to the British Army.²⁵ In the other counties with large Afrikaner populations, Klip River and Weenen, no rebellious activities were reported by the local magistrates.²⁶ Unbeknown to the authorities in Klip River county the Afrikaners of Helpmekaar collected £221 for the Boer cause.²⁷

When peace was restored, the Transvaal, in terms agreed to by the Pretoria Convention, became a self-governing state subject to certain conditions, creating a situation that posed a threat to the British ego and their image as conquerors. On the other hand, the military victory of the Transvalers filled their brothers in Natal with a renewed confidence as well as confirming their historical and ethnic ties with the Republic which many had come to regard as their political home.

Shortly before the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War, statements made on two separate occasions, alluding to the Anglo-Transvaal War of 1880-1881, illustrate the magnitude of the impact of the war on the psyche of Natal Afrikaners. Firstly, the governor of Natal, Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson, noted that subsequent to the Anglo-Transvaal War, Natal Afrikaners looked to Pretoria and the Transvaal as their political Mecca.²⁸ Secondly, Dominee (hereafter Ds) HF Schoon, who served the Ladysmith DRC and its outlying stations for several decades, did not want to make the church building

22. WH Whysall, p.20.

23. *Natal Witness*, 26.2.1881.

24. PAR, British Parliamentary Papers (hereafter BPP) 29: Letter Acting-Governor CBH Mitchell to the Earl of Kimberley, 21.3.1881.

25. M Flemmer, Support for Transvaal independence from Natal, in FA van Jaarsveld *et al* (eds), *Die Eerste Vryheidsoorlog...*, pp.253-254.

26. VS Harris, *The reluctant Rebels: The impact of the Second Anglo-Boer War upon the Klip River Dutch Community with special reference to the Dutch Community of Dundee*, BA Hons-thesis, UNP, 1982, p.14.

27. Vaal Technorama (hereafter VTR), JC Vermaak collection, unnumbered document: Copy of letter PJ Joubert to HJ Kriel, 9.3.1881.

28. Public Record Office (hereafter PRO), Colonial Office (hereafter CO) 179/206: Letter Governor W Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary J Chamberlain, 15.9.1899.

available to the town council as a refuge in case of war, citing as one of his reasons the damage done by the British troops to the DRC building in Wakkerstroom during the Anglo-Transvaal War.²⁹ His objections reveal a new, more outspoken, recognition of the division existing between Boer and Briton. The sense of confidence and unity linking Natal Afrikaners to their Republican kin, was noted by the magistrate of Umsinga in 1883, when he reported that many of the Afrikaners in the area had delayed their annual trek to the Transvaal in search for grazing in order to commemorate the “anniversary of Dingaan’s battle” on 16 December.³⁰ This signified a new awareness of a group identity and a celebration of cultural significance which had not existed prior to the Anglo-Transvaal War. Many decades later Afrikaner historians such as GD Scholtz³¹ and FA van Jaarsveld³² recognised the emotions arising from the victory of the Transvaal against the British as the birth of Afrikaner nationalism. The question now arises as to how deep-rooted these changes were amongst Natal Afrikaners, or whether they were merely a superficial response to external circumstances in the decade that followed the war.

1.2 The aftermath of the Anglo-Transvaal War and its effects on the lives of Natal Afrikaners

The legacy of the Anglo-Transvaal War soon became apparent amongst Natal Afrikaners, and healthy political activity was reported by the Newcastle magistrate.³³ The new-found confidence encouraged those who fulfilled the economic requirements for participation, that is to say, white males who owned or rented property to the value of £50, to become involved in proceedings. The first test for their newly acquired confidence came in the form of the 1882 elections, with the central focus on gaining responsible government, which implied political self-rule for the Colony of Natal. Fearing the military and financial implications that would follow, and with the Anglo-Zulu and Anglo-Transvaal Wars still fresh in their memories, Natal Afrikaners, on election day, 15 May 1882, exhibited the power of their minority vote by rejecting the candidates who proposed responsible government.³⁴ The *Natal Mercury* condemned Natal Afrikaners for their stance, stating that they had voted against the proposals hoping to alienate Britain and thus pave the way for a Republic.³⁵ Although far from the truth, this proved a clear indication that the Natal Afrikaners had made their debut on the political scene.

These political efforts were aided by the voice of a newspaper started by JR Hershensohn, a German-Jew born in Russia, who married an Afrikaner woman. After travelling the Dutch Districts

29. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 5.10.1899, pp.7-8.

30. PAR, NCP 7/1/31: Annual report magistrate Umsinga, 1883.

31. GD Scholtz, *Die ontwaking van die politieke denke van die Afrikaner, Vol IV, 1881-1899*, pp.246-250.

32. FA van Jaarsveld, *Die ontwaking van die Afrikaanse nasionale bewussyn, 1868-1881*, pp.139-140.

33. PAR, NCP 7/1/29: Annual report magistrate Newcastle, 1881.

34. S Hugo, *The 1882 elections in Natal*, BA Hons-thesis, UNP, 1960, pp.37-39.

35. *Natal Mercury*, 20.5.1882.

to gauge the political waters and to promote his newspaper he started with the publication of the weekly *Natal Boeren Vriend* in 1885. Following a dispute with the directors Herschensohnn started the *De Natal Afrikaner* in 1886 with the aim of creating equal political rights for Afrikaners and Englishmen.³⁶ As editor, Herschensohnn used his newspapers to try and educate Afrikaners, both politically and economically. At the same time he initiated the formation of agricultural societies or “boereverenigings” amongst Afrikaners to promote their cause. The inspiration of Herschensohnn’s newspaper as well as his personal efforts, led to the formation of the first of these co-operative endeavours, the Helpmekaar-Boerevereniging, at the house of D Pieters on 11 November 1885. This was soon followed by the creation of other similar organizations at Weenen and Venterspruit and by 1886 nine such organizations were in place.³⁷

Through his newspapers Herschensohnn guided these organizations, giving them political direction. This was later to earn him the title “father of Afrikaner politics in Natal” from historian AJ van Wyk. The various boereverenigings met regularly and soon a representative body, Het Kongres, evolved, uniting Afrikaners from north and south of the Tugela River. At Het Kongres meetings agricultural matters such as wool prices and the scab disease, socio-political matters like the Dutch language, and political matters in the Cape Colony, especially the Afrikanerbond and Boerebeschermingsverenigingen, were discussed and debated. The boereverenigings soon became a power to be reckoned with, both as a collective body and as individual branches, and political candidates who supported the political ideals of the Afrikaners were assured of voter support.³⁸

The real test for the Natal Afrikaners and their growing political awareness, as driven by *De Natal Afrikaner* and the agricultural societies, came with the elections which took place in the final decade of the 1800s. As was the case a decade earlier, responsible government was once again foremost on the agenda, while new issues, such as the position of Africans and Indians in the political dispensation of Natal, also needed to be considered.

With the *De Natal Afrikaner* at the helm the mood was now decidedly pro-responsible government, and the readers were confronted with the choice of, on the one side “...the fighters of Imperialism, Kafferdom, Asian immigrants-men who want to see the inland Republics remain untouched in their independence” and, on the other side, “the Jingos, who want nothing more than that the Republics... be annexed. If this caused bloodshed, mattered very little to them as long as Afrikanerdom was dragged under.”³⁹ According to the newspaper, responsible government would halt such a destructive process by improving relations with the Republics. Cultivating closer ties with the

36. GS Nienaber, pp.54-56; AJ van Wyk, Die Afrikaanse koerantwese in Natal, *Neon*, 18, August 1975, p.95.

37. GS Nienaber, pp.46-50; AJ van Wyk, *Politieke woelinge in Natal 1910-1915*, D Phil-thesis, UOFS, 1977, pp.37-39.

38. AJ van Wyk, *Politieke woelinge...*, p.37.

39. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 3.10.1890.

Republics would also prevent the British government from turning Natal into a “kaffer reserve”. Furthermore, the cry from all corners of Natal was “away with the influence of Downing Street and Imperialism, we want to rule ourselves so the Natal Afrikaners can in future prevent hostile actions against our friends and neighbours, against our blood relations and clansmen by the imperial authorities.”⁴⁰ At last, according to *De Natal Afrikaner*, Natal Afrikaners could determine the future history of South Africa by sending people to the Legislative Assembly, who supported responsible government. The view expressed was that such a step could mean the end of Imperialism and Jingoism in South Africa.⁴¹ The newspaper also warned that the mobilisation of Afrikaners in the Cape Colony which had led to the creation of the Afrikaner Bond, meant that the ministers in that Colony now knew that Afrikaners were the real political power and therefore did not act against them. A similar situation was now deemed possible for Natal.⁴² Although these expectations were rather exaggerated it provided a clear indication of how post-responsible government relations with the Republics and Britain were envisaged. As advised by the paper, the Natal Afrikaners in the Umvoti, Weenen and Klip River counties did return pro-responsible government candidates.⁴³ The attitude of the Afrikaner voters did not go unnoticed and, during the debate on responsible government in the Legislative Assembly on 15 January 1891, two members labelled them as “Republican orientated.”⁴⁴

Despite this accusation the Natal Afrikaners played their role in securing responsible government with its accompanying Legislative Assembly and Council. The former consisted of 37 members elected for a period of four years, while a council of 11 members was nominated by the Natal governor. The cabinet, under the prime minister, contained six members.⁴⁵ With the decision in favour of responsible government secured, *De Natal Afrikaner*, went one step further and reminded its readers that they now had the opportunity of participating in politics and in the governing of Natal on condition that they remained united and independent of all political parties.⁴⁶

In reality the situation soon proved to be different from what had been anticipated. A meeting to discuss responsible government, held on 20 September 1890 at Dundee, which was attended by numerous Afrikaners and Englishmen, gave a glimpse of the ethnic discord prevalent in Natal. When John Hershensohn, the son of the editor of *De Natal Afrikaner*, addressed the meeting in Dutch, most of the Englishmen got up and left the hall.⁴⁷ Eventually only five of the sixty candidates

40. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 22.8.1890.

41. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 3.10.1890.

42. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 21.3.1890.

43. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 17.10.1890.

44. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 23.1.1891.

45. R Robinson and J Gallagher with A Denny, *Africa and the Victorians. The official mind of Imperialism*, p.175.

46. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 7.7.1893.

47. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 3.10.1890.

nominated for the first election of the Legislative Assembly turned out to be Afrikaners. Of these only TJ (Tol) Nel who had served Umvoti from 1886-1893, was elected, and he became the sole Natal Afrikaner representative.⁴⁸ This disturbed supporters of *De Natal Afrikaner* and Hershensohn did not fail to assign blame when he named the lack of co-operation and distrust amongst Afrikaners as the main reason. According to him division would continue as long as “... they are happy to be led by the nose by any Jimmy. As long as that is the case the Englishman will firstly use and then despise them.”⁴⁹

The establishment of responsible government in fact did little to change the position of Natal Afrikaners. What *De Natal Afrikaner* must have lost sight of in propagating its political ideals for Natal Afrikaners, was the extent to which the people could be encouraged to participate. Earlier appeals by the newspaper that branches of the Taalbond should be created in Natal had fallen on deaf ears and only a few allied groups were created, with little enthusiasm being shown. One of these was the Newcastle branch which came into existence on 20 January 1892 on the farm Doornpoort. The main reason for the apathy was that the boereverenigings were fighting the same struggle as the Taalbond.⁵⁰

On another front, but this time acting as pressure groups, *De Natal Boeren Vriend*, *De Natal Afrikaner*, the agricultural societies, the DRC, and individuals prevailed upon the Natal Government to secure minority language rights for Dutch. Initially petitions to secure Dutch as a subject and a medium of instruction streamed in from Umvoti and Weenen, highlighting the concern over the neglect of the language.⁵¹ Supported on the political front by JC Boshof, optimism initially ran high, and it was hoped that by the end of 1886, English and Dutch classes would exist in every school.⁵²

This soon proved to be an unrealistic dream. Boereverenigings, despite pressure on politicians representing the Dutch Districts, complained about the education system and those who administered it. Furthermore, opinions voiced at teachers' conferences had little influence in establishing a more prominent position for Dutch in the curriculum.⁵³ The reasons for this failure were numerous. Early Afrikaans or “Die Taal”, the language spoken by Natal Afrikaners and for that matter almost all Afrikaners, was already far removed from written Dutch, and both learners and parents failed to grasp the relevance of studying Dutch in an academic context. The problem was aggravated by Afrikaner parents who still took their children out of school to work on their farms or to participate in the annual seasonal migration to more suitable pastures. Dutch teachers were also

48. *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordeboek*, Vol V, p.571.

49. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 26.9.1893.

50. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 21.11.1890 and 18.11.1890.

51. AC Swanepoel, pp.290-292.

52. *De Natal Boeren Vriend*, 10.12.1885.

53. GS Nienaber, pp.210-211.

very scarce and neither the education department, nor the parents, could attract teachers to poorly paid jobs in the sparsely populated Dutch Districts.⁵⁴ Affluent Afrikaners chose to have their children educated by private tutors or governesses, or sent them to be schooled in the Cape Colony at great expense.⁵⁵ On the other side of the economic spectrum, children of poor Afrikaners did not attend school at all.⁵⁶

Understandably, Education Superintendent Russell was concerned that very little good could come from the teaching of Dutch. In his 1891 report he wrote: “The work in Dutch is of a low average. The tendency all through the papers is to write phonetically and in accordance with the South African taal. Only 25 took up this subject and only one gained as much as 75% of the marks. These results do not seem to justify the considerable amount spent by the government for the instruction of this subject.”⁵⁷ Matters did gradually improve and by 1897, 305 learners throughout Natal studied Dutch as a subject in government-aided schools. The standard was still very low and this was attributed to the lack of suitably qualified teachers.⁵⁸ The struggle surrounding the position of Dutch within the education system, and in public life, reached a position of stalemate, largely because the Natal Government deemed that it had done enough to accommodate the requests of the various pressure groups. The *Natal Government Gazette* and the *Agricultural Journal* were translated into Dutch, Afrikaners like JH Kleinschmidt were appointed to the education department to oversee the instruction of Dutch, and the language was offered as a subject in some government-aided schools.

The weakening position of Dutch was an omen to Natal Afrikaners that they could become totally anglicised and denationalised, since English was the dominant political, educational and economic language. According to AF Hattersley the anglicisation process amongst Natal Afrikaners gained momentum as the railway and telegraph lines started to reduce the isolation of farms.⁵⁹ In *De Natal Afrikaner*, letters by Afrikaners regularly appeared complaining that fellow Afrikaners were neglecting their language by speaking English to their children in efforts to improve the English of parent and child alike. When such people were confronted they normally retorted that “Hollands kom vanself.” A point in case was the letter by “Onpartydig” in which it was pointed out that English is a foreign language and had to be learnt. Dutch, on the other hand, was the mother tongue and children were familiar with it. According to the writer, the past needed to be forgotten for practical reasons.⁶⁰ The tendency to speak English rather than Dutch was especially prevalent amongst

54. PAR, NCP 7/2/2/1: Annual report superintendent of education, 1884; PAR, NCP 7/2/2/2: Annual report magistrate Newcastle, 1885; PAR, NCP 7/1/31: Annual report magistrate Weenen, 1883.

55. PAR, NCP 7/1/24: Annual report magistrate Klip River (Ladysmith), 1876.

56. PAR, NCP 7/2/2/1: Annual report superintendent of education, 1884.

57. GS Nienaber, pp.213-214.

58. PAR, NCP 7/4/4: Inspectors report for Dutch education, 1897.

59. AF Hattersley, *Portrait of a Colony. The story of Natal*, p.98.

60. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 18.3.1892.

Afrikaners whose children attended the town schools. In extreme cases the children spoke English to one another, while the parents who understood very little, were present.⁶¹ In other instances children would speak English prior to entering the church and once inside would whisper loudly in the acquired language so that all could hear that “zij ‘educated’ zijn.”⁶² Even love letters between Afrikaner couples were in some instances written in English.⁶³

Equally serious language politics were experienced by the DRC. In a letter to *De Natal Afrikaner* of 26 February 1892, “Geboren Engelschman” expressed his concern that sermons for Afrikaners in the Greytown DRC was held in English. He furthermore described how certain Afrikaner children were questioned in English at the time of their confirmation. The letter prompted GT (Gert) van Rooyen to deny that English services were conducted for Afrikaners, stating that such services were only held for English speakers. Van Rooyen did, however, admit that the Otto and Keyter children had been confirmed in English.⁶⁴ Further proof that the Greytown congregation were starting to lose touch with Dutch/Afrikaans is provided by the minutes of the church council which were at one stage during 1892 taken down in English, causing the synod of the church to intervene and prohibit the practice.⁶⁵

To those Natal Afrikaners who had strong leanings towards Dutch the fight was not over and the struggle to preserve their language as a way of preventing the erosion of their culture and identity continued.⁶⁶ At the 1898 Congress of the Dutch Farmers’ Association resolutions were adopted calling on the government to print advertisements of all imports in *De Natal Afrikaner* in Dutch and to include Dutch in the curriculum of all government-aided schools and not only a selected few.⁶⁷ As late as 29 July 1899, the position of Dutch within the education system was still an important issue,⁶⁸ a clear indication of the crucial role the language played in terms of the identity of the Natal Afrikaner.

Within a decade the euphoria created amongst Natal Afrikaners by the victory of the Transvaal in the Anglo-Transvaal War started to wane. The foothold they had gained in the macro-political scene in the 1883 elections was lost by the time responsible government came about in 1893. In reality, the responsible government propagated by *De Natal Afrikaner*, the agricultural societies and some

61. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 13.3.1896.

62. GS Nienaber, pp.57-59.

63. Foy Vermaak private collection: Letter ASM Meyer to C Vermaak, 13.11.1893.

64. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 26.2.1892.

65. GS Nienaber, pp.53-54.

66. WE Lambert, Language as a factor in intergroup relations, in H Giles and RN St Clair (eds), *Language and social psychology*, pp.186-187.

67. PAR, CSO 1563: Resolutions adopted by the Congress of Dutch Farmers’ Association, 6-7.5.1898.

68. PAR, CSO 1635: Letter secretary Dutch Farmers’ Association, FDJ Havemann to Principal-under-Secretary (hereafter PUS) C Bird, 29.7.1899.

individuals, hardly improved the political position of Natal Afrikaners. The reason for this was quite simple: the vast majority of these people were neither politically skilled nor literate enough to participate in the process, while the annual seasonal migration to the Republics served to interrupt any ongoing involvement, causing most Natal Afrikaners to remain apolitical. Parallel attempts to gain rights pertaining to language issues were less than successful. This was greatly due to the changing nature of the Dutch language and the low premium placed on education by many Natal Afrikaners, regardless of the language employed. At the same time affluent Afrikaners who had the vote by virtue of their property, also had the economic means to pay for the education they desired for their children. This in itself tinted both political and language movements with an elitist hue.

The nationalist momentum brought about by the Anglo-Transvaal War amongst Natal Afrikaners slowly petered out and proved to be but a passing phase. This happened despite the increase in the numbers of Natal Afrikaners, when the British recognised the New Republic in October 1886. In exchange, the New Republic dropped all claims to a protectorate over Dinizulu and ceded a block of territory in central Zululand known as Proviso B. The Afrikaners in this block of land were allowed to keep their farms at quit rent, but became British subjects when Zululand was made a British Colony in May 1887.⁶⁹ The main reason, however, for the failing momentum in both the political and linguistic areas, was that the fight was not carried into the most important sphere, namely the economic realm.

1.3 The economic position of Natal Afrikaners prior to the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War

By the 1880s and 1890s very few Natal Afrikaners had ventured beyond the field of agriculture. If they did, links to their agricultural heritage were generally maintained. Natal Afrikaners like P Nel, and PH van Rooyen from Umvoti, A Pretorius and JC Buys from Weenen and S de Jager and B Steenkamp of Klip River county operated water-driven corn mills. A few, especially in Umvoti, became shopkeepers or butchers. No Afrikaners were members of boards or directors of companies.⁷⁰ By 1887 only seven out of the 143 justices of peace, four out of 85 post office managers, and 12 out of 121 office bearers and committee members of agricultural societies in the civil service were Afrikaners.⁷¹ This had altered very little by 1895.⁷² By 1897 matters had deteriorated even more. Only 12 or 1.2% of the roughly 1 000 members listed in the Natal civil service were Afrikaners.⁷³ Natal Afrikaners were also no better represented in professions outside the civil service. According to the *Natal Almanack, Directory and Register* for 1899, Natal

69. JPC Laband and PS Thompson, The reduction of Zululand, 1878-1904, in A Duminy and B Guest (eds), *Natal and Zululand from earliest times until 1910. A new history*, pp.215-216.

70. See PAR, NCP 7/1/19-7/1/27: Return of manufacturers, mines and fisheries in Natal, 1874-1893.

71. EH Brookes and C de B Webb, p.158.

72. GT Plowman, *The Natal civil service list, 1895, passim*.

73. GT Plowman, *The Natal civil service list, 1897, passim*.

Afrikaners figured in the following occupations as enumerated: wagon builders - five; builders - three; shopkeepers - three; blacksmiths - two; teachers - two; watchmakers - one; hotelkeepers - one; masons - one; bakers - one; brickmakers - one and bricklayers - one. In 28 other listed professions which included architecture, medicine, and law, no Afrikaans names appeared.⁷⁴ Such a significant lack of representation could be attributed to the fact that Natal, with its capitalist system linked to the British dominated industrialised international economy, whose mechanisms and intricacies were better understood by the English, marginalised Afrikaners and denied them access to capital and/or positions.⁷⁵

As stock farmers, Natal Afrikaners favoured higher altitudes such as the Umvoti, Weenen, Klip River, Dundee and Newcastle districts because these areas were generally disease-free, received up to 1 400 mm of rain per year, and conformed to the agro-ecology needed for extensive livestock farming.⁷⁶ It was also the furthest many could trek away from British influence, especially those who settled in Klip River county. Settling in such remote counties had distinct disadvantages as it was geographically, politically and economically isolated from the rest of Natal. Economic growth was thus hampered in the Dutch Districts because local markets were largely absent and the long distances to urban markets along bad roads made crop farming in particular not viable. Other deterrents, apart from the lack of markets and the absence of a suitable infrastructure, were rust, late frost and frequent droughts. As a result, the crops that were generally planted were maize for bread and mieliepap and oats, as fodder.⁷⁷

Stock farming was not without its hazards. Runaway fires and lack of fodder proved problematic, while the annual migration in winter to Natal and in the summer to the highveld was time consuming and economically disruptive. Cattle herds were decimated by the outbreak of lungsickness (pleuropneumonia) which caused the deaths of two-thirds of white owned cattle, and the herds only started to recover when new stock was introduced. The recovery was hampered by red water and the destructive impact of rinderpest in 1896-1897 which destroyed 65% of European owned cattle in the Klip River district, 50% in Dundee, and 40% in Umsinga and in Umvoti.⁷⁸

The ongoing threat of lungsickness and red water forced many Natal Afrikaners to introduce sheep from the OFS and later to import stock from overseas in an attempt to diversify and improve their agricultural prospects. In this pioneering venture, significant contributions were made by WH

74. *Natal almanack, directory and register, 1899, passim.*

75. C Ballard and G Lenta, *The complex nature of agriculture in Colonial Natal: 1860-1909*, in B Guest and JM Sellers (eds.), *Enterprise and exploitation in a Victorian Colony. Aspects of the social and economic history of Natal*, p.143.

76. Thorrington-Smith, Rosenberg and McCrystal, *Towards a plan for Kwazulu, a preliminary development plan. The written report.* pp.20-50.

77. JPC Laband and PS Thompson with S Henderson, p.6.

78. PAR, NCP 7/4/3 and 7/4/4: Annual magisterial reports, 1896 and 1897.

Boshoff and PAR Otto, with the latter playing an important role in the formation of the “Natal Association for the Introduction of Woolled Sheep.”⁷⁹ Otto contributed immensely to the development of agriculture in Natal by importing Friesland cattle, Rambouillet sheep and horses from overseas, while also being a very successful wheat farmer.⁸⁰

Sheep farming was not without its own problems. Wild dogs, blue tongue, boetebossie (*xanthuim spinosum*) and especially scab, caused major economic difficulties. To a certain extent the problem of scab was addressed up to 1899 by dipping plus the introduction of various laws to curb the disease. None of these laws were popular; they were generally viewed by both Afrikaans and English farmers as an infringement on their rights as British subjects. How strong these feelings were could be gauged by the 18 petitions submitted in 1880 to protest against Law 26 of 1878, or the “Law for the better prevention of the disease in sheep called scab.” One of the petitions from Afrikaners in Umvoti county claimed that the number of sheep in the area had declined from 147 000 in 1877 to 94 000 in 1880 because of the enforced dipping with Cooper’s powders. LJ Nel claimed to have lost 238 of his 454 sheep after they were dipped.⁸¹ The wool was generally of a bad quality, owing to scab and the need for capital, which forced sheep farmers to shear twice a year. At the same time the washing and preparation of wool was a tedious process.⁸² In spite of these complications, sheep farming remained popular with Natal Afrikaners and most had a herd, especially since cattle was subjected to lung sickness which reoccurred repeatedly.⁸³

Apart from cattle and sheep, Natal Afrikaners also reared large numbers of horses, both for farm work and transport, but horse sickness proved to be a perennial problem and in summer the horses had to be moved to higher ground. Angora and other species of goats were also kept, especially in the rocky areas.⁸⁴

Numerous other economic problems also confronted Natal Afrikaners. The depression of the mid-1880s caused great hardship. Between 1886 and 1889 severe droughts struck the Colony, especially the Klip River county, resulting in serious stock losses. Numerous other natural disasters such as locusts, horse sickness, hail, early or late frost, and even snow in the Newcastle area during 1881, hampered farming. Stock theft by Africans constituted another major drawback with farmers in Weenen losing an average of 80 sheep per farmer during 1884. Despite these problems most Dutch

79. JM Sellers, *The origin and development of the merino sheep industry in the Natal midlands 1856-66*, MA-thesis, UNISA, 1946, pp.19-20.

80. *Lantern*, Vol XXIII, March 1974, No. 3, Natal 150 1824-1974, p.57; *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordboek*, Vol IV, pp.463-464.

81. AC Swanepoel, pp.248-260.

82. JPC Laband and PS Thompson with S Henderson, p.7.

83. JM Sellers, p.53.

84. See, PAR, NCP 7/1/16-7/1/28.

Districts, or parts thereof, also had their share of favourable agricultural conditions.⁸⁵

Long-term advantages from beneficial agricultural conditions were furthermore hampered by Natal's fast disappearing frontiers, with farms systematically decreasing in size by as much as 400 acres on average between 1860 and 1900. Afrikaners, especially where sub-division as a means of providing inheritance for offspring played a prominent role, found themselves with diminished land areas, and land shortage became a major problem. As the population grew land availability decreased and it became almost impossible for young Afrikaner men to become agronomists. Ultimately, few farms of 10 000 acres or the size of the original grants continued to exist. The lack of land meant that Natal Afrikaners could no longer trek elsewhere or participate in the annual migration to the Republics as readily as they had done in the past; a habit which had caused the magistrate of Newcastle to describe them as being the opposite of "the swallow and other migratory species that come in summer and go in the winter."⁸⁶ To make matters worse, access to land became even more difficult after 1893, when crown lands in Klip River county were thrown open for sale by "public competition" with the explicit aim of curtailing migratory movements and the economic complications thereof, such as tax evasion.⁸⁷ The hope of the authorities that more extensive land ownership would introduce greater stability in the Afrikaner community failed as many who had rented the crown lands did not necessarily purchase it.⁸⁸

Policy decisions by the government, as outlined above, irked Natal Afrikaners and made them suspicious of the ruling powers. They came to regard the administrative bodies as interfering and meddling. This was particularly true of the Klip River Afrikaners, as indicated in the reports of the Umsinga magistrate. In 1884 he recorded that "...many of the Boer farmers are suspicious that they will be taxed on their stock and for any improvements on their farms; this evil has arisen from the property tax bill, and when evaluators went around a few years ago it made farmers restless."⁸⁹ In 1888 the scab law of 1887 also aroused suspicion and a few Afrikaners left Natal as a direct result thereof.⁹⁰ The misgivings of the Natal Afrikaner were so deep-rooted, that they almost all provided the field-cornets with inaccurate figures regarding livestock and cultivated land. This was only rectified after 1889 when the Natal Mounted Police collected and recorded the yearly statistics.⁹¹ According to the historian VS Harris, Natal Afrikaners, especially those north of the Tugela River remained distrustful of the intentions of the Natal Government throughout the period 1881 to 1899.

85. For the economic conditions prevalent during this time in the districts in which the Afrikaners resided, see: PAR, NCP 7/1/29-7/1/31 and 7/2/2/12-7/2/2/14: Annual magisterial reports, 1880-1890.

86. AJ Christopher, *Natal: A study in land settlement*, D Phil-thesis, UNP, 1969, pp.43-344; PAR, NCP 7/1/30: Annual report magistrate Newcastle, 1882.

87. PAR, NCP 7/4/1: Annual reports magistrate Newcastle, 1893-1894.

88. VS Harris, p.15.

89. PAR, NCP 7/1/35: Annual report magistrate Umsinga, 1884.

90. PAR, NCP 7/1/38: Annual report magistrate Umsinga, 1888.

91. For the complaints of almost all the magistrates in the Dutch Districts see: PAR, NCP 7/1/32-7/1/38: 1881-1888.

This was not helped by the rudimentary administrative infrastructure in which the resident magistrate carried the bulk of the governing load. All in all by the end of the 1890s government control over the Afrikaner population was barely stronger than it had been during the 1850s.⁹²

Alongside the decrease in available land, environmental degradation increased. As Natal Afrikaners introduced private land tenure, the impact on the environment in the Dutch Districts, and especially on forests and game, became more and more noticeable. Apart from gathering firewood, Natal Afrikaners chopped vast quantities of yellowwood, stinkwood, sneezewood and black ironwood which they sold. Game was shot for meat and trading in skins, horns, ivory and teeth. This meant that by 1870 sightings of eland, hartebeest and buffalo were rare, while no elephants, rhinos and lions were to be found in Natal. Only small game such as duiker and steenbok still existed. As a result, by the 1890s, the fauna and flora, once viable economic commodities in the Dutch Districts had been exploited beyond redemption. The impact on minerals and veld composition was far less dramatic and the vast coal reserves on farms were mined merely for household purposes.⁹³

After the discovery of gold and diamonds, some economic respite came in the form of transport riding, but in some ways this event created more economic problems for the Natal Afrikaners than it solved. Railways developed along the shortest routes thereby bypassing agricultural regions such as Umvoti, Weenen and Umsinga which excluded these counties as markets for food produce. By the time the railroad from Durban reached Johannesburg in 1895, numerous Natal Afrikaners who had survived on transport riding or wagon building, or who followed these pursuits as an additional source of income, and in many areas had monopolised the trade, were put out of business. Furthermore, the limited transport market that remained for non-perishable products after the completion of the railroad, was flooded by the oversupply of transport riders, making it unsustainable.⁹⁴ To add to the dilemma, a large number of Natal Afrikaners, especially during the early years of the goldfields and before the completion of the railroad, had concentrated on transport riding, leaving their farms unattended, and thus neglecting a valuable means of providing a living.⁹⁵

According to the historians Ballard and Lenta, the discovery of diamonds and gold and the subsequent development of the mining industry, had a detrimental effect on the farmers of Natal. The growing Witwatersrand population soon attracted the attention of countries such as Argentina, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States. Since technology had led to the development of refrigerated shipping, these countries with their large-scale food exporting industries, could

92. VS Harris, The Klip River Dutch community 1843-1899, *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, VII, 1984, pp.6-7.

93. B Ellis, The impact of white settlers on the natural environment of Natal, 1845-1870, in B Guest and JM Sellers (eds), *Enterprise and exploitation...*, pp.71-72.

94. H Heydenrych, Railway development in Natal to 1895, in B Guest and JM Sellers (eds), *Enterprise and exploitation...*, pp.47-70.

95. N Hurwitz, *Agriculture in Natal 1860-1950*, p.8.

export their agricultural products more cheaply than the Natal farmers. Owing to the fact that Natal could not compete with the international market, it soon came under pressure in its own arena when cheap products such as butter from Australia and New Zealand, flooded the local markets during the 1890s.⁹⁶

The discovery of gold also impacted negatively on an important prerequisite for white farmers in Natal, that is, the availability of cheap, and large supplies of African labour. The mines on the Witwatersrand and the construction of the railroad which offered steadily increasing wages, lured large numbers of African labourers - as many as 25 514 during 1894 - from Natal. Working on the mines was preferred simply because "... few Africans other than labour tenants were prepared to work on farms unless necessity drove them, as was the case during the depression of the mid-1880s or the years of the natural disaster in the 1890's." A significant factor which helped to account for reluctance of Africans to work on farms, was the practice of wage reduction adopted by many farmers at times when labour was plentiful.⁹⁷

Afrikaners, as extensive livestock farmers, needed herders, but found them in constant short supply. In Umvoti this was blamed on the railway which drew away labour while in Weenen, Africans were viewed by farmers as too affluent to enter into service.⁹⁸ All white farmers, including the Natal Afrikaners, were unhappy with the general policy towards Africans and the shortage of available labour. This dissatisfaction was expressed by JC Boshof who believed no African should be allowed to own a horse or a rifle, and that the locations should be split up in order to provide the labour imperative for economic growth. Boshof substantiated his point of view by stating that blacks contributed very little to the economy apart from paying hut tax. According to him the men were lazy and immoral.⁹⁹ Similarly PR Botha and LJ Nel, livestock farmers from Greytown, who also needed herders, complained in the early 1880s of a shortage of labour and that youngsters were disobeying their elders and not entering into service as per agreement.¹⁰⁰ Yet, while the farmers complained about lack of labour, very few in the then embryonic capitalist economy had the resources to take full advantage of the African workers available to them.¹⁰¹

Many Afrikaners opted for African tenants rather than farming themselves. These tenants focussed

96. C Ballard and G Lenta, The complex nature..., in B Guest and JM Sellers (eds), *Enterprise and exploitation...*, p.133; PAR, NCP 7/2/2/4: Annual report magistrate Weenen, 1887.

97. C Ballard and G Lenta, The complex nature..., in B Guest and JM Sellers (eds), *Enterprise and exploitation...*, pp.93-96.

98. PAR, NCP 7/1/24: Annual reports magistrates Umvoti and Weenen, 1876.

99. AC Swanepoel, pp.242-243.

100. B Carton, *"Blood from our sons." Generational conflict in Natal and Zululand, South Africa, 1880-1910*, PhD-thesis, Yale, 1995, pp.129-130.

101. J Lambert, *Africans in Natal, 1880-1899. Continuity, change and crisis in rural society*, D Phil-thesis, UNISA, 1986, pp.384-385.

on grain production, rather than livestock farming, and were so successful that they managed to pay their rent and taxes by producing marketable agricultural surplus.¹⁰² Generally, Afrikaners did not exact rent from their African tenants, but preferred them to supply labour for herding purposes, as well as for weeding and harvesting crops.¹⁰³ This changed after the discovery of gold and with the construction of the railroad, as Africans tended not to keep to their part of the arrangement. As a result Afrikaners started to charge rent.¹⁰⁴ In extreme cases families were evicted, even though they may have worked for a particular Afrikaner all their lives.¹⁰⁵

Despite the hardships and challenges during the 1880s and 1890s, numerous Natal Afrikaners prospered. PAR Otto, known as the “king” of Natal farmers, was one such farmer who owned 40 000 acres at the time of his death on 10 May 1890.¹⁰⁶ Likewise, Tol Nel was also described as an extremely rich farmer.¹⁰⁷ Well-to-do Afrikaners were to be found in all the Dutch Districts and in 1885 the magistrate of Umsinga could report that: “The European population are chiefly Dutch farmers of stock, and comfortably well off; several of them are the wealthiest stock farmers in this Colony, and own large tracts of land in this Division and in the Transvaal.”¹⁰⁸ In turn the Newcastle magistrate reported that the Afrikaners in his district comprised 66% of the white population and that they were “...well off and prosperous, buying land whenever they can get it, owning large flocks and herds, and having comfortable homesteads.”¹⁰⁹

Not all Natal Afrikaners were rich though, and numerous bywoners and renters co-existed alongside the rich farmers. According to the magistrate of Umsinga, every affluent Afrikaner employed several bywoners.¹¹⁰ The economic position of such bywoners differed greatly. Some were unmitigatedly poor like Thys Pieterse, a local jobber in Weenen county, described as the poorest of the poor, who died when a wall he was working on fell on him, leaving a wife and several children.¹¹¹ Others had some livestock or owned property such as a wagon. The opinion of GBA Gerdener that no poor Afrikaners existed in Natal prior to the Anglo-Boer War was therefore completely untrue.¹¹²

In reality the Natal Afrikaners covered the full economic spectrum, from extremely wealthy to dirt poor, with one common denominator: they were almost without exception involved in agriculture.

102. B Guest and JM Sellers (eds)., *Enterprise and exploitation...*, p.8.

103. PAR, NCP 7/1/30: Annual reports magistrates of Klip River and Newcastle districts, 1882.

104. PAR, NCP 7/2/2/5: Annual report magistrate Umsinga, 1888.

105. PAR, NCP 7/2/2/4: Annual report magistrate Newcastle, 1887.

106. *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordboek, Vol IV*, pp.463-464.

107. *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordboek, Vol V*, p.571.

108. PAR, NCP 7/2/2/2: Annual report magistrate Umsinga, 1885.

109. PAR, NCP 7/1/25: Annual report magistrate Newcastle, 1878.

110. PAR, NCP 7/2/2/2: Annual report magistrate Umsinga, 1885.

111. *Natal Witness*, 20.9.1899.

112. GBA Gerdener, p.133.

This prevented them from sharing in the economic boom taking place in the Transvaal and diminished the euphoria caused by the Anglo-Transvaal War. At the same time, a lack of English language skills, lack of access to the British economic culture, and an absence of political representation entrapped them in a world that had changed very little since the demise of the Republic of Natalia. Natal Afrikaners, furthermore, felt that they were still under the heel of British Imperialism, which due to the Uitlander question, was now spreading to the Transvaal, their political and spiritual home, and their beacon of hope against the threat of British domination.

1.4 The Jameson Raid and its impact on Natal and the Natal Afrikaner

On 2 January 1896, the political scenario in South Africa, including the position of Natal Afrikaners, changed dramatically when Dr Leander Starr Jameson and his supporters, who had invaded the Transvaal in an attempt to overthrow the government of President SJP Kruger, were arrested by Boer commandos at Doringkop. The raid, described by General Jan Smuts as "...the real declaration of war in the Great Anglo-Boer conflict..."¹¹³ immediately polarised Natal society, with unanimous support from English Natalians for the invaders, especially since the defeat at Doringkop brought back memories of Majuba. At the same time it was viewed as another defeat by Britain at the hands of the Afrikaners. In the ensuing events an outpouring of support for the Uitlanders and Britain reached fever pitch in Natal, and a meeting in support of Jameson and his raiders was held in Pietermaritzburg while rumours of gathering military aid abounded. The effect of this was soon visible in exacerbated hostility in Natal between Afrikaner and English.¹¹⁴

In contrast to the wild enthusiasm of the English following the invasion, Afrikaners were said to be crossing the border to the Transvaal in small groups to assist the Republic, with Dundee Afrikaners notably expressing sympathy for the Boer cause. The prime minister, Sir John Robinson, however, informed the Natal Government that it was believed that those crossing the border in an active show of support for the Transvaal were very few in number and, as far as could be ascertained none were from the powerful Umvoti district. In an attempt to allay racial tension, the Natal Government urged the Transvaal authorities to discourage Afrikaner volunteers from Natal, as it could become difficult for them to "control" such itinerant groups. Rumours even started to circulate that Natal Afrikaners were planning to capture Laings Nek, which if true, posed a serious threat to the internal security of the Colony.¹¹⁵ This was refuted by FAR Johnstone, the member of the Legislative Assembly (hereafter MLA) for Newcastle, who as a result was labelled as "pro-Dutch" by Governor Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson. According to Johnstone, the Natal Afrikaners could not have been more loyal, and they behaved in a proper and orderly manner at a meeting in Newcastle. The real anti-British feelings were prevalent across the border in Utrecht and Wakkerstroom and, given the close

113. As quoted by T Pakenham, *The Boer War*, p.9.

114. R Owendale, Natal and the Jameson Raid, *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, IV, 1981, pp.7-8.

115. R Owendale, Natal and the Jameson Raid..., p.9. At least one Natal Afrikaner, Cornelius Nel of Greytown, then resident near Pretoria, joined the fight against the raiders. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 29.9.1903.

proximity of these districts, Johnstone found the Natal Afrikaner's restraint commendable.¹¹⁶

Subsequent to the raid, Robinson and his cabinet found themselves in an extremely difficult position, especially when a large section of the public, rather than denounce the Jameson Raid and the challenge to the sovereignty of the Transvaal, gave it their support and turned against their official economic ally, the Transvaal. Notwithstanding the feelings of numerous English colonists, the moderate attitude of the Natal Government, made easier by the composure of the Natal Afrikaner, did serve to curb racial tension.¹¹⁷ Like the Natal Government, *De Natal Afrikaner* feared the possibility of racial conflict and its reports were full of praise for the responsible manner in which the authorities attempted to remain neutral. The publication called on all Natalians to follow suit.¹¹⁸ As a solution to Uitlander grievances against the Aliens Expulsion Act, the Press Law and the Immigration Laws, and in line with its declared vision of equal political rights for all Europeans, the newspaper advocated that their position be alleviated without providing concrete suggestions as to how this could be accomplished.¹¹⁹

The dividing issue nonetheless remained and individuals either supported the imperialist and Uitlander cause, or the Republican and Afrikaner cause. The reality of how English Natalians really felt about their imperial connections and the raiders soon became clear to the Natal Government, the governor of Natal, Natal Afrikaners and the editor of *De Natal Afrikaner*.

Dr Jameson and his raiders left Pretoria on 18 January 1896, after being pardoned by President Kruger. Throughout the Natal leg of their journey they were cheered on by crowds of onlookers and treated as men of honour rather than criminals. This happened despite measures taken by the Natal Government such as parking goods trains at the station platforms to obscure a view of the raiders and having the train which carried them arrive in Durban in the early hours of the morning. How strong the imperialist sentiments were amongst English Natalians was exhibited by the contrast in treatment received by the governor of Natal and Jameson in Newcastle, especially after the former's congratulatory utterances to Kruger on having thwarted the invasion. Governor Hely-Hutchinson passed through Newcastle from Pretoria at 10:30 and was booed, while Jameson who passed through at 13:00, was cheered. Although the crowd was labelled as out-of-town loafers, it seems that they were concerned citizens intent on repudiating the governor for his treatment of the raiders. Similar treatment awaited both parties at Pietermaritzburg Station, followed by a jingoistic meeting in Pietermaritzburg on 24 January 1896 which set the tone for intensified future racial division.¹²⁰

116. FR Carroll, *The growth and co-ordination of pro-war sentiments in Natal before the Second Anglo-Boer War*, MA-thesis, UND, 1993, p.29.

117. R Owendale, *Natal and the Jameson Raid...*, p.9.

118. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 7.1.1896.

119. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 14.1.1896.

120. R Owendale, *Natal and the Jameson Raid...*, pp.12-14.

De Natal Afrikaner viewed these incidents as “schandelijk en onvergefelijk” and praised the governor for performing his duties.¹²¹ Similar political activities, however, continued, and forced *De Natal Afrikaner* to show indignation at the spirit of “jingoism”.¹²² The persistent pro-Jameson and anti-Transvaal politics forced a section of the Afrikaner community to retaliate by organising a meeting of their own at Greytown on 9 February 1896. Under the auspices of the Umvoti Farmers’ Association, about 100 Afrikaners and six English farmers congregated. One of the speakers encapsulated the mood when he referred to the Jameson Raid as “low, abominable, barbarous and unprecedented” and accused the raiders of being driven by a desire for “plunder and murder”. The mood gradually became more tempered and in the end a resolution was passed, congratulating the Transvaal on repelling the raid, and commending Kruger for his treatment of the prisoners in his wish to strengthen the cause of peace. The hope was also expressed that the grievances of the Uitlanders would be dealt with speedily. In a second resolution, sympathy was extended to the Natal Government at the treatment it had to endure. The meeting was closed with applause for Kruger and Hely-Hutchinson.¹²³ Similar gatherings were held soon afterwards by Afrikaners in Weenen and Klip River where parallel expressions of condolence and support were uttered, with special commendation reserved for the anti-government press and the demonstrations in Pietermaritzburg. When Hely-Hutchinson expressed his appreciation for the confidence shown in him, and the declarations of support from Natal Afrikaners, he, in an attempt to remain as impartial as possible, used general terms and avoided alluding to the raid or congratulating Kruger.¹²⁴ Reactions, especially to the Afrikaner meeting in Greytown, were soon forthcoming. The *Natal Witness* condemned the Umvoti Farmers’ Association, an organization which allegedly had no political ties, and whose members were both Afrikaner and English, for holding such a meeting. The newspaper claimed that 75% of the people present were not members of the association.¹²⁵ *De Natal Afrikaner*, for its part, expressed regret that the resolutions drafted were so strongly worded,¹²⁶ and maintained its appeal for a solution to Uitlander grievances.¹²⁷ With emotions still running high the Legislative Assembly, in an effort to terminate racial turmoil, condemned both the Greytown gathering and the meeting held in Pietermaritzburg the day after the station incident.¹²⁸ Such disapprobation was futile as the die had been cast and the Natal public, newspapers and politicians had become mere observers as the course of history unfolded.

121. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 28.1.1896.

122. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 1.2.1896.

123. R Owendale, *Natal and the Jameson Raid...*, p.17.

124. FR Carroll, pp.48-49.

125. *Natal Witness*, 10.2.1896.

126. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 15.2.1896.

127. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 16.6.1896.

128. R Owendale, *Natal and the Jameson Raid...*, p.17

In English communities the anger remained. Despite the government's insistence that only a small boisterous minority supported Jameson, and that "level-headed Englishmen" did not, the veracity of this claim seems dubious. In Durban, where commercial interests reigned supreme, emotions soon calmed but in Pietermaritzburg and in certain country districts, fuelled by the *Natal Witness*, the *Times of Natal*, and *The Natal Advertiser*, approval of Jameson remained vocal. Support in the newspapers took the form of constant attacks and negative references to President Kruger and the Transvaal.¹²⁹ Politicians who were aware of the commercial dependence of Natal on the Transvaal, and who preached neutrality, did not escape either, and were accused by *The Natal Advertiser* of being out of touch with the views of the colonists.¹³⁰ *De Natal Afrikaner* predictably backed the government in its endeavour to maintain healthy relations with the Transvaal.¹³¹ The feelings of Natal Afrikaners regarding the constant attacks on, and negative references to Kruger and the Transvaal, is best illustrated in a letter from a "Dutch Girl" to the *Natal Witness*, in which she criticises the editor for "sowing ill-feeling and hatred."¹³² Support for her point of view came from the MLA for Umvoti, TJ (Theuns) Nel, who regarded the behaviour of Natal Afrikaners as a reaction to the anti-Transvaal meetings being held all over Natal.¹³³

At this stage attempts by the Natal Government to counter racial polarisation had obviously failed. According to FR Carroll, the response of Natal Afrikaners to the political events that followed the Jameson Raid, suggested that the divisions had widened, not only between Afrikaners and English, but also between certain Natal politicians, who relied heavily on the support of Natal Afrikaners for re-election, and their electorate. Proof of this was that politicians, of the likes of Robinson and FR (Frederick) Moor who had attended the commemoration service at Blaauwkrantz on 16 December 1895, did not view the Pietermaritzburg meeting of 24 January 1896, held the day after the station incident, as extravagant.¹³⁴

Although it is difficult to determine how many English Natalians favoured a more forceful British presence in South Africa at this stage, there was a small but determined nucleus, namely the Natal Province of the South African League, who was committed to sustaining pro-imperialist enthusiasm. The league grew and under the leadership of AH (Albert) Hime, H (Henry) Bale, and FS (Frank) Tatham, soon had branches all over Natal. These three sought support for their ideals from the English section of the white population in Natal. Notwithstanding their aggressive pro-imperialist propaganda, they were initially unable to secure large scale support in districts where people who had lived alongside Afrikaner families for more than a generation, out of mutual respect, were not

129. See the *Natal Witness*, *Times of Natal* and *The Natal Advertiser* for the period under review.

130. R Owendale, *Natal and the Jameson Raid...*, p.19.

131. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 11.4.1896.

132. R Owendale, *Natal and the Jameson Raid...*, p.17.

133. FR Carroll, p.53.

134. FR Carroll, p.49.

keen to have divisions created on racial grounds.¹³⁵ Furthermore, since Natal was unable to move out of the economic orbit of the Transvaal, Imperialism was thrust backstage in favour of local commercial interests, proving that patriotic sentiments were a luxury compared to bread and butter issues. By mid-1897, the economic boom in Natal as a result of sea-borne goods to and from the Transvaal, was on the decline, and the growth created by the opening of the railroad tapering off.¹³⁶ The latent patriotic and imperialistic feelings exposed by the Jameson Raid now became ignited.

The decline in general economic prospects in Natal was followed by political changes. In February 1897, Harry Escombe replaced John Robinson who, as prime minister, had advocated close relations with the Transvaal. Escombe had different political views and favoured closer ties with the Cape Colony. At the same time, there was growing dissatisfaction in Natal because of Transvaal policies aimed at the Uitlanders, many of whom were British subjects. It was against this backdrop that the elections of September 1897 took place.¹³⁷ Although Governor Hely-Hutchinson maintained that the elections were not contested on political grounds but that they focussed rather on the personalities of the candidates, the results did in fact reflect the dissatisfaction felt by many English Natalians towards previously empowered political figures and the political issues at stake, and the outcome indicated a shift to a more hardline Imperialism. The three leading figures of the South African League, Tatham, Hime and Bale, were voted in, defeating the Escombe Ministry in the process. The new prime minister was the pro-Transvaal Henry Binns, while AH Hime became minister of lands and works, and FAR Johnstone, the pro-Afrikaner MLA from Newcastle, the minister of agriculture. With a new government consisting of men with such divergent views on the Transvaal, Governor Hely-Hutchinson could not help but be anxious about future relationships with the Transvaal.¹³⁸

At about the same time that economic and political adjustments were taking place in Natal, another major political change took place in South Africa: Sir Alfred Milner became the South African High Commissioner and the Governor of the Cape Colony.¹³⁹ From the outset, Milner made it clear that he wanted to maintain the existing imperial ties as strongly as possible, while at the same time forging new ones. His vision included dealing with Natal, which he perceived as fostering disloyalty. One of the first to experience his wrath was Prime Minister Binns, who had used unofficial channels to inform Kruger of his good intentions towards the Transvaal and to congratulate him on his re-election as president in 1898. This convinced Milner, with Hely-Hutchinson in tow, that there “has got to be a separation of the sheep from the goats in this

135. FR Carroll, pp.48-49.

136. R Owendale, The politics of dependence, 1893-9, in A Duminy and B Guest (eds), *Natal and Zululand. From earliest times to 1910. A new history*, pp.328-329.

137. R Owendale, Profit or patriotism: Natal, the Transvaal and the coming of the Second Anglo-Boer War, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 8, 1980, pp.213-215.

138. FR Carroll, p.108.

139. DW Krüger *et al*, *Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika*, p.389.

subcontinent, by which I don't mean the English and the Dutch, but those who approve and those who disapprove of the present dishonest despotism at Pretoria, and those who either admire or truckle to it."¹⁴⁰

With Milner at the helm of British affairs in South Africa he ensured that the political inclinations of Natal were slowly but surely directed away from the Transvaal. A major move in engineering this was to get Natal to join the OFS-Cape Colony customs union in May 1898. Despite criticism by Natalians, who feared that they would have to pay more for their food, the Natal Parliament ignored the protests and forged ahead and, in the beginning of 1899, the union took place. The Natal Government must have felt vindicated since profits from rail line dependence on the Transvaal were declining, which suggested diminished economic reliance on Kruger's Republic. Apart from intermittent hindrances, such as the affair surrounding the Swazi King Bunu, a marked cooling was noticeable by 1898 in the attitude of Natal to the Transvaal. To some extent this was due to an improvement in the Natal economy, because of the customs union which had allowed Natal to move out of the economic sphere of the Transvaal.¹⁴¹

More important, the waning relationship with the Transvaal occurred as a result of the dominant influence of jingoists in the Natal Cabinet and the pressure exercised by Governor Hely-Hutchinson, who, in July 1898, after the Bunu affair, warned the Natal Government not to do anything "which might in any way tend to embarrass the High Commissioner in his delicate and responsible task of negotiating with the Republics in matters of imperial and general concern." Reacting to this reprimand, acting Prime Minister Bale gave the assurance that Natal would not provide any further cause for complaint. This declaration followed the vociferous public support for the rights of Uitlanders emanating from Natal, in the wake of an incident involving the shooting of an Englishman named Edgar by a ZAR policeman, which resulted in outrage and calls for intervention. As the tension between Britain and the Transvaal mounted, Natal kept a low public profile in accordance with the promise made by Bale. It was by now becoming clear to Natal, as to the rest of South Africa, that the British Government, under the auspices of Milner who published documents such as the "Helot despatch", was determined to force political reform on the Transvaal, with the objective of creating a united South Africa. To ensure that Natal remained under imperialist control, unlike the Afrikaner Bond Ministry in the Cape Colony, Milner instructed Hely-Hutchinson on 8 May 1899, to "stiffen the wobblers" in the Colony.¹⁴² When the Kruger-Milner Conference held in Bloemfontein in June 1899 failed to provide a peaceful solution to the problem of political rights for the Uitlanders, it seemed that most of the English sentiment in Natal had turned. In their editorials, the *Natal Witness*, the *Times of Natal*, and the *Natal Mercury* exhibited extreme jingoistic views in

140. As quoted by R Ovendale, *The politics of dependence...*, p.331.

141. R Ovendale, *The politics of dependence...*, pp.331-332; R Ovendale, *profit or patriotism...*, pp.216-217.

142. R Ovendale, *The politics of dependence...*, pp.332-334.

their support of Milner and his policy.¹⁴³ As such, they in all probability reflected the opinions of English Natal as voiced during the numerous public meetings on the political problems in the Transvaal. In contrast the bi-weekly *De Natal Afrikaner* remained a lone voice campaigning for a peaceful solution.¹⁴⁴

As the twelfth hour approached, the pro-Transvaal Prime Minister of Natal, Sir Henry Binns, passed away on 6 June 1899. He was succeeded by Albert Hime, founder member of the South African League and well-known for his unwavering imperial sentiments.¹⁴⁵ In the light of the Transvaal question that dominated everything else, Hely-Hutchinson seemed pleased with the new government and visualised that it would provide Milner with all the support he needed.¹⁴⁶ This did not prove to be the case and Hime was forced to include two conciliation minded members in his ministry: FR Moor and CJ Smythe, while the minister of agriculture, HD Winter of Weenen, was labelled a pro-Afrikaner by the governor and therefore distrusted. The two key ministers who would co-operate with Milner were Bale and Hime.¹⁴⁷ At this stage, the balance of power seemed to have slipped away from the pro-Milner lobby and, on 8 June 1899, the cabinet was persuaded “to subscribe to a minute implicitly criticising Milner’s policy and demanding that South Africa ought not to be exposed to war by any act of Her Majesty’s Government” without consulting the governor.¹⁴⁸ At this juncture, Governor Hely-Hutchinson, acting as buffer between Milner and the cabinet, stepped in and refuted the view that the people of Natal would veto war, stating that they merely wanted to have a say.¹⁴⁹ Milner was asked to communicate this message to the Cape Government. This he did, but in the process avoided Natal’s request to be consulted, and gave no positive assurances that their opinions would be taken into account in future. This seemed to mark the end of the Natal Government’s resistance to war with the Transvaal and its demand to be consulted on matters influencing the Colony. Milner’s appeal for equal rights for all in the Transvaal received wide spread support from public meetings held not only in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, but also in towns like Ladysmith, Nottingham Road and Estcourt. Backed by the press and the public, and armed with a petition in favour of “radically” reforming the Transvaal signed by 7 542 European Natal men, Hely-Hutchinson could report to Colonial Secretary Sir Joseph Chamberlain, that if the Imperial Government did not yield, the resolve of Natal to find a solution for the Transvaal problem by whatever means and regardless of the consequences, would remain.¹⁵⁰

143. *Natal Witness*, 12.6.1899; *Times of Natal*, 9.6.1899; *Natal Mercury*, 6.6.1899, 8.6.1899 and 10.6.1899.

144. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 9.6.1899.

145. R Owendale, *The politics of dependence...*, p.333.

146. EH Brookes and C de B Webb, p.199.

147. FR Carroll, p.156.

148. JS Marais, *The fall of Kruger’s Republic*, pp.293-294.

149. R Owendale, *Profit or patriotism...*, p.221.

150. R Owendale, *The politics of dependence...*, p.334; R Owendale, *Profit or patriotism...*, p.222; FR Carroll, pp.173-174. Governor Hely-Hutchinson was also angered by this petition as most Natal Afrikaner men had signed it.

His warning proved well-founded. On 22 July 1899, the motion of Joseph Baynes (MLA), the representative for Ixopo, “supporting the British Government in its endeavour to secure equal rights and privileges for all Europeans in South Africa” was carried unanimously. The motion of equal rights for all Europeans in South Africa and a vote of approval for actions by the Imperial Government to achieve this, was supported by Theuns and Tol Nel in the Legislative Assembly, be it with some reservations. The sole response from Theuns Nel who, during 1895 still viewed President Paul Kruger as a possible leader for a united South Africa,¹⁵¹ was that he thought the time rather inappropriate, as negotiations with the Transvaal were still ongoing. His nephew, Tol Nel, used the opportunity to highlight the political plight of Natal Afrikaners and suggested that the call for equal rights and privileges for Europeans should include those British subjects in Natal who had no voice in Parliament. On 27 July 1899, a similar resolution, seconded by the Afrikaner member of the Legislative Council (hereafter MLC) for Zululand, DC “Vaal Dirk” Uys, was passed unanimously in the council.¹⁵² The English press was jubilant about the result of the debate,¹⁵³ while Natal Afrikaners felt betrayed by their politicians.¹⁵⁴

With Natal now firmly part of the fray, Milner's hand was strengthened in dealing with any franchise proposals offered by Kruger. To Hely-Hutchinson, it was a case of loyal and patriotic feelings that had finally overcome commercial considerations. The views of jingoistic politicians had triumphed over those of the old school, and the issue now at stake was that of British supremacy in the region, and no longer merely the question of the political rights of Uitlanders. The only fear Natalians had, was that the Imperial Government would not fully institute their regime, leaving Natal open to commercial revenge from the Transvaal. Milner again produced skilful arguments to convince the Imperial Government not to waver. As part of the trade-off for political support the military enforcement, which Milner and Hely-Hutchinson had colluded over since early 1899, was called for and troops were deployed in Natal.¹⁵⁵

By mid-September 1899, Hely-Hutchinson again incited the British Government to follow through on its threat of war, arguing that Natal's allegiance had shifted in favour of Imperial policy. If war did not break out, Natal would be commercially ruined through commercial revenge by the Transvaal. Hely-Hutchinson also felt that the attitudes of Natal Afrikaners and Africans left no other option than war, for Africans would not understand a “diplomatic victory”, while the sentiments of Natal Afrikaners were with their Republican kin. Any hesitation by the British Government would

151. FR Carroll, pp.5-6.

152. PRO, CO 179/295: Letter Governor W Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary J Chamberlain, 11.8.1899; *Debates of the Natal Legislative Assembly*, pp.532-534.

153. *Natal Mercury*, 21.7.1899; *Natal Witness*, 21.7.1899.

154. NAR, A 116, 4: Die Boere in Natal tydens die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog, memoirs van JC Vermaak, no date.

155. R Ovendale, *The politics of dependence...*, pp.335-336; R Ovendale, *Profit or patriotism...*, pp.225-227; AH Duminy, *Sir Alfred Milner and the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War*, pp.42-45; FR Carroll, p.168.

therefore cause serious internal dissension amongst the two groups.¹⁵⁶ There was no need for the governor of Natal to be concerned, because the British Government did not abandon its position, and war between the Transvaal and its ally the Orange Free State on the one side and the British Empire on the other, broke out on 11 October 1899 after the Transvaal ultimatum to Britain had expired.¹⁵⁷

1.5 Concluding comments

Subsequent to the Jameson Raid, and until the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War, Natal Afrikaners had merely observed the slow drift towards war. With no politicians speaking out on their behalf, and with *De Natal Afrikaner* remaining loyal to the changing Natal Governments, the only representative to express the real feelings of Natal Afrikaners remained the Dutch Farmers' Association. As the sole political voice, its focus in the years after the Jameson Raid remained fixed on bread and butter issues such as African labour, the control of Africans via passes, cures for stock diseases, and the position of Dutch in schools and in public life.¹⁵⁸ The extent to which even the Dutch Farmers' Association, as a quasi-political movement, was out of touch with the changing political climate in Natal, is illustrated by the loyalty expressed to Queen Victoria and her government on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of her reign in 1897.¹⁵⁹

With the macro-political influences in Natal having swayed almost irreversibly towards war, Natal Afrikaners finally reacted accordingly. At a meeting of the Congress of Dutch Farmers' Association on 27 July 1899 at Ladysmith, a resolution drafted with the aid of the Dundee magistrate, P Hugo, was adopted, namely that war could be averted and the franchise question in the Transvaal be settled, by accepting the latest proposals laid before the Executive of the Transvaal Volksraad. On reception of the petition, Governor Hely-Hutchinson forwarded it to High Commissioner Milner.¹⁶⁰ A similar naive solution came from the Natal DRC in the form of an appeal to Governor Hely-Hutchinson. After drawing attention to the rising tensions created by the events of the past years, and alluding to the war talk of the press and certain politicians, the governor was asked to intervene personally to prevent war, as hostilities would create division between races that would take a long time to heal. As requested, he again forwarded the petition to Milner,¹⁶¹ but these late and idealistic appeals predictably had no impact.

According to Governor Hely-Hutchinson, relations between Afrikaner and Britain started deteriorating after the Anglo-Transvaal War. Thereafter Natal Afrikaners looked at Pretoria as their

156. R Owendale, Profit or patriotism..., pp.225-229.

157. The events outside of Natal which lead to the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War were regarded as beyond the scope of this thesis. For comprehensive discussions of these events and suggested reasons for the war see: T Pakenham, *The Boer War*, and IR Smith, *The origins of the South African War*.

158. PAR, CSO 1563: Resolutions adopted by Congress of Dutch Farmers' Association, 6-7.5.1898.

159. PAR, CSO 1527: Letter PUS C Bird to Congress of Dutch Farmers' Association, 16.7.1897.

160. PAR, CSO 1588: Letter secretary Dutch Farmers' Association FDJ Havemann to PUS C Bird, 29.7.1899.

161. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Letter moderator DRC Natal, Ds GS Malan to Governor W Hely-Hutchinson, 30.8.1899. pp.3-6.

national centre, while racial tensions spilled over from the Transvaal into Natal. The Jameson Raid soured matters even further, so much so that a dominee was heard addressing an audience of Natal Afrikaners on the significance of race. This, the governor viewed as a thankless position as he declared that where the British reigned Afrikaners received rifles, their children were taught in Dutch, and laws, regulations and important agricultural documents were translated into Dutch and distributed. Even the trekboers were treated well. Furthermore, Hely-Hutchinson maintained that when visiting the Dutch Districts he made an effort to show special attention to Afrikaners in an attempt to combat the Transvaal influence. Unfortunately, as far as he was concerned, all these endeavours aimed at Natal Afrikaners were doomed as long as the Transvaal question existed.¹⁶²

Hely-Hutchinson's concern regarding Natal Afrikaners who saw the Transvaal as their real political home, was not exaggerated. Family ties, a common history, geographical proximity and a shared political vision meant that Natal Afrikaners viewed the Republics, and especially the more powerful Transvaal, as a spiritual home, and President Paul Kruger as their leader, so much so that Theuns Nel kept Kruger posted on the political developments in Natal.¹⁶³ Even mundane matters were directed to Kruger, as illustrated in a very submissive letter from AC Vermaak of Paddock near Dundee, in which he asked Kruger information about the healing mineral waters of the Waterberg, as he wished to take his ill son to the baths.¹⁶⁴ Furthermore, shortly before the outbreak of the war a spy wrote to Kruger from Natal to report that 3 530 troops were congregated in Pietermaritzburg, 500 in Pinetown, 1 500 in Ladysmith and that 70 Natal Afrikaners had resigned from the volunteer regiments.¹⁶⁵

Throughout the years that followed the Jameson Raid, Natal Afrikaners remained shadowy figures on the fringes of the macro-political process, never fully integrated into the broader white Natal society. Their political energy of the years before the Jameson Raid was largely expended, and very few signs of the vigour with which for example language rights were pursued, were prevalent during these turbulent years. They had experienced the consequences of British Imperialism before, in 1843, when the Republic of Natalia had been destroyed and again in 1877 when the Transvaal was annexed. The next period to consider in outlining the history of the Natal Afrikaners is that immediately preceding the Anglo-Boer War.

162. PRO, CO 179/206: Letter Governor W Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary J Chamberlain, 15.9.1899.

163. FR Caroll, p.156.

164. NAR, A 371, 11, SP Engelbrecht collection, section President SJP Kruger incoming letters, April-December 1899: Letter AC Vermaak to President SJP Kruger, 23.4.1899.

165. NAR, A 371, 11, SP Engelbrecht collection, section President SJP Kruger incoming letters, April-December 1899: Letter Unknown to President SJP Kruger, 29.6.1899.