

CHAPTER 13

THE END AND THE BEGINNING - THE AFTERMATH OF THE ANGLO-BOER WAR

The peace treaty of Vereeniging signed by the Boer Republics and Great Britain, on 31 May 1902, brought the Anglo-Boer War to an end. The plight of Natal Afrikaners, unlike at the peace negotiations between Botha and Kitchener at Middelburg in February 1901, hardly featured in the treaty. Consequently, and because of the unflinching attitude of the Natal Government, Natal rebels received no concessions. Although the question of rebels remained foremost on the agenda for the Natal Government, they also faced other post-war questions such as the smooth incorporation of several Transvaal districts into the Colony, and how to reconcile with their alienated Afrikaner subjects. In this unequal power relationship, the Natal Afrikaners had no voice and were at the mercy of their government.

13.1 Geo-political changes in Natal and their impact on Natal Afrikaners

Towards the end of 1901 the Natal Government requested that the Transvaal districts of Vryheid and Utrecht in total, parts of the Wakkerstroom district, and the whole of the OFS districts of Vrede and Harrismith, be transferred to the Colony. The rationale for this request was “the close connection, commercial, agricultural, social and familial” that existed between the residents of these districts and Natal. With reference to the OFS districts a guarantee was given that “the increase of the Dutch electorate, tempered by the large British population of the town of Harrismith, would not appreciably affect the predominance of British sentiment of the electorate or the Parliament of the Colony.” The suggested transfer of the two districts was nevertheless opposed by the lieutenant-governor of the Free State, Hamilton Goold-Adams, who feared a “lasting grievance”, and that the anti-British sentiment in Natal would be strengthened by 15 000 Free Staters. These arguments convinced Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain who, on 8 March 1902, quashed the idea of the two Free State districts becoming part of Natal.¹

The position of the Transvaal districts was viewed as historically different. Most of these areas had been part of Zululand before they were annexed to the New Republic in 1884, and incorporated into the Transvaal in 1887. The return of the Vryheid and Utrecht districts, as well as part of the Wakkerstroom district, was the objective of many Natal politicians and had been discussed between High Commissioner Milner and Chamberlain as early as November 1899. While the territorial expansion of Natal at the cost of the OFS failed, the “Northern Districts”, as the areas became known, were transferred to Natal.² This ruling was formalised by Natal Act 39 of 1902, the so-called Annexation Bill,

1. Cd. 941: Further correspondence with regards to proposed addition of territory, pp.2-10.

2. EH Brookes and C de B Webb, p.211.

which was introduced and carried through by the Legislative Assembly on 12 May 1902.³ After much debate, the Representative Bill was passed on 19 May 1902. This gave the new districts representation in the Legislative Council, as well as four seats in the Legislative Assembly, two each to Vryheid and Utrecht.⁴ The formal transfer of these districts to Natal were ratified by the Imperial authorities at end of 1902 which completed the process.

The addition of the Transvaal districts increased the geographical size of Natal by 25%, and its population by 60 000. Approximately 10 000 of these citizens were white, most of them Afrikaners. Although the addition of these Afrikaners to the population of Natal did not alter the English dominance, it did add a different dimension to being a Natal Afrikaner, especially regarding cultural and political life.⁵

Despite the increase in Afrikaner Republican-orientated voters, the Natal authorities had a clear vision of the future of Natal Afrikaner political life. In a short visit to the Umvoti and Weenen districts, Governor McCallum, recommended cooperation, subordination of racial feelings, and personal sacrifice for the common good of all.⁶ Reconciliation was thus considered a duty of the conquered group. Initially the Natal Afrikaners, as defeated people, seemed to resign themselves to their inferior political position,⁷ which resulted in slow political recovery. The assertion of Natal Afrikaners in the political field was at first felt in small events and acts by individuals rather than large scale happenings. One such event involved LL Nel, a Greytown businessman, who wanted to erect a wood and iron building. To achieve this he submitted a plan and explanatory letter in Dutch to the Greytown Local Board. The board, on two occasions, informed Nel that his application would only be considered once it had been translated into English.⁸ Nel found this unacceptable and had a letter written on his behalf, in English, to PUS Bird making it clear that he could not communicate in English and had always corresponded in Dutch without encountering any resistance. He asked Bird: "Will you do me a favour to inform me whether I am compelled by law to use English, or whether the law permits me to use my mother tongue when dealing with public bodies?" The Natal Government neatly sidestepped the question by saying it had no control over the Greytown Local Board and could therefore not advise Nel.⁹

In a similar incipient nationalistic vein a letter to *De Afrikaner* warned Afrikaner parents to be careful

3. PAR, PM 28: Draft bill annexation of the Vryheid, Utrecht and parts of Wakkerstroom districts, 5.5.1902.

4. EH Brookes and C de B Webb, pp.211-212.

5. *Ibid.*

6. One of the few who attended was the local dominee, GS Malan. PAR, PM 117: Letter Secretary GT Plowman to GS Malan, 4.6.1902.

7. PAR, PM 117: Letter Secretary GT Plowman to GS Malan, 4.6.1902.

8. PAR, CSO 1727: Letters Greytown Town Clerk AA Duff to LL Nel, 18-19.12.1902.

9. PAR, CSO 1727: Correspondence between PUS C Bird and LL Nel, 9.3.1903-17.3.1903.

about what their children were taught in schools, especially since some textbooks contained false statements. He/she cited *Natal the land and its story. A Geography and History for the use of schools* which stated that the Boers had lost six guns to the British at Elandslaagte, as an example. According to the correspondent this information was “an infamous lie”, and no mention was made of the maxim taken from the British by the Boers. He also expressed the hope that the government would see that the Colony’s history “...is not taught in this way.” Superintendent of Education Mudie, when informed about the complaint, accepted the statement as untrue and circulated a correction to all the government schools,¹⁰ handing the Natal Afrikaners a small victory.

President SJP Kruger’s funeral on 16 December 1904, in a small way, also served to keep the political flame alive amongst Natal Afrikaners. Several requests from Natal Afrikaners for permits to attend the funeral were initially rejected. The colonial secretary, however, realising the potential political danger of preventing Natal Afrikaners from attending, intervened and ordered that “no obstacle should be put in the way of persons desiring to attend the funeral.”¹¹

Natal Afrikaners also showed their political colours in other ways by failing to attend either the coronation celebration or the thanksgiving for peace, held in June 1902 in Greytown.¹² However, when General Louis Botha visited the area prior to his trip to Europe, the Afrikaners gave him an enthusiastic reception. Such incidents angered Governor McCallum who, rather than try and understand the feelings of his Afrikaner subjects, commented with reference to the north-south divide amongst Natal Afrikaners, that Umvoti was one of the few Afrikaner dominated districts which had not suffered directly because of the war but remained prosperous and as a result did not know how to submit to force. Loyalty was thus a facade. In the view of McCallum, Natal Afrikaners with anti-British sentiments were “only a fraction of the population” and with time and patience they would come around.¹³

McCallum’s prediction proved to be incorrect and the majority of Natal Afrikaners did not “come around.” Ironically enough a political revival did not take place in the prosperous and politicized Umvoti county which had escaped war, but in war-torn Northern Natal. The resuscitation of the Boereverenigings, initially to deal with issues such as dissatisfaction surrounding the Derelict Stock Fund, paved the way for the political awakening of the Natal Afrikaner who formed the Het Kongres

10. PAR, CSO 1777: Minute paper regarding the communication from *De Afrikaner* on a statement in *Russell’s Natal*, 20.12.1904-16.12.1902; R Russell, *Natal the land and its story. A geography and history for the use of schools*, p.303.

11. NAR, CS 549: Telegram Natal colonial secretary to High Commissioner A Milner, 8.12.1904.

12. PAR, PM 117: Letter Secretary GT Plowman to GS Malan, 4.6.1902.

13. PRO, CO 179/224: Letter Governor HE McCallum to Colonial Secretary J Chamberlain, 16.8.1902.

which, by the time of Union in 1910, was “a well organised political body.” As an active supporter of the Union it became the Natal wing of the South African Party.¹⁴ The majority of Natal Afrikaners remained supporters of this party until 1948, first under the leadership of the Natal-born Louis Botha, and then under General JC Smuts. Parallel to the above mentioned political developments, however, a much more specific Afrikaner identity started to evolve in South Africa, including in Natal. This was inspired by the policies of General JBM Hertzog which promoted the cultural identity and political rights of the Afrikaner.¹⁵ This incipient Afrikaner nationalism gained momentum when the first branch of the National Party in Natal was founded in Dundee in 1915 at a meeting attended by more than 100 people. The prevalent mood of the time was captured by John Dafel who stated that the struggle was one of “Nationalisme vs. Imperialism.”¹⁶ But it took several decades before the Republican ideas of the National Party would triumph anywhere in Natal. This finally happened in 1948 when GF Fullard and JS Labuschagne, both members of the Afrikaner Party then in coalition with the National Party, were elected as members of Parliament for Vryheid and Klip River respectively.¹⁷ In time the tide turned even further and pro-Republican candidates were also elected in other Natal constituencies demographically dominated by Natal Afrikaners. On 31 May 1961, when South Africa became a Republic, Republican domination which had been lost in 1843 with the annexation of Natal by Britain, was restored.

13.2 Dealing with the rebels

In terms of the relationship between the Natal Afrikaners and their government, one of the most pressing issues both parties had to deal with was that of the rebels. For the Natal Government, like similar to the rebel trials earlier, the post-war handling of imprisoned and suspected rebels was not so much a matter of resolving the issue, but rather about the right to manage their subjects in an autonomous manner.

Certain rebel-related matters, such as the requests by rebel prisoners to be transferred to prisons closer to their homes, could be dealt with without any interference from London. The Natal Government's policy on this matter, as spelt out on 13 May 1902 by Prime Minister Hime, was clear: “In all cases refuse these requests without bringing them before me, unless there is something very special which needs consideration.” Peace was no sooner restored when Gert van Rooyen challenged this policy. He asked the main political protagonist for Afrikaner rights, FR Moor (MLA), to investigate the removal of rebel prisoners from Eshowe to Pietermaritzburg. As always, Moor rallied to the support of the Afrikaners and raised the issue of the 43 rebels still imprisoned in Eshowe. It was agreed that the

14. AJ van Wyk, *Press, public and politics in Natal 1910-1915*, paper presented at a workshop on Natal and the Union 1910-1938, UNP, 1978, p.16.

15. O Geyser and AH Marais (eds), *Die Nasionale Party, Deel 1*, pp.74-132.

16. *Ibid*, pp.180-184.

17. JM Wassermann, *Die stryd om setels en kandidate tussen die Herenigde Nasionale Party en die Afrikanerparty voor die*

prisoners could be removed to the Pietermaritzburg Prison but the decision was thwarted by the chief commissioner of police who argued that there was insufficient space in the central prison. More importantly the commissioner felt that this would be giving in to the prisoners who had similar requests turned down in the past. Moor strongly disagreed and contended that since hostilities had ended “the political prisoners should be treated as fairly as possible and those who apply to be removed from Eshowe to the Pietermaritzburg Prison or other goal in the Natal Province should have their application granted where room is available.” Moor’s point of view which was supported by the foremost Natal humanitarian of the time, Harriette Colenso,¹⁸ won the day and the cabinet decided to consider the application of each prisoner who wished to leave Eshowe, on merit.¹⁹

Consequently a small number of rebel prisoners were transferred as requested from Eshowe to either Pietermaritzburg or Ladysmith. The application of those who wanted to be transferred to smaller prisons were less successful, as in the case of AC Vermaak, CS Botha and PJ Meyer who were refused a transfer to the Greytown Prison because of the lack of accommodation due to alterations.²⁰ Likewise, the applications of CP Cronjé and JJ de Jager to be relocated from Eshowe to Dundee were not granted because all European prisoners in Northern Natal were at that stage centralised at Ladysmith. Since only Africans were imprisoned in Dundee it meant that a separate cell and a white warden would have to be appointed for one or two prisoners.²¹ JJ Dekker who was serving a seven-year sentence, received the worst treatment. All three applications on his behalf to be transferred to Pietermaritzburg were rejected. The reasons offered for this refusal ranged from an overcrowded Pietermaritzburg Prison to the fact that the PWD needed prisoners who were sentenced to hard labour to work on projects. Since Dekker did not fit into either of these categories, he could not be transferred.²²

uring the same period the Natal authorities received requests from mothers, parents, other family members, and English neighbours, for the release of rebels from prison. These requests ranged from letters to a petition signed by 59 people calling for the release of the rebel leader, DC Uys. All these appeals, in line with their policy of not releasing rebels prior to the completion of their sentences, were

algemene verkiesing van 1948, MA-thesis, UOFS, 1998, p.242.

18. PAR, Colenso collection A 204, 39: Letter CW Havemann to Harriette Colenso, 28.8.1902; Letter Secretary GT Plowman to Harriette Colenso, 3.9.1902.

19. PAR, MJPW 94: Correspondence regarding the removal of several prisoners from Eshowe Prison, 13.5.1902-23.7.1902.

20. PAR, Colenso collection A 204, 74: Letter Harriette Colenso to Sir, 29.9.1902; PAR, Colenso collection A 204, 39: Letter Secretary GT Plowman to Harriette Colenso, 7.10.1902.

21. PAR, MJPW 96: Application on behalf of CP Cronjé to be transferred from Eshowe to Dundee Prison, 20.8.1902-8.9.1902.

22. PAR, MJPW 97: Applications on behalf of JJ Dekker to be transferred from Eshowe to Pietermaritzburg Prison, 18.8.1902-4.11.1902.

rejected by the Natal Government.²³

At the same time other minor rebel-related issues surfaced. Convicted rebel PJ Meyer, for example, requested copies of the depositions made against him as he wanted to clear his name,²⁴ while FM Colling insisted that the documents he handed in at his trial be returned to him.²⁵ HA Potgieter appealed to have the case against him reopened as he felt he was convicted on false evidence.²⁶ These requests invariably had little success. The case of PJ Cromhout was, however, different. He was sentenced to a £50 fine or a three month prison sentence. As he had served 20 days before paying the fine, he managed to secure a refund of £10.17.4.²⁷

Part of the problem the Natal rebels faced was that unlike the Cape rebels on whose behalf General JBM Hertzog campaigned, no politician or military commander seriously fought for their rights.²⁸ The reason for this was simply that they were insignificant in number compared to the Cape rebels, and other post-war issues were simply more important than the rebel issue. Furthermore, the most likely candidate to speak on behalf of the Natal rebels, General Louis Botha, was otherwise occupied in the political landscape which emerged after the war. This meant that both the suspected and convicted Natal rebels were left to their own devices and the mercy of the Natal Government.

The point of departure for both the Natal Government and the English colonists had always been that Natal Afrikaners guilty of high treason should be punished by a court of law. This inflexible attitude, which failed to consider objectively the circumstances which led to rebellion, was one of the reasons for the failure of the peace negotiations between Botha and Kitchener on 28 February 1901. While Kitchener was prepared to give the rebels amnesty,²⁹ the Natal authorities had found a powerful ally in High Commissioner Milner, who for his own reasons, wanted to see the rebels punished “according to the laws of the Colony.”³⁰

23. PAR, PM 118: Letter Secretary GT Plowman to Mrs Kritzinger (jnr), no date; PAR, PM 118: Petition by the brothers of JA van Rooyen for his release from prison, 9.6.1902; PAR, 1/UTR 3/3/1: Petition for the release of DC Uys, 20.11.1902-15.12.1902; PAR, PM 32: Application for the release of PR Buys, 12.9.1902-20.9.1902; PAR, PM 32: Application for the release of AC Vermaak, 2.9.1902; PAR, PM 31: Application by Mrs JM Robbertse (jnr) for the release of her husband, 22.8.1902-25.8.1902; PAR, PM 30: Application by TB Tweedie for the release of CF Marais, 15.7.1902-17.7.1902.

24. PAR, AGO I/8/89: Letter Griffin and Muller to attorney-general, 9.4.1903.

25. PAR, AGO I/9/23: Letter Unknown to FM Colling, 14.10.1903.

26. PAR, AGO I/8/89: Correspondence between HA Potgieter and the attorney-general's office regarding his conviction for high treason, 16.5.1903-14.11.1902.

27. PAR, AGO I/8/85: Correspondence with reference to the fine of £50 imposed on PJ Cromhout, 17.9.1902-30.10.1902.

28. PW Vorster, General J.B.M Hertzog as kampvegter vir die Kaapse Rebelle 1902-1903, *Historia*, 35 (2), November 1990, pp. 20-37.

29. T Pakenham, pp.508-512.

30. LS Amery (ed.), *Times History... Vol. IV*, p.554; SB Spies, p.209.

Just over a year later in May 1902, with peace talks in the air, the issue of how to treat rebels still on a free footing, was raised again. Governor McCallum recommended that such rebels receive a prison sentence not exceeding two years and disenfranchisement for life.³¹ The Natal Cabinet however dug in their heels and rejected McCallum's suggestion.³² As stated earlier, autonomy was paramount for the Natal Government and so they would not agree to the more favourable conditions suggested by Kitchener, but were determined to keep to those proposed in February 1901.³³ It stood firm on its policy that Natal Afrikaner rebels either in prison or still on free footing, would not be pardoned and would "have to take their chance under ordinary law."³⁴

The Natal Government proved to be a minor role player and hardly featured in the affairs surrounding the peace negotiations. As a result a certain amount of confusion existed regarding the plight of Natal rebels. Matters were further complicated when, within days of peace being signed, the Natal authorities received the following telegram from Lord Kitchener: "I would personally consider it a great favour if your Ministers would grant clemency to Natal rebels who were forced to join the enemy when the Boers occupied Natal, when they had no adequate protection, on the same line as the Cape are according to their rebels, viz:- disenfranchisement for life." This telegram was the result of informal discussions held during the peace negotiations since the rebel question was avoided and no reference was made to it in the terms of the peace agreement. Governor McCallum informed High Commissioner Milner, Colonial Secretary Chamberlain, and Kitchener, on behalf of the Natal Government that they could not adhere to the latter's request, and stood firm in their earlier decision, namely - no clemency for rebels since it would be unjust to those already convicted and furthermore, they wanted to treat "rebellion as rebellion."³⁵

Confusion thus reigned in terms of the Natal policy regarding rebels. Matters only became clearer when General Schalk Burger explained during his visits to the Natal Concentration Camps and the Umbilo POW Camp in early June 1902, that Natal rebels, should they return to the Colony, would be punished in accordance with the ordinary laws, while in the Cape Colony they would be disenfranchised for life if they pleaded guilty.³⁶ With bigger issues at stake, Milner, Kitchener and the Imperial authorities had outmaneuvered the Natal Government by substituting a hard-line policy with a more moderate one and

31. PRO, CO 179/223: Confidential despatch Governor HE McCallum to Prime Minister AH Hime, 1.5.1902.

32. PRO, CO 179/223: Confidential despatch Governor HE McCallum to High Commissioner A Milner, 3.5.1902.

33. PRO, CO 179/223: Extract Natal minister's minute, 2.5.1902.

34. T Pakenham p.563.

35. PAR, GH 1304 and 497: Confidential despatch Governor HE McCallum to Lord Kitchener, 5.6.1902; PRO, CO 179/223: Letter Governor HE McCallum to Colonial Secretary J Chamberlain, 7.6.1902.

36. PAR, CO 179/223: Speech delivered by General SW Burger at Howick Concentration Camp, 5.6.1902.

they used Schalk Burger to make this public.

Intervening in the process in this manner resulted in chaos within the ranks of the Natal authorities. They themselves were now uncertain of the real position of the rebels, while the attorney-general, who had to oversee the prosecution of rebels, the magistrates who had to try them, and the police who had to arrest them, were equally unsure what the official position of their government was.³⁷

One Natal official who did understand the meaning of: "It has been arranged that Natal rebels who are surrendering will not be proceeded against unless they re-enter Natal",³⁸ was Governor HE McCallum. According to him the decisions made by the Natal Government were based on ignorance regarding the decision taken about rebels at the peace conference. The Natal Government was therefore taken aback by the above quoted statement, dated 17 June 1902, since they were not been informed that rebels could reside in the former Republics without fear of prosecution. As a result they asked for an explanation from the high commissioner. Milner replied: "I do not think it would be impolitic to endeavour to bring down into the Colony of Natal rebels who have surrendered without it." Though no pledge was given in this respect it was certainly assumed in the discussions that Lord Kitchener's proposal as contained in his letter to General Louis Botha of the 7th March 1901, would hold good and that the Colonial rebels would not be forced to return to their respective Colonies. If, however, they did so it would be at their own risk."³⁹

Milner admitted to McCallum that although he regarded the treatment of rebels by Natal as sound and correct, it was in the best interest of all to yield to a point which the Boer leaders attached considerable importance to, namely an acceptable post-war settlement for Natal and Cape rebels. At the same time he felt: "It would be well now to wind up this rebel business sharp." It therefore became the duty of Governor McCallum, who understood what was at stake was a South African issue and not merely a Natal one, to convince the Natal Government of his point of view. His task was made easier by the fact that Prime Minister Hime was on holiday in Britain and the acting prime minister was FR Moor, renowned for his sympathy towards Natal Afrikaners. McCallum wanted the slate to be cleaned in terms of the rebels, and that they should not be "allowed to live on our borders in daily communication with their friends in the Colony and, exiled from their homes, be an ever present sore prejudicial to the re-establishment of peace, good order an unity."⁴⁰

37. PAR, AGO I/8/85: Request by the attorney-general that his department be informed of the official policy regarding rebels, 23.6.1902-30.6.1902; PAR, PM 92: Letter Magistrate M Matthews, Dundee, to FR Moor, 24.7.1902.

38. PAR, GH 545: Enquiry by GOC, Natal about Natal rebels in the Vryheid and Utrecht districts, 13.6.1902-25.6.1902.

39. PRO CO 179/223: Letter Governor HE McCallum to Colonial Secretary J Chamberlain, 26.7.1902.

40. PRO, CO 179/223: Letter Governor HE McCallum to Colonial Secretary J Chamberlain, 26.7.1902.

Governor McCallum's task was not an easy one. The Natal Cabinet was adamant that they wanted to maintain the right to punish their own subjects. They felt their autonomy was at stake and Imperial concerns paled in significance. The Natal Cabinet ironically not only received support for their stance from the English colonists, but also from the Natal Afrikaners in the Dundee district who were either themselves punished for rebellious activities, or who had suffered economic losses to Boer commandos who included rebels. According to the local magistrate:

The whisper which is going round of pardon to all these men who have hung out to the end of the war, is causing great dissatisfaction amongst the English, Dutch, and natives. The Boers who have been punished and allowed to return to their farms, and the relations of those who are still in the Maritzburg Goal, denounce the very suggestion of forgiveness of those who held out to the end, as a terrible injustice to those who surrendered under General Buller's first proclamation. They say that the imprisonment which they had suffered cannot now be undone, but that they will use every effort in their power to secure the return of the fine imposed on them by the Special Court.⁴¹

Such sentiments did not deter McCallum and to bring the Natal Cabinet round to the Imperial point of view, he had numerous discussions with Moor regarding the procedure which should be adopted. During these negotiations the Natal Government agreed that they wanted to secure good order as soon as possible and remove any evidence of rebellion which tore the Colony apart. In the process Moor came to realise that the undertaking given to the Boer delegates at Vereeniging was much more binding than originally thought and that justice demanded that rank and file rebels who were in prison should be released immediately as an act of royal clemency. This in turn would become the lever for inducing rebels outside of Natal, trusting that the same clemency would be extended to them, to come in and stand trial. As a result the Natal Government, on 2 July 1902, agreed on the principle that the governor could remit the unexpired periods of all rebel sentences of two years and under. The government, however, felt that clemency should not be exercised in more serious cases and that nothing should be done to prejudice the position of ringleaders and rebels still at large. To bring the rebels not yet apprehended in, General Louis Botha was invited to discussions with McCallum and Moor. Botha was, however, not prepared to commit himself to persuade the rebels still at large to surrender if amnesty was not offered. As he was on the verge of leaving for Europe, the initiative of the Natal Government to use Botha as bait to bring in the rebels still at large, failed.⁴²

This inability to secure the full support of Louis Botha set the process of dealing with the rebels back, and Attorney-General GA De R Labistour therefore made it clear that he intended to proceed against

41. PAR, PM 92: Letter Magistrate M Matthews, Dundee, to FR Moor, 24.7.1902.

42. PRO, CO 179/223: Letter Governor HE McCallum to Colonial Secretary J Chamberlain, 26.7.1902.

every suspected rebel who returned to Natal in the exact same way and along exactly the same lines as those who had already been tried.⁴³ The Natal Government dug its heels in and passed Act 22 of 1902 and Act 35 of 1902, both of which confirmed all sentences passed by military courts, and indemnified the governor and the military in regard to acts committed during the existence of Martial Law.⁴⁴ As a result the Royal Commission of Enquiry, appointed by the Imperial Government to investigate sentences passed under Martial Law, found itself in a dilemma as far as Natal was concerned for it was now improper to revise sentences which had already been confirmed by the Natal Parliament.⁴⁵ Governor McCallum therefore suggested that there was no reason for the commission to sit in Natal.⁴⁶

Colonial Secretary Chamberlain in the meantime was worried that McCallum was bullying the Natal Government into advocating clemency for rebels,⁴⁷ and had to be assured by Alfred Milner that the proposed policy which was “a good way out of a awkward situation” (*sic*), was based on a suggestion by the Natal Government. Milner therefore posed the critical question to Chamberlain: “Do you approve this policy?”⁴⁸

Chamberlain was not quite ready to support the policy, mainly because of the problems the Royal Commission of Enquiry was facing. The indemnity laws which were passed made the work of this commission obsolete in Natal as it could only review sentences passed after 10 June 1902, in other words sentences not covered by the laws. The Natal Government, in passing these laws, and remitting the sentences of seven Natal Afrikaners convicted of high treason by court martial, greatly undermined the commission and angered London.⁴⁹ The matter was only resolved after lengthy correspondence between McCallum and Chamberlain when Natal authorities relented and allowed the Royal Commission of Enquiry to sit in Pietermaritzburg on 30 September 1902.⁵⁰

Only once this permission had been granted did Chamberlain agree, on 2 August 1902, to the proposed policy of clemency whereby Governor McCallum could under Royal Instructions and Letters Patent, on advice and under recommendation of the ministers, pardon rebels convicted by courts other than

43. PAR, GH 1304: Memorandum regarding Natal rebels by Attorney-General GA De R Labistour, 29.6.1902.

44. PRO, CO 179/223: Letter Governor HE McCallum to Colonial Secretary J Chamberlain, 13.6.1902.

45. PAR, GH 1304: Confidential despatch Attorney-General GA De R Labistour to Prime Minister AH Hime, 23.7.1902.

46. PRO, CO 179/223: Letter Governor HE McCallum to Colonial Secretary J Chamberlain, 26.5.1902.

47. PAR, GH 497: Telegram Colonial Secretary J Chamberlain to High Commissioner A Milner, 28.7.1902.

48. PAR, GH 497: Telegram High Commissioner A Milner to Colonial Secretary J Chamberlain, 29.7.1902.

49. PAR, GH 1302: Memorandum Governor HE McCallum to Colonial Secretary J Chamberlain, 16.8.1902; PAR, GH 474: Correspondence relative to prisoners who have been tried by court martial, 26.6.1902-29.9.1902.

50. PAR, GH 1680: Submission president, Royal Commission on Martial Law sentences, 30.9.1902; PAR, GH 474: Correspondence relative to prisoners who have been tried by court martial, 26.6.1902-29.9.1902.

military courts. McCallum wasted no time in having the cases of rebels still in prison investigated by the attorney-general. As a result, roughly at the time of the coronation festivities in September 1902, 35 rebels, all rank and file members whose sentences did not exceed two years, had their remaining time remitted. Fines were, however, not waived and neither was the clemency extended to Natal Afrikaners convicted of theft and sentenced to hard labour. Freeing the convicted rebels in question did not constitute a free pardon and, under the Charter of 15 July 1856, they still remained disenfranchised. On taking the decision to remit the sentences of certain rebels General Cheere Emmett, the brother-in-law of Louis Botha, and a resident of the Vryheid district where most of the rebels at large resided, undertook to recommend that the Natal rebels come in *en bloc* and stand trial on the trust that clemency would be extended to them as well.⁵¹

Shortly afterwards, in a further act of reconciliation and in an attempt to get closure on the rebel matter, the Natal Government ordered an investigation into the cases of the remaining imprisoned rebels. To gain greater clarity, the attorney-general asked Magistrate W Broome who sat on the Special Court, to provide his recommendations.⁵²

Broome revisited the cases and recommended that leaders who played an active part in the war, or participated in looting and stealing, should not be granted mercy. This meant that rebels like LJ de Jager, GF Kemp, CS Botha, and JJ Dekker who had been sentenced to five, four, ten and seven years respectively had to serve their full sentences. Broome did, however, allow for some leniency in his recommendations namely that the rebels under investigation could be released on either completion of 18 months, or two years, of their sentences. The rest could be released by the time they had served two years of their sentence, or paid their fines.⁵³

Finally, of the group under discussion, one was discharged, 13 had their sentences fully remitted, 12 had part of their sentences remitted, and for another 12 their sentences had to stand. The latter 12 rebels, the so called ringleaders, was the cause of the real problem as all of them still had a number of years to serve. To force them to serve full terms would not bring closure to the matter since someone like CS Botha could only be released in February 1912. This was not considered good for reconciliation and would also fail to encourage the “bittereinder” rebels outside the borders of Natal to come in to be tried. Little wonder then that the prime minister planted the idea of a future general revision of sentences

51. PAR, PM 92: Correspondence relative to the consideration of sentences passed on rebels, 26.7.1902-2.9.1902; PAR, GH 1302: Memorandum Governor HE McCallum to Colonial Secretary J Chamberlain, 16.8.1902.

52. PAR, AGO I/7/44: Minute paper Attorney-General A De R Labistour to Magistrate W Broome, 27.8.1902.

53. PAR, AGO I/7/44: Memorandum Magistrate W Broome on the cases of certain rebels convicted by the Special Court, 1.9.1902.

while remaining practical, just and fair.⁵⁴

In light of the above, Attorney-General Labistour, who had defended some rebels before the Special Court, proposed extremely lenient criteria to deal with the rebels not yet apprehended namely that those who could not secure bail should be released on their own recognizance, and that the maximum sentence would be six months imprisonment and a fine of £20 which would, except for the fine and disenfranchisement, be remitted by the Natal Government. Cases of theft, other crimes, and acting as leaders during the war, were to be dealt with on merit. In a very pragmatic manner Labistour suggested: "Let one or two of these men surrender, plead guilty and see how they are treated."⁵⁵ Governor McCallum did not agree with the proposal. His biggest concern was the fact that Labistour had given the undertaking that rebels once convicted, would have their prison sentences remitted. The governor, supported by the acting prime minister, wanted no guarantees given and decreed that magistrates should be informed that those rebels who were prepared to come in to stand trial and plead guilty would, in an attempt to clean the slate, be treated leniently.⁵⁶ As a result the Vryheid magistrate was asked to inform rebels who wished to return to Natal that no guarantee could be given but that they had to surrender unconditionally.⁵⁷ This ruling only served to undo the intention of finding closure with regard to the rebel cases since very few were willing to surrender unconditionally.

McCallum therefore had to admit that the efforts by the Natal Government to entice rebels to come in and stand trial had failed. The rebels were adamant that they wanted to come to some agreement while the Natal Government was not prepared to negotiate any deal. In an attempt to break the deadlock, the attorney-general allowed 21 rebels to discuss terms with the Vryheid magistrate. This initiative was rejected by both the prime minister and McCallum, with the latter stating: "I think we have gone too far already. These men must be told once and for all that they must stand their trial unconditionally and that if they do not do so they had better clear out of the new territories at once as they may be declared a portion of Natal by Letters any day now."⁵⁸ By making this statement McCallum played the last card the Natal authorities had available to them.

McCallum's indication that the Vryheid district where many of the 200-300 rebels not yet arrested

54. PAR, AGO I/7/44: Documentation regarding the remission of sentences of Natal rebels, 8.9.1902-9.9.1902; PAR, GH 1302: Letter Governor HE McCallum to Colonial Secretary J Chamberlain, 23.10.1902.

55. PAR, GH 1304: Memorandum Attorney-General GA De R Labistour to prime minister, 30.8.1902.

56. PAR, GH 1304: Letter Governor HE McCallum to Acting Prime Minister FR Moor, 4.9.1902; PAR, GH 1304: Telegram Secretary GT Plowman to Attorney-General GA De R Labistour, 8.9.1902.

57. PAR, GH 1304: Telegram Acting Prime Minister FR Moor to magistrate Vryheid, 10.9.1902.

58. PAR, GH 1302: Letter Governor HE McCallum to Colonial Secretary J Chamberlain, 23.10.1902; PRO, CO 179/224: Letter Governor HE McCallum to Secretary of State J Chamberlain, 23.10.1902.

resided was soon to be ceded to Natal, caused panic and fear among the rebels concerned. Expecting to have to flee, they unsuccessfully attempted to enlist the assistance of WH Tatham to negotiate a general pardon.⁵⁹

The Natal authorities were shown up when confronted with the practicalities involved in dealing with rebels who wanted to return and stand trial. Ten Natal rebels resident in the ORC, nine of whom were land owners and who wanted to return to the Colony unconditionally, admitted to being guilty of high treason. This step, exactly what the authorities had called for, caused a serious dilemma as it proved almost impossible to gather evidence regarding the war-time activities of the men since many shared the same names and surnames. Eventually only Johannes Pretorius of Cundycleugh was identified as a ringleader.⁶⁰ No evidence could be found of his prosecution.

Natal rebels did not only fear punishment by an unyielding government,⁶¹ but also worried about their families, many of whom who were destitute. Some suspected rebels such as GPJG van Zyl, a bywoner of The Oaks, Newcastle, were thus only prepared to return to Natal if provisions were made for their families. This Natal authorities offered to do.⁶²

The undertaking however failed to entice all the rebels to return and stand trial. Instead, possibly sensing that due to the lapse of time the evidence against them would be minimal, a group of 21 rebels including two Landmans, five Van Tonders, three Strydoms, and four Van Rooyens, made enquiries via the Vryheid magistrate about the charges against them. Although the Natal Police replied that the counts against them were insignificant, they did indicate that they were hoping to arrest Gideon Kok and GM de Waal who were suspected of participating in the attack on the Wasbank Station in October 1900. The Vryheid magistrate was reprimanded for conveying this information to the rebels and was instructed not to bargain with the rebels but merely to inform them that they should surrender and plead guilty. If they complied they would each receive a six months prison sentence and a fine of £20. Some rebels consequently decided to test the authenticity of the intentions of the Natal Government and nineteen-year-old Marthinus Koekemoer of Proviso B indicated willingness to return to Zululand to stand trial. No record could be found of him being found guilty.

59. PAR, PM 92: Enquiry by rebels in the Vryheid district about their status after annexation, 13.9.1902-30.9.1902.

60. PAR, PM 33: Petition by HJ Potgieter and other rebels who wanted to return to Natal from Harrismith, 17.9.1902-24.10.1902.

61. PAR, CO 179/224: Correspondence regarding rebels returning to Natal to stand trial, 29.8.1902-11.9.1902; PAR, PM 92: Correspondence regarding rebels returning to Natal to stand trial, 29.8.1902-11.9.1902;

62. PAR, PM 30: Enquiry by Magistrate RH Beachcroft, Utrecht, on support for families of Natal rebels who wanted to surrender, 2.7.1902-12.7.1902.

The fact that Koekemoer in all probability escaped conviction, plus the completion of the transfer in late December 1902 of the Utrecht and Vryheid districts to Natal, prompted a large number of rebels to indicate that they were willing to return to Natal⁶³ to surrender to the Dundee magistrate.⁶⁴ True to their word, 23 did so⁶⁵ and none of them were convicted of treason. These events caused Cheere Emmett to use the opportunity to ask that a free pardon be extended to the remaining rebels in prison. He was politely informed that this was not possible at the time, but an edited letter not forwarded to Emmett, gave another perspective on why this was impossible: "His Excellency the Governor, however, states that if the citizens of Dutch extraction in Natal proper, and in the new territories about to be annexed to Natal, including the Ministers of the Reformed Church, do all in their power in the cause of union, he will be willing to reopen the question and consider another petition on the same subject in a years' time from now."⁶⁶

The frustration of McCallum can be understood when one considers that by the end of 1902, an estimated 258 Natal rebels were still at large.⁶⁷ Many of them had decided to settle permanently in the Vryheid district rather than return to their districts of origin.⁶⁸ These men by their mere presence were, to a certain extent, holding the Natal authorities prisoner. Realising that this was the case, the Natal Government in its attempt to attain closure on the rebel issue, re-focused its attention on the 20 rebels who were still imprisoned, on 1 February 1903. Included within this group was NJJ Dreyer, the last rebel to be convicted, and who had been sentenced to £20 or 2 months imprisonment.⁶⁹ The plight of the 20 men, generally the most serious offenders, was reviewed and the Natal Government subsequently decided that a radical change in policy was required. The geo-political changes in the region which transferred parts of the Transvaal, and especially the Vryheid district to Natal, were partly responsible for the change in attitude since the Colony could not have a situation in which rebels resided within their territory but remained immune to arrest. The change in policy was embodied by the passing of Proclamations 23 and 24 of 1903. The latter served to dissolve Act 14 of 1900, which also meant the termination of the Special Court. Proclamation 23 in turn pardoned all rebels, both those imprisoned and those untried "in order to promote goodwill...and to remove as far as possible the recollection of all the causes of enmity which existed during the late war".⁷⁰ As a result, all the imprisoned rebels except for

63. PAR, PM 33: Correspondence regarding the charges against 21 rebels resident in the Vryheid district, 12.9.1902-17.12.1902.

64. PAR, AGO I/8/87: Minute paper Natal rebels surrendering from Vryheid district, 18.12.1902-19.12.1902.

65. PAR, AGO I/8/87: Correspondence regarding Natal rebels in the Vryheid district, 7.12.1902-23.12.1902.

66. PAR, PM 35: Petition by General C Emmett asking for a free pardon for Natal rebels, 22.12.1902-29.12.1902.

67. PAR, AGO I/8/87: Correspondence regarding Natal rebels in the Vryheid district, 7.12.1902-23.12.1902.

68. PAR, PM 39: Application by Natal Afrikaners resident in the Vryheid district for economic assistance, 21.4.1903.

69. PAR, PM 38: List of rebels still imprisoned in Natal, 5.2.1902.

70. PAR, NCP 6/1/1/57: *The Natal Government Gazette*, 12.3.1903.

TP Lezar, NP Jordaan, GP Kemp and RJ Vermaak, were released on 12 March 1903. The four men in question were not freed because they had not yet paid the fines imposed on them.⁷¹

The refusal to release these four rebels meant that the slate was still not clean. To achieve this the case of the men was taken up by several people. Warden Hunter of the Eshowe Prison, with the permission of the governor of the prison, petitioned the prime minister for the release of Vermaak,⁷² while Dominee WP Rousseau appealed to the authorities for the release of all the rebels, pointing out that all four were very poor, their families were destitute, and they were in no position to pay the fines. In the cases of Kemp and Jordaan this was confirmed by an English colonist of Dundee, Williams, who likewise asked that they be pardoned. The Natal authorities who did not accept these requests at face value, launched their own investigation into the economic status of the men and reached the same conclusion.⁷³ As the men were unable to pay the substantial fines imposed on them, the Natal Government had no choice but to recommend their release despite the disapproval of Governor McCallum. Although he agreed that Lezar and Vermaak could be released, since their fines were optional, he felt that the discharge of Jordaan and Kemp was, “a change of policy”,⁷⁴ and complained to Chamberlain: “We have hitherto treated rebellion with dignity and firmness, and it is, to my mind, a pity that Ministers did not decide to continue to do so to the end.”⁷⁵ The Natal Government defended their decision by stating that it was not a change of policy; the four men simply could not pay the fines levied and as a result they felt “that it was inexpedient that the men should remain in goal for the periods of imprisonment which constituted the alternative of the fines imposed upon them.” McCallum was still not convinced and felt that it was unjust to liberate the men without extracting payment of fines. He was, however, prepared to sign the warrants of release based on “political reasons.”⁷⁶

This brave step by the Natal Government, which brought the rebel saga to a close, was lauded by Louis Botha who felt it would mark a “new era in racial relations of South Africa.”⁷⁷ One hundred and sixty six men from Utrecht likewise signed a petition expressing their appreciation.⁷⁸ Support for the pardon

71. PAR, PM 38: Warrant for the remission of sentences passed on certain rebels, 11.3.1903-13.3.1903.

72. PAR, PM 38: Petition for the release of RJ Vermaak, 20.3.1903-28.3.1903.

73. PAR, PM 88: Correspondence regarding the release of Lezar, Vermaak, Jordaan and Kemp, 19.3.1903-16.4.1903.

74. PAR, GH 1305: Correspondence regarding the release of the remaining imprisoned rebels, 6.4.1903-6.5.1903; PAR, PM 38: Warrants authorizing the release of four prisoners, 15.4.1903-21.4.1903; PAR, GH 1302: Letter Governor HE McCallum to Colonial Secretary J Chamberlain, 16.4.1903.

75. VS Harris, p.48.

76. PAR, GH 1305: Correspondence regarding the release of the remaining imprisoned rebels, 6.4.1903-6.5.1903; PAR, PM 38: Warrants authorizing the release of four prisoners, 15.4.1903-21.4.1903; PAR, GH 1302: Letter Governor HE McCallum to Colonial Secretary J Chamberlain, 16.4.1903.

77. PAR, PM 38: Telegram General Louis Botha to colonial secretary, 14.3.1903.

78. PAR, CSO 1747: Petition signed by 166 inhabitants of the Utrecht district, 30.11.1903-10.12.1903.

also came from the jingoistic Natal press. The *Natal Witness* expressed the hope that it would promote “unity and goodwill”,⁷⁹ while the *Dundee and District Advertiser* described it as “the most important official document published in this colony since 1899...” The latter publication also expressed the hope that this would lead to reconciliation.⁸⁰ Although the decision by the Natal Government constituted a giant step towards eradicating the legacy of the war, issues such as for example disenfranchisement, remained unsettled.

The Natal Government was only prepared to ask for the free pardon of all convicted rebels in 1905. This request was supported by the colonial secretary and his suggestion that it be done on the king’s birthday in November, was adopted.⁸¹ Proclamation No. 116 of 1905, issued on 8 November 1905, therefore removed all civil disabilities including disfranchisement, to which rebels were subjected.⁸² Although all convicted rebels were no doubt pleased, *De Afrikaner* managed to place the pardon within the context of the mood that still existed amongst Natal Afrikaners:

In some copies of our previous issue we announced the “free” pardon granted to Natal burghers who had been guilty of rebellion, or whatever one likes to call it, in connection with the Boer War. The temptation to traverse those convictions, the circumstances under which they were obtained is great but being desirous of letting the past rest we shall say nothing about the matter. We are sincerely grateful to His Majesty the King for the removal of an obstacle which has been in the way, for some years, of the good relationship between the white races in this part of his dominions. This gratitude may not, however, prevent us from declaring how much we regret the reference in the proclamation to fines which cannot be refunded and to compensation which cannot be made...this is only half free.⁸³

This statement by *De Natal Afrikaner* rang true because while the Natal Government was conciliatory in its policy towards the rebels, nothing was done in terms of the most pressing post-war need of Natal Afrikaners, namely economic reconstruction. In terms of financial assistance to rebels, the Natal Government stood by clause 10 of the Vereeniging Peace Treaty, namely that no rebel was entitled to aid. They extended this to include all Natal Afrikaners and the granting of free pardon in 1905 merely served to underscore this point of view. The Natal Afrikaners therefore had to fend for themselves under extremely difficult conditions as explained in Chapter 12. Historian Verne Harris believes the lack of financial aid and economic reconstruction hardened the essentially negative pre-war feelings Natal Afrikaners had towards the government.⁸⁴

79. *Natal Witness*, 14.3.1903.

80. *Dundee and District Advertiser*, 19.3.1903.

81. PAR, PM 53: Proposal by the Natal Government that persons convicted of high treason be pardoned, 14.4.1905-15.5.905; PAR, PM 100: Telegrams regarding free pardon of Natal rebels, 14.10.1904-17.10.1905.

82. PAR, NCP 6/1/1/61: *Natal Government Gazette*, 8.11.1905.

83. PAR, CSO 1803: Translation from *De Afrikaner*, 13.11.1905.

84. VS Harris, p.50.

13.3 Post-war relations and reflections

While Natal Afrikaners were, in the macro processes outlined above, mostly passengers, their fate being decided by much bigger forces outside their control, in other matters they were to a certain extent able to control their own destiny. Some issues, such as reclaiming symbols of culture and masculinity which had been removed during the war, were relatively mundane.⁸⁵ Others issues, such as healing the rift the war had caused within the broader Afrikaner society,⁸⁶ were more complex and played themselves out within both a regional context and in individual households and families. Within Natal Afrikaner society numerous such examples existed. JP Eksteen of Quaggas Nek, Charlestown, had brothers on commando who threatened to shoot him,⁸⁷ while LP de Jager of Serpentine, Newcastle, had joined Loxton's Horse and the Normandien Volunteers Corps while his father, AP de Jager joined the Boers and was convicted as a rebel,⁸⁸ to name but two such examples.⁸⁹

Natal Afrikaners not only had to reflect on post-war relations with fellow Afrikaners but also on those with Natal Africans and English colonists. Although both Afrikaners and Africans were marginalised groups within the Colony, Natal Afrikaners could, within the context of the racial politics prevalent in post-war Natal, resume their pre-war *status quo*.⁹⁰

While Natal Afrikaners, by virtue of their ethnic origin, found themselves in a superior position to Africans, the post-war relations with English Natalians were much more complex. Inter-marriage between Natal Afrikaners and their English neighbours were common in the Dutch Districts. Two of the sisters of JJ Maré of Greytown, who fought on the Boer side, were married to Englishmen.⁹¹ Even two of the first Natal Afrikaners convicted of high treason, PR Buys and GJB Boers, had family members who were married to English Natalians.⁹² It therefore generally did not take long before good relations were restored between the Afrikaners and those English in the Dutch Districts who made a living out of agriculture and thus formed part of a sub-culture with shared sentiments, including a suspicion of the government.

85. PAR, 1/LDS 3/3/15: Correspondence regarding the return of firearms to the farmers of Klip River district, 16.7.1902-22.10.1902; PAR, 1/NEW 3/1/1/9: Letter Acting Magistrate AL Crawford, Newcastle, to colonial secretary, 2.8.1902; PAR, CSO 1706: Minute paper regarding the policy on returning firearms to time expired rebels, 20.6.1902-4.7.1902.

86. AM Grundlingh, *Die hendsoppers en joiners...*, pp.337-353.

87. PAR, CSO 2876: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by JP Eksteen, 13.10.1902.

88. PAR, CSO 2873: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by LP de Jager, 6.1.1903.

89. For other examples of divided Natal Afrikaner families, see: PAR, CSO 2891: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by JJS Maritz, 8.1.1903; PAR, GH 562: Intercepted letter to Dina de Lange, 9.10.1901-13.10.1901.

90. See Chapter 11 for the war-time relations between people of colour and Natal Afrikaners.

91. PAR, A 743: Herinnering van JJ Maré, 17-18.11.1952.

92. *Natal Witness*, 9.6.1900 and 15.6.1900; PAR, AGO I/8/71: *Corpus Dilecti* in the case of the Boers brothers, 1.6.1900; PAR, AGO I/7/1: Treason trial of AGJ, GJB and HW Boers, 5.6.1900.

Much more strained were the relations between Natal Afrikaners, the Natal authorities, and individuals like the war-time volunteer leader Colonel George Leuchars of Greytown, who clashed with the Afrikaner nationalist political ideology of General Hertzog, then gaining a foothold amongst Natal Afrikaners.⁹³ Leuchars was not alone and other English Natalians wanted, in the words of Alfred Milner,⁹⁴ the bottom knocked out of Afrikanerdom. As a result the patronising sense of superiority prevalent during the Anglo-Boer War continued to exist. The war-time discriminatory measures introduced in the inter-related fields of education and language, remained, and by the time the Union of South Africa was proclaimed in 1910, the position of Natal Afrikaners was virtually unchanged from the time the war had ended in May 1902,⁹⁵ making the integration of Natal Afrikaners into broader Natal society impossible. Juxtaposed to this was the lingering Afrikaner memory of the Natal Government's desertion of their Afrikaner subjects, as explained by Missionary Prozesky: "There are men amongst us, it is true, Natalians who, when the Transvalers entered the country, joined them voluntarily and fought against English soldiers, but they are few. The guilt of the others lie in the fact that, after the (Natal) authorities fled, leaving them in the lurch without advice, directions or instructions or orders as to how they should behave, they placed themselves under the authority which had power over them and obeyed those appointed as officials over them by this authority."⁹⁶ The above memory was compounded when the Natal Government, in the eyes of most Natal Afrikaners, adopted punitive measures with little reason or compassion, on political, economic, and socio-cultural fronts. This in turn merely served to affirm the perceptions many Natal Afrikaners had formed of British rule during the preceding 50 years.

Natal Afrikaners also had to reflect on their post-war relationship with their Republican kin. Within the context of the economic losses suffered during the war, the deaths of an estimated 34 Natal Afrikaners while on military duty, (Appendix H)⁹⁷ and the prison sentences endured, pro-Boer and Republican sentiments were greatly moderated by May 1902. In the light of the aforementioned, JC Vermaak, while serving a prison sentence for high treason, questioned the continuation of the war since matters were already lost for the Boers and destruction mounted daily. Vermaak claimed that he had always felt the

93. O Geyser and AH Marais, (eds), pp.105-115.

94. T Pakenham, p.509.

95. AJ van Wyk, *Press, public and politics in Natal 1910-1915*, paper presented at a workshop on Natal and the Union 1910-1938, UNP, 1978, *passim*.

96. OE Prozesky private collection, Diary of JJA Prozesky: Diary entry, Introduction, p.388.

97. PAR, ZA 33: List of Boers reported killed during the war by Africans, *circa* 1899-1900; VTR, JC Vermaak collection, 03/14209/1: Family tree of the Vermaaks compiled by JC Vermaak, no date. The reliability of most of the sources used to compile Appendix H is to be doubted as it was often based on rumours and speculation. Furthermore, according to the records of the Natal Government, only 21 Natal Afrikaners died in combat. See, PAR, AGO I/8/87: Correspondence regarding Natal rebels in the Vryheid district, 7.12.1902-23.12.1902.

sooner the Boers were forced to surrender the better.⁹⁸ However, in his memoirs on the war written in 1941, Vermaak tells a different story and greatly contradicts the views he expressed in 1901.⁹⁹ Time, political circumstances, the Republican ideal, rising Afrikaner Nationalism, and the outbreak of the Second World War, amongst other considerations, all contributed to Vermaak coming to believe in a different, more glorious historical truth, which in turn conjured up a collective memory dissimilar from that which he had experienced and expressed between 1899 and 1902. Therefore, possibly the most succinct and true-to-life summary of the experiences of Natal Afrikaners during the Anglo-Boer War is the one given by Andries Stephanus Eksteen of Potterhill/Laingkrantz, Charlestown: “I had three enemies. The Boers, The British Troops and Kaffir Scouts. They took my things just as they liked by night or day - and just told me to shut up.”¹⁰⁰ From the perspective of the Natal Afrikaners, “The Boers”, proved to be the most acceptable of the three enemies, for with them they felt they belonged.

98. Foy Vermaak private collection: Letter JC Vermaak to CT Vermaak alias Miss C Herzog, 17.6.1901.

99. VTR, Memoirs of JC Vermaak, 03/2553: *passim*, 1941.

100. PAR, CSO 2877: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by AS Eksteen, 6.10.1902.