

CHAPTER 8

MARTIAL LAW, THE LINGERING WAR, AND ITS SOCIO-POLITICAL IMPACT ON NATAL AFRIKANERS

Martial Law was declared in all of Natal on 23 October 1899¹ to act as “the public law of self-defence (and) the right to use military means to preserve the peace against public enemies within.”² The military commander of each area was responsible for the administration thereof. Martial Law gave the military authorities the power to use extreme measures to maintain safety and security. To achieve this movements were restricted, passes were issued,³ people were arrested and removed from their farms, and property was commandeered.⁴ Like most instances of Martial Law, the populace found the conditions deplorable and oppressive, and as the war dragged on beyond June 1900, the relentless pressure on Natal Afrikaners made it difficult for them to manoeuvre under the jingoistic wartime conditions.

In Natal Martial Law was initially upheld by the Indemnity Bill published on 5 June 1900 to protect “the Governor of the Colony, and the Officer Commanding her Majesty’s Forces in Natal, and all persons acting under their authority and in good faith in regard to acts during the existence of Martial Law.”⁵ This bill was subsequently updated by other Indemnity Bills as circumstances changed.⁶ The community of Natal Afrikaners received the bill with mixed emotions. On the one hand people such as Ds HF Schoon argued that it would sanction all kinds of abuses by the authorities,⁷ while the Afrikaner politician, CJ Labuschagne, who himself was innocently imprisoned under Martial Law, voted in favour of the Indemnity Bill.⁸

In the light of the above the emphasis in this chapter will be twofold. It will firstly concentrate on the experiences by Natal Afrikaners under martial law against the backdrop of the continuing war, and secondly, examine the experiences in the socio-political sphere of life after the Boer forces were driven from Natal.

8.1 The lingering war and Martial Law

The war in Natal did not end when the Boers were driven from the Colony in June 1900. Small scale

1. PAR, GH 1454: Proclamation No. 108 extending Martial Law to all of Natal, Proviso B and Zululand, 23.10.1899; *De Natal Afrikaner*, 23.10.1899; *Natal Witness*, 24.10.1899.

2. FN Wiener, *Civilians under military justice. The practice since 1869 especially in North America*, p.219.

3. PAR, 1/UMS 38: Pass issued to L Combrinck by Magistrate T Maxwell, 18.9.1900; Foy Vermaak private collection: Letter JC Vermaak to CT Vermaak alias Miss C Herzog, 17.6.1901.

4. Cd. 981: Papers relating to the administration of Martial Law in South Africa, 1902, *passim*.

5. PRO, CO 179/211: Indemnity Bill as published on 5.6.1900.

6. PAR, PM 34: Indemnity Bills, - Act 41 of 1901 and Act 22 of 1902; PRO, CO 179/222: Indemnity Bills - Act 41 of 1901 and Act 22 of 1902.

7. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 31.5.1900, p.339.

8. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 13.6.1900, p.362.

guerrilla style incursions continued up to the end of the war and were mostly conducted from the cover provided by the Drakensberg and the Vryheid district of the Transvaal.⁹ On 13 August 1900, and again on 21 August 1900, the railway line to the south of Newcastle was destroyed preventing the transfer of rebel prisoners to Pietermaritzburg. During this time an Indian shop in close proximity to Newcastle was also looted.¹⁰ One of the most successful of these raids took place, in October 1900, under the Russian, Captain Pokrovsky, who led a group of 50 Natal rebels and members of the Swaziland Police. The posse crossed into Natal via Vant's Drift and after cutting the telegraph line between Dundee and Helpmekaar, and taking some horses from Africans and Afrikaners in the area,¹¹ they proceeded to Wasbank Station. On 26 October 1900 the station was attacked and burnt down, the railway line damaged, and 11 horses belonging to the remount department, taken.¹²

A month later two small commandos invaded Natal from the OFS. On 29 November 1900 one of these commandos, consisting of 50 men, visited Fred Brandon's farm Jackal's Spruit at the top of Collings Pass. Mrs AW Brandon was alone on the farm at the time because Fred was in prison awaiting trial for high treason. The Boers looted the house and shop and in the process allegedly assaulted Mrs Brandon who did not want to allow them into the house.¹³ After threatening that they would come back to burn the farm down, the men returned to the Free State.¹⁴

At approximately the same time a small commando crossed down to the farm Spitzkop in the Newcastle district. Here they collected sheep and all the riding horses from the various African homesteads and took all the saddles, blankets, and clothing they could find.¹⁵ Further south, at Venterspruit in the foothills of the Drakensberg, a raiding party burnt down the stable of a surrendered rebel, Potgieter.¹⁶ Since such raids by small parties of Boers into the Newcastle district became more and more commonplace Lt-Gen HJT Hildyard, the GOC for Natal, organized farmers into self-defence groups, such as the Normandien Volunteer Corps, in the areas which bordered the OFS.¹⁷ The creation of such self-defence units proved to be unsuccessful as raids into the

9. For a summary of the principles of campaigning against guerrillas aided and abetted by a sympathetic population, see H Strachan, *European Armies and the conduct of war*.

10. OE Prozesky private collection, Diary of JJA Prozesky: Diary entries, 13.8.1900, p.252; 21.8.1900, p.257; 23.8.1900, pp.260-261.

11. PAR, AGO I/8/79: Application by JJ Kemp to return to his farm, 12.4.1901-24.4.1901.

12. PRO, CO 179/214: Letter Governor W Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary J Chamberlain, 27.10.1900; A Davidson, and I Filatova, *The Russians and the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902*, pp.41-42.

13. *Natal Witness*, 4.12.1900; PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 30.11.1900, pp.524-525. The husband of Mrs Brandon, FJT Brandon, was jailed for one year and fined £100 for treason.

14. PRO, CO 179/215: Letter Inspector WV Dorehill to chief commissioner of police, 30.11.1900.

15. PRO, CO 179/215: Deposition by Umkonkonyeka before Magistrate AD Gilson, 30.11.1900; PAR, CSO 2900: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by DJ Pringle, 13.10.1902.

16. PRO, CO 179/219: Report on Boer raids from the OFS, 1902.

17. PAR, GH 533: Letter Lt-Gen HJT Hildyard to Governor W Hely-Hutchinson, 27.11.1900.

Newcastle¹⁸ and Upper Tugela¹⁹ districts by commandos, using the Drakensberg as a base, persisted and farmers and stores continued to suffer serious losses.

Similar raids also continued from the Vryheid district into both Proviso B²⁰ and the Dundee area. In one such raid, on 18 November 1901, Matheson's shop at Vant's Drift on the Buffalo River was looted by a small commando.²¹ These low-key operations across the Buffalo River continued well into 1902 and on two occasions cattle and horses were looted from James Gregory at Gregory's Nek. At the same time nine Boers, two of whom were rebels, confronted Donald Mackenzie at Van Tonder's Pass between Helpmekaar and Wasbank. They took most of his clothes, his horses, and some "mountain dew." A few days later the shop of Cumming at Rorke's Drift was looted.²² The commandos around Dundee²³ were so active that the local press described them as "marauding gangs of Boers" or "highwaymen" and in April 1902 it was still regarded unsafe to travel on the road between Dundee and Helpmekaar.²⁴

Often these small commandos were forced to seek refuge in Natal to escape the giant mobile columns active in the Transvaal and OFS.²⁵ The continued guerrilla activities by Boers along the borders of Northern Natal soon caused rumours to spread and Prime Minister Hime was informed by Mr Mardall, the brother of a Natal Policeman, that he had overheard a conversation in the Imperial Hotel to the effect that some Boers were apparently near Greytown.²⁶ In the Umsinga district HF Fynn claimed that he saw a commando in the Isibindi valley,²⁷ one Pringle reported that he saw 12 Boers near Bushman's Pass,²⁸ while rumours also did the rounds that some Boers were hiding in the little berg near the source of the Umlambonja River.²⁹

In an attempt to deal with these raids the military, under Martial Law, removed civilians from their homes in the areas threatened by the Boers on an ongoing basis. The magistrates of Estcourt and Weenen received instructions from General Buller, soon after the relief of Ladysmith, to place 21 Afrikaner and 30 British families living in the Klip River and Upper Tugela districts on the farms of

18. PAR, GH 534: Letter Lt-Gen HJT Hildyard to Governor W Hely-Hutchinson, 16.7.1901.

19. PAR, GH 534: Report by Lt-Gen HJT Hildyard on Boer raid into the Upper Tugela district, 10.7.1901; PAR, MJPW 86: Telegram Prime Minister AH Hime to Governor HE McCallum, 13.7.1901.

20. PAR, CSO 2897: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by FA Ortlepp, 12.8.1902.

21. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 11.2.1902.

22. *Dundee Commercial Advertiser*, 12.3.1902 and 26.3.1902.

23. PAR, CSO 2894: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by CM Meyer, 13.1.1903.

24. *Dundee and District Advertiser*, February-March 1902.

25. PAR, CSO 1944: Annual report magistrate Dundee, 1901.

26. PAR, MJPW 117: Letter criminal investigation officer to Prime Minister AH Hime, 25.1.1901.

27. PAR, 1/UMS 29: Letter Dr J Dalzell to Magistrate T Maxwell, 4.9.1901.

28. PAR, CSO 1944: Annual report magistrate Estcourt, 1901.

29. PAR, SNA I/1/294: Letter Inspector Mardell to chief commissioner of police, 26.9.1901.

those Afrikaners who had left the area and who were suspected of having joined the enemy. These families lived in tents supplied by the military, or in farm houses when available, and remained there until they were allowed to return to their farms.³⁰ Within the months that followed the military cleared large sections of Upper Tugela and Klip River county of white residents, ordering them south of the Tugela.³¹ In this process, many Afrikaners,³² including Widow Byloo whose husband had been arrested on suspicions of treason, and who had died in hospital in Ladysmith, had suffered substantial material losses since the hasty removal did not leave enough time to collect personal belongings such as furniture. Promises by the provost marshal that the property they had left behind would be protected came to naught as private accounts indicated that severe looting did take place.³³

These relocations happened many times because of general military proclamations. In line with the proclamation issued by Lord Roberts on 19 June 1900, which stated that Afrikaner civilians who resided within the vicinity of sabotaged railway lines were to be removed, and their property destroyed,³⁴ Mrs Thomas Boshoff of the farm Yarl near Newcastle was, along with her children, on 3 September 1900 ordered to proceed to Pietermaritzburg. The explanation for the removal was that the house of the Boshoff's was roughly four kilometres from the railway line which was frequently sabotaged by parties of Boers.³⁵

In his report to Lt-Gen HJT Hildyard, Lt-Col GH Sim stated that the military had completely cleared the Upper Tugela area in September 1900. Its inhabitants, including Afrikaners against whom no evidence existed like AM (Andries) Maree, Salomon de Jager and the wives of Adriaan Marais and Lukas Meyer, were ordered to the Estcourt district.³⁶ In late 1900 and early 1901, they were followed by another large group of Afrikaners including time-expired rebels, those acquitted of treason, and those whom the military were suspicious of.³⁷ The removal of these Afrikaners from Ladysmith to Estcourt did not necessarily follow a logical process. Koos de Jager for example was not banned to Estcourt with his family but had to reside in a boarding house in Ladysmith.³⁸ On another occasion the hands of the military were tied when 30 suspected rebels who had been released on bail, including the Colling brothers and SJ van Vuuren were allowed by the resident magistrate, on the

30. PAR, PM 20: Letter Magistrate RH Addison to Prime Minister AH Hime, 16.12.1900.

31. PAR, GH 1452: Minute paper on deputation of farmers of Upper Tugela to Governor HE McCallum, 3.1.1902.

32. PAR, CSO 2899: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by J Potgieter, 6.9.1900.

33. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 4.5.1900, pp.310-311.

34. SB Spies, *Methods of Barbarism? Roberts and Kitchener and civilians in the Boer Republics: January 1900-May 1902*, pp.112-113.

35. OE Prozesky private collection, Diary of JJA Prozesky: Diary entry, 6.9.1900, pp.282-284.177. Five male relatives of Mrs Boshoff were imprisoned as rebels.

36. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 11.10.1900, pp.483-484.

37. PAR, AGO I/8/76: Minute paper regarding men removed from Ladysmith to Estcourt, 29.12.1900-24.1.1901.

38. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 7.1.1901, p.557.

orders of the attorney-general, to return to the cleared area.³⁹

These removals did not end the raiding and upset the Natal Government to such an extent that they requested the military authorities “to make such arrangements as will prevent the recurrence of similar raids in any part of the Colony.”⁴⁰ Lt-Gen Hildyard, by his own admission, did not know what to say to Prime Minister Hime. He felt the military had done their best with the available resources since they had, as outlined above, cleared large sections of land of its inhabitants. The Natal volunteer regiments could also not be called out since the best men from these units had already been swallowed up by units such as the VCR. This left original volunteer units disorganized. Calling out the volunteer units was also not an option as it would lead to inconvenience and economic hardship which would be detrimental to the Colony.⁴¹

The inability of the military in Natal to deal with the Boer raids prompted Governor HE McCallum to enquire about the extent of the military outposts that existed, and in which areas farmers would be allowed to return to their farms. In his response Lt-Gen Hildyard not only outlined the areas cleared by the military, namely the Upper Tugela district and large sections of Klip River county, but also described the problems faced by the military. These included a lack of manpower to safeguard the farms outside the cleared areas on which farmers resided either with the permission of Sir Redvers Buller, or that of the civilian authorities.⁴² According to Hildyard the civil authorities failed to grasp the military situation which threatened the border area. Thus, while the military tried to keep the area clear, the leniency of the civil authorities in granting bail to suspected rebels, left the military no choice but to confirm passes for those already in the area. No new passes were however issued.

Prime Minister Hime denied that the Natal Government had ever directly or indirectly authorised the return of suspected rebels to the Upper Tugela area. This denial settled the matter for Hildyard. He could now remove all white residents who could be looted by invading Boers. Henceforth Hildyard adopted the hard-nosed attitude that the hardship suffered by a few residents in the area was outweighed by the safety of the Colony.⁴³ The military also sent a clear signal to the civil authorities - they would under Martial Law decide who goes where - regardless of the concerns of the said authorities.⁴⁴ Hildyard's hand was considerably strengthened by Lord Kitchener's proclamation of 7 August 1901 which threatened disloyal families and those who continued with the war with

39. PAR, 1/LDS 3/3/15: Correspondence between Magistrate TR Bennett and DAAG Ladysmith, 22.12.1900-3.1.1901.

40. PAR, GH 534: Telegram Prime Minister AH Hime to administrator, 12.4.1901.

41. PAR, GH 534: Letter Lt-Gen HJT Hildyard to Prime Minister AH Hime, 15.4.1901.

42. PAR, GH 1449: Correspondence Governor HE McCallum to Lt-Gen HJT Hildyard, 8.7.1901-16.7.1901.

43. PAR, GH 534: Correspondence regarding the removal of white inhabitants from Northwest Natal, 22.7.1901-9.8.1901.

44. PAR, CSO 1732: Correspondence regarding the transfer of the Britz and Landman families from Newcastle to the Pietermaritzburg Concentration Camp, 23.6.1901-15.7.1901.

banishment.⁴⁵

The Boer forays into Natal that brought about the most severe reaction from Hildyard took place in early July 1901. Several commandos came down from their hideouts in the Drakensberg and looted stores at Acton Homes and in the Upper Tugela district taking horses, blankets, food, and clothes.⁴⁶ Hildyard immediately issued the following order: "Owing to the late raid of the Boers into Natal it has been decided that all farms in Natal between: Tugela River and Sunday River and, west by a line Venterspruit - Acton Homes Bridge - Besters Station - Ibele mountain must be cleared of all white persons, their horses, cattle, foodstuffs, blankets, and clothing."⁴⁷ This order instructed the Ladysmith magistrate to remove all the white families from the Upper Tugela district to either the area around the little Tugela River or the Ladysmith townlands. Others like GD Fourie⁴⁸ and his family were ordered into Estcourt, and CS du Plessis and Ben and SJ Nel to the area south of Estcourt.⁴⁹

These measures did not satisfy Governor HE McCallum. Instead, he was concerned that the commandos could invade as far south as Umvoti and disrupt the approaching royal visit by Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught. He therefore requested Lord Kitchener to use any available military force to prevent such an invasion by guarding the passes across the Drakensberg that linked Natal and the OFS. Kitchener was also asked to cancel the evacuation order issued to farmers in the Upper Tugela district.⁵⁰

In fact the continued guerrilla activities by the Boers in Natal had, at this stage, both the Natal Government and the governor worried because it made it impossible for loyal colonists to return to their farms or resume ordinary activities. The low-keyed war also had other negative effects on the Colony: Trade was paralysed, trains were monopolized by the military, the cost of living and labour remained high, while Africans were rumoured to becoming restless. As a result the Natal Government asked that sterner measures be adopted to bring the war to an end. The most severe suggestion made was that if the Boers and their rebel supporters did not surrender with immediate effect they would be informed that the women and children cared for in concentration camps would be deported. It was also felt that rebels had to be informed that if they do not surrender immediately

45. SB Spies, pp.269-278; Foy Vermaak private collection, Proclamation by Lord Kitchener as published in an extraordinary *Government Gazette*, 7.8.1901.

46. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 8.7.1901, p.656.

47. PAR, CSO 1681: Order No. 3578 of removal issued under Martial Law by Capt EO Walken. 15.7.1901; *De Natal Afrikaner*, 23.7.1901.

48. PAR, 1/LDS 3/3/15: Letter Magistrate TR Bennett to inspector Natal Police, 9.9.1901.

49. PAR, 1/LDS 3/1/1/16: Letter magistrate Klip River district to Inspector Dorehill, 8.6.1901.

50. PRO, CO 179/219: Telegram Governor HE McCallum to Lord Kitchener and Colonial Secretary J Chamberlain, 20.7.1901.

they would be dealt with severely.⁵¹

The affected residents were not happy either, but their concerns were regarding bread and butter issues. Like McCallum they requested the cancellation of the removal order which they regarded as “ill-advised, harsh and unnecessary” since it was the middle of winter and the lack of grazing would result in serious economic losses. The removal of cattle to the south of the Tugela River would also expose healthy cattle to cattle already infected with lung sickness. According to SW Willis, the spokesperson, the looting of items such as clothing and food was an insignificant loss compared to the losses residents would suffer if they were removed. Farming and other commercial activities would be halted, and possible damage would give rise to new claims for compensation. Those to be removed felt that the Drakensberg was the natural line of defence and that the passes could be guarded by blockhouses, while the local residents ought to be organised into a volunteer corps.⁵²

What troubled the residents as much as their removal was the fact that everybody, even the members of the Natal Carbineers and the rifle associations, had to hand in their rifles.⁵³ They, furthermore, felt they were perceived as disloyal. Telegrams from Prime Minister Hime and Governor McCallum failed to convince the military who would not change their decision and argued that “single rifles on solitary farms are of no possible use for protection and form a bait to raiders.” As far as the complaints by the residents were concerned, the GOC made it clear that the military were sensitive to the removal, but that the residents were exaggerating matters.⁵⁴

The complaining group, however, had no problem with the removal of “suspected and untrustworthy” inhabitants.⁵⁵ Almost without exception the “suspected and untrustworthy” people were Afrikaners. A point in case was the removal of PR Nel, a Weenen mill owner who was ordered by the military to move to Estcourt on 25 July 1901. This left him without any economic means. He consequently requested permission from the authorities to reside in Pietermaritzburg where he hoped to find employment as a carpenter.⁵⁶

Three months after their removal, the white residents of the Upper Tugela were still not back on their farms. They therefore drew up a petition requesting the governor to negotiate their return since they needed to plough and plant their fields, especially since this privilege was granted to Africans

51. PAR, GH 1040: Minute paper Prime Minister AH Hime to Governor HE McCallum, 16.7.1901.

52. PAR, CSO 1681: Letter SW Willis to Governor HE McCallum, 19.6.1901; Letter SW Willis to Captain EO Walken, 19.7.1901.

53. PAR, CSO 1681: Order No. 3579 regarding handing in of rifles under Martial Law issued by Capt EO Walken, 15.7.1901.

54. PAR, PM 89: Correspondence regarding the disarming of residents of Upper Tugela, 29.7.1901-31.7.1901.

55. PAR, CSO 1681: Letter SW Willis to Governor HE McCallum, 19.6.1901; Letter SW Willis to Captain EO Walken, 19.7.1901.

56. PAR, CSO 1687: Correspondence regarding the position of PR Nel, 25.9.1901-7.10.1901.

in the area. Governor McCallum reacted without delay and pressurised the military into allowing the farmers to return. The military yielded under this pressure but, on condition, that only men whose loyalty was beyond suspicion could return; that only foodstuffs for a fortnight could be stored on a farm; and that only horses for farm use could be kept.⁵⁷

Such leniency did not apply to most Natal Afrikaners from the war-ravaged northern part of the Colony. Apart from removing some Afrikaners because of the military threat which the Boers posed, other such removals, mostly to Pietermaritzburg, were made for a variety of justifications which included the all-encompassing labels of being “undesirables” and “suspects.” Being removed to Pietermaritzburg was especially traumatic. Not only was the capital of Natal a very English and hostile city, but those who were removed to it had to cover their own expenses. The Natal authorities were adamant that if the military sent Natalians to Pietermaritzburg they would have to “shift for themselves.”⁵⁸ This placed an extremely hard financial burden on most of them. A point in case are the experiences of P Cronjé, A Meyer, A Potgieter and A van Tonder of Dundee. These men were banned to Pietermaritzburg but could not afford the £5 rent they were expected to pay.⁵⁹ In many cases only the men in a family were ordered south creating great fragmentation within their homes. In one such case, TR Dannhauser of Kliprust Dundee, was ordered to the Weenen area where he resided with P Lotter while leaving his wife and family behind.⁶⁰

Some of the men who were not removed such as JJ (Mias) Nel were placed under house arrest. In June 1900 he was selling mealies from his wagon in the Ngobevu and Inandi locations in Zululand. This aroused the suspicions of various African scouts who reported him to the military. Nel was subsequently ordered to remain within the boundaries of the farm Maresvale, near Greytown. Six months later he was still not charged and as a result his father, LL Nel, wrote to the magistrates of Greytown and Kranskop, as well as the commandant for Greytown, asking that the “quarantine” on his son be lifted since his assistance was required on several other farms. LL Nel’s request was supported by the Greytown but not by the Kranskop magistrate. As a result the military indicated that they would consider the request.⁶¹

The removals of Afrikaners and other European residents continued for as long as the Boers remained active along the borders of the Colony,⁶² and persisted well into 1902. In February of that

57. PAR, PM 24: Resolution and correspondence regarding the return of Upper Tugela farmers, 13.11.1901-30.11.1901.

58. PAR, CSO 1732: Report by the magistrate Newcastle that the military had ordered him to send the De Wet, O’Reilly and Cronjé families down, 4.7.1901-19.7.1901.

59. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 23.3.1900, p.242.

60. PAR, 1/WEN 3/2/4: Letter Magistrate M Matthews, Weenen, to magistrate Dundee, 19.6.1901.

61. PAR, 1/GTN 3/2/9: Application by LL Nel for the lifting of the restriction order on JJ Nel, 10.1.1901-21.1.1901; PAR, 1/KRK 3/1/4: Application by LL Nel for the lifting of the restriction order on JJ Nel, 17.1.1901-23.1.1901.

62. OE Prozesky private collection, Diary of JJA Prozesky: Diary entry, 8.10.1901, p.533.

year Afrikaners were removed south from around Ladysmith. In contrast, surrendered burghers from the Republics were allowed to settle on the farms around Ladysmith, Newcastle, and Dundee from which Natal Afrikaners had been removed. This became one of the reasons why Natal Afrikaners could not return to their farms.⁶³ In April 1902, a month before war ended, LJR Kritzinger of Melmoth complained that he and his three sons were ordered from their farm despite the fact that he had had his wagon and oxen commandeered, had promptly reported the presence of Boers near his farm, and had five horses and 24 head of cattle looted by a commando. Since his removal had taken place under Martial Law, the government could not entertain his request to be allowed to return home.⁶⁴

While the practice by the military of removing Natal Afrikaners from their farms under Martial Law was sometimes difficult to understand, the policy which catered for their return was downright whimsical, illogical, and generally without consistency. WAC Bester of Fourie's Kraal, one of the richest and most influential farmers in the Ladysmith area, soon discovered this. Bester was detained in Ladysmith during the siege without any charge being laid against him. He was then sent to Pietermaritzburg on parole where he took the oath of allegiance on 6 June 1900, after which he was allowed to return to Ladysmith. On arrival he reported to the military who told him to await further instructions. Approximately a month later Bester was informed by the local police that the military had given instructions for him to return to Pietermaritzburg. Back in the capital he reported to Captain Appelby who promptly jailed him, and only released him after he signed a document stating that he would not leave Pietermaritzburg or communicate with the Boers. By now Bester had had enough and requested his lawyers, Carter and Robinson, to raise the matter with the Natal Government who, to their credit, reacted promptly. Inspector Clarke of the Natal Police was asked to investigate the case against Bester. Clarke, supported by the provost marshal, could not find a reason for the treatment of Bester apart from the possibility that his farm just outside of Ladysmith was in close proximity to the positions of some troops. When confronted with this evidence, the military indicated that the situation on the ground had changed and that not only Bester, but also his sons, could return to his farm immediately.⁶⁵ Those residents of Klip River county with less financial power and influence than Bester were less fortunate. GCF Potgieter who initially returned home at the same time as Bester⁶⁶ was also sent back to Pietermaritzburg. His request to be allowed to return

63. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 3.2.1902, p.767; PAR, AGO I/8/79: Letter A Jansen to attorney-general, 17.5.1901. For a comprehensive lists of surrendered burghers who were allowed to reside in Natal see: NAR, Archives of the Staff Officer Prisoners of War, Natal (hereafter SOP) 17: Burghers from Harrismith on parole in Natal, 1.9.1901; NAR, Transvaal Colonial Publications (hereafter TKP) 156 and 157: List of POWs who have arrived in Natal, 1900-1901.

64. PAR, PM 28: Request by LJR Kritzinger that he and his sons be allowed to return home, 15.4.1902-22.4.1902.

65. PAR, CSO 1655: Correspondence regarding the removal of WAC Bester, 4.8.1900-17.8.1900; CSO 1652: Minute paper regarding the treatment of the Bester family, 17.7.1900-23.8.1900.

66. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 22.6.1900, p.377.

home was denied.⁶⁷

The inconsistencies of the functioning of Martial Law are further confirmed by the experiences of JJ Muller of the farm Doorn Kraal near Elandslaagte. Muller (snr) was allowed to reside on his farm until the military moved him in December 1901. What Muller could not understand was why other residents who lived closer to the Drakensberg and thus the OFS border, as well as convicted rebels around Dundee, were allowed to remain. His request to return home was answered by the military with the by now standard reply: "...for military reasons it cannot be acceded to."⁶⁸

In 1902 the military at times adopted a more lenient attitude towards Afrikaners who wanted to return home, possibly because they had better control over the areas threatened by small Boer commandos. JA and JF van der Merwe and CP, CJP as well as JM Hattingh of the Estcourt district were all granted permission to return to their farms on condition that they took the oath of allegiance. Receiving permission to return home did, however, not always prove to be this easy and different conditions were imposed on different applicants. GE Minnaar, a convicted rebel, was for example not allowed to move to the farm Rietvlei, Springfield, of GJ Jordaan, but he did receive a one week pass to visit.⁶⁹

Other petitioners were denied permission to return home altogether. JS Maritz and PJ Triegaardt could not return to their farms which were located within the area that the military wanted to keep clear namely, between the Tugela and Little Tugela Rivers and Lindeques Drift.⁷⁰ This refusal to issue passes allowing Afrikaners to return home forced at least one convicted rebel to break the law. JG Zietsman, after numerous applications, failed to secure a pass to return to his mother's farm, Snelster near Estcourt. He pointed out to the authorities that other time-expired rebels had received passes, and when he was again informed "your application cannot be entertained at present" he used his own discretion and took "French leave." Zietsman's absence did not go undetected and he was arrested and returned to Durban. On his return he took up the pen and in crisp language continued to ask for permission to return home. Time and again permission was denied. Zietsman believed this was a clear indication that he had no chance of being granted permission and that he had to make a serious decision about his future. He therefore requested Prime Minister Hime for "...a passport to quit this Colony for good, as it is useless for me to lie under a government who refuses to give me redress, it is quite evident - judging by the past treatment - that - you as the head of the government - do not intend to give me a hearing." The government referred Zietsman to the commandant of

67. PAR, 1/LDS 3/1/1/16: Letter magistrate Klip River district to Mrs Potgieter, 13.11.1900.

68. PAR, PM 25: Application by JJ Muller to be allowed to return home, 3.12.1901-18.12.1901.

69. PAR, PM 26: Request by GJ Jordaan that GE Minnaar may reside with him, 31.1.1902.

70. PAR, PM 26: Application by Afrikaners from the Estcourt district to be allowed to return home, 14.2.1902-13.3.1902.

Durban.⁷¹ It cannot be determined if he received a passport but he possibly changed his mind as the war ended soon afterwards.

By early 1902 several Natal politicians were beginning to question the value of the continuation of Martial Law.⁷² To the relief of Prime Minister Hime Martial Law was not repealed as requested by the politicians. Instead, the military started withdrawing systematically from regions such as Greytown and Kranskop and started handing over administration to the magistrates and Natal Police.⁷³ In mid-April 1902 Martial Law conditions were relaxed even further and Afrikaners banned to south of the Tugela River were no longer required to report to the authorities as regularly as in the past.⁷⁴ For unknown reasons the military tightened Martial Law conditions once the war ended and a request by the Natal Government that banned persons should be allowed to return home was refused by the commandant of Ladysmith. The Natal Afrikaners affected by this decision kept up their requests to be allowed to return home and eventually by 20 June 1902 most had been allowed to do so.⁷⁵

Over and above banning and restriction orders and removals, Natal Afrikaners also suffered under the application of Martial Law as related to other wartime measures. Gert van Rooyen of Pinedale, Seven Oaks, Greytown applied for a permit to purchase 100 Martini Henry cartridges. Although the controller of firearms did not oppose the application, he could not grant him a permit since a circular of 15 November 1899 prohibited the issuing of cartridges to people who were not members of rifle associations.⁷⁶ Under the same restrictions Magistrate Addison of Estcourt prohibited JG Hattingh from buying 10 lbs of blasting powder to construct water furrows. Not even a letter in support of Hattingh's application by the pro-Afrikaner FR Moor (MLA) could sway Addison who insisted that the applicant had been involved in treasonable acts while the Boers were in the area and could therefore not be trusted.⁷⁷

Even in the case of attending to serious personal matters Natal Afrikaners suffered under Martial Law. On 7 March 1902 PJ Nel of the farm Ongegund near Kranskop applied for a pass to go to the farm Slaaf near Helpmekaar to get married. After a lengthy enquiry and a declaration that he had no relatives on commando nor any that were tried for treason, the Kranskop magistrate, despite regarding Nel as a pro-Boer, recommended that he be granted a pass. This, however, did not happen

71. PAR, GH 562: Application by JG Zietsman to return to the Estcourt district, 26.12.1901-9.1.1902; PAR, PM 28: Application by JG Zietsman for a passport, 17.12.1901-17.5.1902.

72. PAR, PM 91: Letter Prime Minister AH Hime to Governor HE McCallum, 14.2.1902.

73. PAR, 1/KRK 3/1/4: Letter officer commanding Umvoti to magistrate Kranskop, 28.2.1902.

74. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 18.4.1902, p.798.

75. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entries, 12.6.1902, p.815 and 20.6.1902, p.820.

76. PAR, CSO 1680: Application by G van Rooyen to purchase 100 Martini Henry cartridges, 8.7.1901-20.7.1901.

77. PAR, PM 18: Refusal to grant JG Hattingh permission to purchase gun powder, 13.7.1900-24.8.1900.

as the farm Slaaf was raided by Boers in early April 1902⁷⁸ and the military denied Nel a pass to proceed to his wedding.⁷⁹

Martial Law was only repealed on 4 October 1902.⁸⁰ Unfortunately for the Natal Afrikaners, as the borders between limited and absolute war blurred during the guerrilla phase of the conflict, they felt the vengeance of especially the military authorities. Furthermore they often suffered retribution for Boer misdeeds and not necessarily for supporting the Boers or resisting British authority.⁸¹ In the process relations, not only between Natal Afrikaners and their government, but also between the military and civil authorities were strained and at times soured.⁸²

Despite such extreme Martial Law conditions only a handful of Natal Afrikaners were actually found guilty of transgression.⁸³ H Rabe, MF Scheepers and BJ Badenhorst of Dundee were arrested for unpunctuality in reporting themselves. Fortunately for them they were only reprimanded.⁸⁴ Less fortunate were four rebels who had served sentences for high treason. JC Nel, JH Hattingh, LP de Jager and JW Rall were arrested on 22 November 1901 for being at the Pietermaritzburg Station without passes. They were handed over to the civil authorities who fined each man £1 or 10 days imprisonment. The fines were paid the same day.⁸⁵

8.2 The impact of Louis Botha's second invasion of Natal on Natal Afrikaners

The most intense period of persecution of Natal Afrikaners under Martial Law, however, was the period surrounding the second invasion of the Zululand part of Natal by General Louis Botha in September 1901. The Zululand section of the Natal border with the Transvaal proved very porous. Small groups of Boers from the Vryheid district continuously raided into Zululand, and invariably the Zulu reciprocated. The invading Boers generally left the property of Proviso B Afrikaners untouched and often even visited them. Such encounters had to be reported under Martial Law, and on two occasions, 5 and 19 February 1901, Andries L Pretorius informed the Melmoth magistrate that a patrol of two armed Boers had visited the house of Mrs AL Pretorius.⁸⁶ Similar visits were made to the parliamentarian Vaal Dirk Uys. Uys's problems started when five armed Boers,

78. The raid was presumably to get hold of some horses for on 4.4.1902 a notice went out to numerous farms, including Slaaf, stating that only one horse, except for mares in foal and young stock under three years, may be kept. PAR, 1/DUN 3/1/10: Notice Captain FS Reeves, 4.4.1902.

79. PAR, 1/KRK: Application by PJ Nel for a pass to proceed to the farm Slaaf to get married, 7.3.1901-5.4.1902.

80. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 10.6.1902.

81. OE Prozesky private collection, Diary of JJA Prozesky: Diary entry, 6.6.1901, p.512.

82. C Townshend, Martial Law: Legal and Administrative problems of civil emergency in Britain and the Empire, 1800-1940, *The Historical Journal*, 25/1, 1982, pp.164-194.

83. See Appendix for D a list of Natal Afrikaners who were apprehended under Martial Law.

84. Cd. 981: Papers relating to the administration of Martial Law in South Africa, p.191.

85. PAR, CSO 1692: Summary of convictions under Martial Law during December 1901, 21.12.1901.

86. DAR, 1/MEL III/2/8: Letters AL Pretorius to magistrate Melmoth, 5.2.1901 and 19.2.1901.

including two rebels, Theunis Pretorius and Charles Liversage, arrived at his house on 5 February 1901. The spokesman for the group, Pretorius, informed Uys that they knew he was one of the peace commissioners who had been distributing Kitchener's proclamation to two Havermann's and a Potgieter on the border between the ZAR and Zululand. They threatened that if he was found near the ZAR border he would be shot and if he left his farm he would be arrested. After helping themselves to refreshments from his house the men rode off. Fearing that they might loot his cattle Uys, who had no labourers or a horse available, left on foot to collect his stock. In the meantime a thunderstorm had started to rage and Uys had to wait until it passed before he could proceed to inform the police at Melmoth of the incident. During this time the posse of Boers cut the telegraph line in two places, raided 80 cattle belonging to WF White, and drove them to the Transvaal. Because it took Uys such a long time to report the incident, and since his cattle were left untouched, he was under suspicion. This allegation alarmed the governor and attorney-general since it had "an ugly appearance" and they suggested that Uys explain his actions. Uys repeated his earlier statement and the second time around, possibly to prevent political embarrassment similar to that suffered with the arrest of another Afrikaner MLC, CJ Labuschagne, it found favour with the authorities.⁸⁷

The raiding into Zululand became so problematic that the chief magistrate and civil commissioner of the area, CR Saunders, wanted the volunteer forces called out again. He believed that a raid on Melmoth and then across the Tugela into Natal was quite possible since that was the only part of Zululand inhabited by Europeans, most of which were Afrikaners. These Natal Afrikaners, as far as Saunders was concerned, were in cahoots with the Transvalers and kept them well informed of what was happening. Preventing such communication proved impossible since the small Natal Police force stationed in the area could not stop the free movement of groups of Boers across the border. The only remedy for the situation was thus "to make arrangements under which all the Boers near Melmoth could be removed from their farms and kept under strict watch well out of that District, (to) warn them that such arrangements are being made and that if the raiding continue (d) they will be removed. I have little doubt that if they choose to do so they could persuade their friends in the Vryheid District to desist from violating this border..."⁸⁸ The only person to be removed, however, was Dewalt J Pretorius of Waterfall, Proviso B. He was deported to Pietermaritzburg as an undesirable by the commanding officer in Zululand.⁸⁹ In the meantime the cross-border guerrilla warfare, especially to loot cattle, continued and reached a climax when freebooter status was officially bestowed on Colonel H Bottomley and his agents to loot Boer livestock for personal gain.⁹⁰

87. PAR, ZA 33: Documents relating to the looting of the cattle of WF White and the conduct of DC Uys, 7.2.1901-6.3.1901.

88. PAR, ZA 33: Letter CR Saunders to officer troops commanding, Zululand, 15.2.1901.

89. JM Wassermann, *The Eshowe...*, p.35.

90. For the raids across the Transvaal/Zululand border see: JM Wassermann, *The Eshowe ...* pp.2-12.

The small scale Boer invasions into Proviso B and Zululand were soon enlarged. General Louis Botha, in an attempt to divert the war from the Transvaal by opening up a new front, started in September 1901 with a second invasion of Natal. When thwarted by the swollen Buffalo River, the presence of a large British force and the British occupation of the drifts on the said river, Botha decided not to invade the Dundee district. After defeating the British at Blood River Poort on 17 September 1901, his commando crossed the virtually unguarded border into Zululand just north of Nqutu. By now the British Army was well aware of Botha's intentions and the defence of Natal was strengthened by calling out the volunteer regiments while three columns pursued the invading Boers. The invasion was halted at Itala and Fort Prospect which allowed the British time to secure the drifts into Umvoti county on the lower Tugela. By the end of September 1901 the invasion was called off.⁹¹ This unsuccessful invasion of Botha's had a detrimental effect on many Natal Afrikaners.

When information of Botha's intentions reached the military and Natal authorities, they immediately acted against Natal Afrikaners in the districts south of the Tugela to prevent them from supporting the invading force. All wagons in the Weenen/Estcourt area were commandeered by the military. A list was also compiled of the number of horses with a view to requisitioning them all for military purposes.⁹² Inspector Mardall of the Natal Police, on request, informed the military that 180 people under police surveillance in the Estcourt district could possibly join Louis Botha's force. He was also convinced, after receiving information from a surrendered burgher, that the rebels who had completed their time were the most dangerous since fining and imprisonment had not made them more loyal than before. Instead, he suspected that they harboured a spirit of resentment. Mardall also said that beacon fires as well as suspicious night movements of local Afrikaners had been reported in the district. Owing to the proximity of the forces of Botha, Lt-Col JH Sim, commanding officer of troops in Ladysmith, ordered Capt Breves of the Royal Inniskilling Fusileers to inform Mardall to arrest several Natal Afrikaners and POWs on parole who resided north of the Bushmans River. As a result three surrendered burghers, ten time-expired rebels, and six suspected rebels awaiting trial, were arrested in the Estcourt and Weenen districts and taken to the Tin Town POW Camp in Ladysmith. A further eight time-expired rebels were informed that they had to proceed to Ladysmith and report to the staff officer by 23 September 1901.⁹³

The Natal Afrikaners involved, and especially James T Howell and JG (Koos) Hattingh, did not

91. For a comprehensive account of the invasion, see: DM Moore, *General Louis Botha's second expedition to Natal during the Anglo-Boer War, September-October 1901, passim*; CM Carter, Itala - monument to valor, *Military History Journal*, 2(1), June 1971.

92. PAR, SNA I/1/294: Letter Inspector Mardell to chief commissioner of police, 26.9.1901.

93. PAR, SNA I/1/294: List and correspondence of Natal Afrikaners arrested by order of the military, 19.9.1901-11.10.1901; PAR, PM 90: Correspondence regarding the imprisonment of certain Natal Afrikaners, 21.11.1901-22.11.1901.

accept their removal without a fight. Neither of these men had been convicted of high treason but were suspected of wielding great influence over the local Afrikaners and having had close ties with the Boers during the first invasion of Natal. The two men immediately sent a telegram to Prime Minister Albert Hime asking him to intervene and secure their release. With typical Natal bureaucratic efficiency the matter was not dismissed out of hand. Instead, Inspector Mardall was asked for an explanation. Mardall replied that under Martial Law he had merely acted on orders of the military without questioning them. He could therefore not be held accountable for the removals. Acting on the information supplied, Hime informed the two men that since they were ordered into Tin Town by the military under Martial Law, the colonial government could not interfere.⁹⁴

Being the most politically literate of the Afrikaners removed, Hattingh and Howell, with the support of a local politician GR Richards,⁹⁵ again took up their case. In his correspondence Hattingh maintained that the military were prepared to discharge him providing the instruction came from the Natal Government. He also made it clear that he would suffer economically if he remained in prison much longer. Hattingh claimed “the full rights of a British Subject and that freedom and liberty I have enjoyed under my Govt which I am called upon to forfeit through no apparent cause of mine...” As far as he was concerned he was removed because of the enmity that existed between him and Mardall. On his part Howell complained that his removal, influenced by Mardall, happened just prior to the general election. On application to the commandant for a pass to proceed to Weenen to cast his vote, he was refused. Howell therefore demanded his “immediate release, a full enquiry, satisfaction and compensation for all personal, and material injury sustained owing to my removal from my farm, family and occupation.” The Natal Government stood by Inspector Mardall and again informed the two gentlemen that they had been removed at the instance of the military and not the inspector. For their part the military denied that the removal of the men had anything to do with the election and that they only intended to detain the men until the treason trials in the area were concluded, for they feared the intimidation of witnesses.⁹⁶

The opinions expressed by Hattingh and Howell were shared by two local politicians, FR Moor and HD Winter, who relied heavily on the Afrikaner vote. The pair complained to the prime minister that several voters of the Weenen area had been removed by the military. Since no evidence existed

94. PAR, SNA I/1/294: Correspondence regarding the detention of JT Howell and JG Hattingh, 23.9.1901-26.9.1901.

95. GR Richards, a member of the Legislative Assembly, bombarded Prime Minister Hime with letters on 18.10.1901 (two letters), 21.10.1901, 23.10.1901 and 1.11.1901 in which he pleaded the cases of Howell and Hattingh. PAR, 1/SNA I/1/294. The reason for the active involvement of Richards could possibly be traced to a letter from E Hattingh, the wife of JG, to FR Moor in which she stated that the reason her husband was removed a punitive measure because he had worked so hard to have Richards, Moor and Winter returned as members of the Legislative Assembly. See PAR, SNA I/1/294: Letter E Hattingh to FR Moor, 18.10.1901.

96. PAR, 1/SNA: I/1/294: Correspondence regarding the detention of JG Hattingh and JT Howell, 15.10.1901-17.10.1901.

against them they requested Hime to use his influence to allow the voters to cast their votes.⁹⁷ Hime was not desirous for the government to make representations to the military on behalf of individuals. His suggestion was thus that the persons in question make their own representations to the commandant of Ladysmith.⁹⁸ In this way Hime skilfully managed to sidestep the issue for he knew that any petition to the military would fail.

Two months later, despite the dissolution of the threat of Botha's invasion, seven Natal Afrikaners, JG Hattingh, JT Howell, Jacob and Frank van der Merwe, JS Maritz, P Trichardt, and Izak Meyer, were still imprisoned. Again Howell and Hattingh complained to the Natal Government who now immediately enquired from the military why the men were still detained. Without explanation the military released the Afrikaners from Tin Town but, they were not willing to allow them to return to their farms.⁹⁹ At this point FR Moor, who had tried to play both sides, stepped in and suggested that if the Afrikaners in question were prepared to furnish substantial security in the form of bonds on their properties they should be allowed to return to their farms.¹⁰⁰ If this did not happen, Moor feared that the detention would cause the men to become sullen and discontent. With enough time having elapsed since the threatened invasion Prime Minister Hime and the cabinet supported Moor's suggestion and asked Governor McCallum to relay the idea to the military. McCallum, unlike in the case of the English farmers who wanted to return to their Upper Tugela homes, did not support the idea because he was adamant that the civil authorities should not interfere with military discretion, especially when it involved Afrikaners. The Natal Government disagreed with McCallum and they felt that once the military had considered the merit of each case and found that there were no serious military reasons for imprisonment, the Afrikaners involved should be allowed to go home, on condition that they provide the necessary security. The pressure exerted by the Natal Government on the governor eventually won the day and he relented and approached the military with the request. Surprisingly the military capitulated and agreed to free the men on the conditions outlined by Moor and the Natal Government.¹⁰¹

As had happened in the Weenen county, the military in the Umvoti county, under Lt-Col GA Mills of the 1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers, immediately took steps in case General Louis Botha should raid into the district of his birth. As a first step the local rifle associations were informed of the possible invasion and warned that they could be called out. Indicative of the distrust of Afrikaners it was not

97. PAR, PM 24: Telegram FR Moor and HD Winter to Prime Minister AH Hime, 25.9.1901.

98. PAR, PM 24: Telegram Prime Minister AH Hime to FR Moor and HD Winter, 25.9.1901.

99. PAR, PM 90: Letter JS Maritz to FR Moor, 4.12.1901; PM 90: Requests by CP Hattingh and WC Zietsman to return home, 3.12.1901-5.12.1901.

100. PAR, PM 90: Requests by CP Hattingh and WC Zietsman to return home, 3.12.1901-5.12.1901.

101. PAR, SNA I/1/294: Correspondence regarding the detention of JG Hattingh, JT Howell and other Afrikaners, 15.10.1901-8.1.1902; PAR, CSO 1944: Annual report magistrate Estcourt, 1901; PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 29.11.1901, p.732.

deemed desirable to issue the same warning to them.¹⁰² Mills was especially worried about the actions of Paul Hansmeyer, the brother-in-law of General Louis Botha, whom he suspected of keeping up correspondence with the commandant-general. He therefore requested that a strict censorship of mail be undertaken in Umvoti county. The Natal Police, correctly so, pointed out that this would be illegal.¹⁰³ He was also informed that such a step would be fruitless since letters were not passed through the post-office but forwarded by hand to the Boers by Natal Afrikaners living on the Zululand border.¹⁰⁴

Martial Law, however, enabled Lt-Col Mills to act in other ways against Afrikaners in the Umvoti county suspected of having pro-Boer sentiments and who could possibly aid Botha. On receiving intelligence from Mrs Otto that Afrikaners residing in the Mooi River area were disloyal,¹⁰⁵ Mills instructed Daniel Petrus Boshoff to proceed to Pietermaritzburg where he was charged for using seditious language and harbouring the enemy. Further efforts to obtain information about Boshoff by an intelligence officer failed as the Afrikaners in the Mooi River area closed ranks and became very reticent.¹⁰⁶ Boshoff, who ended up residing in the boarding house of his daughter, Mrs Braham, in Pietermaritzburg was very bitter about his arrest as he felt the charges against him were false. He even considered instituting legal action against the military authorities for illegal arrest.¹⁰⁷

Acting on information provided by an Afrikaner loyalist from Greytown, Jan (TJ) Nel, and without informing the magistrates of either the Umvoti or the Kranskop districts, Mills removed the following individuals to Pietermaritzburg: FE van Rooyen (stock inspector), LMJ van Rooyen jnr (Wonderfontein), PH van Rooyen (Good Hope), Ds GS Malan (Greytown), John Keyter (Frogmore), LMJ and PJ Nel (Ongegund), TJ, JPC and PR Nel (Spitzkop), AJJ Nel (Berning), LL Nel (Greytown) and JC Martens, LJ Potgieter and JP van Rooyen (all of Broedershoek). The men had no idea why they were removed but attributed it to the fact that they did not instantly comply with earlier commandeering orders issued for their wagons and oxen.¹⁰⁸ According to Missionary Hofmeyr, who worked in the Umvoti area, the men were removed for collecting money for the support of the wives and children of the imprisoned rebels and the rebels themselves.¹⁰⁹ What irked

102. PAR, GH 1302: Letter Governor HE McCallum to Colonial Secretary J Chamberlain, 14.9.1901.

103. *Natal Witness*, 2.4.1900. WB Morcom QC, successfully litigated against the Natal Government, forcing them to end censorship in the rural areas of the Colony.

104. PAR, PM 90: Correspondence regarding the alleged correspondence between Paul Hansmeyer and General Louis Botha, 21.10.1901-23.10.1901.

105. PAR, SNA I/1/294: Letter Inspector Mardell to chief commissioner of police, 26.9.1901.

106. PAR, CSO 1683: Correspondence relative to DP Boshoff, 22.8.1901; CSO 1676: Minute paper with reference to the charges brought against DP Boshoff, 10.5.1901-20.5.1901; PAR, PM 21: Correspondence by JG and H Hattingh and KM and PJ de Jager asking to be allowed to reside in the Weenen district, 7.5.1901-24.6.1901; PAR, 1/WEN 3/2/4: Correspondence Magistrate M Matthews, Weenen, and commandant, Pietermaritzburg, 3.7.1902-24.7.1901.

107. PAR, MJPW 117: Report by civil intelligence officer A Hershensohn, 15.5.1901.

108. PAR, 1/KRK 3/1/3: Complaint by JS van Rooyen to colonial secretary, 24.10.1901.

109. OE Prozesky private collection, Diary of JJA Prozesky: Diary entry, Introduction, p.392.

those removed the most was that they were relocated soon after the first rains, which meant that they could not plough and plant.¹¹⁰

On investigating the removals the magistrate of Kranskop concluded that most of the men were sent away as undesirables and because of minor disputes with the military, such as the loyalist John Keyter who had not instantly complied with a commandeering order and LMJ van Rooyen (jnr) who had a disagreement with the military over 25 sheep and 10 oxen that were commandeered from him.¹¹¹ This was only partly true. Mills had acted on information that the men were disloyal and that they would join the Boers if they were to invade.¹¹² Furthermore, this was the first time since the war had broken out that reliable evidence could be procured against Afrikaners from Umvoti, thanks to Jan Nel breaking the ranks. The military therefore possibly felt that they had to act.

Two of the men who were removed, JC Martens and JP van Rooyen, did not take kindly to the fact that they were sent to reside in the Pietermaritzburg Concentration Camp. In a letter to the colonial secretary they made their sentiments clear:

We have been told we can live in the Boer Refugee Camp in a Bell Tent at Government expense - we are not able to do this without being subjected to great inconveniences, and we desire to live at an Hotel in Maritzburg and we beg to request that an allowance may be made to enable us to do this, and we shall be glad if you will deal with this matter or forward this application to the proper Authorities in order that it may be dealt with. Apart from the inconvenience of living in the Boer Camp it is distasteful to us at the present time to have to live amongst Dutch Refugees.

Not surprisingly their request was rejected.¹¹³

The removal of the men from the Umvoti county infuriated several leading local Afrikaners who believed the treatment was unfair. A father and son, LMJ and JS van Rooyen of Welgevonden, felt so strongly about the matter that they were prepared to stand security to the amount of £10 000 for six of the men.¹¹⁴ The strongest petition for the liberation of the men came from Theuns (TJ) Nel a former MLA. Nel made it clear that the men in question, as landowners, all had vested interests in the Colony and valued the protection and privilege provided by the British Empire. It would therefore have been unwise for them to be disloyal at that stage of the war. He proceeded to point out that the men in question had complied when wagons, oxen and horses were commandeered, and would suffer economically if they remained away from home for much longer.¹¹⁵

110. PAR, 1/KRK 3/1/3: Complaint by JS van Rooyen to colonial secretary, 24.10.1901.

111. PAR, 1/KRK 3/1/3: Petition by JP Nel to magistrate Kranskop, 29.10.1901.

112. PAR, SNA I/4/9: Report Lt-Col GA Mills to DAAG, Natal, 11.10.1901.

113. PAR, CSO 1687: Correspondence regarding the request by JC Martens and JP van Rooyen, 5.10.1901-7.10.1901.

114. PAR, 1/KRK 3/1/3: Complaint by JS van Rooyen to colonial secretary, 24.10.1901.

115. PAR, PM 24: Letter TJ Nel to Prime Minister AH Hime, 30.10.1901.

Prime Minister Hime, in response to Nel's petition, advised the GOC that the men in question should be allowed to return home since he thought: "They had a severe lesson." A month later, after the Natal Police had unsuccessfully investigated the complaints against them, the GOC allowed all the men except LL and TJ Nel and PH and FE van Rooyen to return home.¹¹⁶ This brought an end to their six week exile to Pietermaritzburg.¹¹⁷ Soon afterwards the remaining prisoners, except for JE van Rooyen, were released and allowed to return home.¹¹⁸

The shadow of the military prowess of Louis Botha continued to fall over Natal. It was feared that Botha, who was active in the Vryheid district during early 1902, might break through and attack the Colenso Concentration Camp to liberate the male inhabitants as Beyers had done when the camp was still located in Pietersburg.¹¹⁹ Rumours of such an attack did the rounds in both the concentration camp and within Botha's commando. As a result the authorities immediately decided to move the camp to Pinetown.¹²⁰ This meant, that this time around, Republican civilians bore the brunt for Botha's military exploits and not the Natal Afrikaners as had happened previously.

8.3 Education, language and politics under Martial Law

Martial Law and other wartime measures, as explained thus far in this chapter, not only resulted in the banning and removal of Natal Afrikaners, and related hardships, but also impacted on the social, political and educational aspects of their lives as will be illuminated below.

Education was one of the spheres of Afrikaner life that suffered because of wartime sentiments and Martial Law. The instruction of Dutch was already under pressure prior to the Anglo-Boer War, and the conflict had a further negative impact on the already fragile status of the language.¹²¹ In his report for 1899 the inspector of schools for Dutch in Natal and translator to General Redvers Buller, JH Kleinschmidt, stated that 150 pupils studied Dutch, eighty of which were at Durban High School. Yet only two of the learners, the Jansen brothers, were Afrikaners.¹²² The others took the language as an alternative to French rather than as a desire to learn the language. In the Afrikaner stronghold of Greytown only 37 out of 117 learners enrolled in the government school studied Dutch. This happened despite the fact that 70% of the learners in the school were Afrikaners. In 1901 matters

116. PAR, PM 24: Minute paper regarding the removal of certain men from Umvoti county, 2.11.1901-7.12.1901.

117. *De Kerkbode*, 12.12.1901.

118. PAR, 1/KRK 3/1/3: Complaint by JS van Rooyen to colonial secretary, 4.12.1901.

119. PRO, CO 179/223: Telegram Governor HE McCallum to Lord Kitchener, 27.2.1902.

120. E Neethling, *Should we forget*, pp.216-217.

121. For pre-war position of Dutch, see pp.5-11.

122. Ernest (EG) Jansen was an excellent scholar and sportsman who was to rise to political prominence as a tireless fighter for Afrikaans culture in Natal. He became the first Afrikaner to fill the role of governor-general for South Africa. PJJ Prinsloo, *E.G. Jansen se rol in die belang van die Afrikaners in Natal*. D Litt-thesis, PU for CHE, 1987, *passim*.

took a turn for the worse when in the collective examination for Natal only six out of more than 500 candidates wrote the Dutch exam, one less than when Dutch was first examined in 1891. All six candidates were girls from the Afrikaner private school, Greytown Seminary. In his damning report Kleinschmidt stated:

Many thousands of pounds sterling have been devoted by Government during the last decade to support the teaching of Dutch and there is nothing to show that any advantage whatever has accrued to any one from the expenditure. The Government support (£750-1000 a year) was originally given because it was contended that children of Dutch parentage had no opportunity of acquiring the language they wished to learn, viz: - Dutch. My experience of 11 years in Natal has shown that 3% of the Dutch speaking children, on whose behalf the demand for Government aid was made, have availed themselves of that aid when it was given and continued for ten years.¹²³

As a result of this report the Natal Government withdrew its funding for the teaching of Dutch in government schools from the 1900/1901 and 1901/1902 budgets. This step alarmed Governor Henry McCallum who feared that it would “intensify racial feelings” but the reasons provided by Kleinschmidt served to allay his fears. The sober summing up of this decision by the colonial office namely, “that the commercial value of English is too great for Dutch to compete without the stimulus of political agitation”, hit the nail on the head because Dutch was by this stage already a foreign language to most Afrikaners.¹²⁴ Thereafter matters took a turn for the worse for Dutch education and in early 1901, EG Jansen claimed that Dutch was no longer taught at Durban High School.¹²⁵

The loyalist *De Natal Afrikaner*, which strove to enhance the position of Dutch, initially did not want to comment on the fact that no funding was allocated to the teaching in and of the language for 1900/1901. The newspaper regarded the racial tension in the Colony as too high to debate the issue, while it also believed that nothing would come from protests. *De Natal Afrikaner* could, however, not resist the temptation to link the budgetary decision to the upcoming high treason trials by pointing out that it was a very un-English way of dealing with perpetrators of the law to punish the accused before they were tried and found guilty. *De Natal Afrikaner*, furthermore, regarded the decision as an indication that all 5 000 Natal Afrikaners were branded as disloyal and were being punished for the actions of a suspected 1 000 people who were yet to be tried. The newspaper did not regard this as “English fair play” and expressed the hope that the matter of Dutch language education would be reconsidered for the 1901/1902 financial year.¹²⁶

This did not happen and a year later, in *De Natal Afrikaner* of 14 May 1901, the editor, Joshua

123. PAR, PM 17: Report on Dutch instruction in government schools by JH Kleinschmidt, 29.5.1901.

124. PRO, CO 179/218: Letter Governor HE McCallum to Colonial Secretary J Chamberlain, 11.6.1901.

125. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Letter EG Jansen to HF Schoon, 3.1.1901.

126. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 26.6.1900.

Hershensohn, warned the Natal Government that the policy it was following would play into the hands of the Natal Afrikaner who were sympathetic to the Afrikaner Bond. The newspaper again pointed out that the Afrikaners were treated unfairly with the removal from the budget of funding allocated to Dutch instruction. In contrast substantial amounts were allocated to Indian, Coloured and African education, and white English learners could receive instruction in their mother tongue. The loyalist broadsheet made it clear that the critical article appeared for two reasons: to see justice and fairness done to Natal Afrikaners who did not deserve such treatment because some of their kinsman were disloyal, and to counteract the Afrikaner Bond which was already functioning in Natal.¹²⁷

When Theuns Nel, in June 1901, attempted to raise the treatment of Dutch language education in the Legislative Assembly, he was prevented from doing so by a Mr Hitchins who suggested that the meeting proceed to the next point on the agenda. His suggestion was accepted by 17 votes to 16. *De Natal Afrikaner* proceeded to lambast the 17 members stating that their behaviour was shameful and, vengeful, and that it contributed to the already tense situation between the two white groups. Editor Hershensohn even speculated that the 17 members were able to take such a vote since so many Afrikaner voters had been disenfranchised due to treasonable offences. In an attempt to exert pressure, and to indicate who stood where on the matter, the names of those who voted for and against the issue, were published.¹²⁸

Even the jingoistic *Natal Advertiser* could not agree with the 17 members and regarded their behaviour as counter-productive. The newspaper argued that a knowledge of Dutch was necessary for anyone residing in South Africa and that the matter needed to be debated along economic principles and not political emotions.¹²⁹ The policy of the Natal Government towards Dutch and the prevention of Theuns Nel to table his motion also came under fire in the *Het Zuid-Westen* in the Cape Colony. The paper also regarded the attitude towards Dutch as counterproductive especially since English was such a dominant language in Natal. The *Het Zuid-Westen* argued that Dutch would have died a natural death in Natal but would now be revived since every self respecting Afrikaner would, in the light of the persecution of the language, cling to Dutch and use the policies aimed at it as an anti-English stick.¹³⁰

The prediction by *Het Zuid-Westen* was soon fulfilled. LL Nel of Greytown was adamant that he

127. PAR, CSO 1676: *De Natal Afrikaner*, 14.5.1901 translated into English for the Natal authorities; *De Natal Afrikaner*, 14.5.1901.

128. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 11.6.1901.

129. *Natal Advertiser*, 7.6.1901.

130. *Het Zuid-Westen*, 13.6.1901 as quoted in *De Natal Afrikaner* of 2.7.1901. An example of the impact of the war on language is the case of Anna Barry. Before the war they spoke English at home, but after a traumatic experience at the hands of British soldiers she decided to become Afrikaans speaking. A Barry, *Ons Japie. Dagboek gehou gedurende die*

wanted to be served in Dutch at all times. As a result he had quarrels with the postmaster of Greytown and the clerk of the magistrate in Kranskop. What drove Nel over the edge was a letter in Dutch, dated 23 November 1900, which he had addressed to the magistrate of Kranskop regarding an African in his employment. When he did not receive a speedy reply he stormed into the office of the clerk of the magistrate, Kirkman, demanding an explanation. A heated exchange followed during which Nel demanded to be served in Dutch while Kirkman insisted that it was a British Colony with English as the official language and he would not learn Dutch for the gratification of Nel. When requested to produce Nel's letter Kirkman was unable to do so. Nel left in a huff and subsequently sent a strongly worded letter to the Natal authorities complaining of the treatment he had received from the "petty fogging youth" and enquired whether all Afrikaners were to be treated with such contempt. An investigation into the matter showed that Kirkman had placed Nel's letter in a safe to await the return of the local magistrate, Adamson, who spoke and wrote Dutch. Unfortunately for Kirkman he forgot about the letter thus causing the row. Magistrate Adamson chose to ignore this evidence and concluded that Nel had entered the office in a foul mood because of the direction the war had taken. In addition to this Nel had also attended a funeral the same morning and had a heated debate with LMJ van Rooyen because the latter was transporting an Englishman in his trap. Nel was consequently informed of Kirman's oversight and assured that all government employees were expected to act in a civil manner towards members of the public, but that this needed to be reciprocal. Nel did, however, manage to secure a small victory for Dutch as he was informed that a clerk who could speak Dutch had been appointed to the office of the Kranskop magistrate.¹³¹ Nel's outburst did also forced the Natal Government to put a language policy in place when dealing with their Afrikaner subjects. While the were willing to accept letters in Dutch, they would be answered in English.¹³²

Simultaneously as the funds for Dutch language education were withdrawn, Afrikaner teachers in government schools found their conditions of employment increasingly difficult. Joachim van der Merwe, a teacher at the government school in Greytown, was first suspended and then dismissed from service.¹³³ His problems started when the military authorities intercepted a letter he wrote to his family at New Bethesda in the Cape Colony. Van der Merwe could not give a satisfactory explanation to the education authorities of the political sentiments expressed in the letter and was subsequently discharged.¹³⁴ Undaunted he started his own private school which soon had 96 learners, all "Boeren jongens." Another intercepted letter again brought trouble to his door. One of his learners, JR, wrote to a friend in Bethulie in the OFS, Jan Kruger. JR admired Van der Merwe

Driejarige Oorlog, p.5.

131. PAR, CSO 2591: Correspondence regarding LL Nel's complaint that his communication in Dutch was ignored, 11.2.1901-6.3.1901.

132. PAR, CSO 1666: Request by LM Swanepoel that he be corresponded with in Dutch, 11.12.1900-15.1.1901.

133. PAR, AGO I/8/70: Letter Minister of Education H Bale to minister of lands and works, 27.4.1900.

134. PAR, EC 26: Note Prime Minister AH Hime to Governor W Hely-Hutchinson, 2.6.1900.

greatly and explained to his friend that “als ons gaan dril dan trekken wij onze jersey en een zwart broek aan, aan onze jersey is genaai deze letters O.V.S. P.R...jij weet wat de O.V.S. meent en de P.R. meent Penkop Regement...wij zijn nog Blikoore.” In other childlike news JR boasted “Ik hebt een mooi nooi” while he also informed Jan Kruger “dat jiy niet my cricket set kan krijgen...” The letter angered the authorities and resulted in a full examination into the activities of Van der Merwe, but the investigation proved very little. Two independent sources testified that no drilling was carried out and that the boys did not wear a uniform. Neither could any proof be obtained that Van der Merwe was imbuing his learners with anti-British and pro-Republican feelings. The English community of Greytown was, however, adamant that Van der Merwe was vehemently anti-British and given to disloyal and racial hate talk to his compatriots. The boys who attended his school were described as “the sons of the most rabid Dutchmen in the place” and included the sons of Dominee Malan. Since the contents of the letter could not be verified the Natal authorities approached the military to use Martial Law to have Van der Merwe removed to the OFS where he originally came from.¹³⁵ General Hildyard, the GOC, was not prepared to deport Van der Merwe but was willing to have him relocated in Natal and in doing so break up his school. This second prize was not good enough for the Natal authorities and they decided to drop the case.¹³⁶

Van der Merwe was not the only government-employed teacher to fall foul of the authorities. RK van Dam, a teacher at the Boys Model Primary School in Loop Street, Pietermaritzburg, got into trouble for telling the boys in his class that it was not true that any of the Boers had retired under a flag of truce after the Battle of Talana. He also wiped the blackboard with a red, white and blue dress flag. As a result eight boys of the school signed a statement against him. A letter from Dominee Wiese of Noodsberg, who knew Van Dam as someone “in the habit of disseminating treasonable sentiments” from when he was a school teacher in the area, convinced him to hand in his resignation.

This was not the end of Van Dam’s quarrels with the Natal authorities. On 3 October 1899, a day after he had submitted his application for naturalization, he unlawfully joined the Pietermaritzburg Rifle Association. When the association found out that he was not yet a British subject he was asked to resign and was subsequently accused of attending a meeting of the leaders and sub-leaders of the rifle association called by the magistrate. This was untrue, but he was nevertheless arrested as a spy - only to be released soon afterwards. In the meantime a letter of naturalisation had been prepared for

135. The fear of the Natal authorities can be understood when considering the immense power nationalistic teachers wielded. A point in case is the experiences of a Natal student by the surname of Searle. He arrived at Victoria College in Stellenbosch a “good loyalist.” He apparently became so indoctrinated by the views of two professors, Marais and Neethling, that he became a rabid pro-Boer. C Venter, Stellenbosch tydens die Anglo-Boereoorlog, in *Historia*, 44 (2), November 1999, pp.365-389.

136. PAR, GH 562: Correspondence regarding the accusations of disloyalty against J van der Merwe, 4.7.1901-13.9.1901.

Van Dam but when the knowledge of his arrest came to light the letter was suspended. With no prospects left in Pietermaritzburg, he took up a position as a teacher on RJJ van Rooyen's farm Buffelshoek, near Weenen. Eleven months later Prime Minister Hime decided that Van Dam was a problem case and convinced both the military authorities and the governor that it was necessary to transfer him back to the capital so that he could be watched. By now Van Dam must have had enough of the unaccommodating attitude of the British. He took 13 days to make his way from Weenen to Pietermaritzburg. On arrival he was told to remain in town and report to the authorities twice a week. Van Dam promptly booked himself into the "The Langham Hotel" on the account of the military. After residing in the hotel for more than two weeks he applied to be allowed to return to the employment of Van Rooyen. His hotel bill was attached to his application with a promise that further hotel bills would be forwarded as they were presented to him. The military refused to pay the bill and it had to be settled by the Natal authorities on whose instruction Van Dam was transferred to Pietermaritzburg. In reaction the Natal authorities swiftly transferred Van Dam to the Pietermaritzburg Concentration Camp.¹³⁷

The pressures Natal Afrikaners experienced in the fields of language and education spilled over into the political arena. On the political front no supra-political organization existed that could represent the aspirations and views of Natal Afrikaners and, whatever existed in terms of political organization, was destroyed by the war. Despite the lack of a political organization there were always Afrikaner representatives elected to the Legislative Assembly. This changed in the wartime general election that took place in late 1901. Several Afrikaners were named as candidates in the Umvoti county. Gert Thomas van Rooyen of Pinedale was nominated by 27 voters, of which all but two were Afrikaners; Theunis Jacobus Nel of Craiglands received 38 nominations, all but one from Afrikaners, while Theunis Jacobus Nel of Waterfall received 22 nominations, of which only one came from an English person. In contrast WA Deane received more than 50 nominations with two coming from Afrikaners and Major George Leuchars of the UMR received more than 60 nominations, six from Afrikaners.¹³⁸ No Afrikaners were nominated in any of the other Dutch Districts like Weenen, Newcastle and Dundee.¹³⁹

In especially Weenen, candidates such as FR Moor and HD Winter relied heavily on the Afrikaner vote. As a result they refused to have their names attached to a confidential memorandum in which the Natal Government supported Kitchener's proclamation of 7 August 1901 regarding the banishment of certain Boers.¹⁴⁰ They were afraid that if their views on the banishment became

137. PAR, PM 21: Correspondence regarding RK van Dam, 3.10.1899-5.4.1901; *Natal Witness*, 9.11.1899 and 15.11.1899; *De Natal Afrikaner*, 21.11.1899.

138. PAR, 1/GTN 2/2/8: Nominations of candidates by the electors of Umvoti county, 9.9.1901.

139. PAR, CSO 1944: Annual report magistrate Estcourt, 1901.

140. SB Spies, pp.269-278.

public they would lose the votes of the Afrikaners in their constituencies.¹⁴¹

During the election that followed 19 of the 39 members elected to the Legislative Assembly were completely new to political life, most of them volunteer officers returning from the front. Not only were old and respected members not re-elected, but for the first time since responsible government was acquired, no Natal Afrikaner was elected to the Legislative Assembly. Instead three Englishmen were elected in the Afrikaner political stronghold of Umvoti county.¹⁴² Not only was the Afrikaner vote weakened by the disenfranchisement of convicted rebels, but the political organization founded by Thomas Hannah to assist the Afrikaner candidates in the Legislative Assembly elections, failed to deliver.¹⁴³ The result of the election clearly reflected the prejudices against Afrikaner candidates inflamed by the war.

Afrikaners fared little better on local political levels. Two, Nel and AFW Laatz, served on the Greytown Local Board for the period 1899-1900. Six out of the twelve candidates for the next term of office, 1900-1901, were Afrikaners but only the loyalist, AFW Laatz, was elected.¹⁴⁴ The following year, 1901-1902, ten candidates were up for election but the number of Afrikaner candidates had shrunk to two and only JM van Rooyen was elected.¹⁴⁵

The political vindictiveness against Natal Afrikaners spread to beyond the formal political sphere into the realm of heritage. In Pietermaritzburg the local municipality adopted a resolution to change some street names of Afrikaner origin to English names, namely: Greyling to Gallway, Boom to Milner, Berg to Cornwall, Pietermaritz to York, Longmarket (Langmark) to King Edward and Loop to Queen.¹⁴⁶ Sanity however prevailed and the decision was not implemented.

8.4 Religion

In the absence of a supra-political organization amongst Natal Afrikaners, the DRC, the only church catering specifically for their needs, tended to fulfil this role. The DRC comprised five congregations served by the following dominees: DF Bosman - Newcastle, HF Schoon - Ladysmith, AM Murray - Weenen, GS Malan - Greytown and WP Rousseau - Pietermaritzburg. As in the Cape Colony, the DRC could not maintain a strictly neutral stance because of the sympathy most members had with the plight of the Republics. Furthermore, the dominee, as one of the few learned people in the community, who at times also provided guidance in political matters, could not remain outside

141. PAR, GH 1302: Letter Governor HE McCallum to Colonial Secretary J Chamberlain, 3.8.1901.

142. PRO, CO 179/220: Report on the general election that took place in Natal, 5.10.1901; *Natal Witness*, 27.9.1901 and 30.9.1901; *De Natal Afrikaner*, 8.10.1901 and 25.11.1901.

143. PAR, MJPW 117: Report by civil intelligence officer A Hershensohn, 25.5.1901.

144. *Natal Witness*, 1.6.1900.

145. PAR, 3/GTN 1/1/1/2: Records of the town clerk of Greytown, 29.5.1900 and 26.5.1902

146. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 16.4.1901.

the fold.¹⁴⁷ Consequently, both the ministers, and the physical church buildings, became targets of the British forces, while the activities of all the above-mentioned congregations were at one stage or another interrupted or influenced by the war.

One of the most severely disrupted congregations was that of Newcastle. Proof of this is the time that elapsed between church council meetings. The last meeting held prior to the war was on 10 July 1899. The next meeting was only held on 20 August 1902. Present at both meetings were Ds Bosman, Renier Dannhauser, Frans Fourie and HJ Davel.¹⁴⁸ Fortunately for the Newcastle congregation their main church building suffered very little damage. A rural church on the road to Dundee was, however, damaged. Bosman's claim for compensation was only submitted after 20 August 1902. The claim was rejected on the grounds that the Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission had already been disbanded. His explanation that he had only received permission from the military to visit the building after the war ended was not considered.¹⁴⁹

Bosman and his family, as central figures in their community, did not manage to escape the wrath of the military authorities. Bosman himself was, after the retreat of the Boers, arrested and briefly detained by the military for forwarding a letter to General Buller which he addressed, Newcastle, ZAR.¹⁵⁰ His teenage son, Lindley Bosman, was less fortunate and was sentenced to a £50 fine or 4 months in prison for high treason. The war also impacted on the religious duties of Bosman and he was denied permission to preach to members of his congregation held in the Dundee Prison, while the curfew, which forced all Newcastle residents to remain indoors between 18:00 and 8:00, was particularly strictly enforced on him and his family.¹⁵¹ In a particularly petty incident, the commandant of Newcastle instructed him to clean up around the DRC, well knowing that the debris came from the businesses on either side of the church.¹⁵²

Despite these difficulties Bosman and his wife attempted to continue with their congregational duties as normally as possible. Every Sunday he conducted services to the small number who could attend, visited members of his congregation imprisoned in Newcastle, buried those who passed away,¹⁵³ and confronted the military about the distribution of goods donated by the Afrikaners of Greytown to the poor.¹⁵⁴ The Bosmans in particular went out of their way to support local

147. JH Snyman, *Die Afrikaner in Kaapland...*, pp.121-122.

148. NGKA: Kerkraadsnotules, Newcastle 1899-1902, (G47/1), pp.77-84.

149. PAR, CSO 1729: Claim for compensation on behalf of DRC, Newcastle by Ds DF Bosman, 7.4.1903-9.4.1903.

150. *De Kerkbode*, 31.5.1900.

151. OE Prozesky private collection, Diary of JJA Prozesky: Diary entry, 30.8.1900, p.269.

152. OE Prozesky private collection, Diary of JJA Prozesky: Diary entry, 11.9.1900, p.296.

153. OE Prozesky private collection, Diary of JJA Prozesky: Diary entries, 31.5.1900, p.214; 19.8.1900, p.255; 31.8.1900, p.272.

154. OE Prozesky private collection, Diary of JJA Prozesky: Diary entry, 5.10.1900, pp.356-360. While still under Boer occupation women of the Newcastle congregation, under Mrs Jan Meyer, forwarded a box of goods to the Ladysmith

Afrikaners arrested as rebels. Mrs Bosman regularly sent soup and other food to the prison in Newcastle,¹⁵⁵ while the poorest male members of the congregation were allowed to reside in the vestry of the church while awaiting trial.¹⁵⁶ They also took Missionary JJA Prozesky and his wife into their home when the former was granted parole.¹⁵⁷

The only other DRC congregation in Northern Natal was the one at Ladysmith which also served the Dundee district. Its minister, HF Schoon, kept a detailed diary of events throughout the war. He also fired off numerous letters to the Natal Government, the Ladysmith Town Council, and the military regarding matters that concerned the plight of his congregation members in particular, and Natal Afrikaners in general.¹⁵⁸ This did not endear him to the powers of the day and when the Siege of Ladysmith ended,¹⁵⁹ Schoon was accused by Lt-Col AE Sandbach of having communicated with the Boers. He and his family were therefore banned to Pietermaritzburg¹⁶⁰ where they rented a house at 288 Loop Street from Widow Berning for £11 per month.¹⁶¹ Schoon immediately set about serving the members of his congregation who like himself, were under Martial Law banned to Pietermaritzburg. He visited these members, conducted services alongside Ds WP Rousseau,¹⁶² met the family of the Boers brothers, the first rebels to be convicted by the Natal authorities, at the railway station and arranged accommodation for them.¹⁶³ The Schoons were eventually, after numerous requests, allowed to return to Ladysmith on 29 June 1900.¹⁶⁴

Here Schoon resumed his duties, conducted services - often mostly to women since the men were either in prison or were refused passes to travel, buried the dead and baptised children. As in Newcastle, Afrikaners who could not find accommodation in town were allowed to reside in the church building. Most of these duties were centred around Ladysmith. On one occasion he received permission to visit the members of his congregation in the Eshowe Prison,¹⁶⁵ but only received permission to visit the Dundee section of his congregation in January 1902. On this trip he baptised four children and married one couple. He could, however, not visit the Judith church which served

congregation, then under siege. This never reached its destination. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 9.6.1900, p.354.

155. OE Prozesky private collection, Diary of JJA Prozesky: Diary entries, 20-25.5.1900, pp.190-205; 22.8.1900, p.259.

156. OE Prozesky private collection, Diary of JJA Prozesky: Diary entry, 30.5.1900, pp.212-213.

157. OE Prozesky private collection, Diary of JJA Prozesky: Diary entry, 27.5.1900, pp.209-210.

158. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary, *passim*.

159. For the experiences of Ds HF Schoon and members of his congregation during the Siege of Ladysmith, see pp.91-92.

160. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 6.4.1900, p.265.

161. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 21.3.1900, p.235.

162. *De Kerkbode*, 19.4.1900.

163. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 1.6.1900, pp.342-343.

164. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 29.6.1900, pp.382-383.

165. OE Prozesky private collection, Diary of JJA Prozesky: Diary entry, 21.5.1901, p.502.

the Afrikaners of Helpmekaar.¹⁶⁶

HF Schoon's outspokenness regarding what he considered to be unfair, unjust and wrong made him unpopular with the authorities and the local English populace. Both groups possibly viewed him as the Afrikaner leader in the region. As a result he was terrorised on several occasions by mischief-makers. The first time this happened was with the fall of Pretoria. On this occasion stones were thrown at the houses in which Afrikaners banned to Pietermaritzburg resided, while "God save the Queen" was sang in front of the Schoon's house.¹⁶⁷ Such acts continued when Schoon returned to Ladysmith. On Christmas Eve 1900, stones were thrown on the roofs of Afrikaner houses in Ladysmith and on 1 January 1901 on the roofs of the parsonage and the church.¹⁶⁸ Stones were again thrown on the parsonage roof on 28 February 1901, possibly as a celebration of the relief of Ladysmith and again when Louis Botha invaded Zululand.¹⁶⁹

One matter that Schoon pursued with great vigour was the damage done to the church buildings of his congregation. The Ladysmith church and parsonage suffered extensive damage during the siege. The church was used as a hospital by the military which resulted in damage to numerous parts of the interior, while shellfire damaged the parapet, while forms, tables, cane chairs, church documents and the communion silver also disappeared from the church. Structural damage was also caused to the parsonage. Schoon's claim of £222.15 was paid out by the Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission, but his claim for the salary he did not receive during the time was not acknowledged.¹⁷⁰ He could only visit the two church properties in the Biggarsberg, Kirkland, and Judith in July 1902 to determine the damaged caused but as he was forbidden by the military to leave the immediate area around Ladysmith. He claimed £25.14 for damaged done to Kirkland of which only £7.16 was paid out. The church at Judith, between Helpmekaar and Dundee, sustained extensive damage. Windows, the door, the pulpit, the organ, chandeliers, lamps, and numerous other church items were either stolen or vandalised. Of the total claim of £181.8 only £135 was paid out because it was deemed that the damage was caused by both Boer and British forces.¹⁷¹

Towards the end of January 1902 Schoon again clashed with the military. A town guard was formed in Ladysmith and all white men were expected to join. Schoon did not want to do this since he feared that once he joined and had again taken the oath of allegiance, he could be employed to fight against his own people. Lt-Col GH Sim did not regard this as a legitimate excuse and on 17 March

166. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entries, 5.7.1900-13.1.1902, pp.386-758.

167. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 7.6.1900, p.353.

168. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entries, 25.12.1900, pp.538-539; 1.1.1901, pp.552-553.

169. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entries, 28.2.1901, p.589; 5.10.1901, p.703.

170. PAR, CSO 2926: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by DRC, Ladysmith, 25.7.1900.

171. PAR, CSO 2926: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by DRC, Ladysmith, 1.8.1902.

1902, Schoon was banned to Weenen to reside with Ds AM Murray. He could only return home on 30 June 1902, a month after the war had ended and when passes for travelling in Natal were no longer required.¹⁷²

Disruptions were also experienced by the Weenen DRC. By 31 December 1899 communication between the northern and southern sections of the congregation had been severed and was only re-established after the retreat of the Boers from Natal. Martial Law also made it difficult for Ds AM Murray to conduct his normal house visits during the early part of 1900 and he had to cancel his long leave.¹⁷³ The economic impact of the war also made it difficult for members of the congregation to pay their annual contributions. Despite their financial woes, the Weenen congregation managed to donate £15 to Ds Schoon for the costs incurred by the Ladysmith congregation for treating the Boer wounded from the Battle of Elandslaagte.¹⁷⁴

The greatest inconvenience suffered by the Weenen DRC was the damage and desecration by British soldiers to a church building located at the Little Tugela Bridge. Windows were smashed, chandeliers broken, organ notes ruined, the church silver and other odds and ends stolen, and in the pulpit Bible someone had written: "Cursed be the Dutch in all their doings." Murray, with considerable help from FR Moor (MLA), presented the matter to the military and the prime minister. Although the military camped about 500 metres from the church, they denied damaging the church and placed the blame on Africans or other ill-disposed people. Prime Minister Hime tasked Inspector Mardall of the Natal Police to investigate the matter. Predictably so the investigation failed to determine who caused the damage.

When informed about the damage to the church, Governor Hely-Hutchinson suggested that the Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission compensate the church to the value of 75% of its loss. He also, possibly in an attempt to remove the spotlight from the atrocity, asked that the loyalty of Murray and the two local deacons, HJ Hattingh and Hans van der Merwe, be investigated. This time around, Mardall had no difficulty in finding evidence. He described Murray, in spite of the fact that his son fought on the British side, as "a Boer sympathiser, and though unable to trace any act of disloyalty on his part, I am of opinion he is a person not to be trusted." Murray was also accused of "preaching seditious sermons" and of being "very intimate with the prisoners in Goal charged with high treason." What tainted Murray even further was the fact that he had attended the congress of the Afrikaner Bond in Worcester.¹⁷⁵ No evidence of disloyalty could be produced against Van der

172. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entries, 24.1.1902-30.6.1902, pp.762-830.

173. NGKA: Kerkraadsnotule, Weenen 1899-1902, (G70/14), pp.51-77.

174. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entries, 30.10.1899, p.37, 23.3.1900, p.242.

175. PAR, AGO I/8/77: Correspondence regarding the permission sought by Ds AM Murray to travel to the Cape Colony, 7.1.1901-7.2.1901.

Merwe, but Mardall regarded all the Afrikaners, almost all of them Van der Merwes, who resided in proximity of the church with suspicion. Likewise no tangible evidence of disloyalty was found against Hattingh and Attorney-General Bale consequently refused to prosecute him. In the end the Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission reimbursed the church to the value of £81.5.6.

This incident went a long way in showing up Natal colonial attitudes towards Natal Afrikaners as well as those of politicians like FR Moor who remained loyal towards their voters. The matter took all but ten months to be settled and in the margin of a letter from Murray to Moor, which was returned to the latter by the authorities after being submitted as evidence, the following remark was written by an official in the Natal civil service: "Mr Moor is very anti-English, and it is probable that he is making a good deal or mischief over this case." Moor took exception to this insult and with the support of Hime had it withdrawn.¹⁷⁶

Religious and pastoral work was also conducted by AM Murray for rebels incarcerated in the Weenen Prison, for those in the Eshowe Prison on 14 September 1901,¹⁷⁷ and for a period of a month in the concentration camp at Colenso.¹⁷⁸ With the approval and blessing of the Natal Burgher Camps Department, and his own congregation, Murray continued giving this service during May 1902 when the camp was moved to Pinetown.¹⁷⁹

The DRC congregation which suffered the least disruption was that of Greytown and as a result the church managed to continue functioning in an unhindered manner, that is apart from the six week period in late 1901 when Ds GS Malan and several leading members of the congregation were removed under Martial Law to Pietermaritzburg.¹⁸⁰ The war was generally not discussed during the church council meetings of the Greytown DRC. The meeting of 22 September 1900, however, was different since letters of brotherly love were sent to the sister congregations at Weenen, Ladysmith and Newcastle. The issue of the war was only raised again roughly a year later. At the meeting of 24 August 1901, S Martens suggested that a special collection be held so as to provide the "Afrikaansche gevangenen" in Pietermaritzburg with coffee.¹⁸¹

176. PAR, CSO 2590: Correspondence regarding the damage done to the DRC at Little Tugela River, 22.2.1900-28.11.1900; CSO 2926: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by DRC, Weenen, 28.5.1900.

177. OE Prozesky private collection, Diary of JJA Prozesky: Diary entry, 14.9.1901, p.525.

178. PAR, 1/WEN 3/2/3: Letter AM Murray to Magistrate M Matthews, 24.9.1900.

179. JM Wassermann, *The Pinetown Concentration Camp during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902)*, p.12 and pp.64-68.

180. PAR, PM 24: Letter TJ Nel to Prime Minister AH Hime, 30.10.1901.

181. NGKA: Kerkraadsnotule, Greytown, 1899-1902, (G30/1), ongenommer en pp.1-18. An area of study that falls beyond this thesis that needs further research concerns the relationship between Natal Afrikaners and the DRC, especially since almost all the congregations constantly faced financial problems and regularly lost members to English churches or to no church at all. Should such research be undertaken the class differentiation within the various congregations needs investigation.

Although not reflected in the minutes of the church council meetings, the Greytown congregation endlessly supported fellow Afrikaners who suffered due to the war. Firewood and other gifts were sent to the Pietermaritzburg Concentration Camp from time to time.¹⁸² Afrikaners in Northern Natal especially were recipients of charity from Greytown. On two occasions Ds Schoon received £5 from funds collected in Greytown for Afrikaners banned to Pietermaritzburg,¹⁸³ while foodstuffs were also forwarded to individual Afrikaners in need. In one such case Mrs JM Pieters of Paddafontein, Dundee, received a bag of flour, a pocket of sugar, a box of candles, and 20 pounds of coffee.¹⁸⁴ The Newcastle congregation also benefited from donations made by the Greytown Afrikaners. On 3 October 1900, 18 bags of flour, sugar, salt, rice, coffee, and soap arrived in the town. The military immediately confiscated the goods to prevent Afrikaners suspected of treason from distributing it. Requests by the Bosmans for the goods to be released did not sway the military. The provost marshal eventually used a wagon and members of the Natal Police to distribute the goods to the poorest of the poor amongst the Newcastle Afrikaners, some of whose clothes were in tatters and who were reduced to begging.¹⁸⁵

The most active DRC dominee was the elderly and sickly Ds WP Rousseau of the Pietermaritzburg congregation. Even before war broke out Rousseau attracted the attention of the authorities. In a despatch on 29 September 1899 to Joseph Chamberlain, Governor Hely-Hutchinson mentioned that: "A minister in the Dutch Reformed Church yesterday offered a gentleman of my acquaintance and his wife asylum in his parsonage which he said would be respected by the Boers when they capture Pietermaritzburg." Rousseau found it hard to believe that his comments, which were made in a "jocular" fashion in the privacy of his house, warranted a paragraph in an official despatch. According to Rousseau, when discussing the possibility of war with his English friends, he often made similar comments in jest.¹⁸⁶ Rousseau's explanation was attacked in a jingoistic letter by "Seriously Jocular" to the *Natal Witness*. The author failed to see the point of Rousseau's argument and preached "jocular confiscation of property, or disenfranchisement."¹⁸⁷

Whether the comments by Rousseau belied his true beliefs at the time, is difficult to determine, but he did rally to Afrikaners arriving in the town as POWs or suspected rebels. Less than two weeks after hostilities started Rousseau asked for permission to visit the POWs in the Pietermaritzburg Prison. This request had the support of Attorney-General Bale but the governor after consulting the military, denied Rousseau permission to visit any prisoners except the wounded.¹⁸⁸ This privilege

182. *De Kerkbode*, 13.6.1901.

183. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entries, 30.10.1899, p.37; 10.9.1900, p.442.

184. PAR, CSO 2898: Invasion Losses Commission: Claim by JM Pieters, 18.2.1901.

185. OE Prozesky private collection, Diary of JJA Prozesky: Diary entries, 3.10.1900-5.10.1900, pp.353-362.

186. *Natal Witness*, 15.3.1900.

187. *Natal Witness*, 16.3.1900.

188. PAR, CSO 1629: Application by WP Rousseau to visit Boer POWs, 22.10.1899-31.10.1899.

was, however, soon extended to include visiting rights to all POWs, including Natal Afrikaners sent down as suspected rebels.¹⁸⁹ From then on Rousseau held weekly prayer sessions, conducted the Sunday service and even buried a POW, Daniel du Plessis. Rousseau's wife and other ladies of the congregation provided coffee, tea, milk, cake and fruit, as well as a Sunday meal, for the POWs.¹⁹⁰

When the POWs, including some suspected Natal rebels, were transferred from Pietermaritzburg to the *Catalonia* anchored off the coast at Durban, Rousseau secured permission and a first class return rail ticket to visit these prisoners. Not only did Rousseau conduct religious services, but he also took gifts and money for some of the men. At the same time he continued attending to the spiritual needs of his own congregation, the wounded POWs in Pietermaritzburg, and when he buried a second one, Van Leggelo, his wife made a Transvaal flag to cover the coffin.¹⁹¹ Such a pro-Republican statement did not go down well with the military and he was accused of breaking the regulations when visiting the prisoners on board the *Catalonia*. At the same time, "A Loyal English Woman", in a letter to the governor, accused Rousseau of disloyalty and of having ammunition hidden in cases labelled milk.¹⁹² As a result of these accusations his permission to visit the prisoners and the free rail ticket were revoked.¹⁹³

It could rightfully be assumed that Rousseau's visiting rights were repealed because of growing anti-British sentiments that were possibly reflected in his sermons. The most possible cause of this was the death of Philip Cronjé in the Greenpoint POW Camp. Cronjé held a prayer meeting every night at a place near the camp fence where he could get enough light. On 30 April 1900, while the group was singing, a sentry gave an order to the group to move away from the fence. They did not hear the order and Cronjé was shot. The death of Cronjé touched Rousseau deeply. So much so that he wrote a poem, "De Dood van Cronjé", the first verse of which is quoted below:¹⁹⁴

Hebt gij gehoord van den dood van den jongen Cronjé?
Hy sneuvelde in Groene Punt Kamp
Met zyn Byebel in hand, toen hy daar langs den draad
Stond te zingen by't licht van den lamp.

Rousseau was, however, allowed to continue his religious work among the Natal rebels imprisoned in Pietermaritzburg which he continued doing until all the rebels were released under the general amnesty of 1903. As was the case with the POWs, Rousseau tirelessly tried to improve their lot. He

189. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 7.6.1900, p.353.

190. *De Kerkbode*, 19.4.1900.

191. *De Kerkbode*, 17.5.1900.

192. PAR, AGO I/7/40: Documents on the proceedings of and the investigation into WP Rousseau, 11.12.1899-16.12.1899.

193. PAR, MJPW 76: Withdrawal of permission to WP Rousseau to visit the *Catalonia*, 30.6.1900-4.7.1900.

194. NGKA: B 34, Poem, *De Dood van Cronjé*, 11.12.1902.

organised that they receive coffee, sugar and milk and on one occasion even bought £1 worth of meat out of his own pocket and had it cooked and divided amongst the 74 rebels.¹⁹⁵ In turn Mrs Rousseau also managed to alleviate the needs of some of the rebels with the donations she received from the Cape Colony.¹⁹⁶

Rousseau also ran into problems while attending to the spiritual needs of suspected Natal rebels. The trouble was caused by a pamphlet he distributed in prison entitled “Our beloved South Africa in tears” by “One sorely afflicted”. Not only did the pamphlet offer spiritual comfort but Britain was also abused under a religious guise with phrases such as “...Great Britain has, during recent years viewed the Transvaal Goldfields with envious eyes.” The distribution resulted in a full-blown investigation followed by a serious warning to Rousseau that if it happened again he would be charged with treason. WP Rousseau expressed his regret at distributing the pamphlet, but his apology did not lead to the restoration of the privileges he earlier held.¹⁹⁷

Because of his devotion to the spiritual needs of the rebels, the latter held him in extremely high regard. Two group photographs of convicted Natal rebels taken on 1 February 1902, in the Pietermaritzburg Prison, were given to Rousseau as a “Geschenk van de Politieke Gevangenen te Pietermaritzburg.”¹⁹⁸

The third group of prisoners whom Rousseau served were the concentration camp inhabitants. He visited the camps at Howick,¹⁹⁹ Eshowe,²⁰⁰ Colenso,²⁰¹ Pinetown,²⁰² Merebank,²⁰³ Jacobs, Wentworth²⁰⁴ and Pietermaritzburg²⁰⁵ to conduct services, lead prayer meetings, distribute clothes and money, organise religious associations, and provide general guidance.

195. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 19.7.1900, p.403.

196. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 25.4.1900, p.303.

197. PAR, MJPW 77: Investigation into the pamphlet distributed by WP Rousseau to Natal rebels in the Pietermaritzburg Prison, 14.8.1900-21.8.1900. Ironically enough the grandson of Rousseau, Garth Petzer, currently serves in the Royal Navy as a chaplain. Correspondence via e-mail with G Petzer, 12.10.1999.

198. NAR, photographs 7163 and 7164: Veroordeelde rebellen in de gevangenis te Pietermaritzburg, 1.2.1902. An extensive collection of individual photographs of rebels is to be found in the CF Leipoldt collection in the South African National Library (hereafter SANL) in Cape Town. See SALN, BRN 1/5/3: INIL 3819-3889. The only way these photographs could have found their way to this collection was via Rousseau who was a friend of Leipoldt. A file in the PAR, CSO 2584, marked secret, which should have contained a letter dated, 20.11.1899, from CF Leipoldt to WP Rousseau contains no documents at all.

199. PAR, PM 88: Letter Camp Commandant Struben to Hurst, 28.2.1901.

200. JM Wassermann, *The Eshowe...*, pp.56-57.

201. JM Wassermann, *The Pinetown...*, p.12.

202. JM Wassermann, *The Pinetown...*, pp.64-68.

203. *De Kerkbode*, 12.12.1901.

204. *De Kerkbode*, 5.6.1902.

205. *De Kerkbode*, 4.4.1901; *De Kerkbode*, 13.6.1901; *De Kerkbode*, 12.12.1901. All these articles were written by Rousseau and are characterized by the manner in which he under plays his work.

Probably the most fitting tribute to the work done by Rousseau comes from Missionary Prozesky: “Brother Rousseau a short squarely build man the right constitution for work, indefatigable...He has died but he lives in the memory of so many; thousands in the prisons, in the refugee camps saw him, saw his engaging way, and heard his words which breathed Christian love. What blessings this man scattered cannot be expressed.”²⁰⁶

8.5 Concluding comments

In terms of conditions under Martial Law in Natal Missionary JJA Prozesky probably best sums up the perception of the Afrikaner community: “England is most merciful - that is towards England” while Afrikaners were persecuted.²⁰⁷ HF Schoon took an ever dimmer view of the conditions and felt that the war was not against the Republics *per se* but against Afrikaners in general.²⁰⁸

Support for the sentiments of Prozesky and Schoon came from John M Robertson, a pro-Boer and the author of *Wrecking the Empire*. After a visit to Natal facilitated, by Schoon and other Afrikaners in Northern Natal,²⁰⁹ he reported on “The reign of terror in Natal” in *The Morning Leader* illustrating his articles with a detailed description and photographs of the destroyed farm Snelster of Mrs MJ Zietsman near Estcourt. According to Robertson, the military assisted by Africans “destroyed 85 young fruit trees, cut down and removed miles of fencing and took all the stock, consisting of 450 cattle, 500 sheep, and 100 goats; all the pigs and poultry; and all the forage including 100 muds of mealies. The house itself was gutted of all its doors and windows, and woodwork...” Robertson then provided a detailed account of the looting and death threats that some Afrikaners in the Estcourt area had to endure resulting in some of them fleeing the district. He claimed that in other areas hundreds of Afrikaners were arrested on false accusations. He explains these actions by giving three reasons: “(1) the animal malice of most colonials and too many imperial officers and soldiers towards the Dutch in lump; (2) the gross credulity which tends to go with malice; and (3) sheer lack of common sense and common caution among the authorities of all grades.” Robertson followed up his article with a series of public meetings in London.²¹⁰

The manner in which the Natal authorities reacted to the statements made by Robertson probably served to substantiate it. The Natal Government firstly requested a report from Magistrate RH Addison of Estcourt on Mrs Zietsman. In his report Addison admitted that Zietsman’s house was completely destroyed after she had left it on 26 November 1899 in the face of the British advance.

206. OE Prozesky private collection, Diary of JJA Prozesky: Diary entry, 4.11.1900, p.444.

207. OE Prozesky private collection, Diary of JJA Prozesky: Diary entry, 26.5.1900, p.207.

208. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 14.8.1901, p.672.

209. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Letter HF Schoon to JHF Meyer, 24.9.1900.

210. *The Morning Leader*, 14.12.1900 and 15.12.1900. Robertson’s statements caused an intense debate in *Pall Mall Gazette* of 18 and 20.12.1900 and *The Times* of 20.12.1900.

He suspected that it was done by Colonial and British troops. The magistrate furthermore explained that one of Mrs Zietsman's sons had been sentenced as a rebel while the other two were still absent from the district. Her brothers, Hendrik and Christiaan Hattingh, were also missing from the district.

This report was, in his official contradiction of Robertson's article, masterfully turned into a piece of counter-propaganda by Prime Minister Hime. He pointed to the rebellious activities of the sons of Mrs Zietsman as well as that of her brothers. He then continued to twist Addison's report to suit his agenda: "I am informed that Snelster was looted when our troops advanced from Frere by troops or whether by natives is not known." Hime then proceeded to, apart from the Africans, introduce another possible culprit - the rebels of the area: "The occurrence took place just after the looting of several farms belonging to British Colonists by Natal rebels and others of the enemy, and though much to be regretted, is scarcely surprising." Hime went on to deny any malice shown towards Natal Afrikaners by British Colonists, who according to him, at times even testified in favour of Afrikaners during rebel trials.²¹¹ Like a modern day "political spin doctor" Hime denied all accusations of maltreatment of his Afrikaner subjects, suggested alternative culprits, and attempted to claim the moral high ground. With such political leadership on the one side, and the military on the other, Natal Afrikaner civilians stood very little chance under Martial Law as is borne out by the following statement referring to PRN Vermaak of Helpmekaar, then a teacher in the Pietermaritzburg Concentration Camp: "The head teacher is a young man, a British subject who did not fight, but it was though best for the Empire that he should live in a goal, and so he did for eight months. He still thinks, poor man that he should have been charged with some offence and tried, but this is a vain thought..."²¹²

The destruction and Martial Law experiences as outlined above are rooted within the total war that gripped Southern Africa, including Natal from late 1900 onwards. When the enemy, in this case the Boers, could not be found, civilians had to bear the brunt as a war of low intensity moved to a front that encompassed socio-political, economic, and human aspects. For the civilians caught up in this it looked like an all out assault on them. All in all it was a counter-productive way to wage a war since everything which had been destroyed, including physical structures and relationships, would eventually have to be rebuilt.²¹³

211. PAR, PM 20: Correspondence regarding the agitating by JM Robertson that Mrs Zietsman suffered at the hands of British colonists, 15.12.1900-17.12.1900.

212. NAR, A 2030, 98: A South African diary - reprinted from the *Daily News*, no date.

213. E Schmidl, *The position of the Anglo-Boer War in the 'Century of Peace' (1815-1914)*. Lecture delivered on 19.2.2004, UP.