

## CHAPTER 7

## NATAL AFRIKANERS AS LOYALISTS

In Albert Grundlingh's groundbreaking work on Afrikaners who sided with the British during the Anglo-Boer War,<sup>1</sup> these individuals are referred to as hendsoppers or joiners. The Natal Afrikaner loyalists were neither, for as British subjects they were expected to, at the very least, remain neutral. It would therefore be more appropriate to use a simple definition from *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* to explain who and what a loyalist is, namely: "a person who remains loyal to the legitimate sovereign ... in the face of rebellion or usurpation."<sup>2</sup> Within the Natal Afrikaner community a small group managed to do so by not departing from their allegiance to the crown, regardless of the pressures placed upon them. Who was this extremely small group of Natal Afrikaner loyalists? Why did they remain loyal to the Empire and the Natal Government in the face of aggressive Republicanism? Or was it a question of all the Natal Afrikaners being disloyal and some being more disloyal than others? In this chapter an attempt will be made to answer these and other questions related to loyalist Natal Afrikaners.

### 7.1 Support for, and involvement in, the British and colonial forces

In terms of war, ultimate loyalty is the willingness to take up arms against invaders of the same ethnic and cultural group as yourself. This display of loyalty was exhibited by the Afrikaners who joined the UMR, a volunteer regiment from the Greytown and Kranskop area. A detachment of this unit, 36 strong, consisting of 21 Afrikaners and 15 Germans under the command of Captain EJ Landsberg was despatched to Ixopo on 6 October 1899<sup>3</sup> to guard the southern border of Natal against a possible African uprising in the Pondoland area.<sup>4</sup> The troop remained in this locality for the duration of the Boer presence in Natal, i.e. until June 1900.

Governor Hely-Hutchinson explained the thinking of the Natal authorities when he addressed the men prior to their departure for Ixopo:

You must not think we, the Government, distrust your loyalty by sending you to the Southern Border, as we consider it our duty to send a body of men to guard that border as well as the other borders of the Colony, and we have studied the situation and consider it right and proper that as you are of Dutch decent, you should be sent there, bearing in mind that some of you have blood relations and ties on the other side, but we feel confident and satisfied that you will do your duty equally with those who are now at the front.<sup>5</sup>

The vast majority of Afrikaners from Umvoti were less enthusiastic about this deployment as can be

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1. AM Grundlingh, *Die hendsoppers en joiners. Die rasional en verskynsel van verraad, passim.*

2. RE Allen (ed)., *The concise Oxford dictionary*, p.704.

3. PAR, MJPW 71: Muster roll of Captain Landsberg's detachment of the UMR, 6.10.1899.

4. CH Stott, p.25 and p.216.

5. *Natal Witness*, 16.2.1900.

gauged by their lack of contribution towards a gift for the unit prior to its deployment. Of the 41 people who contributed to the present only PR Botha and his son were Afrikaners.<sup>6</sup> At the same time the homes of those Afrikaners who were associated with the UMR, were, according to rumour, earmarked for ruthless looting.<sup>7</sup>

This sensible decision by the Natal authorities to send the specific detachment of the UMR to the Ixopo area meant that the Afrikaners would not be directly confronted by their kin in battle. As a result the impression was created amongst some in Natal that they could not be trusted to fight the Boers.<sup>8</sup> The posting also result in long periods of inactivity and idleness. To try and pass the time two rifle matches were organised against the Ixopo Rifle Association,<sup>9</sup> but this soon attracted public criticism. "Britisher" in a letter to the *Natal Witness* complained that the UMR volunteers were receiving all the perks soldiers were entitled to while they were playing games. He believed that a "volunteer is a volunteer" and that they should be at the front.<sup>10</sup> Similar sentiments were expressed by "One who knows."<sup>11</sup> This criticism elicited an angry response from one GE Francis who explained that it was no fault of the detachment that they were prevented from proceeding to the front by the authorities. As far as Francis was concerned all the men were willing to serve at the front since they had all taken an oath of allegiance to defend the Colony. Francis proceeded to advise "One who knows" that if he was so anxious to see the detachment disbanded he should show his loyalty and patriotism by joining instead of writing incorrect and disparaging remarks under a "nom de plume."<sup>12</sup>

By the time that the Boers were all but driven from Natal the local magistrate also questioned the presence of the UMR detachment in Ixopo. The Natal Cabinet, realising that it would make little political sense to move the troop to the front, decided to maintain the status quo for the time being. This decision was altered a couple of days later when the unit was employed in doing police-like patrolling of the Ixopo and Polela areas.<sup>13</sup> A month later a rumour surfaced that the troop would be transferred to Dundee. An outcry from the commander of volunteers resulted in an urgent telegraph to the prime minister to protest that the transfer "was not advisable for many reasons." Prime Minister Hime agreed and angrily demanded to know the source "of such an absurd rumour."<sup>14</sup>

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6. PAR, A 771 (v): Letter signed by 41 inhabitants of Greytown to Major G Leuchars, 1.10.1899.

7. GC Musgrave, *In South Africa with Buller*, p.175.

8. *Natal Advertiser*, 2.11.1899; *Times of Natal*, 11.11.1899.

9. *Natal Witness*, 12.12.1899.

10. *Natal Witness*, 31.1.1900.

11. *Natal Witness*, 5.2.1900.

12. *Natal Witness*, 16.2.1900.

13. PAR, MJPW 75: Correspondence regarding the use of the UMR troop based at Ixopo, 10.5.1900-6.6.1900.

14. PAR, MJPW 76: Telegrams exchanged between Prime Minister AH Hime and commandant of volunteers, Col JG Dartnell, 10.7.1900 and 11.7.1900.

It was clear that the Natal authorities were not willing to take any risk by sending this particular force to the front. The hesitancy of the Natal Government can be understood when one considers the case against Privates JM (Mias) and JJ (Marthinus) Botha, members of the UMR. In a joint letter written home the men used disloyal language towards the crown. Both were brought before a military court which identified JM Botha as the real culprit. He was found guilty and dismissed from the UMR.<sup>15</sup> In addition, with the Boers driven from Natal, the authorities were uncertain what to do with the Afrikaner troop of the UMR, as well as the other Natal volunteer units. Consequently all Natal volunteer units were disbanded in August 1900.<sup>16</sup>

When the UMR was disbanded not a single Afrikaner attended any of the subsequent homecoming functions. The commanding officer, Major George Leuchars, called it “ill will”<sup>17</sup> and encouraged the Afrikaners to accept British rule, to bury the past, and to work with the British colonists for a better future.<sup>18</sup> This “ill will” was however, reciprocated by the colonial authorities. The disbandment, for example, left Captain EJ Landsberg without a position. He therefore applied for permission to return to his farm Morgenstond in the Dundee district which he had vacated to join the UMR. Serving the war effort did not count for much in his case and the commandant of Dundee refused the request.<sup>19</sup>

In the end very little value was attached to the duty done by the UMR unit stationed at Ixopo. This can be gathered from the names which appear on the shield which honoured those who served from 29 September 1899 to 9 October 1900, presented to the unit by the inhabitants of Greytown and Umvoti county. Not one of the names of those who served at Ixopo appear on the shield. The only names of men who might have been Afrikaners and appear on the shield are: Sergeant J Laatz, C Laatz, P Meyer, WJH Muller, Corporals A Krause and A Muller, C Krause and F Krause.<sup>20</sup> These men were possibly the men who were transferred to the UMR detachments along the Tugela River and who had then guided the Imperial Light Infantry in April 1900 from Greytown on their march towards the area.<sup>21</sup>

A number of Natal Afrikaners also joined the British Army by enlisting in units other than the UMR. LP de Jager of Serpentine, Newcastle, first joined the Normandien Volunteer Corps in November 1900 to counteract stock theft by raiding Boer commandos and in July 1901 he joined Loxton's

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15. PAR, AGO I/8/75: List of persons prosecuted by the military for treasonable offences, no date; PAR, CSO 1641: Statement and summary of evidence in the cases against JM and JJ Botha, UMR for translation, 22-24.2.1900; PAR, CSO 1645: Hershensohn and McGillewie enquires on the sentence passed on Mias Botha, 18.4.1900-25.4.1900.

16. PAR, 1/WEN 3/2/3: Application by Captain EJ Landsberg to return to his farm, 20.8.1900-28.8.1900.

17. *Natal Witness*, 13.10.1900.

18. *Natal Witness*, 16.10.1900.

19. PAR, 1/WEN 3/2/3: Application by Captain EJ Landsberg to return to his farm, 20.8.1900-28.8.1900.

20. UMR Archive, Durban, Unnumbered photo album on the Anglo-Boer War: Photo of the shield presented to the unit by the residents of Greytown and Umvoti, circa 1902.

21. CHS Boscawen-Wright, *With the Imperial Light Infantry in Natal*, pp.65-67.

Horse.<sup>22</sup> Other Natal Afrikaners who enlisted in the military included Hans (Johannes) Strydom of Newcastle who served as a guide with the Swaziland Column,<sup>23</sup> FW Prinsloo of Dundee who joined Thorneycrofts Mounted Infantry,<sup>24</sup> Pelster of Dundee who joined the Scottish Horse Regiment,<sup>25</sup> and Theunis de Jager of Wasbank who was killed in action by the Boers near at Nqutu,<sup>26</sup> making him the only Natal Afrikaner loyalists to pay the ultimate price in fighting for the Empire.

An Afrikaner to join the British forces for ulterior motives was Jan (Theunis Jacobus) Nel, the son of “Mal Theuns” Nel of Spitzkop, Umvoti district. During the early stages of the war Jan Nel carried letters to the Boer forces. After a quarrel with his family he changed his allegiance and joined Mennes’ Scouts “with the express purpose of giving a few of his Greytown friends away.” Apart from serving in the Standerton district, he did what he promised and accused 14 prominent farmers in the Umvoti district, including his father and five other Nels, of harbouring and communicating with the Boers, stealing government cattle, colluding with Chief Gayede, and talking seditiously. The fact that Jan Nel testified against his own father marred his statement, at least in the books of Attorney-General Henry Bale and the clerk of the peace in Greytown, Charles Tatham. Despite these reservations against his testimony, the intelligence he provided was used to remove a large number of Afrikaners from Umvoti county to Pietermaritzburg.<sup>27</sup>

Worse was to follow for Jan Nel. He lost his property and was no longer on a good footing with his relations due to his loyalist leanings. As a result he applied for the post of Dutch and Zulu interpreter. In hoping to advance his prospects he approached FS Tatham requesting him to use his influence in the matter. Tatham wrote to both the colonial secretary and John Henry Brand de Villiers, the registrar of the Natal Supreme Court, singing the virtues and loyalty of Nel.<sup>28</sup> This did not seem to have helped as no record of appointment for Nel could be found.

A small number of Natal Afrikaners also served the armed forces in non-combat capacities. J Theunissen served as a conductor in the Natal Transport Unit and for that he was awarded the Queen’s South African medal.<sup>29</sup> Donald Mackenzie, despite his name, was an Afrikaner who could not speak a word of English. His lack of English language skills did, however, not prevent him from finding a position with the British military as an ambulance conductor.<sup>30</sup> PWC Jordaan of Dundee,

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

23. PAR, CSO 2927: List of British subjects in Natal who are suspected of disloyalty with handwritten notes, no date

24. PAR, CSO 2900: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by FW Prinsloo, 20.11.1900.

25. PAR, CSO 2888: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by MPC de Jager on behalf of SHF de Jager, 2.10.1900.

26. Foy Vermaak private collection: Letter JC Vermaak to CT Vermaak alias Miss C Herzog, 14.8.1901.

27. PAR, SNA I/4/9: Documents related to the statements made by TJ (Jan) Nel, 12.7.1901-2.10.1901.

28. PAR, CSO 1714: Letter from TJ Nel relative to his employment in the Natal civil service, 3.7.1902.3.-10.1902.

29. PAR, GH 526: Special circular with names of transport conductors to be awarded the Queen’s medal, 20.6.1906.

30. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 27.11.1900.

rendered services from 25 September 1900 for the British Army. During his treason trial this did not count for much and on 21 August 1901 he was sentenced to four months in prison. His father, GJ, was commended by several Britishers for the assistance he rendered to them in terms of supplying food and clothing while they were fleeing Dundee after the Battle of Talana. He too was found guilty of treason.<sup>31</sup>

Two Natal Afrikaners found a niche for themselves in the intelligence services of the British Army. The Dutch inspector of schools, JH Kleinschmidt, enlisted with only a couple of hours notice and was appointed as the Dutch interpreter to General Buller. He only informed the superintendent of education, R Russell, once he had arrived at Frere Camp on 8 December 1899. Kleinschmidt clearly revelled in this new role, described the pay as generous, and informed his superior that he intended to follow Buller through the campaign and would, if he “found any trophies worth collecting”, keep them for Russell. As an initial task Kleinschmidt was handed a “long rigmarole of lies from president Steyn” to deal with.<sup>32</sup> Unfortunately for Kleinschmidt his enthusiasm did not match his staying power and his health failed. Finding a replacement for him did not prove a problem. The 26-year-old John Henry Brand de Villiers, originally from the OFS, who had become a naturalised British subject after living in Natal for two years,<sup>33</sup> asked the Natal Government if he could vacate his civil service position to apply for Kleinschmidt’s post. Unfortunately for De Villiers another eager candidate had already filled the position.<sup>34</sup> The loyalty of De Villiers to his new country did however pay off and after serving as a Dutch interpreter for the Special Court,<sup>35</sup> a position he had to resign from for health reasons,<sup>36</sup> he was promoted to the position of registrar of the supreme court in May 1902.<sup>37</sup>

Apart from his work at the front, JH Kleinschmidt also acted as a secret agent. Under the guise of inspecting the teaching of Dutch in the government school in Greytown, he investigated the matter of disloyalty amongst the local Afrikaners.<sup>38</sup> The other Natal Afrikaner who worked for the intelligence department was Alan Hershensohn, the son of the editor of the *De Natal Afrikaner*. It is doubtful if Hershensohn’s work carried much weight or was even taken seriously. Like a typical amateur spy he referred to the existence of secret societies, numerous spies that operated in both

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31. PAR, AGO I/8/80: Letter J Anderson to Attorney-General H Bale, 20.7.1901.

32. PAR, PM 109: Letter JH Kleinschmidt to Superintendent R Russell, 8.12.1899.

33. PAR, Archives of the Executive Council (hereafter EC) 26: Letter Prime Minister AH Hime to Governor W Hely-Hutchinson, 17.3.1900.

34. PAR, CSO 1644: Minute paper JHB de Villiers asking for permission to apply for post of interpreter at military headquarters, 6.4.1900.

35. PAR, AGO I/8/73: Minute paper regarding the payment of salaries to Griffin and De Villiers, 12.9.1900-17.9.1900.

36. PAR, AGO I/8/80: Application for extension of leave by JHB de Villiers, 17.5.1901-25.5.1901.

37. PAR, CSO 1704: Minute paper transfer of JHB de Villiers from staff of colonial secretary to Supreme Court, 1.5.1902.

38. PAR, GH 549: Letter JH Kleinschmidt to Inspector CH George, 30.11.1899.

Durban and Pietermaritzburg and plots to “poison the local garrison.” Little attention was paid to his revelations by both the civil and military authorities.<sup>39</sup>

Overall only a small number of Afrikaners joined the Natal Volunteer Regiments and other British/Colonial units. Of the 435 members on the muster roll of the Natal Carbineers, only five were Afrikaners - four Meyers and a De Haas, while the 221 strong Natal Mounted Rifles only had four Afrikaners in its ranks.<sup>40</sup> Of the 2 208 Natal men involved in the various volunteer regiments during the war, excluding the UMR, no more than an estimated 20 were Afrikaners.<sup>41</sup>

The only other armed grouping which contained a reasonable number of Afrikaners were the rifle associations. Although most Afrikaners resigned from these associations when members were forced to take the oath of allegiance, some retained their membership. In terms of Law No. 19 of 1862, and according to the rules of rifle associations, members could be called out for duty in their respective magisterial districts by the local magistrate.<sup>42</sup> Thus, when the Camperdown and District Rifle Association was called out for duty by the local magistrate in November 1899, two Afrikaners, H and WC Meyer, reported for duty. A third, EW Meyer, was a volunteer on service with the Natal Carbineers. The Meyers remained active in the rifle association until the end of the war.<sup>43</sup> Camperdown was no exception as a number of Afrikaners in other areas also remained active members. JA Maré, JA de Waal and AP, CF and C Keyter continued as members of the Kranskop Rifle Association,<sup>44</sup> while GF van Rooyen who was a member of the Newcastle Rifle Association<sup>45</sup> resigned leaving only LP de Jager as a member.<sup>46</sup> Other Rifle Associations such as Tsekana, Seven Oaks, Umvoti, Riet Vlei, Melmoth, Charlestown, Ingogo, Elandslaagte, Highlands and Indowane collectively had but 24 Afrikaner members.<sup>47</sup> The Rifle Association with the largest number of Afrikaner members was Weenen. At its annual shooting competition in August 1900, 12 Afrikaner men and 13 Afrikaner women participated in proceedings.<sup>48</sup> This Afrikaner involvement did not last long and by April 1903 only five out of 51 members of the Weenen Rifle Association were Afrikaners.<sup>49</sup> All in all by June 1902 no more than a maximum of 40 Afrikaners counted amongst the

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39. PAR, MJPW 117: Intelligence reports by A Hershensohn, 25.5.1901.

40. PAR, NDR 2/3: Muster rolls for the Natal Carbineers and the Natal Mounted Rifles, 30.6.1902.

41. PAR, NDR 2/3: Volunteer corps muster rolls, 30.6.1902.

42. PAR, CSO 1684: Circular to various rifle associations from Governor W Hely-Hutchinson and Prime Minister AH Hime, 20.11.1899.

43. PAR, CSO 1684: Muster roll Camperdown and District Rifle Association, 11-12.1899.

44. *Natal Witness*, 21.5.1900; PAR, NDR 2/3: Muster Roll Kranskop Rifle Association, 31.12.1903.

45. *Natal Witness*, 8.5.1902. GF van Rooyen was a clerk in the local court and was after the war rewarded for his loyalty by being made the field-cornet. PAR, CSO 1730: Appointment of GF van Rooyen as field-cornet, 14.4.1903-16.4.1903.

46. PAR, NDR 2/3: Muster Roll Newcastle Rifle Association, 31.12.1903.

47. PAR, NDR 2/3: Muster Roll's for rifle associations in Natal, 31.12.1902.

48. *Natal Witness*, 16.8.1900.

49. PAR, NDR 2/3: Muster Roll Weenen Rifle Association, 16.4.1903.

2 292 Rifle Association members.<sup>50</sup>

The decline in membership can be explained by the anti-Afrikaner sentiment of the time and can be illustrated by the following case. Two of the Afrikaners who participated in the Weenen Rifle Association activities, JLJ Pieterse senior and junior, were originally from the farm Danskraal near Ladysmith. They were removed by the military to Weenen during the Siege of Ladysmith. JLJ Pieterse (snr) was eventually charged with high treason but acquitted. When the Pieterse returned to their farm in 1901 they wanted to join the Ladysmith Rifle Association and consequently signed the required oath of allegiance. The Ladysmith Rifle Association, however, was not as accommodating as their Weenen counterpart and was reluctant to issue the Pieterse with rifles. Instead, they chose to reject the verdict of the court and continued to believe that the Pieterse had assisted the Boers during the Siege of Ladysmith. Only a lengthy correspondence process managed to sway the Ladysmith Rifle Association to assign rifles to the loyal Pieterse.<sup>51</sup>

Membership of the town guard which was introduced in early 1902, was a stark contrast to the rifle associations. All white male British subjects over the age of 18 were compelled to become members. This military creation was even less successful in attracting Afrikaner members than the rifle associations largely due to the fact that most Afrikaners resided on farms outside the towns. Of the hundreds of men in the Dundee Town Guard, for example, only five were Afrikaners: JM and H Slabbert, AHO Kruger and J and Stephen Liebenberg. The name of Barend Liebenberg also appears on the list, but as a non-combatant.<sup>52</sup> In Ladysmith, Ds HF Schoon refused to join the activities of the town guard. He voiced two concerns: firstly, that he was required to take the oath of allegiance again, even though he had done it 20 years earlier, and: secondly, that he might be forced to take up arms against his own people. He was consequently banned to Weenen by Lt-Col GH Sim.<sup>53</sup>

Other Natal Afrikaners supported the war effort by more indirect means. In Proviso B assisted wounded and sick members of the Melmoth Field Force. TR Ortlepp gave his house to the Red Cross while Ortlepp and DC (Vaal Dirk) Uys (MLC) allowed them to use the facilities offered by the local DRC. AF Ortlepp in turn provided the patients with smoking filters,<sup>54</sup> Piet Uys provided "splendid grapes",<sup>55</sup> Vaal Dirk Uys also a large quantity of grapes, Mrs Britz and DC Uys chicken broth, JWF Ortlepp custard, custard pudding, preserves and magazines, and Mrs Pretorius a daily

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50. PAR, NDR 2/3: Muster Rolls's for rifle associations in Natal, 31.12.1902.

51. PAR, 1/LDS 3/3/14: Correspondence pertaining to the applications by JLJ Pieterse snr and jnr to become fully fledged members of the Ladysmith Rifle Association, 7.6.1901-18.7.1901.

52. PAR, 1/DUN 3/1/1: List of members Dundee Town Guard, 1902.

53. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entries, 24.1.1902, 8.3.1902 and 17.3.1902, pp.762, 787, 789.

54. *Natal Witness*, 28.2.1900.

55. *Natal Witness*, 9.3.1900.

supply of milk.<sup>56</sup> At Dundee, JH Ries of Langfontein, who was eventually convicted as a rebel, sent milk and eggs to the British hospital,<sup>57</sup> while in the Weenen district some Afrikaners were prepared to contribute financially to the British victims of war. After the Relief of Mafeking a collection list with the intimidating caption, “Heroes All! Pay! pay!! pay!!!” circulated in the area. Of the 62 people who contributed 15 were Afrikaners. All of them contributed 5 shillings each, except for JC Buys, Frik Buys, WJ Basson and Ds AM Murray who contributed more.<sup>58</sup> Murray himself would in time suffer a personal loss when his son, who fought on the British side, was killed in action less than two weeks before the end of the war. The fact that his son was a loyalist apparently made the death even more painful.<sup>59</sup>

Some of the those who supported the Imperial war effort, like Mrs A Otto who contributed to the Maritzburg Association for Aid to Sick and Wounded,<sup>60</sup> were dyed in the wool loyalists. Others, including some of those mentioned above, were definitely not loyalists but cared enough for victims of the war to make some contribution to improve their lot. Deeds such as these contributed to blurring the boundaries between loyalists and non-loyalists and allowed Afrikaners to adopt multiple personalities during the war.

## 7.2 Loyalist experiences at the hands of the Boers

When the Boers made the decision, towards the end of November 1899, to commandeer the white residents of the occupied Klip River county, immense pressure was placed on the local Afrikaners to join the Republican cause. But, not all capitulated. In Newcastle the continuous refusal of JC Uys and CR (Coenraad) Cronjé<sup>61</sup> to join the Boer forces resulted in them being sent to Pretoria for imprisonment. Uys was later released and allowed to travel via Lourenco Marques to Durban. As he was well acquainted with the residents of Newcastle and with the geography of the area, Magistrate JO Jackson, who was also arrested and deported via Lourenco Marques to Durban, highly recommended Uys for employment in the military.<sup>62</sup>

In the Dundee district the experiences of the loyalists mirrored that of Cronjé and Uys. The problems for the loyalists of the specific district also started with the decision to commandeer all white men still residing in the area. The first meeting called to enact this took place at Wasbank on 20 November 1899. Several Afrikaner men of the Dundee area, amongst them the Strydom brothers,

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56. *Natal Witness*, 22.3.1900.

57. PAR, AGO I/7/17: Regina vs JH Ries, p.355; *Natal Witness*, 15.2.1901.

58. PAR, 1/Wen 3/2/3: Subscription list circulated in the Weenen district, 22.5.1900-28.5.1900.

59. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Letter M Schoon to HF Schoon, 21.5.1902.

60. *Natal Witness*, 9.2.1900.

61. Interview with Hans Meyer conducted at Ingagane, 10.7.2000.

62. PAR, MJPW 72: Recommendation to Prime Minister AH Hime by Magistrate JO Jackson, Newcastle, regarding JC Uys, 21.12.1899; *Natal Witness*, 15.12.1899; PAR, CSO 2909: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by JC Uys,

Wynand, Gerhardus, John, Paul, Theunis and Frederick, did not go.<sup>63</sup> Not even threats that they would be fined £37.10 each or be driven across the Tugela River could convince them to attend. In an attempt to gain clarity about their situation Wynand and John Strydom later visited the laager at Helpmekaar. Their visit culminated in a row with General JJ Ferreira, with the latter threatening to confiscate all their property if they did not cross the Tugela within seven days. The meeting ended without any firm decision and the Strydoms received a pass from Commandant Engelbrecht to visit Dr Dalzell at Pomeroy.<sup>64</sup>

The visit to Dalzell was but an excuse to communicate with the UMR across the Tugela. In a letter to the officer commanding the spokesman for the Strydom clan, WW (Wynand) Strydom, made it clear that they refused to be commandeered. According to Strydom, the disloyal Afrikaners in the area were the instigators behind their eviction, and he feared that they could be attacked as they were heading towards the Tugela. He therefore requested the assistance of the UMR or the Natal Government to negotiate their safe passage with General Piet Joubert. A defiant Strydom, in a marginal note, informed the officer commanding that “I will try and bring ten sacks of potatoes as a present for your men.”<sup>65</sup> The loyalty of the Strydoms was applauded by Dalzell who described it as “...magnificent! These men are surrounded by the enemy and disloyal boers.”<sup>66</sup>

Not long after the return to their farm two local Afrikaners by the surname of Vermaak, visited the Strydoms urging them to co-operate with the Transvalers by providing information regarding stock and property belonging to loyalists. The Vermaaks argued that such a step would remove any suspicion of their loyalist activities. The Strydoms were also informed that a meeting of Natal Afrikaners was planned at Dundee for 29 November 1899 to appoint officials for the envisaged Natal Commando. The meeting was to be held under the chairmanship of Justice of the Peace DP Wolfaardt at Paddafontein between Dundee and Helpmekaar. Upon hearing that the meeting had been moved to Dundee some of the Strydom brothers returned home while others held a family meeting at Blesboklaagte outside Dundee. Here they decided to stick together even if it meant that expulsion across the Tugela River as per the proclamation issued by General Piet Joubert.<sup>67</sup> Roughly

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16.3.1901.

63. Although great emphasis will be placed in this chapter on the experiences of the loyalist Strydoms, other loyal Natal Afrikaners resident in the occupied region also had to constantly endure commandeering orders. See, PAR, CSO 2886: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by AA Jansen, 19.3.1901; PAR, CSO 2896: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by WS Naude, 9.12.1901; PAR, CSO 2886: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by AL Jansen, 24.10.1900.

64. PRO, CO 179/212: Statement by WW Strydom, 20.6.1900; PAR, CSO 2907: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by JJ Strydom, 10.10.1900; CSO 2907: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by GC Strydom, 13.2.1901.

65. PAR, CSO 1632: Letter WW Strydom to commanding officer UMR, 25.11.1899.

66. *Ibid.*

67. OE Prozesky private collection, Diary of JJA Prozesky: Diary entry, 10.3.1900, pp.343-347, Proclamation by General PJ Joubert, 9.11.1899; PRO, CO 179/218: Report by president of the Special Court, AW Mason containing the Proclamation by General PJ Joubert, 10.6.1901; PAR, GH 547: Proclamation by General PJ Joubert, 9.11.1899; *De*

100 other people were likewise rumoured to be willing to cross the Tugela rather than join the Boers.<sup>68</sup>

Other loyalists like AW Illing, his father-in-law DC (Dirk) Pieters of Zwartwater near Dundee, and CL and AJ Pieters, as well as members of the Jansen and Gregory families, attended the mentioned meeting.<sup>69</sup> The issue of allegiance to the crown was soon raised. Dirk Pieters requested to remain neutral but was told by Wolfaardt (JP) "...that if any Afrikaner is so rotten as not to take up arms, he must be plundered and persecuted by any burger who comes across him." Wolfaardt took the debate one step further and declared that an oath of allegiance to Britain made by local Afrikaners, was null and void since the British had vacated the area. This was disputed by a AL Jansen who made it clear that such an oath could not be broken. Jansen warned all those present against joining the Boers.<sup>70</sup> The Dundee townlands manager, Barend Liebenberg, also did not mince his words and made it clear that he was a British subject and intended to remain one. His vociferous manner apparently made him a marked man from then on.<sup>71</sup> Realising that they could be conscripted, the Pieterses and Illing asked for passes to cross the Tugela. This was declined and only passes to cross into the besieged Ladysmith were offered. The Pieterses and the Jansens thereafter left the meeting.<sup>72</sup>

In due course the loyalists were informed that it had been decided at the Dundee meeting that all the Natal Afrikaners who did not want to take up arms on the behalf of the Republic would have to move south of the Tugela within seven days. Passes for this could be obtained from the justice of the peace in Dundee. To clarify their position, three of the Strydom brothers, and two English Natalians, consulted with General JJ Ferreira at Helpmekaar who informed them that they would have to be ready to move within four days. In the meantime the justice of the peace was swamped with requests for passes.<sup>73</sup> It seems as if the large number of white inhabitants who wanted to escape Republican occupation offended the Boer administration, and Ferreira, as a result informed the Strydoms that he had decided against issuing passes as this would amount to a breach of security. He was, however, willing to allow them to go to Ladysmith.

Only in one case, that of Mrs Liebenberg and her children, was a pass issued by the Boers to Natal Afrikaners to cross the Tugela into British held territory. When the loyalist family group reached

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*Volksstem*, 11.11.1899. See Appendix B for the complete text of the proclamation.

68. PRO, CO 179/212: Statement by WW Strydom, 20.6.1900; PAR, CSO 2589: Statement by WW Strydom, 20.6.1900; VTR, JC Vermaak collection, 03/14223: Declaration by JJ Kemp, 22.5.1900.

69. PAR, CSO 2898: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by DC Pieters, 6.10.1900.

70. PRO, CO 179/213: Letter Dr Dalzell to Attorney-General H Bale, 10.8.1900.

71. PAR, AGO I/7/42: Diary of PG Hill, no date, p.7.

72. PAR, AGO I/7/42: Statement by AW Illing, 22.5.1900.

73. VTR, JC Vermaak collection, 03/14223: Declaration by JJ Kemp, 22.5.1900.

Helpmekaar with the intention of crossing by wagon via Pomeroy they were stopped and kept prisoner in the laager for three days. Guards surrounded the wagon and the Liebenbergs were told that they would be shot if they tried to leave. The family was then returned to Dundee where the eldest Liebenberg boy was imprisoned for nine days, apparently because he was a loyal British subject. On 2 January 1900 the Liebenberg family was sent to Pretoria and then on to Durban via Lourenco Marques. Her husband Barend was previously also removed to Pretoria. He arrived in Durban on 4 May 1900, after being released by the Transvaal authorities.<sup>74</sup>

The rest of the Natal Afrikaner loyalists were trapped in Boer occupied territory and exposed to the mercy of the invaders. On 5 December 1899, three of the Strydom brothers, John, Paul and Wynand, were arrested and brought before General Ferreira and his staff at Helpmekaar. They were threatened and given the choice of taking up arms or be driven into the besieged Ladysmith. They opted for the latter. Unsure of how to deal with such defiance, Ferreira allowed the Strydoms to proceed home. Within an hour of their return home a group of Boers arrived to confiscate their arms and ammunition. The posse also remained to guard the house. The following day, 6 December 1899, Ferreira, on three occasions, sent a messenger to enquire if the three Strydoms had changed their minds. When this did not happen Ferreira lost his patience and 50 Boers arrived and took the three Strydoms to Helpmekaar, from where they were ordered to proceed to Blesboklaagte. The fact that the loyalist brothers complained of having left behind most of their furniture, 100 pockets of potatoes, a number of horses and some cattle, did not impress the Boer officers. As a favour Wynand Strydom was allowed to send back one of his African labourers on horseback, to remain with their property. The labourer, however, did not reach the farm as a local Afrikaner, CJ Vermaak, captured him and took him on as an agterryer, while another local Afrikaner, J Kemp, took the horse.

*En route* three messengers arrived and informed the group of loyalists that Ferreira had changed his mind and that they were to proceed to Dundee. Dismayed the three Strydoms left their families at Blesboklaagte. Accompanied by their other three brothers and their brother-in-law, Wade, they proceeded to the Dundee Police Station. From then on the three ringleaders, Wynand, John and Paul, were subjected to the disjointed Boer administration where decisions were taken as situations arose. The threesome was locked up for a day and a night without food. Warden Nel then ordered their wives to visit them because they were to be transferred to Pretoria. The brothers insisted on seeing the justice of the peace first. The justice of the peace found the situation puzzling since he had not received orders to imprison the men. He therefore ordered that they be fed, their stock handed over to their brother Gert, and that their families be allowed to reside in Dundee. Although the brothers were initially removed to the police barracks on his orders, they were taken back to the prison by the warden and Field-Cornet Meyer, apparently "on instructions from Pretoria." The Strydoms were

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74. PRO, CO 179/211: Letter B Liebenberg to PUS, 24.4.1900; PAR, CSO 1645: Letters B Liebenberg to PUS, 24.4.1900 and 5.5.1900; PAR, CSO 2889: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by B Liebenberg, 28.11.1900.

soon joined by nine other loyalist prisoners. After six days of imprisonment they were brought before the justice of the peace who asked if they would take an oath of neutrality if he placed them under house arrest. They agreed and were consequently granted permission to join their families in Dundee. Circumstances changed for the trio with the arrival of Wolmarans (JP) at the end of December 1899. On meeting Wynand Strydom and the mother of the clan he lifted the house arrest. Wolmarans, on investigation of the charges against the brothers, declared that under Transvaal law no one had the right to commandeer or interfere with British subjects. The magistrate then allowed the brothers to proceed to the farm Helena with their stock, advising them to remain quiet so as not to offend the Boers. On being informed that the horses and potatoes belonging to the Strydoms had been confiscated without the issue of receipts, Wolmarans wrote to General Ferreira asking for receipts to be issued. The general bluntly refused.<sup>75</sup>

The rudimentary Boer administration in the Klip River county, with the assistance of disloyal Afrikaners, started to turn the screws on the loyalists from December 1899 onwards. One Kirkness, a member of the DRC in Ladysmith, complained that the Boers wanted to arrest him on three occasions on suspicion of being a spy.<sup>76</sup> AL Jansen and JJ Kemp were threatened with being sent either to Pretoria, Colesberg or Ladysmith, or forced south of the Tugela River.<sup>77</sup> A large number of loyalists, including B Liebenberg, JA Naude, J Craig, AJ Nienaber, Magistrate P Hugo and about 160 others were arrested and sent to prison in Pretoria.<sup>78</sup> After a short stay in the capital of the Transvaal, some of the Natal prisoners were returned to Ladysmith and forced into Intombi Camp, firstly because the officials in Pretoria could not cope with the large number of inmates and possibly also as a means to flood the besieged town with people which in turn would deplete the British resources and hasten the towns surrender.<sup>79</sup> Other Natalians, like JE Northern and AJ Oldacre, were later allowed to proceed to Durban via Delagoa Bay. On arrival in Durban they wasted no time in informing the authorities of the identity of the Natal rebels. Oldacre could also reveal that the Jansens, Pieterses, Illing, CM Meyer of Gladstone, Dundee and Cornelius Meyer of Tafelberg, Dundee had remained loyal.<sup>80</sup> While this handful of Klip River county Afrikaners managed to remain true, the treatment they suffered convinced a man like JJ Kemp of Zuurfontein, Dundee, to abandon his intention of not taking up arms. He therefore, in middle December, on the insistence of

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75. PRO, CO 179/212: Statement by WW Strydom, 20.6.1900; PAR, CSO 2589: Statement by WW Strydom, 20.6.1900.

76. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 4.3.1900, pp.195-197.

77. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 12.7.1900, pp.397-398, letter AL Jansen to HF Schoon, 9.7.1900; VTR, JC Vermaak collection, 03/14223: Declaration by JJ Kemp, 22.5.1900.

78. *Natal Witness*, 30.10.1900; PAR, CSO 1643: Report by Magistrate P Hugo regarding events since the British withdrawal from Dundee up to his arrival at Intombi Camp, 19.3.1900; PAR, CSO 2896: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by AJ Nienaber, 9.2.1901; PAR, AGO I/7/40: Report from intelligence department regarding disloyal Natal Afrikaners, 9.12.1899; PAR, CSO 2896: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by JA Naude, 11.12.1901.

79. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 8.11.1900, p.61; *De Natal Afrikaner*, 5.12.1899.

80. PAR, GH 556: Affidavit by JE Northern made to Captain Percy Scott, 31.1.1900; Affidavit by AJ Oldacre made to HR Bousfield, 22.1.1900.

his wife, proceeded to Helpmekaar to collect his rifle and join the Natal Commando.<sup>81</sup>

In the meantime the persecution of the loyalist in the Dundee district continued. On 21 December 1899, Illing, AJ and CL Pieters were arrested at Blesboklaagte by Gideon Kok and a group of men. They were taken to the laager at Helpmekaar and handed over to Dirk Uys who informed them that they had been arrested because they refused to take up arms on the Boer side.<sup>82</sup> The following morning Illing, AJ and CL Pieters, James Craig, Ridley, and the four Strydom brothers Gerhardus, Theunis, John and Frederick, were brought before a court martial chaired by General JJ Ferreira and charged for being British subjects who refused to take up arms. No evidence was presented against them and they were, after their appearance, locked up again. The next day they were released with the warning that they were to report at Helpmekaar on 27 December. On the return date the men were read a telegram, apparently from President Paul Kruger, stating that all Natal Afrikaners needed to be commandeered at once or pay a fine ranging from £1 to £300. The nine loyalists informed the court martial, which included three Natal rebels, PJ van Rensburg as well as Dirk and Koos Uys, that Kruger had no authority over them and that they refused to pay either the fine or take up arms. Some of those in the crowd of onlookers now warned the group that they would be shot. This did not happen and the group was allowed to return home. Two days later Pieter Nel jnr, a Natal rebel accompanied by a Transvaler, came to the farm Zwartwater to collect £15 from DC, AJ and CL Pieters apiece as well as from James Craig and Illing. Only DC Pieters paid up; the rest refused wanting to know what the money was for.<sup>83</sup> The following day Craig, Illing AJ and CL Pieters proceeded to the laager at Helpmekaar to enquire about the £15 demanded from them. In no uncertain terms they were informed that it was not a fine but money commandeered from them. Seeing no way out they all decided to pay. This extortion bought the loyalists three weeks of grace.

The treatment of the loyalists did not have the approval of the vast majority of rebels stationed at Helpmekaar. In a letter to General JJ Ferreira, the 96 Afrikaners signatories pointed out that they were informed at the meeting held at Dundee on 29 October 1899 that only two options existed - you either supported the Boers or you were against them. Those who opted for the second choice were to be expelled across the Tugela within seven days. What concerned the signatories was that a third option seemed to exist, namely that of remaining neutral. They complained that while they were on commando the neutral Afrikaners were allowed to move around freely, even though every now and again some of them were arrested only to be released after paying a small fine. They felt that if this option was allowed some of the men presently in the laager might also choose to become neutral since it was a safer and more comfortable option. The signatories further argued that should they fall

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81. VTR, JC Vermaak collection, 03/14223: Declaration by JJ Kemp, 22.5.1900.

82. PAR, AGO I/7/42: Statement by AW Illing, 22.5.1900.

83. It seems as if on 29 December 1899, £15 were commandeered from all loyalist in the area. See, PAR, CSO 2886: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by AL Jansen, 24.10.1900; PAR, CSO 2898: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by DC Pieters, 6.10.1900.

into the hands of the British they could be executed for taking up arms because the crown would point out that some men had managed to remain neutral. They therefore called on the Transvaal authorities to, for the sake of the protection of the rebels, implement their earlier decision and bring everybody into the fold.<sup>84</sup>

It seems as if the Transvaal authorities paid some attention to the argument that if all Natal Afrikaners were to take up arms, the British would have to treat them all the same. Therefore, on 22 January 1900, the Pieterses, Illing and Craig were again commandeered by a Natal rebel, JS Swart, this time on the orders of Commandant T Steenkamp and Field-Cornet PJ van Rensburg. The loyalists had to report at Helpmekaar on 27 January 1900, armed and with provisions for eight days.<sup>85</sup> The Pieterses and Illing again refused and proceeded to seek an audience with the newly appointed Commandant Steenkamp who proved to be much more accommodating than Ferreira. He listened to the men, questioned them, took depositions from them and informed them that he would refer the matter to General Piet Joubert. It is uncertain what became of the report but matters did change after General Joubert's visit to Helpmekaar on 10 February 1900 because five days later two rebels, CM Vermaak and Fritz Havemann, informed the loyalists that they had to remain within the boundaries of their farms or suffer the consequences if they were found outside the stated parameters. Rumours later indicated this meant that they would be shot. Most of the loyalists were, apart from Ridley and Craig who were sent to Pretoria, thereafter left alone.<sup>86</sup>

At the beginning of February 1900, the Strydom brothers were once again commandeered by a Natal rebel, J Schalkwyk. The Strydoms threw Schalkwyk from their house in a violent manner. When rumours started to circulate that they would be punished for this Wynand consulted Wolmarans (JP). The latter informed them that they had acted incorrectly and that they should have rather written a letter stating their position. Still fearing the repercussions of their deed, the brothers hid in the veldt for three days. A letter from Commandant Steenkamp eventually reached the men informing them that he wanted to speak to them. The meeting took place in fairly amicable circumstances but the brothers were informed that if they were found guilty of assaulting Schalkwyk they would be shot. Steenkamp then took statements from them regarding the treatment they received since he had been given power by General Piet Joubert to judge such cases. The statements inevitably lead to an argument about loyalty. Gert Strydom stated that he refused to join the Boers since that would be tantamount to being a rebel. The argument about loyalty raged for a while with Steenkamp insisting

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84. NAR, KG 819: Letter to General JJ Ferreira signed by 96 Natal Afrikaners, 8.1.1900; PAR, CSO 2899: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by CL Pieters, 6.10.1900; PAR, CSO 2872: Invasion Losses Commission Enquiry: Claim by J Craig, 9.10.1900.

85. PAR, CSO 2898: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by DC Pieters, 6.10.1900.

86. PAR, AGO I/7/42: Statement by AW Illing, 22.5.1900; PAR, CSO 2888: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by HL Labuschagne, 5.10.1901; PAR, CSO 2898: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by DC Pieters, 6.10.1900.

that the Strydoms's "unborn children's children" would curse them some day. Steenkamp then allowed the men to go home while he awaited orders from Joubert. Afterwards three Natal rebels informed the Strydoms that they could not, as was the case with other loyalists, leave the farm they were residing on, Helena.<sup>87</sup>

By early May 1900 the position of the Strydom brothers had become precarious. Their loyalty meant that they were being imprisoned on a farm other than their own and were running low on food. Three of the brothers therefore proceeded to Glencoe to consult with General Lucas Meyer. Meyer's response was curt: the brothers could not expect the ZAR to feed disloyal people, but he was prepared to send them to Ladysmith where they would find both "food and Englishmen enough." Meyer ended the meeting by ordering the brothers to return to their residence and remain quiet. On 7 May 1900, as the Boer defences started to crumble, Commandant Steenkamp gave the Strydoms permission to return to their own farms<sup>88</sup> to await the arrival of Buller's Natal Army. This return sometimes proved to be unpleasant as JM Strydom, mother of the loyal Strydoms, testified. Her house was used as a stable and all the fruit trees were cut down. Similar sights awaited other loyalists who were absent from their properties.<sup>89</sup> JS, L and JH Combrink of Uithoek, Umsinga, all members of the UMR, and closely associated with the Strydoms on whose farm they resided, found that their property was looted by the Boers as a punitive measure.<sup>90</sup>

The mistreatment of loyalist Natal Afrikaners was not restricted to the occupied areas north of the Tugela. Those to south of the Tugela suffered a similar fate, during the brief Boer occupation. Wessel Pretorius requested the commander of a 500-strong commando to be allowed to remove his family and property to his farm on the Little Tugela. The commander refused because he believed that Pretorius knew of their plans and positions and would inform the British thereof. As a result the distressed family and their possessions were forcefully removed to the laager. In the process a lot of the Pretorius' furniture was broken by the Boers who simply threw it onto the wagon. After residing in the laager for a short period of time Pretorius and his family were allowed to proceed to his father-in-law, John Oosthuysen's, farm near Harrismith. As a parting message Pretorius was informed that he would be brought back to join the commando.<sup>91</sup>

Despite the suffering loyal Natal Afrikaners had to endure at the hands of the Boers and Natal rebels it was not regarded in a serious light by a later president of the Special Court, AW Mason. He

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87. PRO, CO 179/212: Statement by WW Strydom, 20.6.1900; PAR, CSO 2589: Statement by WW Strydom, 20.6.1900.

88. *Ibid.*

89. PAR, CSO 2907: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by JM Strydom, 9.10.1900.

90. PAR, CSO 2871: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claims by JH and JS Combrink, 10.10.1900; Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by L Combrink, 6.10.1900.

91. PAR, GH 525: Statements taken by the Field Intelligence Department from Hiya, John, Jacob and Makanda, 12.1.1900.

preferred to play down their suffering when compared to that of English colonists. His verdict was that:

No instance, however, of any kind, was brought to our notice of personal hardship being inflicted upon a Dutch resident of the Dundee district declining to take up arms. One or two men lost a few pounds, or an ox or two, and some were detained for a short time in laager at Helpmekaar under custody, in the Newcastle district one or two men were sent into the Transvaal and thence to Delagoa Bay, and this happened with respect to the British inhabitants of Dundee some of whom, however, were sent into Ladysmith, and there endured the privations of the siege...while the loyal Dutch suffered little more than inconvenience, those of British nationality were in many cases treated with extreme harshness, some being confined to their farms, some removed therefrom, while others were deported to the Transvaal.<sup>92</sup>

Scant wonder the loyalist *De Natal Afrikaner* reported in June 1901: "We who remained loyal since the outbreak of war, and who are still most heartily loyal, we who always contended that our Afrikaners may safely rely upon the sense of fair play of the better class of English Colonists as a guarantee for good treatment in the future, we are now compelled to admit that we were sadly mistaken in our belief."<sup>93</sup>

### **7.3 Brother against brother - revenge against and reaction towards loyalists Natal Afrikaners by Natal rebels**

As could be expected a serious rift developed between those Afrikaners who remained loyal to the crown, and those who chose to align themselves with the invading Republican forces. Vengeful attitudes towards loyalists by disloyal Natal Afrikaners did not take long to surface. HJ Strydom complained that he had been molested by someone for several nights in late September 1900 when the person threw stones at his house. In one case a stone broke a window and injured a family member.<sup>94</sup> The levels of anti-loyalists emotions also surfaced in the DRC. The day when Ds Bosman of the DRC in Newcastle preached at Judith, a church situated between Dundee and Helpmekaar, AL Jansen was informed that he was not welcome. In reaction Jansen sent a message to Bosman, requesting a visit from him. When this did not happen, Jansen did not become angry but professed a feeling of sadness for the local Afrikaners who were misled and ended up in jail. At the same time he stated that his eyes were opened to the behaviour of the members of his congregation.<sup>95</sup>

92. PRO, CO 179/218: Report by president of the Special Court, AW Mason, in response to the application by Mrs JJ Webb to have her husband's sentence reduced, 10.6.1901.

93. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 18.6.1901.

94. PAR, Archives of the Umsinga magistrate (hereafter 1/UMS) 38: Letter HJ Strydom to Magistrate T Maxwell, Umsinga, 28.9.1900; Letter Magistrate T Maxwell, Umsinga, to Sgt Salter, 28.9.1900.

95. PAR, HF Schoon collection, A 72: Diary entry, 12.7.1900, pp.397-398, letter from AL Jansen to HF Schoon, 9.7.1900. The process of barring Afrikaners who sided with the British from church activities became one of the features of post-war South Africa. See, AM Grundlingh, *Die hendsoppers en joiners...*, pp.314-336.

The real conflict between loyal and disloyal Afrikaners came to a head during the rebel trials which started in September 1900. In trial after trial the loyalists exacted revenge for their treatment at the hands of the occupiers and their fellow Natal Afrikaners by testifying against suspected rebels. The Strydom brothers testified against between 40 and 50 suspected rebels, including family members, whom they alleged were harder on them than the Transvalers.<sup>96</sup> Likewise Illing and the Pieters family became key witnesses in the rebel trails, testifying against a large numbers of rebels.<sup>97</sup> Other loyalists who also testified for the crown in the rebel trials included: Daniel Opperman of Newcastle against AJ Matthee,<sup>98</sup> MW Theunissen and Trooper Steyn of the UMR against AC, H and TC Vermaak<sup>99</sup> and Barend and Stephen Liebenberg against PJ, IJM and HG Jordaan.<sup>100</sup> Even rebels who had served their time, such as CFH Posselt and JCL Labuschagne, became loyalists and testified for the crown.<sup>101</sup> In an extreme case Joseph Lombaard Odendaal Colling, who was serving with the Volunteer Composite Regiment (hereafter VCR), and who had once been arrested as a suspected rebel and had two brothers convicted as rebels, testified against BG Meyer.<sup>102</sup>

Being a witness in the rebel trials also had a downside. Barend Liebenberg complained that he was “suffering through the Rebels” because his testimony as a witness in the Special Court had become a “permanent job”. Consequently his business suffered when he was called to testify in Pietermaritzburg, Estcourt and other places. Liebenberg, therefore complained that he was paid too little and submitted a claim for money lost while absent from his business. The Natal authorities did not entertain this claim and informed Liebenberg that he had actually been overpaid to the amount of 8/6.<sup>103</sup>

Those on the wrong side of the evidence offered, and who sought revenge, each developed his own strategy. JC Vermaak, sentenced to two years imprisonment, decided to exact retribution against the Afrikaners who testified against him by publically humiliating and exposing them. In a letter to the *Natal Witness* he declared: “I wish through remedy of your respected paper my respectful and hearty thanks to convey to Messrs. F Leroux, JJ Muller, Aug. Jansen, JJS Maritz, Adrian Jansen and others

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96. PRO, CO 179/212: Despatch C Tatham to Attorney-General H Bale, 20.6.1900; VTR, JC Vermaak collection, 03/14223: Testimonies of TJ and GC Strydom and CL Pieters against JC Vermaak, 24.9.1900; PAR, AGO I/7/35: Testimony of SL Strydom against JJ van Tonder, 26.11.1901.

97. PAR, AGO I/7/42: Statement by AW Illing, 22.5.1900.

98. PAR, Archive of the Newcastle magistrate (hereafter 1/NEW) 1/1/2/1: Rex vs WJ Matthee in the special magistrates court, 8.1.1901.

99. PAR, AGO I/7/37: Rex vs AC, H and TC Vermaak, pp.950-952.

100. PAR, AGO I/7/44: Rex vs PJ, IJM and HG Jordaan, pp.1140-1144.

101. PAR, AGO I/8/83: Application by CFH Posselt and JCL Labuschagne for increased witnesses expenses, 28.10.1901; OE Prozesky private collection, Diary of JJA Prozesky: Diary entry, 15.6.1901, p.508.

102. PAR, AGO I/7/37: Testimony of JL Colling against BG Meyer, 15.1.1902; PAR, CSO 2872: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by JL Colling, 6.9.1900.

103. PAR, AGO I/8/80: Correspondence surrounding the claim by B Liebenberg that he had been underpaid, 11.6.1901-12.6.1901.

for the evidence by them given in my case. Of the seven counts against me brought I have been found guilty of only two by the Judge and those are the two admitted by me...the Lord give me the strength that I forgive the witnesses who without reason have persecuted me good for evil return."<sup>104</sup>

*De Natal Afrikaner* refused to publish this letter and responded by bemoaning the state some Natal Afrikaners found themselves in.<sup>105</sup>

Other rebels followed a less sophisticated but equally harmful approach. This strategy consisted of the rebels attempting to, either implicate loyalists in rebellious activities, or discredit their applications for compensation before the Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission. In sworn affidavits the following convicted rebels, WFJ Prinsloo, JCL Labuschagne, CFH Posselt (jnr), CFH Posselt (snr) and SL Strydom, implicated AW Illing in rebellious activities and in falsifying compensation claims. The men were in agreement that during the early part of the war Illing had continued "freely and willingly" with the operation of his store at Coalfields outside Dundee. As it was the only well-stocked store in the area, Illing had apparently not only received permission to increase his prices by 100%, but the members of the Natal Commando also purchased boots, tobacco, and liquor from him. Furthermore, in early November 1899, Illing presented a barrel of Cape Brandy to the Boer forces while delivering a rousing speech in which he referred to himself as one member of the Afrikaner nation who was glad that they were retaking the lands of their forefathers. Afterwards Illing managed to secure a permanent guard to prevent Boers from looting his store thereby enabling him to continue with the operation of his enterprise until almost all his stock was sold. He then handed it over to the Boer forces. Some rebels claimed that Illing was even seen carrying a rifle at times and that he had also visited the Boer wounded after the Battle of Talana. In the light of this the mentioned convicted rebels found it strange that Illing could claim £6 000 compensation.<sup>106</sup>

Even the members of the Strydom family, despite their professed loyalty, were suspected of dealing with the enemy. Magistrate Thomas Maxwell of Umsinga informed the Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission that Hendrik Strydom snr of Uithoek's claim that the Boers had taken some of his cattle, horses and 1 000 lbs of fodder, was false. According to Maxwell he had proof that Strydom had actually sold the horses and fodder to the Boers and that some of the cattle in the claim were with his son in Zululand.<sup>107</sup>

Other loyalists faced similar accusations of disloyalty. Rebel Lucas Willem Meyer<sup>108</sup> stated that he

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104. *Natal Witness*, 5.10.1900.

105. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 9.10.1900.

106. PAR, AGO I/8/81: Depositions by WFJ Prinsloo, JCL Labuschagne, CFH Posselt jnr and snr and SL Strydom, 3.6.1901, 18.6.1901, 24.6.1901, 27.6.1901.

107. PAR, 1/UMS 38: Letter Magistrate T Maxwell to Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission, 13.11.1900.

108. LW Meyer was the son-in-law of the loyalist August Jansen. The latter, on two occasions, unsuccessfully petitioned for the release of Meyer. PAR, AGO I/8/72: Letter J Hershensohnn to Attorney-General H Bale, 2.8.1900; PAR, CSO 1673: Petition by A Jansen to governor regarding the release of LW Meyer, 4.4.1901-15.4.1901.

saw Gert Strydom talking to some Transvaal burghers on the stoep of Nelson's store in Dundee during late October 1899, while in December 1899, he collected a Lee Metford rifle from Strydom which had been left with him by some Transvalers.<sup>109</sup> The elderly Dirk Pieters of Zwartwater was likewise accused of treason. According to GP Kemp, Pieters had taken two loads of furniture belonging to the magistrate of Umsinga to Zwartwater. When this was uncovered by the Transvaal authorities, the furniture was removed. SL Strydom elaborated that Dirk Pieters had also sold slaughter animals to the Boers to the value of £70. Loyalist Coenraad Pieters of Zwartwater was similarly accused by GP Kemp of voluntarily supplying the Boers with forage and two riding horses. SL Strydom added to the accusation by declaring that Pieters had, before the formation of the Natal Commando, participated in action at Lombard's Kop.<sup>110</sup> The evidence against Coenraad Pieters mounted when JJ and GC van Tonder charged him with attending the commandeering meeting at Dundee and of nominating a CJ de Villiers as assistant field-cornet. The claims of disloyalty against Coenraad Pieters were rejected by the Natal authorities as pure fabrication.<sup>111</sup> A dimmer view was taken of the accusations against other loyalists and an enquiry was launched.

The task of evaluating the belated depositions by convicted rebels against loyalists fell on the shoulders of Charles Tatham. The point of departure for Tatham was a very pragmatic but also defensive one:

Few people who remained within the area occupied by the enemy - did not, in some way, become involved with the invaders - I have therefore, throughout my - connection with treason work, been careful as to whom I caused to be prosecuted and whilst it was hinted to me, when I was at Dundee, that several persons of Dutch birth or sentiment, whom I treated as witnesses for the crown were not untainted with treasonable acts - I preferred to accept them as witnesses after carefully considering the facts and circumstances connected with each case and from personal observation - as I personally visited at their farms, on my way to Dundee... I may say that so far I have seen no reason, or proof, that a mistake has been made...

To acknowledge that any of the accusations against the loyalists were true would therefore imply that the original investigative work done by Tatham was not up to standard. Tatham's verdict was therefore predictable. He regarded Gert Strydom as a very loyal man who served in the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 and was arrested by the Boers during the Anglo-Transvaal War of 1880-1881. During the Boer occupation of Klip River county he was arrested and endlessly harassed by the Boers who commandeered his fodder. Despite all of this he remained loyal. Tatham likewise regarded the wealthy Dirk Pieters and his son Coenraad, as extremely loyal. All the witnesses he consulted denied that the Pieterses traded with the Boers; it was merely a case of goods being commandeered from them. The trip to Lombard's Kop was conducted to reap some crops and collect cattle from a farm the family owned in the area.

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109. PAR, AGO I/8/81: Deposition by LW Meyer, 26.6.1901.

110. PAR, AGO I/8/81: Depositions by GP Kemp and SL Strydom, 14.6.1901, 21.6.1901.

111. PAR, AGO I/7/34: Rex vs JJ and GC van Tonder, pp.826-827.

Tatham treated the evidence against AW Illing much more circumspectly. He admitted that Illing could have committed treasonable acts between 20 October and 15 December 1899. Illing confessed that he had traded with the Boers, saying that if he had not done so they would have taken the goods without paying. In December the Boers commandeered most of his stock and gave him two receipts. Since the Boers offered him no protection he had to move his stock and furniture to the house of his father-in-law. Tatham rejected the depositions by the Posselt's out of hand since they were "considered the biggest looters in the Biggarsberg." As far as Tatham was concerned if Illing did carry a firearm it was merely a "pass" to allow him to move about freely and trade for as long as possible. What Tatham could not hide was Illing's opportunistic exploitation of the war since he was being sued by a rebel, Edmund du Bois, for wool paid with an unexchangeable money order issued to him by the Transvaal Government. What was most important to Tatham was that Illing did not take up arms on behalf of the Boers.<sup>112</sup> Although the investigation by Tatham, which was in effect a review of his own work, smacked of double standards and a cover-up, it, for all intents and purposes took care of the serious accusations levelled at several leading loyalists.

As a result of Tatham's investigation the hatred and anger felt towards loyalists by some Natal Afrikaners deepened. This anger manifested itself either in physical violence or in writing and it remained ingrained in the memory of many of the Natal Afrikaners. An example of physical violence was that suffered by a member of the Strydom clan, SL (Fanie), who had joined the Boers. While imprisoned in Pietermaritzburg he, hoping to get a reduction on his two year prison sentence, decided to become a witness for the crown against Thomas Boshoff. When this came to light, his fellow inmates were furious. Some wanted him to be punished by the so-called "beesvel ry". Hereby the person being punished was propelled into the air by means of a blanket which was removed when the victim was in the air. Dirk Uys, however, came up with an alternative suggestion. Strydom had to be thrown into the prison swimming pool every morning. From then on, every morning, regardless of the weather, Strydom was thrown into the pool.<sup>113</sup>

According to JC Buys, Strydom and JG Wiggell were endlessly tormented by their fellow Afrikaner inmates for their willingness to testify against their kin. In an early form of Afrikaans he provides an insight into the events that took place in and around the cell of the two loyalists:

...was de laaste mens achter hem zoo als een klop kraaien om een uil, naderhand toen ons met ons kos de avond op sters ging toen heef het eers dol gegaan, de ouw Strydom ze bynaam is Wolvie, party zeg de wolf zal bijt de menschen moet op pas, perty zeg het is nu twee wolven een mannetjie en een wijvie...en party van de menschen heef hen altwee net zoo sleg geseg

112. PAR, AGO I/8/81: Report to Attorney-General H Bale by Charles Tatham on the accusations leveled against several loyalists, 4.9.1901.

113. VTR, JC Vermaak collection, 03/2554/2: Document entitled "Voorvalle en grappe in die tronk", 1941.

als wat moeglik was de joaler heef kom stil maak mar kun zijn lag niet houw, de menschen wil de een de ander ddod trap voor de twee Konings getuigen ze door om hen te zien...

This process repeated itself the next morning, and again when the two loyalists returned from having testified in Dundee. Apparently the men hoped to have their sentences lifted but in the words of Buys: “de jutsen heeft hem uit gelag.”<sup>114</sup>

The tormenting became too much for Strydom and in a letter to Attorney-General Henry Bale he complained that: “I cannot stay here with these people they are angry with me...I ask to be removed here today. I cannot stand this. Bad things will occur here. I am afraid to stay here any longer.” Strydom’s wish was granted and he was transferred to the Dundee Prison.<sup>115</sup>

The words written about loyalist Natal Afrikaners were to have a long lasting effect. HC McPeak, (formerly Zietsman, born Rheeder) who was a six-year-old girl during the war, in a semi-biographical sketch entitled *Vierkleur*, recalls the loyalty of Paul Bester: “You see the sun sinking into the redness - that is the blood of our people, all the men, women and children you have betrayed, Paul Bester. You are a traitor and their blood fills the sky.”<sup>116</sup>

Other Natal Afrikaners took to poetry to express their anger towards the loyalists. In pure doggerel, of which some is quoted below, Rebel JC Vermaak made his feelings clear:

De eerste hield zich neutraal  
En sprak dus ook geen leugentaal  
De laatste vol schynheiligheid  
Die predikt leugens wyd en zyd

Om hunnen eigen kwaad te dek  
Bleven zy toen in geen gebrek  
Geveinsdheid aan den day to beg  
Dan komen hunse zaaken rech<sup>117</sup>

Even greater anger, with striking religious overtones, was spewed by PRN Vermaak in a poem entitled, *Aan die verraaiers*,<sup>118</sup> of which some lines are quoted below:

In watter gedaante sal Jy voor hom verskyn?

114. WM, Dagboek van Johannes Christoffel Buys: Deel 2, pp.20-21, 3-4.6.1901.

115. PAR, AGO I/8/80: Request by SL Strydom to be removed from the Pietermaritzburg Prison to Dundee, 6.6.1901-26.6.1901.

116. MP Tarr private collection: Biographical sketch by HC McPeak (formerly Zietsman, born Rheeder) entitled *Vierkleur*.

117. Foy Vermaak private collection: Letter JC Vermaak to CT Vermaak alias Miss C Herzog, 30.5.1901.

118. Foy Vermaak private collection: Poem entitled: *Aan Die Verraaiers* by PRN Vermaak, no date.

Sal jy waag om in Jou omhulsel van Satan ???  
Verraaier, jy is die Judas, die vloek van Jou volk  
Jou naam dit is Judas; Verraaier en duiwels gespuis;  
Mismaakte gedierte en kruipende luis;  
Verraaier, braaksel, skuim van die aarde.

Equally long lasting are the memories by the rebels and their descendants of the loyalist individuals. JC Vermaak, a convicted rebel, still wrote of Coenraad Cronjé in 1941 as a “verraaier en vloek der aarde.”<sup>119</sup> The grandson of another Natal rebel was even able to recall 100 years later how Coenraad Cronjé was ostracised by the Newcastle Afrikaner community, forcing him to sell off his property and move to Weenen where he was not known.<sup>120</sup> Likewise the “disloyalties” of Coenraad Pieters are easily recalled.<sup>121</sup> In this context the statement by FS Bishop, a loyalist resident of Helpmekaar, rings true: “...the Natal Boers never ceased to annoy me. Their behaviour generally towards me and other residents who remained was worse than that of the Transvaal Boers.”<sup>122</sup>

Not all Natal Afrikaners guilty of high treason found it a bitter pill to co-exist alongside loyalists, many a time blood relatives. In fact in many cases the families of rebels who had lost everything were cared for by the Afrikaners of the Dundee district who remained loyal. These charitable deeds received high praise from the *Dundee Commercial Advertiser*<sup>123</sup> and also served to challenge the impression that all Afrikaners convicted of treason blamed their loyalist kin for their plight.

#### **7.4 How much is our loyalty worth? The post-war relationship between Afrikaner loyalists and the Natal Government**

When the Boers were driven from Northern Natal in June 1900 the loyalists could exact revenge. One of the prominent men to do so was Coenraad Cronjé. When released from prison by the British forces who had captured Pretoria, he provided the provost marshal with the names of 42 alleged rebels, “residents of Natal who have been assisting the enemy in the present war against the Empire.” Cronjé promised that if he “had the opportunity of visiting the districts in Northern Natal he would add many more names to the list.”<sup>124</sup> This was not the end of the involvement of Cronjé in identifying disloyal Afrikaners. After the war ended he and HE Kirby<sup>125</sup> were employed on the dockside in Durban, and at the Umbilo POW Camp, to identify Natal rebels from amongst the

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119. VTR, JC Vermaak collection, 03/2553: Memoirs of JC Vermaak, p.27, 1941.

120. Interview with Hans Meyer conducted at Ingagane, 10.7.2000.

121. Interview with Foy Vermaak conducted at Helpmekaar, 10.7.2000.

122. PAR, AGO I/7/42: Deposition by FS Bishop, 31.5.1900.

123. *Dundee Commercial Advertiser*, 12.3.1902.

124. NAR, PMO 5, 352/02: Letter CR Cronjé to provost marshal, 26.6.1900.

125. PAR, MJPW 97: Application by HE Kirby for a railway pass in connection with identifying rebels, 14.10.1902-28.10.1902.

returning POWs.<sup>126</sup>

But the darlings amongst the loyalists were the Strydoms. Governor Walter Hely-Hutchinson sang their praises in a letter to Joseph Chamberlain and also recommended their cause to the Natal Government.<sup>127</sup> The government reacted with great speed and Wynand Strydom was rewarded for the “exemplary behaviour of yourself and members of your family” by being appointed as a justice of the peace.<sup>128</sup> The Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission was also instructed to pay immediate attention to the Strydoms case.<sup>129</sup>

The good relations between the loyalist Strydoms and the Natal authorities soon soured. On 18 August 1900, Charles Tatham brought Gert Strydom to Attorney-General Henry Bale. After Strydom explained that they had suffered considerable economic losses at the hands of both the Boers and the British, Bale wrote to Prime Minister Hime suggesting that he hoped “it may be found possible for the government to reward them substantially.”<sup>130</sup> What the Strydoms were looking for, according to Dr Dalzell, was a grant of 500 acres in land or the equivalent in cash.<sup>131</sup> The Natal Government found this unjustifiable and made it clear that no reward would be paid to any member of the Strydom family.<sup>132</sup>

This verdict silenced the Strydoms for almost two years. Two months after the war ended they launched a second attempt to gain compensation for the loyal services rendered. The Strydoms approached FS Tatham, the clerk of the peace at Dundee during the war, to try and negotiate some economic benefit on their part. Tatham deemed it necessary to inform the Natal Government of “...all the facts...” about the most loyal family on the Biggarsberg and proceeded to explain that because they were regularly being called upon to testify in rebel trials the brothers were often absent from their farms. This caused stock losses and a neglect of their farming activities; indirect losses not covered by the Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission. When the government held sales of looted stock, the Strydoms, because they were Afrikaners, were denied permits to attend the auctions and buy cattle at low prices. Adding to this dilemma the Strydom family was ostracised by the other Afrikaners in the area. To reward them for their loyalty and to allow them to improve their unbearable position Tatham called upon the government to grant “...allotments in the Piet Retief or Vryheid districts (the other side of Vryheid) so that they can be a long distance away from those that they gave evidence against.” As far as Tatham was concerned this was not a case of rewarding

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126. Interview with Hans Meyer conducted at Ingagane, 10.7.2000.

127. PRO, CO 179/212: Letter Governor W Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary J Chamberlain, 20.6.1900.

128. PAR, CSO 2589: Letter PUS C Bird to WW Strydom, 13.8.1900.

129. PAR, CSO 2589: Correspondence PUS C Bird to secretary Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission, 7.7.1900.

130. PAR, CSO 2589: Letter Attorney-General H Bale to Prime Minister AH Hime, 18.8.1900.

131. PRO, CO 179/213: Letter Dr Dalzell to Attorney-General H Bale, 10.8.1900.

132. PAR, CSO 2589: Letter Attorney-General H Bale to Prime Minister AH Hime, 18.8.1900.

loyalty but a grant for their services “...similar to the grants which were made to the late Richard King in the early days of this Colony, for his services at the time of the Boer Attack upon Capt. Smith.”<sup>133</sup> Tatham’s plea received strong support from Henry Wiltshire, the MLA for Dundee.<sup>134</sup>

The appeal on the behalf of the Strydoms again fell on deaf ears and the Natal Government, possibly wary of setting a precedent, replied: “The ministers, while recognising the value of the services of the Strydom family during the war, regret that they do not see their way to extend to these gentlemen any further recognition of their services.”<sup>135</sup>

Several months later the Strydom brothers saw the imminent visit of Joseph Chamberlain to Natal as an opportunity to revive their cause. Attorney-General CA de R Labistour approached the colonial secretary on their behalf requesting an interview with Chamberlain.<sup>136</sup> This was refused until the exact nature of their reasons for requesting an audience was made known. Consequently WW Strydom declared his reasons:

We believe that it is an Imperial matter, as the redress we seek is for loss and suffering incurred during an Imperial war, and under martial law. You are aware of my brothers and my own suffering during the war, on account of our loyalty, and that we gave the Government a large amount of assistance after the Boers were driven from Natal. We would like to know if something special could not be done in the way of a grant of land on easy terms, or otherwise, to help to recompense us for what we have gone through, and the losses we have incurred. Only one of us is an owner of land. On account of constant attendance of treason trials, we had no opportunity of attending stock sales, and buying stock at a reasonable price. We were the only Dutch British subjects in this district, who were removed from their farms, and imprisoned by the Boers. Even now, we are boycotted on account of our loyalty by Dutch residents here. I am afraid that we may be obliged to leave this district, as we shall be unable to procure land for our stock here. We also suffered heavy indirect losses in the form of loss stock etc., from being driven with our families from our farms for five months.<sup>137</sup>

Despite the eloquently written letter the Strydoms had very little luck. Governor McCallum deemed the issue a matter for local government and not one for Chamberlain whose time could not allow him to interview individuals.<sup>138</sup> This, however, did not deter the Strydoms; instead they enquired if it would be possible, since it was a matter for the Natal Government, to submit a full report of their treatment and losses during the war.<sup>139</sup> The Government responded by pointing out that the compensation by the Invasion

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133. PAR, CSO 1708: Letters FS Tatham to colonial secretary, 14.7.1902. and 16.7.1902.

134. PAR, CSO 1708: Letter H Wiltshire to Prime Minister AH Hime, 24.7.1902.

135. PAR, CSO 1708: Minute paper containing pleas on behalf of GC Strydom for recognition of services rendered during the war, 16.7.1902-2.8.1902.

136. PAR, CSO 1719: Letter Attorney-General CA de R Labistour to colonial secretary, 9.12.1902.

137. PAR, CSO 1719: Letter WW Strydom to Attorney-General CA de R Labistour, 19.12.1902.

138. PAR, CSO, 1719: Letter PUS to Attorney-General CA de R Labistour, 27.12.1902.

139. PAR, CSO, 1719: Letter WW Strydom to PUS, 14.2.1903.

Losses Enquiry Commission had, or would be paid to them in full, but that this compensation only related to direct losses since indirect losses could not be recognised. In concluding the principal-under-secretary attempted to put the morality of the loyal services rendered by the Strydoms in perspective: “This government highly appreciates the loyal attitude which you, and the other members of your family, maintained throughout the War, and regrets that attitude should have subjected you to ill treatment and annoyances at the hands of the enemy; but it would be impossible, nor do I think that you would desire, that the Government should put a monetary value upon what you suffered in this respect.”<sup>140</sup> This put an end to any hopes of gain the Strydoms harboured.

Other loyalist Natal Afrikaners were less public than the Strydoms about their suffering and allowed others to speak on their behalf. Dr Dalzell took it upon himself to inform the authorities that Adrian Jansen, (JP) and his brother August, remained loyal to the end. Dalzell considered the Jansens as loyal as the Strydoms, and believed that they had suffered much more in economic terms. In the wake of the Boer retreat from Northern Natal the advancing British military arrested every Afrikaner and confiscated large herds of livestock.<sup>141</sup> While the Strydoms were released within days and their cattle returned the Jansens did not receive the same treatment. All livestock belonging to the Jansens was confiscated and August Jansen was banned to Pietermaritzburg under the suspicion of having committed treason. The sons of August; Arnold, Alexander and Johannes Stephanus, were furthermore, kept in prison awaiting trial.<sup>142</sup> Dalzell’s letter prompted an immediate investigation into the charges against the Jansen boys. The clerk of the peace, Charles Tatham, felt very strongly that the Jansens were guilty of taking up arms, harbouring the Boers, and supplying them with food and shelter. He even produced 12 witnesses to testify against them.<sup>143</sup> In time, however, Dalzell was vindicated as the Jansens were found not guilty of all the charges of treason brought against them.<sup>144</sup> Acquittal did not necessarily mean that the loyal Afrikaners in question left the court unblemished. A point in case is Renier Dannhauser (JP) of Palmietfontein, Dannhauser. He was found not guilty of all treason charges in February 1902. The reason for this is best described by Judge Mason in his verdict: “...it appears while he endeavoured perhaps not to commit himself openly to the Boer side, on the other hand he was careful not to make any declaration of loyalty that might in any way offend the enemy. He was anxious, perhaps, to avoid being prosecuted for high treason, but at the same time he paraded as not unfriendly to the Boers.” He was not what the judge claimed to be an “actively loyal” subject.<sup>145</sup>

140. PAR, CSO, 1719: Letter PUS to WW Strydom, 20.2.1903.

141. PAR, CSO 2912: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by CM Wessels, 28.11.1900.

142. PRO, CO 179/213: Letter Dr Dalzell to Attorney-General H Bale, 10.8.1900.

143. PRO, CO 179/213: Affidavit by C Tatham regarding the charges against AJ Jansen and JS Jansen, 21.8.1900.

144. PAR, AGO I/7/37: Rex vs AJ and JS Jansen, pp.338-340. The Jansens were not the only loyalists to suffer this fate. Countless were arrested on suspicion of treason but released without being charged. Others like, NJ Degenaar, CJ van Rooyen, IJ Meyer, WM Lotter and CJ van Rooyen, to name but a few, were arrested, tried and found innocent. See, PAR, AGO I/7/1-I/7/37: Judgements and sentences against Natal rebels, *circa* 1900-1902.

145. PAR, AGO I/7/34: Rex vs R Dannhauser, pp.801-805; *Natal Witness*, 27.2.1902.

Other Afrikaners who remained loyal were treated even worse by their own government. WS Naude of the Dundee district was removed to Greytown. Three months after his banishment he requested permission to return to his farm but was denied permission by the military authorities.<sup>146</sup> When further requests failed Naude took up Joshua Hershensohn's offer extended in the *De Natal Afrikaner*, to assist loyal Natal Afrikaners in their attempts to return to their farms. What irked Naude was that a fellow loyalist like August Jansen was given permission to return to Dundee, and disloyal Afrikaners and English Natalians allowed to remain on their farms, while he was refused permission and suffered economically for it. Hershensohn's good intentions to help fellow Afrikaners by corresponding directly with the prime minister proved to be just that. He failed to negotiate the successful return to their farms of both Naude and another loyal Afrikaner, JN Nel of Bronkhorstville near Ladysmith. In both instances the military failed to reveal their reasons for denying the farmers permission to return home.<sup>147</sup> Nel himself possibly offered the most plausible reason: "I know of cause, that being an Africander, or Dutchman, as we are designated by some, I am liable to be suspected of actively sympathising with the enemy."<sup>148</sup>

FS Tatham reached a similar conclusion after he had taken the case of his loyalist client, CM Meyer of Gladstone, Dundee, to both the prime minister and the governor of Natal. To Tatham the case was simple: The British military allowed Meyer to stay on his farm until 7 November 1901, when he was told to leave his farms, 13 000 acres in total; 500 head of cattle and 4 000 sheep; and proceed with his family to Pietermaritzburg. Tatham's claim "that Mr Meyer's position is precisely the same as that of any loyal British subject..." fell on deaf ears and despite Tatham's position and his access to officials in high places, the military denied Meyer permission to return to his farm.<sup>149</sup>

Although loyalty for the sake of loyalty was not enough for the Strydoms, for other Natal Afrikaners and their government this was sufficient. However, as Natal Afrikaners, they could never be loyal enough and some doubt continued to linger in the minds of non-Afrikaners as the following section will disclose.

### **7.5 Being a loyal Natal Afrikaner in the Natal civil service**

Working as a loyal Afrikaner in the Natal civil service during the war was no easy task. On 17 October 1899, two Natal Afrikaners by the surname of Bester were arrested and brought before Magistrate P Hugo in Dundee because they and some Africans had looted an Indian store in

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146. PAR, 1/GTN 3/2/18: Letter WS Naude to Magistrate Gibson, 27.2.1901; Letter Magistrate Gibson to commandant, Dundee, 27.2.1901.

147. PAR, PM 21: Correspondence regarding the return of WS Naude, 26.4.1901-13.5.1901.

148. PAR, PM 24: Correspondence regarding the return of JH Nel, 28.10.1901-7.11.1901.

149. PAR, PM 20: Correspondence regarding the return of CM Meyer, 17.12.1900-7.2.1901.

Dannhauser. According to the Africans, Bester (snr) had given them permission to do so since the region was now part of the Transvaal. Hugo's handling of the case immediately opened him up to criticism based on his ethnic origin. The *Natal Witness* made no bones about it by stating "...there is bound to be a certain amount of suspicion in the minds of some people that a Magistrate of Dutch descent is prone to lean in his sympathies on the side of those of the same nationality as him." The newspaper suggested that for his own sake and for the sake of justice he should be transferred.<sup>150</sup> Despite these accusations Hugo, who had close relations with the Afrikaners in the Dundee district, was taken prisoner and sent to Pretoria by the Boers for being a loyalist.<sup>151</sup>

The highest ranking Natal Afrikaner in the civil service, Judge HG Boshoff, also found himself accused of disloyalty. A friend of his, Sergeant Barron, informed Attorney-General Henry Bale of conversations he had had with Boshoff. According to Barron, Boshoff had stated that he saw signs of providence on the side of the Boers. Boshoff apparently said that he felt the Boers ought to receive a portion of Natal, as Natal people had no right to meddle in affairs that did not concern them. Furthermore, whenever the Boers had a victory Boshoff would phone Barron, but he did not call when they suffered reverses. He was apparently very jubilant when the Boer forces moved as far south as Mooi River stating that it would not be long before they were in Pietermaritzburg. Barron concluded by stating: "I could never understand Mr Boshoff as at sometimes he seemed very anxious for the Boers to win and at others he seemed to be loyal." Henry Bale believed every word of the statement by Barron and confronted Boshoff on his apparent loyalty to "the enemies of the Queen" by pointing out that as a judge Boshoff was not allowed to take part in politics and his duty as a subject of the queen obliged him to refrain from expressing or even feeling sympathy with those who were in arms against the Empire. Bale reminded Boshoff: "As I was largely responsible for your appointment as a Judge in the Native High Court I trust that it will not be necessary for me to take further notice of your conduct, and that you will, as I have already advised you, by attention to your judicial duties by abstention from all political action and by your loyalty justify your occupancy of the high and honourable position which you hold through the favour of the Queen's Ministers in Natal." Boshoff professed to be hurt by the tone of Bale's letter, especially since he had earlier explained his side of the story to Bale. All he could do was once again deny that he was in sympathy with the Boers.<sup>152</sup>

Boshoff and Hugo were not the only civil servants accused of disloyalty. Colonel EC Bethune, the officer commanding for Greytown, forwarded a telegram in cypher to Governor Hely-Hutchinson complaining that Magistrate HC Koch and Sub-Inspector Meiners were, as far as he was concerned,

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150. *Natal Witness*, 19.10.1899.

151. PAR, GH 537: List of civilian government officials recommended for the war medal, no date.

152. PAR, CSO 2586: Minute paper regarding the loyalty of Judge HG Boshoff, 6.12.1899.

generally unreliable and their conduct unsatisfactory.<sup>153</sup> Animosity against Afrikaners in junior positions also reared its head. When FAF Gilson retired due to ill health as clerk of the court at Bulwer in Polela district, he was temporarily replaced by a Mr Crosses. Magistrate HW Boast, on receiving notice that Crosses was to be replaced by GF van Rooyen took to singing the praises of Crosses and made his feelings towards Van Rooyen very clear:

I do not consider him a fit or proper person to fill or hold an appointment in this division. Personally the man is a perfect stranger to me and he may be for all I know perfectly qualified for the duties of the office but Mr Van Rooyen unfortunately is Dutch and I fear his stay at Bulwer will be unpleasant. The feeling in this district against Dutch people is stronger than any other part of the Colony. I am perfectly certain if Mr Van Rooyen knew the prejudices there is (*sic*) against his nationality here it would be his last wish to be stationed here.

Boast's recommendation fell on deaf ears and he received a telegram from the colonial secretary informing him that Van Rooyen would report for duty during the last week of September 1900.<sup>154</sup> GF van Rooyen did not remain in the Polela district for long before he was transferred to Newcastle. The acting magistrate in the district, Maynard Matthews, felt differently from his colleague in Polela and was suitably impressed with the work Van Rooyen delivered as a clerk and as a Dutch and Zulu interpreter. What pleased Matthews most was the fact that Van Rooyen did not demand remuneration, as his predecessors did, for Dutch interpretation. Matthews as a result, recommended him for promotion.<sup>155</sup>

A handful of Afrikaners were, like Van Rooyen, rewarded for their loyal work. JM Hershensohn was transferred from the office of first class assistant in the education department to that of a second class clerk in the colonial secretary's office,<sup>156</sup> PD Botha was appointed to act as assistant magistrate in Upper Umkomanzi,<sup>157</sup> and Adrian Johannes Stephanus Maritz as acting magistrate in the Lower Tugela Division.<sup>158</sup> The latter appointment followed in the wake of Maritz acting as a guide, because of his knowledge of Umvoti county, to Colonel Bethune, during October 1901.<sup>159</sup>

Like the loyalists in the areas occupied by the Boers, the civil servants in the employment of the Colony of Natal found that being an Afrikaner in wartime Natal generally meant that some

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153. PAR, CSO 2586: Minute paper on conduct of Magistrate HC Koch and Sub-Inspector Meiners of Greytown, 17.2.1900.

154. PAR, CSO 2590: Minute paper regarding the appointment of GF van Rooyen as clerk of the court at Bulwer, 19.9.1900.

155. PAR, CSO 1683: Note by Acting Magistrate M Matthews, 14.9.1901.

156. PAR, CSO 2592: Note by clerk executive council, HA Hime, 28.6.1901.

157. PAR, CSO 1691: Appointment documents for PD Botha, 25.11.1901-3.12.1901.

158. PAR, CSO 1695: Oath of allegiance and judicial oath taken by AJS Maritz, 6.1.1902; PAR, CSO 1668: Appointment of AJS Maritz, 15.2.1902; *De Natal Afrikaner*, 7.8.1900.

159. PAR, CSO 1688: Minute paper granting authority to AJS Maritz to accompany Bethune's column, 17.10.1901; CSO

prejudices existed towards you. It was virtually impossible to escape this, even if your loyalty was beyond any doubt.

### 7.6 The most loyal Natal Afrikaner - *De Natal Afrikaner*

Possibly the most loyal “Afrikaner subject” in the Colony of Natal was *De Natal Afrikaner* under the editorship of Joshua Hershensohn. The philosophy of the Pietermaritzburg-based newspaper, that appeared twice a week, was very simple: It was completely loyal to the British Empire, anti-Republican, in favour of peace and when that failed it fully supported the war effort. Furthermore, the newspaper approved of maintaining the status of the Dutch language in Natal.<sup>160</sup>

In terms of the war, *De Natal Afrikaner* endlessly counselled its readers on how to conduct themselves, and reminded them that good behaviour meant remaining loyal to the crown. Even before the outbreak of war the Natal Afrikaners were advised, on three different occasions, to adopt public motions in favour of peace and against war. The sole reaction to this advice came from a Biggarsberg Afrikaner who wrote to a newspaper in Vryheid making it clear that the Afrikaners were not afraid of the British.<sup>161</sup> Further calls by Editor Hershensohn to remain loyal elicited angry reactions from some of the subscribers which the newspaper proceeded to publish without revealing the names of the correspondents.<sup>162</sup> This meant that Hershensohn knew the identity of disloyal Afrikaners whom the Natal authorities wanted to apprehend. No amount of pressure by the Natal authorities could, however, move the principled Hershensohn to reveal the names of these disgruntled Natal Afrikaners and his determination forced them to abolish their investigation.<sup>163</sup>

When war broke out and many Afrikaners in the northern parts of the Colony took part in rebellious acts *De Natal Afrikaner* showed very little compassion for their circumstances. Instead, in a article, the rebels were reminded that they would not have been in trouble had they followed the advice of the newspaper and not that of “adventurers and charlatans.” When the Boers were driven from Natal in June 1900 *De Natal Afrikaner* was once again quick to offer advice to Natal Afrikaners: accept the proclamation by General Buller and surrender.<sup>164</sup> Two weeks later the accusational attitude of the paper was somewhat toned down and the problems Northern Natal Afrikaners faced under the Boers, in the absence of their government, were described in an article. The paper did, however, make it clear that the only rebels who deserved sympathy from the Special Court were those who were forced into rebellion. Looters and volunteers for the Boer cause needed to be punished

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1688: Telegram magistrate Stanger to colonial secretary, 17.10.1901.

160. For the contribution by *De Natal Afrikaner* in the struggle to maintain the status of Dutch in Natal, see Chapter 8.

161. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 27.3.1900.

162. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 6.12.1899.

163. PAR, CSO 2585: Correspondence regarding an article on disloyalty in *De Natal Afrikaner*, 6.12.1899, 7.12.1899-13.12.1899.

164. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 8.5.1900 and 15.5.1900.

harshly.<sup>165</sup> This was duly done and when some Afrikaners complained about the sentences meted out, *De Natal Afrikaner* was swift to inform its readers that for similar offences in the Cape Colony the death penalty was imposed.<sup>166</sup>

Republican war successes such as the Boer victory at Spioenkop in January 1900 were frowned upon. The fear was expressed that such victories would convince many of the Natal Afrikaners, who still doubted the abilities of the Boer forces, to openly rebel. *De Natal Afrikaner* stated that had the Republicans suffered a serious reversal at Spioenkop they would have grasped the futility of it all and asked for peace. The paper suggested that Spioenkop made matters worse for the Afrikaners for: “Nu echter zullen ze den oorlog voortzetten met het gevolg dat zij vernield zullen worden door de Britsche cohorten, die binnenkort van alle kanten des Rijks Zuid Afrika zullen binnestroomen.” The newspaper was under no illusion that Afrikaners would disapprove of the article but was convinced it would be proven correct within the months to come.<sup>167</sup> The paper must have felt vindicated when Lord Roberts reached Bloemfontein in March 1900 and again raised the question what the Republics could gain by continuing the war.<sup>168</sup> As Roberts continued his march to Pretoria *De Natal Afrikaner* persisted with its refrain of questioning the logic of prolonging the war, which by now had entered a guerrilla phase. *De Natal Afrikaner's* point of view was, understandably so, not very popular with a large number of its readers and consequently Hershensohn deemed it necessary to explain to them that the truth about the war was painful but that the newspaper had so far correctly predicted the events.<sup>169</sup>

Subsequent Boer military activities received equally little respect, while in contrast, the efforts of the Imperial forces were reported on in glowing terms.<sup>170</sup> A planned raid on the Glencoe Station was represented as the work of “dwaze waaghalzen”,<sup>171</sup> while the actions of Boer heroes Danie Theron and Gideon Scheepers were described as “psalmsingende wreedheid.”<sup>172</sup> The Transvaal authorities were, in two articles, taken to task for the way in which they treated British POW's,<sup>173</sup> while the newspaper even suggested that the Boers were dunking their bullets in poison before firing them at the British Army.<sup>174</sup> Throughout all of this *De Natal Afrikaner* persisted in dispensing advice to its readers by suggesting an alternative way in which “de Engelschen eene verpletterende neerlaag kan

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165. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 29.5.1900.

166. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 15.10.1901.

167. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 6.2.1900.

168. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 24.4.1900.

169. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 31.7.1900.

170. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 20.2.1900.

171. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 25.12.1900.

172. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 5.11.1901. This article was written in retrospect, for by then Danie Theron had been dead for 14 months, and Gideon Scheepers imprisoned for three weeks.

173. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 23.1.1900 and 24.4.1900.

174. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 13.3.1900.

worden toegebracht." Afrikaners needed to distinguish themselves in the economic and social fields, let bygones be bygones, and most importantly, embrace the British Empire.<sup>175</sup> One Natal Afrikaner who apparently did manage to follow this advice was JG (Koos) Hattingh of the farm Rama near Estcourt who according to *De Natal Afrikaner*, "found the perfect way in which to defeat the English."<sup>176</sup> What endeared Hattingh to the newspaper and to the English inhabitants was his offer to "Lord and Lady Roberts of the two acres of land on which lie the remains of their son, and other gallant soldiers who fell at Colenso." The praise heaped on Hattingh by *De Natal Afrikaner* was echoed by the *Natal Witness* who proclaimed: "Yes! We have Dutchmen who have their hearts in the right place, who, whatever their natural sympathies may be, are loyal and true and are Nature's gentlemen."<sup>177</sup>

The pro-British *De Natal Afrikaner* became even more critical towards the Afrikaners in the field as the war progressed. By late August 1901, the Boers still fighting were accused of being hard headed and blind.<sup>178</sup> In an article in the edition of 4 February 1902 the bittereinders were attacked in very strong language and described as "unpatriotic" and "revolting in character"; men who merely wanted to "satisfy their feelings of vengeance." The bittereinders were accused of not caring about the suffering of the women and children in the concentration camps or the destruction of the Republics, but merely caring about independence. Most importantly, the article blamed them for creating the phenomena of joiners and the tragedy of a civil war situation in which Afrikaners were fighting each other. *De Natal Afrikaner*, furthermore, predicted that "De Afrikaners zullen voortaan sommigen hunner eigen stamgenooten meer haten dan zij de Britischen doen."<sup>179</sup> In the next edition of the paper another attack was launched against bittereinders like General Louis Botha who had, according to Editor Hershensohn, turned the gracious and humane care the British took of the Boer women and children into a slander campaign during which endless lies were fabricated and this while the Boer civilians were well looked after and cared for.<sup>180</sup> To prove its point the newspaper published a letter from a group of inhabitants of the Pietermaritzburg Concentration Camp in which they called on the Boers still on commando to end hostilities.<sup>181</sup>

As a loyalist mouthpiece *De Natal Afrikaner* was always quick to either promote or defend loyalism. In a jingoistic book review, the newspaper even recommend that its readers purchase the book, *Natal*

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175. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 26.6.1900.

176. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 16.10.1900.

177. *Natal Witness*, 9.10.1900. The loyalty of Hattingh were praised as early as 1.12.1899 by the *Natal Witness*. According to the article he remained loyal in the face of "persuasion and threats" while his brother joined the Boers. Magistrate RH Addison of Estcourt likewise praised Hattingh for his loyalty, see: PAR, NCP 7/4/7: Annual report magistrate Estcourt, 1900.

178. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 13.8.1901.

179. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 4.2.1902.

180. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 11.2.1902.

181. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 20.11.1900.

*Volunteer Record*. The view expressed was that in time this publication would, ironically enough, become a wonderful source of reference to Afrikaners.<sup>182</sup> Loyalist Natal Afrikaners who suffered due to the war were also defended by the newspaper. The *Times of Natal* was taken to task for, firstly claiming that justices of the peace were appointed in a reckless manner from amongst the disloyal Natal Afrikaners of Northern Natal and, secondly, for claiming that James Gregory spoke out against commandeering at a meeting held at Dundee in November 1899. The *Times of Natal* were informed that there was only one Afrikaner JP in the Dundee district, Adrian Jansen, and that he and not Gregory, was the person who spoke out against the commandeering by the Boers.<sup>183</sup> This act of correcting their article did not go down well with the *Times of Natal* and the journalist in question felt insulted. In an attempt to try and get his own back he explained that he meant Jansen when he referred to the JP. He then proceeded to attack *De Natal Afrikaner* by firstly giving sections of the article in question in Dutch followed by English translations to prove his point. In response Hershensohn had a field day and proceeded to correct all the errors in translation made by the *Times of Natal*.<sup>184</sup>

Much of the advice dispensed by the newspaper was aimed at the Umvoti Afrikaners. The Afrikaners of this region were chastised for sending a proclamation to the queen in favour of the independence of the Republics.<sup>185</sup> In the 29 May 1900 issue, which celebrated the 81<sup>st</sup> birthday of Queen Victoria, the Umvoti Afrikaners were reprimanded for wanting to open several businesses in opposition to the predominantly English ones that already existed.<sup>186</sup> The view expressed was that such a step would serve to sideline Afrikaners even further and provide ammunition for the public figures who wanted to attack and belittle Afrikaners.<sup>187</sup> The appropriate way to behave would, according to the newspaper, be to provide as little suspicion as possible by living an almost apologetic lifestyle. That way the Afrikaners would not provoke verbal attacks on themselves.<sup>188</sup>

*De Natal Afrikaner* was not adverse to dispensing advice to the Natal Government either and to warn the rulers of the implications of its policies. A point in case was a warning issued that the “Cape Dragons, i.e. the ‘Bond’ had established itself in Natal.” The newspaper took it upon itself to, “in the interests of fairness and justice but also in the interest of future peace, prosperity and progress to point out to the Government where they act wrongly and injuriously to the general interests.” The

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182. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 15.1.1900.

183. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 3.7.1900.

184. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 24.7.1900.

185. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 27.3.1900.

186. *De Natal Afrikaner* deeply mourned the passing of Queen Victoria and dedicated large sections of its 29.1.1901 issue to tributes to the late monarch.

187. In the 15.5.1900 issue of *De Natal Afrikaner*, the paper took a member of the Legislative Assembly, Walter Pepworth, to task for his statement: “Ik geloof veeleer loyale kaffers, dan rebellen Afrikaners.”

188. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 29.5.1900.

article in question referred to the decision by Parliament to allocate no money to the instruction of Dutch in Natal, while setting aside funding for African, Indian and Coloured Education.<sup>189</sup>

This pro-Dutch expression possibly did very little to improve the status of *De Natal Afrikaner* in the eyes of its readers. The diary entry of Missionary Prozesky, while awaiting trial in the Newcastle Prison, possibly summarises the feeling of most Afrikaner readers. He described Hershensohn as a Russian Jew and a jingo “of the dirtiest water” who took it upon himself to lecture the Boers and to please the English because his articles “judge so nicely.” Prozesky possibly managed to encapsulate the philosophy of *De Natal Afrikaner* when he accused the paper of creating the image that: “All English possess the spirit of infallibility, and to judge any action of theirs negatively is already to be guilty of a severe punishment.”<sup>190</sup>

The loyalty of *De Natal Afrikaner* during the war did, however, hold some benefits for the newspaper. Joshua Hershensohn was informed by Governor HE McCallum that High Commissioner Milner had agreed to the Transvaal Government’s subscription to the *De Natal Afrikaner* to the extent of 100 copies of each issue.<sup>191</sup> This was a very welcome economic windfall to a newspaper slowly but surely forsaken by its primary audience.

### 7.7 The real Natal Afrikaner war heroes

Being an Afrikaner in Natal during the Anglo-Boer War meant that it was virtually impossible to be regarded as a loyalist. While Afrikaners were imprisoned by virtue of their ethnicity, the Natal authorities were in turn imprisoned by the reductionist manner in which they suspected almost all Afrikaners of being disloyal. In a somewhat Orwellian-like world even expressing sympathy towards the Boers meant that loyalist Afrikaners could be labelled as supporters of the enemy. What mitigated against the small number of Afrikaner loyalists was the form their loyalty took. While some remained loyal because they believed it to be the correct thing to do, others acted in this manner because of a series of variables. The Strydoms seem to have been loyal in the hope that they would economically gain from it, TJ Nel acted loyally to harm his family and friends, Pelster because he was arrested by the Boers, while JH Ries of Dundee or the Ortlepp’s of Proviso B acted humanely but not necessarily loyally. Others like DJ Pretorius of the farm Waterfall near Melmoth who had reported the presence of small groups of armed Boers near his house on 4 and 19 February 1901,<sup>192</sup> and the 71-year-old Johannes Christoffel Buys, a resident of Natal since 1844, who provided a statement about the actions of the Dreyers, did so not out of conviction, but because they

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189. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 14.5.1900.

190. OE Prozesky private collection, Diary of JJA Prozesky: Diary entry, 24.7.1900, p.185.

191. PAR, PM 118: Letter secretary prime minister to J Hershensohn, 1902.12.10; PAR, CSO 738: Minute paper Transvaal Government subscribing to *De Natal Afrikaner*, 4.12.1902.-10.12.1902.

192. Durban Archive Repository (hereafter DAR), Archives of the Melmoth magistrate (hereafter 1/Mel) 3/2/8: Letter DJ Pretorius to magistrate, Melmoth, 4.2.1901; Letter DJ Pretorius to magistrate, Melmoth, 19.2.1901.

were forced to do so by law.<sup>193</sup> Some were even loyal because of their economic circumstances. i.e. in the employment of English Natalians. Captain EJ Landsberg, a member of the UMR, worked for TY Griffen near Dundee,<sup>194</sup> AJ Nienaber worked in the colliery outside of Dundee,<sup>195</sup> FW Prinsloo of Dundee, who joined Thorneycrofts Mounted Infantry, worked in a English butchery,<sup>196</sup> and FJ Swartz, an illiterate Afrikaner who worked for an English Natalian near Newcastle all remained true to the crown.<sup>197</sup>

But it is also in the ranks of the loyalists that the real Natal Afrikaner heroes of the war are found.<sup>198</sup> The true heroes were families like the Jansens, Strydoms and Pieterses who remained loyal despite being deserted by their own government; intimidated; threatened with death, fines, imprisonment and deportation; punished by the Boers; scorned and ostracised by their fellow Natal Afrikaners; and arrested, imprisoned or deported by the British forces. In spite of all this their belief in the Empire did not falter and they firmly believed that their loyalty was worth the trouble and pain it caused.

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193. PAR, AGO I/7/34: Statement by JC Buys, 19.7.1901.

194. PAR, CSO 2888: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by EJ Landsberg, 5.2.1901.

195. PAR, CSO 2896: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by AJ Nienaber, 9.2.1901.

196. PAR, CSO 2900: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by FW Prinsloo, 20.11.1900.

197. PAR, CSO 2906: Invasion Losses Enquiry Commission: Claim by FJ Swartz, 17.1.1901.

198. For an attempt to create a list of Natal Afrikaner loyalists from the area occupied by the Boers, see Appendix C.