

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND.

THE S I S F O R T H E M . A . D E G R E E
I N H I S T O R Y .

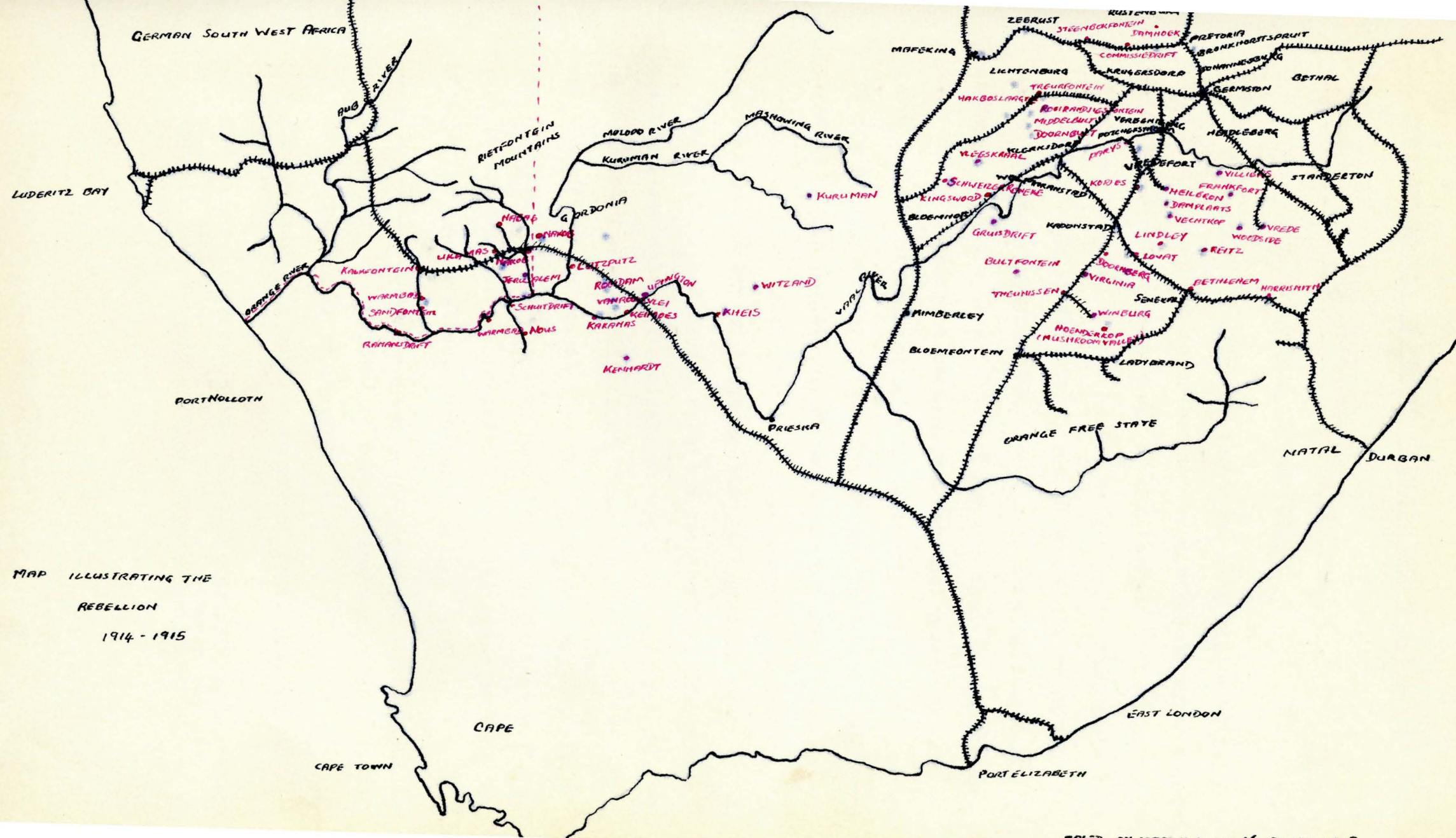
" THE REBELLION IN SOUTH AFRICA 1914 - 1915".

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THE REBELLION IN SOUTH AFRICA 1914 - 1915.

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BASED ON MAP U.G. 46-06, ANNEXURE A.

THE REBELLION IN SOUTH AFRICA 1914 - 1915.CHAPTER 1.THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND.

"Two nations warring in the bosom of a single state".¹

Thus Lord Durham had described the conditions in Lower Canada,² which had led to the outbreak of the 1837 Rebellion. The 1914 Rebellion in South Africa cannot be analysed in Durham's terms; although it was similar to the Canadian Rebellion in that it was a violent eruption of a virile, sectional nationalism, it differed from the Canadian Rebellion, in that it was not so much due to a conflict between two national groups in one state as to a conflict between opposing elements in the same group. "This", said a burgher (referring to the 1914 Rebellion) "is a family affair between us Afrikaners. You Englishmen must keep out of it."³ Although that view needs amplification,⁴ there is an element of truth in it.

By 1912 it had become apparent that not all Afrikaner political and cultural aspirations could be canalised into the single outlet of 'Conciliation! that divergence of outlook had been primarily caused by a growing belief on the part of many Afrikaners that the Government's 'Conciliation' policy, both in its domestic connotation and in its wider connotation of imperial co-operation, promised little, and

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1. The Report of the Earl of Durham (Methuen, 1930), p. 8.
 2. Governor-General of Canada.
 3. Remark made by a burgher to one of Prof. E.A. Walker's brother-officers. Walker (b), p. 562.
 4. The issues at stake in the Rebellion naturally concerned all the inhabitants of the Union even though the overt conflict was largely confined to one section of the population.

threatened much, as far as the aims of Afrikaner Nationalism were concerned. But the divergence in Afrikaner political aims, which had led to an open breach in 1912, had in fact originated long before that date; that Afrikaner political solidarity which had seemed to be developing after 1902, and which had apparently been realised in 1910, was an illusion. The common desire for self-government in the two former republics after 1902, the spirit of rapprochement in evidence at the National Convention, and the achievement of a United South Africa in 1910, had veiled, but had not entirely obscured the fundamental differences of outlook amongst Afrikaners. The Hertzog-split in 1912, the formation of the Nationalist Party, the impact of the outbreak of the First World War on political aims and forces in South Africa, and the Rebellion in 1914, merely served to clarify and intensify differences which were already in existence; in fact the first discordant notes were sounded at Vereeniging in 1902.

On 15 May 1902, after nearly three years of war, thirty delegates from each Boer republic, representing the commandos still in the field, together with the representatives of their governments,⁵ met at Vereeniging to discuss the termination of hostilities. On 17 May a Commission consisting of Botha, De Wet, De La Rey, Hertzog and Smuts, was appointed to discuss matters further with Milner and Kitchener, the representatives of the British Government. The Commission tried to negotiate on the basis of the republics retaining a limited form of independence. The British Government made,

5. M.T.Steyn, C.R.De Wet, J.B.M.Hertzog, W.J.C.Brebner and C.Olivier represented the Government of the Orange Free State. S.W.Burger, F.W.Reitz, Louis Botha, J.H.De La Rey, L.J.Meyer, and J.C.Krogh represented the Government of the South African Republic. J.C.Smuts, who had been State Attorney in the South African Republic at the outbreak of the war attended as legal adviser to his Government.

it clear, however, that they were only prepared to negotiate on the basis of the republics surrender^{er}ing their independence; a draft treaty was drawn up, and the delegates at Vereeniging were instructed that those terms could not be altered, but had to be accepted or rejected in their entirety. From 29 May to 31 May the delegates at Vereeniging discussed the terms, and on the latter date they agreed to lay down their arms and to accept the terms.⁶ On 31 May 1902 the members of the Republican Governments signed the Treaty of Vereeniging at Pretoria.⁷

Although the delegates at Vereeniging had accepted the terms by fifty-four votes to six,⁸ there had in fact been considerable dissension in the Boer ranks. There was friction between the Free State and Transvaal delegations which led to clashes, particularly between the Chief Commandant of the Orange Free State, Christiaan De Wet and the Commandant - General of the South African Republic, Louis Botha. The Free Staters felt that they had not been sufficiently consulted in all phases of the peace negotiations, and there was also a wider dissatisfaction, a feeling that they were now being driven to make peace by the Transvaalers, whose policies had provided the British Government with a casus belli in 1899.⁹

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6. The members of the Governments did not vote - it was left to the sixty representatives of the Commandos to decide. Obviously though, the views expressed by the members of the Government played an important part in influencing that decision.
 7. Vredesonderhandelungen, passim; C.De Wet, pp.401-506; Van den Heever, pp.144-175; Engelenburg, pp. 70-88; Kestell, pp.135-145.
 8. A.J.Bester, C.C.J.Badenhorst, C.A.Van Niekerk of the Orange Free State and J.J.Alberts, J.C.Kemp, J.Naudé of the South African Republic voted against the peace terms. Vredesonderhandelungen, p. 212.
 9. Ibid., passim; Van der Merwe ii pp.76-77; Van den Heever, p.169; Kestell, p. 141.

When the delegates had met at Vereeniging on 15 May, the pro-war party had seemed to be in the ascendancy. The Free Staters were in favour of continuing the war, and they were supported by some Transvaalers, particularly those from the Western Transvaal, who had been operating under Gen. De La Rey¹⁰; the vast majority of Transvaalers, however, were in favour of accepting the peace terms. The Western Transvaalers had been in close contact with the Free State Commandos, and so to some extent they had been influenced by the views of the Free Staters; more important, perhaps, was the fact that in March, De La Rey had gained a victory over Methuen at Tweebosch. De La Rey, himself, had been in favour of continuing the war, when the Republican Governments had met at Klerksdorp in April, but in May, at Vereeniging, he was in favour of making peace.¹¹ The Free Staters, however, remained adamant, and as late as 30 May, Hertzog wrote in his diary: "O.V.S. staan vas".¹² On the morning of 31 May, Botha and De la Rey spoke to De Wet, who had taken over the leadership of the Free State delegation, due to Steyn's ill-health, and De Wet agreed to accept the peace terms and to persuade the other Free Staters to vote for peace.¹³

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10. Significantly, in 1914, the rebel cause received the greatest support in the Free State and Western Transvaal.
11. Vredesonderhandlingen, pp. 161 - 163, ; Kestell pp. 135, 141.
12. Van den Heever, p. 174.
13. Ibid. pp. 174 - 175; Engelenburg. pp. 84 - 85.

What arguments were used to induce the Free Staters to accept the peace terms? Various writers have asserted that Botha persuaded the Free Staters to accept the peace terms, by using the argument, that even if they made peace at that time, they could rebel to recover their independence at a later date, when Britain might be in difficulties.^{14.}

14. Webb, p.6 ; Kemp, pp. 110-111; Oost, pp. 40 - 41, 90-100; Van den Heever, p. 172. H.S.Webb was an attorney who helped defend some of the leaders of the Rebellion in the 1915 trials; he obtained his information from De Wet and other Free Staters. J.C.Kemp was one of the Boer delegates at Vereeniging and he knew De wet and De La Rey well. Harm Oost was De Wet's Secretary during the 1914 Rebellion, but he obtained his information from other Free Staters and not, from De Wet himself. C.M. Van den Heever used Hertzog's Vereeniging 'dagboek' in writing his biography of Hertzog (but he does not quote from it in this instance). These authors are all agreed that the above statement was made at Vereeniging, but differ to some extent as far as the circumstances are concerned. Webb stated that Botha made the statement when he and De La Rey spoke privately to De Wet on 31 May. Oost agrees with that view. Van den Heever was not as specific; he maintained that the statement was made by "some Transvaalers" (sommige Transvaalers'). Kemp implied that the statement was not made in private, but during the discussions held by the delegates (he asserts that not everything said at those meetings were minuted).

De Wet, in his book, ("Three Years War") asserted that the decisive factor, inducing the pro-war party to accept the peace terms, was the depressing news received of conditions in the Cape Colony (C.DeWet, p.390) Obviously though, De Wet would not have mentioned Botha's proposal (if such there were) in his book, which was published in 1902.

Neither Botha's nor De Wet's biographers mention Botha's alleged statement (See Engelenburg, p. 84; Kestell, p. 142).

Although all these statements were made after the 1914 Rebellion had taken place, - and some of them with the undoubted intention of discrediting Botha's actions in suppressing the Rebellion - they nevertheless, cannot be dismissed lightly. Certainly Smuts did make a similar suggestion in a letter to Steyn in 1901. The letter was captured by the British along with other papers belonging to Steyn, but Steyn gave his biographer the following version: "It would be better to stop the war now and to take up the struggle again in fifteen or twenty years time".¹⁵ That Smuts did indeed write such a letter is confirmed by Sir George Arthur, in his biography of Kitchener: "Among the papers seized was a letter written by Smuts to Steyn stating that if they had to give up now, it would be with the intention of fighting again when England might be in difficulties".¹⁶ That that understandable desire to renew the struggle at a later date, did exist in 1902, apparently even reached the ears of the British authorities. In April 1902 Kitchener, ^{wrote} to a Mr. Ralli: "The young Boers, of whom there are a considerable number as aides-de-camp etc. talk rather openly. They say, that if no terms are made and they are forced to unconditional surrender, they will hold themselves absolutely free to begin again when they get a chance and see England in any difficulty".¹⁷

15. "Het was beter de oorlog nu te doen ophouden en om over vijftien of twintig jaar de strijd opnieuw te vervatten". Steyn rejected the suggestion. Van der Merwe ii, p. 75.

16. Arthur ii, p. 39.

17. Ibid. ii, p. 93, n.i. ; Pyrah, p. 63.

Bearing in mind the tenacity of purpose shown by the Boers in the war, it would not have been surprising if some of the delegates at Vereeniging did make such a suggestion. If Smuts could use the argument in 1901, is there any reason why some Transvaalers would not have used it in 1902? Although lack of sufficient evidence does not permit a categorical statement on the matter, it nevertheless seems possible (perhaps even probable) that such a statement was made at Vereeniging. But even if such a statement were made, that does, of course, not mean that Botha and Smuts were honour-bound to support the rebels in 1914. If there were such an undertaking it must surely¹⁸ have been governed by the principle : *rebus sic stantibus*. De La Rey, of all the Boer generals was the only one who had any expectation of Botha and Smuts supporting a rebellion¹⁹ in 1914. De Wet, according to Webb, regarded the Vereeniging statement as a "diplomatic ruse" on the part of Botha to gain a large majority in favour of peace; he did not believe that Botha would actually countenance a²⁰ rebellion.

18. And, of course, the fact that both the Transvaal and Orange River Colony had been granted self government by 1907 and the fact that in 1910 South Africa had become a united self-governing nation meant that the situation in 1914 was radically different to the situation in 1902, when the Boers having lost their independence had only been promised that they would receive self-government in the indeterminate future.

19. See below, pp. 65-71

20. Webb, p. 7.

Certainly, from Botha's point of view, there is no evidence to suggest that he, at any time after 1902, deviated from an attitude of full acceptance of the peace terms.

The terms of the Treaty of Vereeniging, except for one vital point, were not harsh in comparison with other modern treaties - but that vital point was the loss of republican independence.²¹ Observers of the South African scene, both in Britain and in South Africa, had no illusions as far as the strength of Boer Nationalism was concerned. Lord Salisbury,²² before the Anglo-Boer War, declared "that if the Boers submitted without fighting, they would hate the British for a generation, and if they fought and were beaten, they would hate them still longer!"²³ Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman²⁴ had expressed very similar views in October 1899 when he said that a British victory in South Africa would only be achieved at the cost of "racial enmity and anger, which it will take generations to overcome."²⁵ J.X. Merriman,²⁶ who had a better knowledge of South African conditions than Salisbury or Campbell-Bannerman, took an even more serious view of the situation, when he made the following statement in 1900:

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21. Botha in 1919 said that it had been "a generous peace that the British people made with us". But as Prof. L.M. Thompson comments: "it should be borne in mind, however, that unlike many defeated sides, the Boers *had* had their territories annexed by the victor". Thompson, p. 13. See Vredesonderhandlingen p. 135. for the full terms of the Treaty.
22. British (Conservative) Statesman. Prime Minister of Britain 1886-1892 and 1895 - 1902.
23. C.H.B.E. VIII. Chap. XXI, p. 612.
24. British (Liberal) Statesman. Prime Minister of Britain 1905 - 1908.
25. Pyrah, p. 63.
26. South African (Cape) Statesman. Prime Minister of the Cape Colony 1908 - 1910.

"I warn Great Britain against the policy of annexation. Some people talk light heartedly about the solemn act of taking away the life of a nation, but I look upon it as something like murder upon the individual. I tell you what you are going to do by annexation, you are going to make England lose South Africa ----- Annexation will turn the energies of these people away from peaceful pursuits to preparation for the next revolt, and whenever England is in a tight place ---- these people will get ready and will fly at her throat."²⁷

It remained to be seen whether all Afrikaners would regard constitutional concessions and the achievement of a United South Africa as adequate compensation for the loss of their republican independence.

Recent research has shown that the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) was provoked by Britain to secure British²⁸ supremacy in South Africa. Milner²⁹ had hoped that the defeat of the Boer republics would destroy Afrikaner Nationalism. In 1899, before the outbreak of war, Milner wrote to Chamberlain³⁰ : "If the Transvaal were to disappear from the map as an independent State or if it were to become an Uitlander Republic, the 'Afrikander Nation' idea would be for ever doomed"³¹. It was hoped that the war which would achieve those objects would be of short duration. Instead of the quick settlement which Milner and others had expected, the war lasted thirty-one months and

27. Speech published in "South African News" 26.9.1900. Quoted by Kemp, p.120.

28. Marais, passim., and particularly pp. 323 - 332.

29. Alfred Milner, High Commissioner for South Africa 1897-1905

30. Joseph Chamberlain, British (Unionist) Statesman. Colonial Secretary 1895 - 1903.

31. Marais, p. 319.

Britain had to put 448,000 men in the field. Those vast forces were handled (particularly in the latter phase of the war) with almost total disregard for the effect which their operations would have on post-war political developments in South Africa. Things were done, some by accident and some by design, which left an indelible impression of bitterness.³² But Milner's aim was not achieved; Afrikaner Nationalism was not broken as a result. In fact, despite the material devastation, and the legacy of divisions left by the war, there was a rapid Afrikaner revival after 1902. The immediate post-war period was a period of cultural rather than political revival, for the inhabitants of the two former republics had no political rights under the Crown Colony regime.³³ It did not take long, however, before the Afrikaners became politically organised. Botha, Smuts and De La Rey had been offered seats in the nominated Legislative Council, but they had declined. Thereafter Botha and Smuts in the Transvaal, and Hertzog in the Orange River Colony criticised the Milner regime at every opportunity.

32. Vide lecture by Prof. G.H.L. Le May: "The Peace of Vereeniging and the Rise of Afrikaner Nationalism" (Witwatersrand University 11.10.1961) Reported in "The Star" 20.10.1961. Prof. Le May, who stated that his lecture was based on hitherto unpublished documents, said inter alia (as reported in "The Star"): "At first the concentration camps were genuine refuges but later they were used as a means of coercion. The total death rate in the camps was about 26,000, with a high mortality rate among children. Though the British did not aim at extermination and though British troops themselves suffered heavy casualties from disease, the fact remained that those who died in the camps were under British responsibility and many had been confined against their will. Kitchener devised the construction of barbed wire barricades and blockhouses. The Boers were cleared out of the area, the livestock removed or slaughtered, crops burned and houses blown up. The political consequence of this policy Kitchener considered none of his business. Another sore point among the Boers was the arming by the British of non-Whites. Kitchener stated that he had armed 10,053 Non-Europeans."

33. See Trollip, p. 51; Thompson, pp. 17 - 18.

In January 1905 the first fully organised Boer political party came into being, in the Transvaal, when Het Volk was founded; in the Orange River Colony the Boers also became politically organised in May 1906 when the Orangia Unie came into being. With the formation of these bodies, it became evident that there were vast differences of outlook among Afrikaners - differences which depended essentially on the view taken as to the future of the Afrikaner people and their relations with the English-speaking section in South Africa, and as to the closeness and indeed the permanence of the imperial connexion.

The Head Committee of Het Volk consisted of Louis Botha (Chairman), Schalk Burger, J.H. De La Rey, C.F. Beyers, J.C. Smuts, A.D.W. Wolmarans and Ewald Esselen. Botha appears to have been the first Boer leader to become fully reconciled to the realities of the Boer defeat. Louis Botha had been born in Natal in 1862. He had scarcely any formal education, but became a very successful farmer. He had been a member of the South African Republic Volksraad from 1898 and he had supported the policies of Gen. P.J. Joubert. He was not eager for war,³⁴ but when war came he wholeheartedly supported it and succeeded Joubert as Commandant-General of the South African Republic. He was a man of action, with no great intellectual gifts, but he had great gifts of tact and patience. His close friend and colleague, J.C. Smuts, once described another facet of Botha's character: "But this great man of action had the tenderest feelings and the most sensitive soul. He combined the strength of a man with the extreme sensitiveness of a woman. A stupid letter of a friend would cause him sleepless nights; an undeserved criticism or insult would inflict pain far beyond what was probably

34. Indeed it seems likely that he voted against the ultimatum being sent to the British Government in 1899. See Spoelstra, p. 347.

intended. His power of sympathy was not only a powerful weapon, but it left him unprotected and exposed him to a degree which would be considered almost unbelievable."³⁵

On the day that the Treaty of Vereeniging was signed, Botha and Schalk Burger³⁶ had addressed an open letter to the Boer people: "We recommend you to acquiesce in that peace and³⁷ conduct yourselves peaceably and quietly and to obey and respect the new government. Let us now join hands for the other great struggle that lies in front of us, for the safety and welfare of our people in spiritual and social matters, laying aside all feeling of bitterness and let us learn to forgive and forget so that the deep wounds inflicted in the war may be healed."³⁷ As early as May 31 1902, then, Botha had declared his policy - one of conciliation and co-operation. He had in fact seen a new vision, a vision of a "Greater South Africa".³⁸

The ideal of a 'Greater South Africa' came naturally to Botha's chief lieutenant, Jan Christiaan Smuts, who, as a young man, had been a protagonist of the policies of Cecil Rhodes before the Jameson Raid, and who was to write a philosophical treatise on Holism. In September 1899 he had expressed his views in a Memorandum: "South Africa", he concluded "is on the eve of a terrible blood bath, from which our people will emerge either as an exhausted remnant, wood-cutters and water-carriers for a hated race, or as victors, founders of a United South Africa, of one of the great empires of the world --- an Afrikaner republic --- stretching from Table Bay to the Zambesi".³⁹

35. Introduction (written by J.C.Smuts) to F.V.Engelenburg's Life of Botha (English version), pp. 17 - 18.

36. Acting - President of the South African Republic.

37. Pyrah, p. 139.

38. Ibid., p. 138; Engelenburg, p. 87.

39. Marais. p. 318.

During the peace negotiations in 1902, the opinion expressed to him by Kitchener that within two years a Liberal Government would be in power in Britain, and that they would give the Boers self-government, gave him some hope for the future.⁴⁰ His attitude of mind was reflected in his final speech to the Boer delegates at Vereeniging: "The war of freedom in South Africa has been fought not only for the Boers, but for the entire people of South Africa. The result of that struggle we leave in God's hands. Perhaps it is His will to lead the people of South Africa through defeat and humiliation and even the Valley of the shadows of death to a better future and a brighter day."⁴¹ The bitter realities of living in a defeated, devastated country under the Milner regime, seems to have somewhat disillusioned Smuts in the immediate post-war period; but the despair apparently implicit in his statement in a letter to Emily Hobhouse⁴² in 1904: "I see no ray of light in the future",⁴³ was clearly exaggerated. It is evident from his other letters to Miss Hobhouse that he had in fact pinned his hopes - lacking in assurance though they were - to the Liberal Party in Britain.⁴⁴

Jan Christiaan Smuts had been born in the Cape Colony in 1870. A man of brilliant intellectual gifts, he had won the Ebdon Scholarship to Cambridge in 1892, where he had gained a first in the law tripos. He had become State Attorney of the South African Republic at the youthful age of twenty-eight and had been in command of the Boer forces operating in the Cape, during the war. Paul Kruger had described Smuts as "the man of iron will" and prophesied

40. Smuts, p.30; Millin; pp. 52 - 54.

41. Vredesonderhandeligen, p. 197.

42. Emily Hobhouse(1860-1926) English social worker and reformer best known for her work in alleviating conditions in the Concentration Camps during the Anglo-Boer War.

43. Millin; p. 201

44. Ibid; pp. 192 - 201, pp. 207 - 210.

" -- if Smuts is spared, he will one day still play a great role in the history of South Africa".⁴⁵ He was to prove the perfect foil to Botha.

Both Botha and Smuts, then, had accepted the idea of of a "Greater South Africa", whose future lay within the framework of the British Empire, and although it was, to some extent a calculated attitude, which they hoped would win constitutional concessions from Britain, they never deviated from it. That ideal had as its necessary corollary, the abandonment of a separate Afrikaner Nationalism in the sense that it had existed in the republics before the war; carried to its logical conclusion it envisaged the creation of a new South African Nation in which the English and Afrikaner elements would be fused.

Not all Afrikaners in the Transvaal could accept that ideal so soon after the war; indeed it would have been surprising if they had. In December 1903, Ds. J. D. Du Toit advised his people to re-establish the lines "which fix the boundary between us and all Uitlanders, for the power of Afrikanerdom lay in the isolation of our principle."⁴⁶

In December 1904, Ds. H. S. Bosman, the Moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church in the Transvaal, spoke as follows at the burial of Paul Kruger: "He urged them by the God of Paul Kruger, not to let that national feeling die out ----- and they could go along the lines that he had laid down under the flag that now waved over them, and still be true to it, but they would always remain Afrikaners, God helping them."⁴⁷

45. Kruger's Gedenkschriften, p. 170 quoted by Marais, p. 218.

46. Thompson, p. 18.

47. Ibid. , pp. 18 - 19.

Even the common desire to obtain self-government did not entirely obscure the differences existing even amongst the Head Committee of Het Volk. C.F. Beyers, especially, held and expressed views which differed radically from the ideas held by Botha and Smuts. Christiaan Frederik Beyers had been born in the Cape in 1869. He received his education at Stellenbosch, where he objected to the 'Engelse gees' existing at Victoria College.⁴⁸ Moving to the Transvaal in 1889 he became articled to a legal firm in Pretoria and subsequently practised on his own in Boksburg. He had obtained citizenship rights in the Transvaal by doing Commando service at the time of the Jameson Raid. He did not take an active part in politics in the pre-Anglo-Boer War Transvaal, but according to his biographer, he privately opposed Kruger's policies.⁴⁹ When war came in 1899 he supported the Boer cause, however, and rose from the ranks to become Assistant-Commandant-General over the Boer Commandos in the Waterberg and Zoutpansberg Districts. He was elected Chairman of the Meeting of Boer delegates at Vereeniging in 1902. A strong, handsome figure, outspoken and forceful, he was to become one of the leading members of Het Volk before the grant of self-government, but something of an embarrassment to Botha and Smuts, due to his frank speeches which had little in common with their policy of Conciliation. In February 1905, for example, Beyers made a speech at Pietersburg which was anything but conciliatory in tone : "We are still being constantly depicted as being of the 'bywoner' class by the English press and they and the capitalists are working together to drive the Boer and the worker under; we are being treated

48. Scholtz (a), p.14.

49. Ibid , p. 22 .

as dogs by the Government. ---- Lady Curzon - an English Lady wrote shortly after the peace: 'Get the children and make Englishmen of them'. Is that reconciliation? Is that not a policy calculated to make us desperate and everybody knows what a Boer is capable of when he is desperate. If it goes on like that we will again have war in our country -- You were men in war-time. Be men also in peace-time and fight such a pernicious policy!"⁵⁰ Although the official organ of Het Volk published a leading article calling Beyers "a child in politics" ("een kind in de politiek") and although Botha publicly repudiated Beyer's views,⁵¹ Beyers continued to express them, and he was not alone in the Transvaal in holding such views.

In the Orange River Colony, the leading political leaders were J.B.M. Hertzog, C.R. De Wet and A.Fischer. James Barry Munnik Hertzog was born in the Cape Colony in 1866. After a distinguished academic career at Victoria College, Stellenbosch, and Amsterdam, he seemed to be destined to be an outstanding jurist and in fact was appointed a Judge of the High Court of the Orange Free State.

50. Scholtz (a), pp. 122-123. In Feb. 1905 at Nylstroom he said that "the British Government wanted to destroy their nationality and as long as that attitude persisted there would be no reconciliation. He wanted to be truthful and if Het Volk did not support that principle then he did not want anything to do with it". (Ibid., pp. 125 - 126). In April 1905 he complained of the "wagon-loads of teachers from England, Canada and elsewhere who had been brought in to plant English ideas (he preferred to call it English poison) in the hearts of Afrikaner children" (Ibid., p. 141)

51. Ibid., p. 124.

During the War he became Assistant-Chief Commandant of the Free State forces.

Christiaan Rudolf De Wet had been born in 1854 in the Orange Free State. He had had hardly any formal education but had risen to a position of eminence in the Orange Free State. Before the Anglo-Boer War he had at one time or another been a member of both the Transvaal and Free State Volksraads. During the War he was Chief Commandant of the Free State Forces and had emerged from the war with probably the greatest reputation of all the Boer Generals.

Abraham Fischer, born in the Cape in 1850, was the eldest of these three leaders. He had had considerable experience of public life. A lawyer by occupation, he had been a member of the Free State Volksraad and Executive Council before the war. From 1900 to the end of the war he had been a member of the Republican deputation to Europe.

Influential as these three figures undoubtedly were, their influence in the Free State was overshadowed by that of ex-President Marthinus Theunis Steyn, who was unable to take an active part in post-war politics due to his failing health. Steyn, up to the time of his death in 1916, occupied a unique position in South Africa as an elder statesman. Although not active in politics, he nevertheless kept in touch with affairs and leading personalities. He was consulted on most important issues and his views carried considerable weight.

Due partly to the fact that the vast majority of the white population in the Orange River Colony were Afrikaners and due partly to the personalities of their leaders, the

policy of Conciliation was not the policy of Orangia Unie. In January 1906, for example, Steyn urged his people "to avoid foreign ways" and "to teach their children the story of the concentration camps."⁵²

Clause Seven of the Treaty of Vereeniging had promised that the two former republics would be granted representative institutions leading up to full self-government as soon as circumstances allowed.⁵³ Both political parties in Britain were agreed that self-government should be the ultimate objective in the new colonies. In a speech in the House of Commons, Asquith⁵⁴ declared that Anglo-Boer antagonism was the artificial creation, the transient and removable result of accident and circumstance. He hoped to see the time when Briton and Boer, "forgetting their animosities, bound together by ties of common interest and mutual respect, enjoying in like measure both the discipline and the privileges of freedom, will be found living and labouring side by side".⁵⁵ It was recognised that the first condition necessary to bring about that state of affairs would be the grant of self-government to the Colonies; indeed it was widely believed that, altruistic motives apart, solely from the point of view of sound policy, it was essential that that grant be made. Ripon,⁵⁶ for instance, argued that any alternative or delay in granting self-government would very possibly lead to underground conspiracies and small outbreaks of unrest.⁵⁷

52. Thompson, pp. 34-35.

53. Vredesonderhandeligen, p. 135.

54. H.H.Asquith (Lord Oxford), British (Liberal) Statesman; Chancellor of the Exchequer 1905-1908, Prime Minister 1908-1916.

55. Pyrah, p. 147.

56. Lord Ripon, Liberal Colonial Secretary 1892-1895, Lord Privy Seal 1905-1908.

57. Letter from Ripon to Campbell-Bannerman 19.1.01, quoted by Pyrah, p. 148.

Smuts had expressed the same view in 1904; in a letter to Emily Hobhouse he stated that if self-government were not granted soon "there would be a vast agitation in the country the consequences of which none can foresee".⁵⁸ Even Milner realised that the question of responsible government was an urgent matter, but he, in common with the Unionists, feared the consequences of granting it too soon.⁵⁹ The Unionist policy envisaged a gradual development - the grant of representative government leading on by slow stages to the grant of responsible government. But their attempt to introduce that system into the Transvaal was still-born due to their fall from power in December 1905.

Although the leaders of Het Volk had pinned their hopes on the Liberals, they wished to make assurance doubly sure by sending the Smuts Mission to the new British Government at the end of 1905. Campbell-Bannerman's Ministry lived up to their expectations by issuing Letters Patent instituting self-government in the Transvaal in December 1906 and in the Orange River Colony in June 1907.

Even before the grant of self-government, Botha and Smuts had decided that South Africa's future lay within the framework of the British Empire. Smuts's Memorandum to the Colonial Office in 1905 stressed the fact that the Boers and their leaders did not wish to raise the question of the annexation of the new Colonies under the British flag; they accepted accomplished facts.^{60.}

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58. Millin i, p.209. He used a similar argument in his Memorandum to the Colonial Office in 1905. "There may be some danger in trusting the people too soon, but there may be much greater danger in trusting them too late". Pyrah.p.166
59. --" if terrible troubles between the Colonies and the Mother country are to be averted, we must get self-government in the new Colonies soon. And yet too soon is also dangerous. Letter from Milner to Ramsay Collins. 19.4.04, quoted by Pyrah, p.156.
60. Ibid., pp. 165 - 166.

That, according to Smuts was what he and Botha had decided when they signed the Peace of Vereeniging: "We had made up our minds that it was the end of one life and the beginning of another."⁶¹ There is no doubt that the rapid grant of self-government strengthened those feelings and that it made a profound impression on Botha and Smuts, ensuring their loyalty to the British Empire. Smuts expressed his views on the matter as follows: "They gave us back - in everything but name - our country. After four years. Has such a miracle of trust and magnanimity ever happened before?"⁶² In his first public speech after becoming Premier of the Transvaal, Botha expressed similar sentiments.⁶³

Not all the Boer leaders saw the grant of self-government in that light. Hertzog and others took the view that Britain was simply carrying out their share of the compact at Vereeniging and that as the Boers had every right to expect that to happen, there was no need for them to feel morally obligated towards Britain. In December 1904 Hertzog had said "that a promise was made that our constitution would be of the same type as that of the Cape Colony. That was the promise and it had to be honoured."⁶⁴

61. Millini, p.214.

62. Ibid, p. 215.

63. "--- de Koning van Engeland, de Britse Regering en het Britse volk hebben de gehele bevolking der Transvaal vertrouwd op een wijze die geen weerga vindt in de geschiedenis.--- Is het voor de Boeren ooit een zo grote daad van edelmoedigheid en rechtvaardigheid te vergeten? Nooit ---". Coetzee, pp. 334 - 335.

64. Van den Heever, p. 204. Beyers in the Transvaal held the same view. Scholtz (a) p. 121.

The victories gained at the polls by Het Volk and Orangia Unie and the fact that in the Cape Colony Merriman's South African Party gained a resounding victory over Jameson's Unionists, meant that in 1908, the governments of these three Colonies all owed their existence to the support of Afrikaners.⁶⁵ In the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, the leading members of the Governments were all men who had actively supported the Boer cause in the war. In the Transvaal, Botha and Smuts, in view of the radical views held (and expressed) by Beyers decided that one of them would always be present when Beyers addressed election meetings;⁶⁶ and Botha did not include Beyers in his Cabinet.⁶⁷ But Botha considered that he had to muzzle Beyers even further; as a member of the Legislative Assembly he could still, from Botha's point of view, be dangerous. Consequently Botha nominated him as Speaker and he was elected to that office.⁶⁸ The view expressed by Edmund Garrett⁶⁹ : General Botha by a masterstroke --- has pinned him into the chair" was generally accepted.⁷⁰ In addition A.D.W. Wolmarans, a member of the Head Committee of Het Volk, who had been a close associate of Kruger, and who had showed that he did not wholeheartedly agree with Conciliation.

65. Thompson, pp. 28-30

66. Scholtz (a), p. 159.

67. Beyers' biographer relates that on the eve of the election Beyers became seriously ill while staying with a friend in Germiston. While he was convalescing Smuts had come to fetch him and he was to stay with Smuts until he had recovered. He was still in bed at Smuts's house when he heard of the Composition of the Cabinet. When he heard that he was not included, he became involved in a violent altercation with Smuts, got up out of bed and left his house. Ibid. pp. 163 - 164.

68. Ibid., p. 165.

69. Fydeell Edmund Garrett (1865-1907), English publicist interested in South African affairs; associated with Pall Mall and Westminster Gazettes; Editor of Cape Times (1895-1900) returned to England in 1900 but continued writing on South African affairs.

70 Ibid., p. 167.

by expressing views similar to those of Beyers, became a member of the nominated Legislative Council and not of the Assembly.⁷¹ Botha had thus organised matters so that there was no dissentient voice in the Cabinet and no effective Afrikaner opposition in the Legislative Assembly.

In the Orange River Colony, Abraham Fischer, had become Prime Minister in 1907; he owed his position to seniority and experience.⁷² The real leaders and policy makers were ex-President M.T. Steyn, who did not take an active part in politics, and General J.B.M. Hertzog, who became Attorney-General and Minister of Education, and who, due to his background and personality, became the ablest and most influential member of the Cabinet.

The immediate Afrikaner response to the challenge of Milnerism took the form of a vast cultural revival after the war; the desire to establish and develop their own language was a powerful aspect of the struggle to maintain their own identity. Botha and Smuts played little part in that cultural movement and indeed did not recognise its strength. After the grant of self-government Hertzog wrote to Smuts hoping to obtain uniformity in the two Colonies as far as the equality of English and Dutch was concerned. There was no response from Smuts.⁷³ The difference in outlook in connection with the language question between Het Volk and Orangia Unie, which was symptomatic of the divergence of viewpoint between Botha and Smuts on the one hand and Hertzog

71. Thompson, p. 33.

72. Ibid., p. 34; Van den Heever, p. 220; Coetzee, pp. 328 - 329.

73. Van den Heever, p. 227.

and the majority of the Free Staters on the other, was markedly borne out by the Education Acts passed by Smuts in the Transvaal and Hertzog in the Orange River Colony.⁷⁴

These two Education Acts widened the rift between the leaders of Het Volk and Orangia Unie; and when it became apparent what violent opposition Hertzog's proposals had aroused, there was a hardening of Afrikaner opinion.

The contrast between Hertzog's Act and Smuts's Act caused a reaction amongst Afrikaners in the Transvaal as well; at the annual Het Volk Congress in 1908 several delegates urged that the Transvaal Education Act should be amended.⁷⁵ In fact, despite Botha's muzzling of Beyers and Wolmarans and despite the Het Volk Statute which stated that the Head Committee could dissolve local committees which it deemed to be under "influences detrimental or hostile to the principles of Het Volk,"⁷⁶ Afrikaner opposition to his policy in the Transvaal became increasingly vocal. In 1908, for instance, Schalk Burger had to remind Afrikaners in the Lydenburg District that he had been a supporter of Gen. Joubert before the war and that he had sacrificed much in the War.⁷⁷ The gift of the Cullinan Diamond to King Edward VII and Botha's speeches at the Colonial Conference in 1907 further alienated Afrikaners from his policy. Many Afrikaners agreed with the view Steyn expressed to Merriman: "With you I agree that it would be better if Botha did not lay the loyalty butter on so ^{very} thick."⁷⁸

74. Transvaal Act No. 25 of 1907 and Orange River Colony Act No. 36 of 1908; Van den Heever, pp. 227-236; Trollip, *passim*.

75. Thompson, p. 34.

76. *Ibid.*, p. 33; Article 14 of the Statutes of Het Volk.

77. Coetzee, p. 337.

78. Enegelenburg, p. 146 ; Scholtz (b), p. 26.

Despite the sharp criticisms of Botha's policy, particularly⁷⁹ in the country districts, his personal appeal remained strong. The personal loyalty, which many Transvaal Boers felt towards⁸⁰ Botha as their war-time Commandant-General, died hard.

When the Liberals conferred Responsible Government on the Transvaal, they did so partly in the hope that such a⁸¹ step would lead to the Union of the South African Colonies. Union was considered an urgent necessity, not only because Botha was considered to be the ideal man to take the lead in such a venture (and therefore it was essential that Union should be achieved while he could still be at the helm), but also because it was felt that a European War (which by 1908 had become a distinct threat)⁸² would have disastrous repercussions on a disunited South Africa. In addition it was felt that disunion in South Africa meant a weakening of the imperial⁸³ tie, and although the 'Kindergarten'⁸⁴ took the initiative in the Unification movement, they carefully soft-pedalled their imperial objectives. Although Merriman and Steyn initially had doubts about unification, the political leaders in the various Colonies came round to the view that it would also be in the interests of South Africa to have a United⁸⁵ Country.

79. In 1908 the Head Committee of Het Volk, was reelected by a large majority and for the post of Chairman, Botha received 134 votes against the 2 for Wolmarans and the 1 for De La Rey. Thompson. p. 34.

80. Spoelstra; p.347; Coetzee, p. 329.

81. Pyrah. p. 219.

82. Seely, p. 133; Thompson, p. 398-399.

83. The brilliant group of young men which Milner had brought to the Transvaal to occupy the key posts in the Administration.

84. Thompson, pp. 61-63, 64-70.

85. In Dec. 1906 Merriman wrote to Smuts: "I do not want to see any Union hastily patched up with the view of serving the ends of Imperialism, that the whole of S. Africa may have one neck in order to fit the yoke easier on it". Steyn, in 1906, expressed doubts whether the Free Staters were ready for further changes. Ibid. pp. 73-74; pp. 75-94.

Steyn (as he told his biographer, subsequently) also feared the effect of a war between England and Germany on a disunited South Africa.⁸⁶

The meetings of the National Convention had not been free of friction, and deadlocks had arisen more than once.⁸⁷ None of the delegates were completely satisfied with the Constitution, for as the most recent historian of this period,⁸⁸ points out "compromise had been the price of unanimity". Nevertheless the remarkable feature⁸⁹ was that compromise was possible when the diverse backgrounds of the delegates were considered. Lofty sentiments were expressed by delegates, who at times were seemingly somewhat overcome by the emotional nature of the proceedings. De Wet stated that "today it does not matter what race we belong to --- as long as we are South Africans" and Fitzpatrick said they were making "a final peace between Boer and Briton."⁹⁰ In fact the Conciliation policy of Botha and Smuts seemed to have made a great impression on the delegates; whether the delegates were prepared to put those principles into action once the emotional tide of unification had subsided, was another matter. The Parliaments of the Cape, the Transvaal, and the Orange River Colony were virtually unanimous in accepting the Draft South African Act and the Electorate of Natal supported it by a large majority.⁹¹

86. Van der Merwe ii pp.297 - 298

87. Thompson, pp. 172- 308.

88. Ibid. p. 307.

89. For a discussion of the delegates see Ibid. pp. 174-180
501-512

90. Ibid., p. 307.

91. Ibid., p. 396.

It would obviously have been naive to interpret that as an indication that White political solidarity and unity had been achieved in South Africa.⁹² Indeed, there is considerably^e validity in the view that the formation of a United South Africa actually tended to intensify the possibility of clashes occurring, since the divergent aims existing among South African politicians could no longer, after 1910, find expression in their separate colonies.⁹³ That applied particularly to the widely divergent views held by Botha and Smuts on the one hand and Hertzog and the Free Staters on the other; how could those ideas continue to exist in the same political party and indeed in the same Cabinet? The spirit of compromise evidenced at the National Convention could obviously not be expected to be a permanent feature of South African politics.

On 21 May 1910 Gladstone, the first Governor-General of the Union of South Africa, asked Botha to form a Cabinet. Although Gladstone knew that the British Government and public favoured Botha, his hands were in no sense tied by the Colonial office, and he regarded it as his duty to select⁹⁴ the man who enjoyed the widest support.

92. Steyn sounded a sobering note when he said: "Met die Unie van Zuid-Afrika is het millenium nog niet aangebroken. Van der Merwe ii, p. 231.

93. See Scholtz (b) , p. 29. "Solank die Transvaal en die Vrystaat onder aparte regerings gestaan het kon dit tussen hulle nie tot 'n botsing lei nie. Nou son daar egter een Regering oor Suid-Afrika wees."

94. Thompson, p. 454-455.

Botha's main problem in forming his Cabinet was: What to do with Hertzog? It had been impressed on Botha that Hertzog's inclusion in the Cabinet might alienate English-speaking voters.⁹⁵ On the other hand if Hertzog were not included, the Free State would be alienated. Botha's initial reaction to that dilemma was to send Smuts and F.S. Malan⁹⁶ to interview Hertzog to persuade him to accept a position in the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, but Hertzog refused. Smuts, on behalf of Botha, then offered him the Portfolio of Justice, which he accepted.⁹⁷ When Hertzog subsequently met Botha, he (Botha) did not mention the subject. As Hertzog rightly commented: "There was no mistaking the reluctance with which the Prime Minister accepted me as a colleague!"⁹⁸

The main opponents in the General Election which followed were Botha's South African National Party (later to be known as the South African Party)⁹⁹ and Jameson's Unionist Party of South Africa, but in fact there was no policy dispute between Botha and Jameson.¹⁰⁰

95. Ibid., p. 457.

96. Cape politician, one of the leaders of the erstwhile Afrikaner Bond; a member of Merriman's Cabinet.

97. Van den Heever, pp. 326 - 327; Smuts, p. 119; Cloete, p. 227; Van der Merwe ii, pp. 242-245.

98. Van den Heever, p. 327; Smuts, p. 119; Millin i, p. 271.

99. Leander Starr Jameson of Jameson Raid notoriety; subsequently Cape Politician; Prime Minister of Cape Colony (1904-1908).

100. Thompson, pp. 464- 465.

The election campaign did, however, confirm the vast divergence of outlook existing between Botha and Smuts on the one hand and Hertzog on the other - differences not only on educational matters - but also on the fundamental issue of the imperial

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connexion. In their election speeches Botha and Smuts stressed the imperial aspect of Conciliation. Smuts said "South Africa should do everything possible to assist the Empire, which had given the Transvaal freedom". Botha said that the Empire had every reason to regard him and his party as her sons. There was a vast difference between those statements and Hertzog's reluctant and conditional acceptance of the imperial tie. He said that the grant of self-government "reconciled us to our loss suffered by the fortunes of war, and if we are no longer permitted to be free republicans, we shall be and remain free Britons and carry out our duties regarding Great Britain ----- so long as we are given the privilege of working out our national salvation through the recognised

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means of autonomy."

The outcome of the election - the South African National Party only had a majority of thirteen over all other parties, and Botha and two other Cabinet Ministers were defeated in their constituencies - was considered to be a rebuff to the

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Government.

101. There was also a radical divergence of opinion on the question of white immigration. While Botha gave it his unqualified support, Hertzog declared 'There is nothing more detestable than the cry for immigration from the outside'. Ibid., p. 468; also see Trollip, pp. 168-169.

102. Thompson, pp. 467-468. There was also a marked difference in tone - Botha's speeches were moderate; Hertzog recalled the Jameson Raid and Jameson's support of the 1902 agitation for the suspension of the Cape constitution.

103. Ibid., p. 479.

The results showed that despite Botha's Conciliation policy not many English speaking voters had voted for his party. Every constituency won by Botha's party contained a large number of Afrikaans-speaking voters; every constituency won by Botha's opponents contained a large number of English-speaking voters. The majority of Afrikaners had certainly voted for Botha's party; the majority of English-speaking voters had certainly voted for Botha's opponents.¹⁰⁴ Botha and Smuts were convinced that Hertzog's policies and statements had been the main reason for their failure to capture the English vote.¹⁰⁵ So that although the Union had been launched on a wave of optimism it was clear that Botha's Conciliation policy had not yet won over English voters, what is more Botha could not even be sure that all Afrikaners had wholeheartedly supported his policies - had many Afrikaners supported his party simply because there was no alternative Afrikaner party?

The immediate future of the Union would depend to a large extent on the relations between Botha and Hertzog and whether they could agree on a compromise between the policy of conciliation¹⁰⁶ and the policy of protection for the Afrikaner.

104. Ibid., pp. 471-478.

105. Botha wrote to Steyn: "Hertzogisme is daar bepaald die oorsaak dat ons hier ses setels verloor het -- Ook my eie neeflaag is bepaald daaraan te wyte. Van der Merwe ii. p.241; Van den Heever, p.282. Smuts wrote to an English friend: "-- the thing that knocked us badly was Gen.Hertzog's Education policy in the Free State, which the English people resented as directed against their racial ideals. It is very hard that Botha and Hull(H.C.Hull,Cabinet Minister, who was also defeated) should be punished for a policy they have always resisted-- My interpolation. Thompson, p. 479.

106. See Thompson, pp.480-481. The ultimate future of the Union would of course, as Thompson points out, depend on the larger issue of the relations of White South Africans with their Coloured, Indian and African fellow-countrymen.

But the aims of Botha and Hertzog were also widely divergent and the temperamental differences between the two were so great, that the hopes that they would become reconciled were slight. Jameson, who may have exaggerated, wrote to his brother before the election: "I lunched with Botha at Pretoria last week and talked the whole thing out with him. It is the old story --- hates most of his colleagues; but talks of getting rid of the old gang in a couple of years."¹⁰⁷

Parliament had been in session only three weeks when Botha and Hertzog clashed on the language question. In the next year, on 13 May 1911, Hertzog was driven to write to Steyn: "I do not want to be disloyal to my colleagues but it cannot go on much longer as it has for the last eleven months. If they continue on the old road of ignoring and sacrificing the interests of the people to achieve popularity with the opposition, I will definitely soon be forced to refuse to support them".¹⁰⁸

The threatened split between Botha and Hertzog became a reality in 1912 after a series of speeches delivered by Hertzog, which differed radically, both in tone and content from the official Government policy. In the course of speeches delivered at Fylstroom, Smithfield and De Wildt in October and December 1912 he propounded his doctrines of a "two stream" policy as far as the two white sections were concerned: South Africa for the Afrikaner (by which term he maintained, he meant all those people English or Afrikaans speaking, who accepted South Africa as their country); and 'South Africa first'. These speeches came at a particularly

107. Colvin ii, p. 295.

108. Van der Merwe ii, p. 255. See also Van den Heever, pp. 239-240; Cloete, pp. 247-248.

inopportune time for Botha, for there was to be a by-election in the predominantly English-speaking constituency of Grahamstown on 9 December. Botha attached great importance to the result, as he hoped that it would show that his Conciliation policy had made headway amongst English-speaking voters. Two days before the by-election, Hertzog made his culminating speech at De Wildt. He stressed the fact that for him South Africa came first. Imperialism, he said, was only acceptable to him when it helped South Africa; when it conflicted with the interests of South Africa, he opposed it. He was not one of those individuals who always talked of conciliation and loyalty for they were idle words --- He had always said that he did not know what that Conciliation
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meant. The Botha Candidate at Grahamstown was defeated and Colonel Sir George Leuchars, the Minister of Commerce and Industry and Public Works, from Natal, resigned. According to Botha's biographer it was not only Leuchars who contemplated
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resignation; according to Engel^{en}burg, Burton¹¹¹ and Sauer,
from the Cape wished to obtain a guarantee from Hertzog that he would not make any further speeches dealing with the imperial status of the Union without first consulting the Cabinet or
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the Premier. Smuts drew up a draft letter, which Fischer¹¹³

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109. Nylstroom speech, "The Star", 5.10.1912; Smithfield speech "The Star", 14.10.1912; De Wildt speech, "The Star" 7.12.1912; "South African Parties and Policies", pp. 62-67; Van den Heever, pp. 312-318; Engelenburg pp. 257 - 266.
110. Henry Burton, Minister of Railways and Harbours (formerly Minister of Native Affairs.)
111. Jacobus W. Sauer, Minister of Agriculture (formerly Minister of Railways and Harbours.)
112. Engelenburg, p. 267.
113. Minister of the Interior.

presented to Hertzog to sign, but Hertzog refused to do so. Botha clearly expected Hertzog to resign, although he did not expressly say so. Hertzog, for his part, maintained that he was prepared to resign, if Botha made a statement disagreeing with his doctrine that the interests of South Africa came before the interests of the Empire. That Botha was not prepared to do, but he did maintain that it was a mistake to express such sentiments publicly.¹¹⁵

On 11 December 1912 Botha informed the Governor-General of his intention to resign; he then reformed his Cabinet excluding Leuchars and Hertzog. Botha had been placed in a dilemma by Hertzog's speeches. If he kept Hertzog in his Cabinet, he felt that he would have no hope of making his Conciliation policy succeed; if on the other hand he disagreed with Hertzog's doctrine of 'South Africa first', he would alienate his Afrikaner supporters. When the Union Congress of the South African Party declared itself in favour of Botha by 131 votes to 90 in November 1913 and De Wet led Hertzog's supporters out of the hall, the split was complete and final. In January 1914, at Bloemfontein, Hertzog and his supporters formed the Nationalist Party and a political alignment which was far more realistic than that which had existed in 1910, came into being.¹¹⁶

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114. Van den Heever, pp. 317-318; Engelenburg, p. 268. It was required that Hertzog should express his regret at his discussion of certain topics and that he should promise not to make public speeches on those topics in the future without first discussing the matter with Botha.
115. Van den Heever, pp. 317-318; Pirow, pp. 59-60; Round Table (March 1913), pp. 371-372. Botha reiterated that point of view when he announced his new Cabinet: "Gen. Hertzog has gratuitously and unnecessarily put the question whether the interests of South Africa should take preference over those of the British Empire. This question should not have been put. There is no reason for putting it nor should any reason therefore arise in the future. The true interests of South Africa are not and need not be in conflict with those of the Empire"----
116. Van der Merwe, p. 255; Van den Heever, p. 345; pp. 350 - 357.

What prompted Hertzog's actions in 1912 and why did they lead to a split in the South African Party? A member of the Cabinet, who supported Botha's policies put it as follows: "As time went on General Hertzog convinced himself that the Afrikaans-speaking section was not getting the full benefit of the principle of racial equality as laid down in the South Africa Act and that the Botha Cabinet --- did not sufficiently stress the maintenance of that principle --- In Hertzog's eyes the official Conciliation policy was premature. Only by keeping the British and Afrikaner cultures apart could the latter as the weaker and less fully-formed of the two be saved from absorption.¹¹⁷ Further, it should be noted that if Conciliation (and the equal rights for both English and Afrikaner sections implied in that policy) were to be justly applied it should have meant more recognition for Dutch as a language and for the rights of the Afrikaner, for generally after the war English as a language and the English-speaking inhabitants as a group, were in a more favoured position. The achievement of equal rights for both sections could obviously only have been achieved through some sacrifice of the dominance enjoyed by the English language and the English-speaking people in South Africa; Botha was clearly reluctant to countenance such a policy, as his aim was to gain the confidence of the English section, and many Afrikaners felt that the Government was not doing sufficient for them. Hertzog tried to rectify that, -before Union, particularly in the sphere of language and education - but when he tried to ensure that equal rights were first realised, and consequently shifted the doctrine of co-operation into the background, he came to be regarded, by the English-speaking section as the personification of an extreme Afrikaner Nationalism, and as such an embarrassment to Botha. Hertzog had already achieved

117. F.S.Malan, Minister of Education and Mines at the time of the Hertzog crisis, in C.H.E.E. VIII. Chap. XXIV, p. 644.

that reputation before Union; after Union Hertzogism came to encompass more than just language and education and as many Afrikaners felt that they were being neglected by Botha's Conciliation policies, Hertzog's policies developed to the stature of a political creed.¹¹⁸ There can also be little doubt that Hertzog had been concerned by the events at the 1911 Imperial Conference, where the question of Imperial Federation had been raised, and although Botha had repudiated that scheme, he had nevertheless made it clear that he considered the imperial tie to be close and binding.¹¹⁹ In addition the Unionists (in South Africa) had been spreading the doctrine that South Africa's interests were subservient to the Empire. These tendencies were anathema to Hertzog, who believed that, even if the status quo were maintained, there was a great danger of the Afrikaner losing his identity. The time had come, Hertzog believed, to make an unequivocal stand; and there can be little doubt that he was deliberately provocative in the process.

The problems which had faced Botha's administration during the first four years of Union had been well-nigh overwhelming; dissension in the Cabinet and schism in the party; European labour disputes and industrial strikes;¹²⁰ unrest among the African and Asiatic inhabitants.¹²¹ Nor was there to be a hiatus, for the outbreak of the First World War was to have serious repercussions in the Union.¹²²

118. See Trollip, pp. 64, 70, 169.

119. See Below, p. 35, n. 1

120. In June 1912 that had also been a Cabinet Crisis: conflict between H.C. Hull, the Minister of Finance and J.W. Sauer, the then Minister of Railways and Harbours, led to the resignation of Hull from the Cabinet: Walker (b) p. 544.

121. Walker (b) pp. 553-555; Millin i pp. 278-290; Smuts, pp. 130-133.

122. Walker (b), pp. 547-553.

C H A P T E R 11.THE OUTBREAK OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR.

When Britain's ultimatum to Germany expired on the night of 4 August, the whole British Empire was at war; there was no question of South Africa or any of the dominions remaining neutral.¹ Even Hertzog, in 1914, agreed with Botha's contention that when Britain was at war, South Africa was also ipso facto at war.² But, being at war and participating in that war were two different matters, as Sir Wilfrid Laurier³ pointed out in a speech in the Canadian House of Commons, in December 1912:

"When England is at war, we are at war", but it does not follow that because we are at war, we are actually in the conflict. We can be in the conflict only through two things, namely, actual invasion of our soil, or the action of the Parliament of Canada ---. We were in the war with the American Colonies; we were in it in the war with the American Republic in 1812-13; but we were not in it in the war with France; we were not in it in the war with Turkey; we were not in it -- in the Sudan War of 1885. We might have been in that, but Sir John A. Macdonald, then leader of the Government refused.^{" 4}

The Union, in 1914 was in a similar position; although she was automatically at war when Britain declared war, she could only be in the conflict if South African troops were forced to defend Union territory as a result of a German

1. That had been agreed by the representatives of the dominions at the 1911 Imperial Conference. See below. pp. 44-45
2. In July 1911 while Botha was still overseas after attending that conference, "De Volkstem" the official organ of the South African Party in the Transvaal, had embarrassed him by maintaining that South Africa had the right to remain neutral in a war in which Britain was involved. Botha repudiated that contention. Dominion neutrality in a war involving Britain was, he said, simply unthinkable; moreover no enemy could respect it. De Volkstem 4.7.1911. C.F.B.E. VIII Chap. XXVIII. pp. 747-748; Oost p. 42; Pirow, p. 56.
3. Van den Heever, p. 371.
4. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Canadian Statesman; Prime Minister of Canada.

invasion, or by action of the Union Parliament. The World War, coming as it did, only twelve years after the conclusion of the Anglo-Boer War was bound to have a considerable impact on political aims and forces in South Africa. The two White sections had not yet become reconciled and a deep breach had appeared in one of them.⁵ The English-speaking section could be expected to clamour for participation in the war; the Afrikaners could, at best, hardly be expected to be enthusiastic in that connection; at worst, members of that section might openly oppose the war and attempt to realise their own aspirations. A further factor was that South Africa, of all ^{THE} dominions, was the only one whose territory was bordered by a German possession. The effect that the War had on the delicate South African situation ^{would} to a large extent, depend on the actions of the Government.

Parliament was not in session in August 1914 and Botha was in Rhodesia, when his Government was warned by the Imperial authorities on 29 July and 1 August that the situation was critical.⁶ Botha hastily returned, and as soon as war was declared on 4 August, he sent the following telegram to Harcourt, the Secretary of State for the Colonies:

"The Government fully recognising the obligations of the Union in the event of hostilities, wishes to assure you of its preparedness to take all such measures as may be necessary for the defence of the Union.

Should His Majesty's Government require the Imperial troops now stationed in South Africa and who are not connected with the garrison artillery, in any other part of the world, Ministers

5. See above, Chapter 1.

6. Walker (a) p. 429; Engelenburg, p. 292.

would gladly employ the Defence Force of the Union for the performance of the duties entrusted to the Imperial troops in South Africa⁷. On 5 August, the British Government acknowledged Botha's telegram and on 7 August they replied as follows:

"His Majesty's Government gratefully accept your offer to release Imperial troops from South Africa and yourselves to take charge over defence and internal order⁸. We shall accordingly recall all the troops which are not actually required in duties which cannot otherwise be performed⁹.

If your Ministers at the same time desire and feel themselves able to seize such part of German South-west Africa as will give them the command of Swak^hmund, Luderitzbucht and the wireless stations there or in the interior, we should feel this was a great and urgent Imperial service. You will, however, realise that any territory now occupied must be at the disposal of the Imperial Government for purposes of an ultimate settlement at the conclusion of the war. Other dominions are acting in a similar way on the same undertaking."¹⁰

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7. U.4.46-16, Annexure C - White Paper containing correspondence between Union and Imperial Governments regarding German South-West Africa, p.111; Cd.7873; Walker (a), p.502.
 8. Engelenburg maintains that the use of the phrase: "-for the performance of the duties entrusted to the Imperial troops in South Africa", in Botha's telegram (see above p.37) was ambiguous. According to his biographer, Botha intended it to mean that South African troops would be responsible for the defence of the Union; the Imperial authorities understood it as willingness on Botha's part to undertake any duties for which the British troops in South Africa had been earmarked if necessary also to go on the offensive. Engelenburg, p.294. That view is not acceptable. It is clear from the phrase "-and yourselves to take charge over defence and internal order", in the British reply, that the Imperial authorities understood Botha's telegram for what it was intended-viz: an offer to be responsible for the defence and internal order of the Union. Also see Scholtz (b), p.43. The subsequent request to invade South-West Africa was a different matter altogether.
 9. The Imperial troops withdrawn from South Africa, the equivalent of an infantry brigade with a brigade of artillery formed part of the 7th Division which went to Belgium in October 1914 and fought with distinction at Ypres. Lucas IV, p.373.
 10. U.4. 46-16, Annexure, C, p.112; Cd. 7873 ; Walker (a), p. 502.

While the Union Cabinet was still considering the implications of the telegram of 7 August, a more urgent request was received from the British Government on 9 August:

"---His Majesty's Government regard as urgent necessity seizure of coastal wireless stations at Swakopmund and Luderitzbucht; this can only be effected in reasonable time by a joint Naval and Military expedition up the coast. Capture of long distance station Windhoek, which is of great importance, might follow another expedition against coast stations or be carried out independently from interior, but this must rest with your Government."¹¹

After he had received the first request to invade South-West-Africa, Botha told his Cabinet that he was prepared to agree unconditionally to undertake the campaign.¹² When, however, it became apparent that not all members of the Cabinet agreed, Botha adjourned the meeting;¹³ apparently the Acting-Governor General, Lord De Villiers was also not in favour of the campaign.¹⁴ F.S.Malan felt particularly strongly about the matter and considered that it would be "a fatal mistake" to agree to the request. Malan had four main reasons for opposing the campaign: An attack on South-West-Africa by South African

11. U.G. 46-16, Annexure C, p.113; Cd. 7873; Walker (a), p.503

12. Cloete, p.316. Cf. Engelenburg, pp.294-294¹⁹⁹⁴, where he states that Botha only agreed to the British request with the utmost reluctance. There is no doubt that Cloete's view is the correct one; her quotations from F.S.Malan's diary substantiate it; Also see below pp.40-41

13. Cloete, pp.316-319. F.S.Malan; H.C. Van Heerden (Minister of Agriculture) H.S. Theron (Minister of Lands) and Graaff (from Malan's diary entries it is not clear which Graaff it was; but it was probably Sir David Graaff) opposed an invasion of South West Africa by South African troops. See also Walker (a), pp. 503-504.

14. His biographer states: "De Villiers was thoroughly unhappy. He loathed and feared war. He would have been much more at ease if the Union had waited to be attacked before launching forth on expeditions into German territory." Walker (a), p. 504.

forces was not necessary, from the point of view of the interests of the Union; as the Germans had not yet attacked the Union, it would not be in South Africa's interests to be the aggressor; South Africa needed all its troops to protect the Union against the Natives; seeing that their own party was already divided on the issue, they could not expect the people of the Union to be prepared to go any further than the Government's initial message (i.e. that South African forces would be responsible for the defence of the Union). He wished to put the railway and telegraph lines in South Africa at Britain's disposal; to allow British troops in South Africa to withdraw, and for South Africa to be responsible for the defence of the Country; he would not support any agitation against Britain.¹⁵ Malan and the other Cabinet Ministers opposed to the South-West-African expedition contemplated resignation if Botha insisted on carrying out his scheme. However, after discussing the matter with Van Heerden and Graaff, Malan decided that their resignation would lead to misunderstanding and a possible uprising; he appears also to have had second thoughts on the matter and arrived at the conclusion that if they did not agree to undertake a campaign against South-West-Africa, they could be accused of dishonesty, as they had given Britain the assurance that she could withdraw her troops from South Africa.¹⁶ Malan also discussed the matter privately with Botha and made the following points: "If they said 'Yes' to England, what would they say to Parliament? But, if they did not wish to flatly refuse the British request because they did not wish to give the English

15. Cloete, pp. 318 - 319

16. Ibid., pp. 318-319. There was, however, nothing in the telegram of 4 August to indicate that the Union Government had committed itself to anything other than defence. See above, pp. 36-37.

in South Africa the impression that they did not want to do anything, then he suggested, that they inform the British Government that if they wished to send an expedition to South-West, then the Union would help with volunteer troops. He saw no chance of commandeering the people." Botha replied that he feared a racial division ("een rassen verdeeldheid") in South Africa if it became known that they had refused Britain's request for aid. He also used the most unconvincing argument that the Transvaalers still felt insulted because the Kaiser had refused President Kruger entry to Germany during the South African War. Botha concluded his argument by expressing the belief that if the two races (English and Afrikaner) fought together in the war they would be more closely bound together.¹⁷

When the Cabinet met on the following day (10 August), Botha read the second, more urgent request from the British Government. He urged the Cabinet to give a speedy reply, so that negotiations could be started with the Naval authorities. Malan, who had apparently not been entirely convinced by his discussion with Botha, pointed out the practical difficulties of agreeing to the British request. However, after Botha had made an earnest appeal for co-operation and had stressed the argument that if the Cabinet were not unanimous, it would split the population on racial lines, Malan agreed to compromise. He insisted that only volunteers should be used in the campaign and that Parliament should be consulted. Smuts then helped Malan draft their reply and (according to Malan) it read as follows: "--- Ministers are prepared subject to the approval of Parliament to assist the Imperial Government in sending an expedition of volunteers to carry out the objects contemplated on lines to be mutually agreed upon."¹⁸

17. Ibid., p. 319. Malan wrote in his diary: "Een prachtige politiek, doch hij loopt gevaar voeling met onze eigen menschen te verliezen".

18. My emphasis. Ibid., p. 321.

But the reply sent to Britain on 10 August was an unconditional acceptance and made no mention ^{either} of Parliament or volunteers:- it read as follows:

"---they cordially agree to co-operate with the Imperial Government and to assist in sending an expedition for the purpose indicated, the Naval part to be undertaken by the Imperial authorities and the Military operations to be undertaken by the Union Government." ¹⁹

In his evidence before the Judicial Commission of Inquiry in December 1916, Botha said "--we decided to do that work in South West Africa on one condition viz: that we should do nothing until we had first called Parliament together and then Parliament could either approve or disapprove of it" ²⁰. That was, however, incorrect for before the "Special Session of Parliament met on 9 September extensive military preparations ²¹ had already been made for the expedition. Botha must have realised that his original statement was manifestly untrue, for in his subsequent evidence he corrected it: "We were going ahead with the expedition before Parliament had decided. In

19. U.G. 46-16, Annexure C p.113; Cd 7873. Malan commented on the difference between his draft version and the version that was sent: "In't antwoord zoals verzonden werden de woorden 'on lines to be mutually agreed upon' vervangen door de verklaring dat de vloot-gedeelte van de expeditie sal staan onder de Imperiale regering en de landoperaties onder de Unie". As has been shown, however, a more important alteration was made.
20. U.G. 42-16, p. 350.
21. Parliament sat from 9 to 12 September, but already in mid-August a number of Active Citizen and Permanent Force Units had been called up for service "anywhere in South Africa, within or outside the Union". The military plans for the South West African Campaign were finalised at a meeting on 21 August. On 1 September Brig-Gen. Lukin landed at Port Nolloth with a force of 2,420 men to operate against the Southern border of South West Africa. The original plan had also been that the force to attack Luderitzbucht would leave Cape Town before Parliament had met; they were, however, delayed until 15 September because no adequate naval convoy was available. U.G.42-16, p.213; U.G.46-16; p. 7; Walker (a), pp.502-503, pp. 506-507; South Africa and the War, pp. 10-13.

case Parliament did not agree with our policy, then of course we could not remain in office any longer. We would have²² resigned and the expedition would have been recalled".

It has been asserted that Botha, in 1914, had no option but to agree to the British request; according to those accounts a South African attack on South-West-Africa, in the event of war, had been planned, and agreed upon at the Imperial Conference in London in 1911.²³ According to one source, Botha, himself subsequently (i.e. after the South West African Campaign)²⁴ admitted that that was so. Can these versions be substantiated?

22. U.G. 42-16, p. 362.

23. Vide "Die Burger" 22.2.1923. "Drie jaar voor die groot oorlog uitbreek is al die maatreels getref in verband daarmee. Alles was vooraf beskrywe, die inval in Duits-Wes-Afrika, die verowering van Duits-Oos Afrika. Geen enkele van die maatreels van 1914 en 1915 kan spontaan genoem word nie. --- Ons deelname aan die oorlog was 'n vooruit klaargemaakte plan, waarby die besluite van die Unie parlement om saam te doen, al sy betekenis verloor het" Also see Scholtz (a), p. 236; Oost, p. 42.

Scholtz provides no evidence to substantiate his statement. "Die Burger's" article appears to be based on the fact that in 1911 a so-called 'war Book' had been drawn up (see below pp. 44-45). Oost bases his statement on that and on statements made after the war by two British Cabinet Ministers, Lloyd George and Churchill (see below pp. 46-47). Those facts do not, however, prove that a decision to attack South West Africa had been taken in 1911 (See below, 46).

24. The source is Dr. T. Seitz, the last German Governor of South West Africa. On the outbreak of war, the Mayor of Ermelo (Smuts) had been in South West Africa and Seitz had sent him back to the Union with a letter suggesting that a South West African official (Regierungsrat Carlowa), who had been on leave in the Union be sent back in exchange. Seitz had thought that if Botha had any intention of keeping the Union out of the war, this would provide him with an ideal opportunity to open negotiations. When Seitz met Botha at the conclusion of the South-West-African Campaign, he asked him if he had received the letter. Botha replied that he had and that he had understood the implications, but that it was too late to take action then, as he had committed the Union to participation in the War at the 1911¹⁻² Conference. Seitz (a), p. 33, (b) p. 86.

Botha, accompanied by F.S. Malan and Sir David Graaff, had attended the Imperial Conference in London in May and June 1911. While the Conference was in session, the Dominion delegates were summoned to a meeting of the Committee of Imperial Defence.²⁵ If any plans were made in 1911 in connection with the invasion of South-West-Africa, they would have been discussed at that gathering and not at the normal sessions of the Imperial Conference.²⁶

By 1911 the British Government had come to regard the possibility of a war against Germany as a very real danger, and considerable preparations had been made to deal with that eventuality.²⁷ On November 12, 1911, Hankey, then a member of the Permanent Secretariat of the Committee of Imperial Defence, had written a Memorandum entitled "The War Organisation of the British Empire", which contained a number of suggestions for the future development of the Empire's preparations for war.

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25. A.J. Balfour (British-Conservative- Prime Minister 1902-1905) had been responsible for the establishment in 1904 of the Committee of Imperial Defence. It was brought into existence as a means of co-ordinating the defence problems of the whole Empire: to ensure that peace-time preparations followed a consistent plan, and that in times of emergency a definite war policy could be formulated. The Prime Minister was its invariable President with "absolute discretion in the selection and variation of its members". In practice Balfour and his successors summoned regularly to the meetings those Cabinet Ministers and leaders of the Fighting Services who were especially concerned with the wider aspects of Imperial Defence; other Ministers, Officers and Officials were asked to attend, ad hoc, according to the nature of the business. A small Permanent Secretariat was the corner-stone of the Committee. The Committee's function was to be a purely advisory and consultative one. Hankey, (a) pp. 84-88, (b) i, 45-50 (Hankey was the Permanent Secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence from 1912 to 1933 and a member of the Secretariat from 1908); Asquith, p. 135.
26. See Cd. 5745, p. 23, p. 33. The Minutes of the Imperial Conference have been published- Parliamentary Papers (Great Britain) 1911, Cd. 5745, but there is no official published record of the proceedings of the Committee of Imperial Defence.
27. According to Asquith the British Government had by 1909 already "investigated the whole of the ground covered by a possible war with Germany. ---The next phase was one of detailed preparation." Asquith p. 116

Hankey had suggested, inter alia, that a so-called 'War Book' containing the detailed arrangements to be acted on in case of war, should be compiled; he had stressed that arrangements should be made for the co-operation of the Dominions in the Committee of Imperial Defence, and he had particularly emphasised the fact that the British Government, together with the Dominions, should draw up plans for the seizure of the German Colonies adjacent to New Zealand, Australia and South Africa in the event of war with Germany.²⁸ What effect did Hankey's Memorandum have on the deliberations between the British Government and the Dominion representatives in 1911?

The first meeting of the Committee of Imperial Defence in 1911 took place on 26 May; in addition to the principal members of the British Cabinet, and the experts of the fighting services, there were present five Prime Ministers from overseas each accompanied by one or more of their colleagues.²⁹ The proceedings were prefaced by the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, giving a comprehensive exposition of British foreign policy and the international situation.³⁰ At two subsequent meetings on May 29 and 30 the question of the co-operation of the Naval and Military forces of the Empire was considered.³¹ There was a lengthy and lively debate on the status of the Dominions on the outbreak of war. It was admitted by all the Dominion representatives that if war was declared upon, or by Great Britain, the whole Empire would, from the point of view of international law, automatically be

28. Hankey (b) i, p. 85, p. 127.

29. Ibid. i, pp. 127-128; Asquith, p. 121. The Dominion Prime Ministers present were: Laurier (Canada) Fisher (Australia), Ward (New Zealand), Morris (Newfoundland) and Botha (South Africa). Botha was accompanied by both Malan and Graaff.

30. Asquith, p. 121; Hankey (a), p. 89, (b) i pp. 128-129; Dawson, pp. 10-11, Also see Cd. 5745, p. 23.

31. Asquith, p. 123.

at war. The Canadian and Australian representatives, however, asserted that active participation in the war was a matter which could only be decided by the Dominion Parliaments.

It was at the same time agreed by all the representatives that in the new economic and strategic conditions of the modern world it was almost inconceivable that the Dominions would not offer their military and naval co-operation.³²

Hankey's suggestion that a 'War Book' should be compiled was apparently also accepted; according to him, not only did the British Government put that scheme into effect, but by the outbreak of war, all the Dominions had also compiled some form of 'War Book'.³³

As far as the question of attacks on the German Colonies was concerned, there is, on the basis of the available evidence, nothing to indicate that any definite plans were made. Hankey maintains: "There was one question which we never did succeed in getting tackled before the war, namely the working out of plans for the capture of the German Colonies.³⁴ J.E.B. Seely, who was the British Secretary of State for War, from 1912 to 1914 also maintains that although "every possible form of enemy attack on the Empire was considered, -- no single scheme of attack by us on others was thought out or prepared".³⁵ Asquith, on the other hand, maintains that in 1911 "a new stage had been reached and the relations between the --- Dominion forces --- and the Imperial army and navy, and the parts whether in the way of attack or defence which they would respectively be called upon to play in the event of war presented a number

32. Ibid., p. 130; Hankey (b) i, p. 130.

33. Hankey (b) i, p. 134.

34. Ibid. i. pp. 86-87. Hankey puts forward a convincing reason why that was not done. According to him one objection raised to plans of that sort was the feeling that "any plans for the attack of Colonial possessions were certain to lead to dispersion of force in 'side-shows' to the detriment of the Continental expedition".

35. Seely. p. 139. The biographers of F.E. Hall and Latham also maintain that no such plans had been drawn up before the war. Vide Cloete, p. 257; Engelenburg.

of problems which urgently called for joint consultation and concerted conclusion".³⁶ However, Asquith does not state that any definite plans of attack were drawn up. In the absence, therefore, of any evidence to the contrary, and despite the fact that the available evidence is of such a nature that it cannot be regarded as conclusive, it must be conceded that there is no basis for the statement that plans^{were} officially agreed upon before the war for a South African attack on German-South-West-Africa; there is no evidence that the matter was even discussed, either at the Imperial Conference or at the meetings of the Committee of Imperial Defence in 1911. It should also be stressed that even if such a scheme were agreed upon by the Committee of Imperial Defence, that would in no sense have been a binding commitment on Bother's Government. The fact that the powers of that Committee were strictly limited had been stressed by Balfour at its inception: " --- the only thing the Defence Committee may give, either to a Department at home, or to the Cabinet, or to the Colonial Governments, is advice".³⁷ When Asquith addressed the Committee in 1911, he reiterated that point: "The Committee of Imperial Defence is a purely advisory body. Neither the Government of the United Kingdom, nor, of course, the Governments of any of the Dominions are in the least committed by any of its decisions".³⁸

Why did the Imperial authorities in 1914 consider it such an urgent necessity³⁹ to obtain control of German-South West-Africa? The official reason was that Allied shipping

36. Asquith, p. 120-121 (My emphasis)

37. Hankey (a), pp. 85-86.

38. Asquith, p. 135; Hankey (b) i, p. 131.

39. See above, p. 38

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would be threatened if the South-West^A coast remained in German hands and it was considered that the long-range wireless stations in the area had to be silenced. The official South African War History states: " --- it was necessary to take immediate measures to obtain control of the South-Western seaboard and harbours so as to deny the enemy the advantage of a friendly coast on the flank of the European-Oriental line of ocean communication. Von Spee's Asiatic Squadron was at large in the South Atlantic; there were long range wireless stations at Swakopmund and Luderitz harbours; and, if the enemy could establish submarine and other raiding bases there, it would considerably inconvenience the European-South African line and in the event of the Suez Canal closure, the entire European-Oriental line of ocean communication would be affected from a trade or a military point of view." ⁴⁰ It would appear that the proposed South-West African Campaign was part of a larger strategical plan, the main object of which was to deprive the German Navy of its colonial bases and wireless stations. ⁴¹ But how well equipped were those bases and how powerful and reliable were the wireless stations? In other words, how important a factor was the strategic consideration? A former Governor of German East Africa, subsequently (i.e. after the war) stated: " --- there were in the German Protectorates no fortified naval stations, --- no harbours for U-boats. There were no harbour fortifications, no shore batteries, --- no places in which German warships could have lain in safety and taken in coal. When the war broke out the few small warships which did happen to be in the neighbourhood of the German Colonies in Africa

40. South Africa and the War, p. 10.

41. The South-West African Campaign was but one of six such Colonial operations authorised by a sub-Committee of the British Cabinet. The other five were against the German Colonies of Togoland, the Cameroons, Tanganyika, German New Guinea and German Samoa. Hankey (b) i, pp. 181-182; Naval Operations i, p. 129 C.H.B.D. iii, p. 607.

and the South Sea were compelled to leave the harbours of the Protectorates concerned because these could offer them no protection".⁴² Although those statements were prompted by a desire to minimise the military value that the Colonies were supposed to have, they nevertheless cannot be seriously disputed. It would also appear that the wireless stations in South-West Africa (of which the one at Windhoek was the most powerful) were not as reliable⁴³ or as powerful as the public was led to believe. Botha, at any rate, does not appear to have considered the strategic aspect of the South-West African Campaign to have been of prime importance, for in his speech in the House of Assembly in September 1914, when it would have been expected that he would have dealt with all the conceivable reasons why that Campaign was necessary, he did not even mention the danger to Allied shipping or the need to silence the wireless communications.⁴⁴ In any event the conquest of South-West Africa was only completed in July 1915 and regular German resistance in East Africa lasted until the end of 1917;⁴⁵ it cannot be said that that delay seriously hampered the Allied cause in the naval or any other sphere.⁴⁶

42. Schnee, p. 75.

43. See Seitz (a), p. 37; Kemp, p. 161. Another source states the following in connection with the Windhoek wireless station: "--- at the time of the surrender of this station the contractors had not been able to complete the calibration of the transmitting plant sufficiently to enable it being utilized with any beneficial effect for war purposes. It could communicate with Togoland, but as this station was destroyed in August 1914, direct communication between Windhoek and Germany was out of the question and the efforts of the station were directed towards jamming the weak field sets with which the Union Expeditionary Force was equipped or sending out news of any set-backs to our troops in the hope that they would be picked up by German raiders at sea." Y.E. No.3 - 1919.

44. See below pp. 83-84

45. Guerilla warfare continued well into 1918. South Africa and the War, pp. 63-86; 89-92.

46. Admittedly the fact that Von Spee's Pacific Squadron was destroyed off the Falkland Islands in December 1914, was a serious blow to German Naval power. See Naval Operations i, pp. 410-436.

It would appear then that the strategic factor was not the only, or even the main consideration, in the plan to attack South-west Africa; Hankey admits that there were, in addition, political reasons.⁴⁷ What does Hankey mean by "political reasons"? He clarifies the matter by stating that "German South-West Africa was regarded by the Union Government as a threat to South Africa";⁴⁸ in other words the Union Government⁴⁹ was in favour of invading and conquering South West Africa. During the Peace Conference in 1919 Botha told Hankey that "it had always been his intention, if war broke out, to be the first man to enter German South-West Africa at the head of an army".⁵⁰ In fact Botha had expressed similar views before the outbreak of the War to at least two British Cabinet Ministers. Lloyd George subsequently recorded a conversation he had with Botha in 1911: "He (Botha) expressed a very definite opinion that sooner or later there would be war with Germany. He thought everything pointed in that direction. I then said to him, 'If there is trouble, what will you do?' He said, 'I will keep my word and stand by the Empire. As soon as war is declared I will lead 40,000 horsemen into German South-West Africa and clear out the Germans'".⁵¹

47. Hankey (b) i , p. 168.

48. Ibid.

49. More accurately, Botha and Smuts. In addition to the views which Botha expressed to Lloyd George, Churchill and Hankey, see Engelenburg, p. 308. In 1908 when the German Colonial Minister visited South Africa to attempt to persuade the Cape Government to build a railway line to Walvis Bay, Botha wrote to Kerriman: "It is our opinion here that German influence in South Africa should not be increased and as for myself, I will not encourage any scheme which leads to an increase of that influence". At the same time Smuts wrote to the Cape Premier: "From the point of view of South Africa's future, the German Empire is no desirable neighbour".

50. Hankey (b) i , p. 168.

51. Lloyd George (a) iv , p. 1729; Hankey (b) i , p. 129.

52

Winston Churchill reports the following conversation with Botha: "In 1913 when he returned from a visit to Germany --- he warned me most earnestly of the dangerous mood prevailing there. 'Mind you are ready', he said. --- 'I can feel that there is danger, in the air. And what is more', he added, 'when the day comes I am going to be ready too. When they attack you, I am going to attack German South-West Africa and clear them out once and for all' "

53

Why was Botha so eager to conquer South-West Africa? Was it because it was considered to be a threat to South Africa - as Botha expressed it in 1919 to Hankey because "its capture would be essential to the stability of the Union"? It should at the outset be stressed that from a military point of view, the Union had little to fear from German South-West Africa in 1914⁵⁵, and that some other motive should be sought. Was that other motive not a desire to acquire territory? It is not yet definitely known to what extent Smuts influenced Botha's political decisions, but it appears that Botha did very little without first consulting Smuts⁵⁶. Smuts's political opponents and critics often accused him of being an imperialist, but perhaps he could be described more exactly as a South African Imperialist. He, himself used the term as early as 1907 in a speech at Potchefstroom: "They talk of imperialists in England. why should they not talk of South African imperialists? But the time was not yet ripe for that"⁵⁷. Indeed Smuts, even before the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer war had considered the prospect

52. First Lord of the Admiralty 1911-1915.

53. Churchill, p. 269.

54. Hankey (b) i , p. 168.

55. See below p. 54

56. See Spoelstra, p. 347-348, p. 383-384.

57. Rand Daily Mail, 14.1.1907.

of "an Afrikaner republic -- stretching from Table Bay to the Zambesi"⁵⁸ That conception became an integral part of his political philosophy.⁵⁹ That those views of Smuts had influenced Botha in his decision to invade South-West Africa is clear from a speech which the latter made during the South African Party Congress at Bloemfontein in August 1915: "The steps taken by the Government in the Campaign in German South West were not taken only in the interests of the Empire and its allies, but also and more especially in the interests of permanent peace and of the future of the Union. --- It is clear that a great deal more will have to be done in the future for land settlement than in the past. Owing to the unsuitability of Crown lands and the high price asked for Crown lands, land settlement has not progressed as much as we expected. But that state of affairs is now changed with the occupation of South West Africa - (Cheers) - where we have a territory belonging to the state bigger than the Transvaal and Free State together, the greater part of which belongs to the Government and which is eminently suitable for agriculture and stock-raising".⁶¹

58. See above p.12 (quotation from Marais, p. 318)

59. In August 1915 (after the successful conclusion of the South-West African Campaign) he expressed the following views in a speech: "There is now the prospect that the Union of South Africa can become nearly twice as big as before. If we stay united our Northern boundaries will not stay where they are now and we will leave to our children a magnificent country". quoted in Hintrager (a) p. 211. It is also significant that although Smuts suggested the mandate system at the Peace Conference in 1919, he clearly did not wish that system to apply to South-West Africa; it was his intention that that territory should become part of the Union. Lloyd George (b) i, pp. 520-521; Smuts, pp. 229-230; Wessels, p. 4. Note also the strong bid which Smuts made for the incorporation of Southern Rhodesia in the Union, after the First World War. Walker (b) pp. 595-599.

60. This despite the fact that the telegram from the British Government had clearly stated: "You will -- realise that any territory now occupied must be at the disposal of the Imperial Government for purposes of an ultimate settlement at the conclusion of the War." see above p.37

61. S.A.P. Speeches. p. 7. (My emphasis)

On the available evidence there is nothing to suggest that any scheme committing the Union Government to an attack on South West Africa, in the event of war, had been drawn up before 1914. Botha had, however, in 1911, accepted the contention that in the prevailing conditions it was almost inconceivable that the Dominions would not offer their military and naval co-operation to Britain should she be involved in a war.⁶² Asquith in his address to the Committee of Imperial Defence in 1911 had declared that one of the reasons why politicians as well as military experts were invited to meetings of the Committee was to "ensure that the recommendations of the Committee are not merely correct from the technical point of view, but that they are also conformable to the exigencies of practical politics".⁶³ Botha, however, did not, either in 1911, or at a later stage, attempt to indicate the serious repercussions that a war involving Britain and Germany would have on South African affairs and that, due to the peculiar situation existing in the Union, her reaction to such a war could hardly be expected to be the same as that of the other Dominions. On the contrary, he privately made it quite clear that he intended to take aggressive action against South West Africa, in the event of war, and, as he put it to Churchill,⁶⁴ clear the Germans "out for once and for all". It would be naive in the extreme to regard that attitude as being primarily a manifestation of selfless loyalty to the Empire, for the prospect of territorial aggrandizement was undoubtedly a powerful motivating force.⁶⁵

62. See above p. 45. That acceptance on Botha's part in 1911 did not, of course, mean that the Union Government was bound to accede to the British request in 1914; the final decision rested with the Union Parliament.

63. Asquith, p. 135.

64. See above p. 50

65. Engelenburg's statement in this connection ("--om te verower is totaal afwesig in die regeringskring; bevliegung om landpale te versit is glad uit die kwessie uit") (Engelenburg p. 295) cannot be accepted.

In 1914 South-West Africa had been a German possession for thirty years. In 1883 a Bremen merchant, F.A.E. Lüderitz, received the tacit approval of the German Government for his schemes for the purchase of lands from Native chiefs in the area between the Orange River and Angola. In May 1883 he bought Angra Pequena (later called Lüderitzbucht) and the land around it from a Hottentot Chief; in August 1884 he extended his purchases to include a coastal strip twenty miles wide over the whole South-West Coast and in the same month the German Government proclaimed a protectorate over the whole coast excepting Walvis Bay.⁶⁶ The British Government recognised the German Protectorate in September 1884 and by the Anglo-German Agreement of July 1890 the inland boundaries of German South West Africa - a territory embracing an area of 322,450 square miles - were defined. The original intention of the German Government had been to allow a Chartered Company, the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft to administer and develop the territory. By 1891, however, it had become apparent that that policy was impracticable and a military administration was set up. In 1904 Civil Administration took the place of Military rule and in 1909 a form of representative government was introduced. High hopes were centred on German South-West Africa only to be disappointed due to a number of factors. Endemic troubles with Native tribes (up to 1907), the barren nature of the country and the fact that only a limited number of settlers were attracted to the Colony militated against the rapid development of the territory and meant that it was a considerable burden on the German taxpayer.⁶⁷

66. Walvis Bay was annexed by Britain in 1878, and in 1884 it was placed under the control of the Cape Government. See C.H.B.E. VIII, Chap. XVIII, p. 471.

67. State subsidies to South-West Africa in the period preceding the Great War averaged 250 million marks per annum. C.H.B.E. viii. Chap. XXVI (b), p. 709. On the early history of German South-West Africa vide Hintrager (a), pp. 7-93; C.H.B.E. viii, pp. 515-517, 694-709; Lovell, pp. 81-101; De Kiewiet, pp. 310-319.

In 1914 there were altogether about 15,000 White inhabitants of South-West Africa. There were about 2,000 Non-Germans in the territory, mostly Afrikaners, many of whom⁶⁸ had settled in South-West Africa after the Anglo-Boer War. These Afrikaners who retained their own language, church and traditions were regarded with suspicion by many Germans.⁶⁹ All sources are agreed that there were only about 2,000 regular troops in the territory in 1914 when war broke out.⁷⁰ The military strength of the Germans in South-West Africa on the outbreak of War was therefore negligible compared to that of the Union.

The number of regular troops in the territory had been systematically reduced since 1906 (when they numbered 18,000).⁷¹ That policy was partly due to the belief, current in German Government circles, that if war did come, the fate of the Colonies would be decided by what happened in Europe. A German journalist⁷² who testified before the Judicial Commission of Inquiry in 1916, gave the following account of a conversation he had had in 1907 with Dr. Dernburg, the German Minister of Colonies: "He stated) -- that if war did break out in Europe then the ultimate fate of the Colonies would be decided, not in the Colonies themselves, but in the Home Country, and --- it would be far wiser in the opinion of the Imperial Government not to maintain a large force of troops in the Colonies, and particularly in South-West Africa. To keep large forces there

68. Seitz (a), p. 9; C.H.B.E. viii, pp. 708-709; Trümpelmann passim.

69. In 1908 a member of the Reichstag declared: "The 'Boer Question' is the most important question in South-West Africa". Trümpelmann, pp. 152-153.

70. C.H.B.E. viii, p. 703; Seitz (a), p. 13; South Africa and the War. p. 12. In addition there were a number of reservists - according to Seitz, 3,000 not all of whom were well trained; the Official South African War History states that there were 7,000 adult males, most of whom had had military service.

71. Seitz . (a), p. 13.

72. F.C.H. Berthold.

would possibly make the country bankrupt ---" ⁷³ The attitude of the German Government was best summed up by the slogan: ⁷⁴ "The Colonies must be defended in the North Sea." An additional factor which led to the reduction in the number of troops in South-West Africa was the belief in German Government circles that the Union would not invade the territory in the event of war. The German Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, told Seitz in December 1912 that he did not consider it likely that Botha would countenance an attack on South-West Africa. He based that belief, according to Seitz, on information he had received from Staatssekretär Solf, who had visited the Union earlier in the year. Solf had spoken to Botha and Botha had told him that the military forces in South-West Africa were not powerful enough to deal with a Native uprising. Bethmann-Hollweg considered that Botha would not have made such a statement if he were contemplating an attack on the German territory. Seitz did not share the Chancellor's optimism and continued to oppose his Government's policy - albeit vainly - of reducing the number of troops in South-West Africa. ⁷⁵ Seitz had become aware of the growing hostility on the part of many prominent South Africans towards the Germans in South-West Africa. ⁷⁶

That complacent attitude in German Government circles apparently persisted right up to the outbreak of the war, for on 2 August, Seitz received the following telegram from the Colonial Minister: "Reassure settlers Colonies not in danger." ⁷⁷

73. U.G. 42-16, p. 81.

74. "Die Kolonien müssen in der Nordsee verteidigt werden." Seitz (a), p. 1.

75. Seitz (b), pp. 21-22. An inhabitant of German South-West Africa has also expressed the view that the German Government did not believe that Britain would fight a Colonial War. Vile Hennig (✓), p. 44. No confirmation of that view could be found in the official German documents (Grosse Politik und Deutsche Dokumente zum Kriegeausbruch).

76. Seitz (b), pp. 81-83.

77. "Beruhigt Andsiedler, Schutzgebiete ausser Kriegsgefahr". Ibid. p. 91; Seitz (a) p. 4. The Governor of German East Africa received a similar telegram on 2 August, Abs. p. 63.

Seitz did not agree, but at the same time he felt that there could be no question of embarking on an offensive campaign against the Union; the military forces at his disposal were clearly not sufficient for that purpose and, in addition, they were badly equipped.⁷⁸ Under the circumstances, he felt that unless the war ended very rapidly, (which he considered unlikely) the only hope for the Germans in South-West Africa would be an Afrikaner rebellion in the Union.⁷⁹ The Chief of the German General Staff in a Memorandum (on 2 August) addressed to the German Foreign Office had recommended that attempts should be made to stir up revolts in India, Egypt and South Africa if war between Britain and Germany broke out.⁸⁰ If a revolt in South Africa were to be fomented with German aid, the impetus would obviously have to come from South-West Africa, and although Seitz does not mention it, it is likely that the above recommendation was communicated to him. Seitz, when he proposed the idea of a German supported Afrikaner rebellion found that the Commander-in-Chief of the regular troops in South-West Africa, Oberstleutnant Von Heydebreck, was opposed to the scheme;

78. Seitz (a), p. 27. Botha in 1916 declared: "The impression which I gained when I was there (in South-West Africa) was that the Germans had no plan, intention or power to declare war from that country ----" U.G. 42-16, p. 359.

79. Seitz (a), p. 29.

80. "Dem Auswärtigen Amt beehre ich mich, anliegend einige Gesichtspunkte militärpolitischer Art zu überreichen, denen ich von militärischem Standpunkt aus Wichtigkeit beimesse ---- . Es müssen Versuche gemacht werden einen Aufstand in Indien zu entfachen, wenn England als unser Gegner auftritt. Dasselbe ist in Aegypten zu versuchen. Ebenso in den südafrikanischen Dominien." Deutsche Dokumente iii, pp. 124-125.

Von Heydebreck was of the opinion that it would be impossible for Germans and Boer rebels to work together without friction. Seitz, however, overcame Von Heydebreck's opposition and they agreed that they would have to move swiftly, for it was felt⁸¹ that if Botha had time to get organised it would be too late. Despite the fact that there were German agents operating in⁸² the Union before the war, no attempt had been made by the German authorities to foment rebellion in the Union before⁸³ August 1914.

81. Seitz (a), pp. 29-30.

82. U.G. 46-16, pp. 78-81. There were also British spies in South-West Africa before the war. At the time of the Herero Rebellion, Sir Edmund Ironside had spent two years in the territory posing as an Afrikaner who did not wish to live in British South Africa; he attempted to obtain military secrets in the area. "Foreign Affairs-" April 1940, cited in Scholtz (b), p. 57; also see Trew, p. 95.

83. See below pp. 67-68. An officer of the Union Defence Force Col. S.G. ("Ma~~n~~ie") Maritz had contacted the German authorities in South-West Africa in 1913 in an attempt to obtain German aid for an Afrikaner rebellion but had met with no satisfactory (from his point of view) response.

C H A P T E R 111.THE SOUTH AFRICAN REACTION.

Botha, according to F.V.Engelenburg, did not expect the Government's proposed attack on South-West Africa to meet with general approval in the Union; the attitude adopted by certain Cabinet Ministers had underlined that fact; and soon there were indications that opposition to the Government's war policy would be violent and widespread. One of the first people, outside the Cabinet, to express disapproval of the Government's plans, was the Commandant-General of the Union Defence Force, C.F.Beyers.

It is not easy to ascertain what Beyers's political views were immediately prior to the outbreak of war. Due to his election as Speaker in the Transvaal Legislative Assembly he had taken no part in politics in the Transvaal in the period 1908 to 1910, and he had taken little part in the 1910 election campaign. Botha and many other Transvaal politicians had favoured Beyers for the position of Speaker in the first Union

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1. Engelenburg, p. 295. Botha feared that it might even lead to 'opstandigheid'.
 2. See above p. 38-40.
 3. He had been an impartial and firm Speaker and had won the respect of all parties. See Scholtz (a), p. 178. After his death in December 1914, "The Transvaal Leader" commented: "As a Speaker he has probably never been equalled in the country". "The Transvaal Leader" 9.12.1914 quoted by his biographer. Scholtz (a), p. 180.
 4. He had not been opposed in the Pretoria South Constituency. Ibid., p. 205.

Parliament, but he was not nominated for that office.⁵ In July 1912, after the formation of the Union Defence Force,⁶ Beyers had been appointed as Commandant-General. In August of that year he had gone overseas to study the military organisation of various European countries; while attending the Swiss military manoeuvres he had met the German Emperor.⁷ From July 1912 to the outbreak of war he had not taken an active part in politics, but his biographer on rather flimsy evidence, maintains that even after the Hertzog-split, he remained a Botha supporter.⁸ There are, however, contrary views on this matter. According to a number of sources, Beyers, at the beginning of 1914, expressed violent opposition to the policies of Botha and Smuts.⁹ Denys Reitz, in his book "Trekking On," tells of an occasion during the general strike

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5. Due apparently to the attitude adopted by the Cape and Free State politicians in Botha's party. Merriman, in a caucus meeting, argued that all the high positions should not go to the people of one province; apparently the Free Staters supported Merriman. The result was that the nomination of Molteno was not opposed and he became the Speaker of the Union House of Assembly. Ibid., p.208; Engelenburg, pp. 236-237.
 6. Scholtz (a), p. 235.
 7. Ibid., pp. 240-242. There is no evidence to support the view that Beyers had discussed the question of German support for an Afrikaner rebellion with the Kaiser.
 8. Ibid., pp. 261-270, p. 272. Scholtz bases his statement on
 - i) A letter from the Clerk of the House of Assembly, G.Hofmeyer to Beyers on 22.3.1913, in reply to an earlier letter from him, in which Hofmeyer states: "Ik denk ook dat de arme Gen.Hertzog zijn kop verloren heeft".
 - ii) A letter from Botha to Beyers dated 22.6.1914, which shows that Botha still trusted Beyers and considered him to be one of his followers.
 - iii) The view expressed by an intimate friend of Beyers, Dr.Gustav Freller, that Beyers was a Nationalist but not a Hertzogite. The views expressed by Beyers to Hofmeyer, who was not a close friend of his, cannot be regarded as being conclusive. Botha's letter merely indicates that Botha still considered him to be a supporter of his views that does not necessarily mean that he was. There is an apparent paradox implicit in Freller's view, but that does not necessarily invalidate it - such an assessment would certainly have been true of De La Rey. (see below p.63)
 9. Staunch supporter of Botha and Smuts.

in January 1914, when Beyers addressed a comrade: "I sat my horse directly in front of him, so I heard every word he said. His speech was a scarcely veiled attack on the Government and on Botha and Smuts".¹⁰

Lieutenant-Colonel D.J.E. Opperman, an officer in the Union Defence Force testified (in his evidence before the Commission of Inquiry in 1916) that at the time of the strike in 1914, Beyers approached him and wished to speak to him privately; Opperman asked one of his staff officers, Major J.F. Meyer to stay with them. According to Opperman, Beyers said: " --- the time has now come for Louis Botha and Jan Smuts the Governors of South Africa to come down. --- As long as Botha and Smuts remained at the head of affairs in South Africa,¹¹ we would not recover our independence"

Another witness, Colonel J.E.F. Kirsten told the Commission of Inquiry that he had had a private conversation with Beyers in February 1914, and Beyers had said that he was a 'Hertzog-man' and that "under cover of this uniform we can so arrange matters and exercise influence over the people that when the time arrives, which will be very shortly, through difficulties which are coming about in Europe, we can obtain our freedom and independence again."¹²

10. Reitz (b), p. 46. Reitz did not, however, mention this incident in his evidence before the Judicial Commission in 1916. See U.G. 42-16, pp. 24-29.

11. U.G. 42-16, pp. 84-85. Meyer, in his evidence, confirmed Opperman's statements. Ibid. pp. 88-89. Reitz, in his book, states that Opperman told him that Beyers had asked: " -- whether the burghers would support him in case he arrested Botha and Smuts". Reitz. (b), p. 47.

12. U.G. 42-16, p. 179.

Dr. Scholtz quotes this evidence, but rejects it as being
¹³unreliable. Admittedly these witnesses all made their
statements after the Rebellion had taken place and their views
were undoubtedly coloured by the fact that they knew that Beyer
had gone into rebellion in 1914. But neither that fact, nor the
objections made by Dr. Scholtz, are sufficient to render them
completely valueless, unless one is prepared to accept that
there was a preconceived plot (particularly on the part of
Opperman and Meyer) to present Beyer in the worst possible
light. Even if one takes into account that these witnesses
probably exaggerated, their combined evidence more than counts
balances Dr. Scholtz's evidence that Beyer was a Botha supporter
at the outbreak of war, for surely it is not likely that the
testimonies quoted were complete fabrications. In any case,
in view of Beyer's known political views before he became
¹⁴Commandant-General, it would have been surprising in the
extreme if he had been a Botha-supporter rather than a Hertzog
supporter. Dr. Scholtz explains that erroneously by stating that
¹⁵Beyer had ample reason to be grateful to Botha and that as
provincial loyalty was still a potent factor in determining

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13. Scholtz (a), pp. 261-267. Meitz's evidence is not
accepted because his book was written long after the
events had taken place and because, according to Dr. Scholtz,
he was biased against Beyer as a result of Beyer's
actions, during the 1914 Rebellion. Opperman's evidence
is rejected because Dr. Scholtz maintains that Beyer
would not have spoken in such a way to Opperman, because
Opperman was a Botha supporter. Kirsten's evidence is
discounted because it is maintained that he bore a grudge
against Beyer, as a result of being punished by Beyer
during the Anglo-Boer War. Dr. Scholtz's final query is
why did they not at the time report these conversations
to Botha or Smuts?
 14. See above pp. 15-16. Also note speech made by Beyer in his
constituency in October 1910: "Generaal Botha het die
Engelse te veel vertrou. ---Hy (Beyer) was ten gunste
van samewerking maar hy was nie ten gunste daarvan dat
toegewings net van een kant kom nie. Van die 3,700 staat
ambtenare was slegs 700 Afrikaners en dan word daar nog
om gelykheid geskreeu". Scholtz (a). p. 266.
 15. For his appointment as Speaker in the Transvaal Parliament
for the fact that Botha had intended to nominate him as
Speaker in the Union Parliament; for his appointment as
Commandant-General.

political alignments at that time, it was understandable that Beyers remained a Botha-man.¹⁶ It should be noted, however, that Botha had excluded Beyers from his Cabinet in the Transvaal and that as Dr. Scholtz shows Beyers had bitterly resented that fact.¹⁷ As far as the question is concerned of Beyers as a Transvaaler being reluctant to support the policies of a Free Stater, the following remarks made by Beyers in a letter to Steyn, in February 1910, seem to indicate that he would not have been averse to supporting the policies of a Free Stater: "Ik verlang al om een bietjie politiek van mijn President te hooren. Ik hoop net, dat wanneer wij een dag van die ou rooi vlag verlost zijn ^{uwe} gezondheid u weer zal toelaten de 'voor-touw' te nemen ---"¹⁸ All in all, therefore, it is unlikely that Beyers was still a supporter of Botha's policies in August 1914.

Beyers was informed of the decision to invade South-West Africa shortly after the Cabinet had decided on the matter; he immediately intimated that he was not prepared to lead such an expedition. He also told Botha that although he disapproved of the Cabinet's decision, he would not resign or take any other action until Parliament had decided.¹⁹

The Government planned to have two meetings of military personnel in Pretoria on 14 August; the one would be a meeting of the Transvaal Commandants, the other a meeting of Permanent Force Staff Officers.²⁰ But before those meetings took place,

16. Scholtz (a), p. 271.

17. See above p. 21.

18. Steyn Papers, quoted by Thompson, p. 450.

191 U.G. 42-16, p. 351 (Botha's evidence); Scholtz (a), pp. 282-283; Engelenburg, p. 297.

20. That two meetings were planned (and held) is clear from the evidence of A.E. Basden, Chief Clerk in the Department of Defence (U.G. 42-16, p. 209). Botha, however, in his evidence gave the impression that only one meeting - of Commandants - was held (See below p. 24). The meeting of Commandants was called to explain the implications of the British troops leaving the country and that Union forces would be responsible for the defence of ^{the country} and maintenance of internal order ~~in the country~~. According to Basden, the meeting of Staff Officers was to be in connection with the proposed S.W.A. Campaign. Actually that Campaign was not discussed at either of the meetings U.G. 42-16, p. 209, p. 350, see below pp.

Botha and Smuts received disquieting reports from the Western Transvaal about the intentions of General J.H. De La Rey.²¹

Jacobus Hercules De La Rey had been born in 1847. He had been with Botha a supporter of General P.J. Joubert in the Transvaal Republican Volksraad, but when war came in 1899 he had wholeheartedly thrown in his lot with Kruger. During the war he had become Assistant Commandant-General of the South African Republic and had distinguished himself in the guerilla operations. After the war he was associated with Botha and Smuts in the formation of Het Volk, and in 1910 he was elected as one of the Senators to represent the Transvaal in the Union Senate. He remained loyal to Botha at the time of the Hertzog-split and did his best to heal the breach in the South African Party.²²

A simple, kindly figure, without any formal education, he was highly respected by all sections²³ and had considerable influence in the Western Transvaal. Despite his loyalty to Botha and the South African Party, his political ideals were far removed from the official party line; he certainly did not regard the imperial tie as being permanent and although he did not publicly express those sentiments, those who knew him well, were aware of the fact that he dearly wished to see the two former republics recover their independence.²⁴

21. De La Rey did not know of the proposed campaign against South-West Africa, while he was formulating his plans; he only learnt of the Government's intentions on 14 August, see below p.70

22. S.C. 1-15, pp. 320-322; Webb, pp. 26-27.

23. Smuts on one occasion, after De La Rey's death, described him as "one of the whitest and noblest souls that ever lived". J.C. Smuts in the Introduction to F.V. Engelenburg's life of Botha (English version), p. 18.

24. J.C. Kemp (1872-1946)^{who} had served under De La Rey during the Anglo-Boer War stated that after that war, he (Kemp) wished to leave South Africa to settle in South-West Africa. De La Rey dissuaded him from leaving the country after 1902. According to Kemp, De La Rey used the following argument: "Ons voormanne moet bymekaar staan en as Engeland in gevaar kom moet ons ons kans waerneem om weer vry te word". (Kemp, pp. 111-112) A journalist, J. Steinmeyer, relates how De La Rey in December 1913, intended appearing at the unveiling of the Vrouemonument, near Bloemfontein carrying a Vierkleur and that it was with great difficulty that he was dissuaded. Steinmeyer, p. 96.

During the Anglo-Boer War, De La Rey had been greatly impressed by the apparent psychic gifts of one of his burghers, Nikolaas ("Siener") Van Rensburg.²⁵ After 1902 Van Rensburg had settled in the Wolmaranstad District in the Western Transvaal. Van Rensburg's 'prophecies' in August 1914, were of such a nature that many Afrikaners in the Western Transvaal interpreted them to mean that the war would lead to the recovery of republican independence; these 'prophecies' were undoubtedly partly responsible for the unrest in the Western Transvaal.²⁶

De La Rey intended holding a meeting at Ereurfontein (Coligny), in the Western Transvaal on 15 August and he sent messages to the burghers in the Lichtenburg and surrounding districts to come armed to that meeting.²⁷ Major J.C. Kemp, who²⁸

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25. Many of Van Rensburg's 'prophecies' were of such an ambiguous nature that they could be interpreted in a variety of ways. Apparently he did, however, on a number of occasions warn De La Rey and other Boer leaders of the imminent approach of British forces. See Hertzog's evidence before the Select Committee, S.C.1-15, p. 219; Also Scholtz (a), p. 45; U.G.10-15, pp. 5-6.
26. The news spread in the Western Transvaal that Van Rensburg had prophesied that Germany would win the war. (He claimed to have seen a grey bull defeating a red bull). He also claimed to have seen, inter alia, a dark cloud over Lichtenburg, the republican flag, De La Rey playing a prominent part and the number fifteen (Kemp, pp. 129-132; Personal information received from Mr. Horn Oost). There is little doubt that De La Rey was influenced by those 'prophecies'. According to Botha, De La Rey told him on 13 August: "The prophet cannot see what month it is, but he can see it is the fifteenth" (U.G.42-16, p. 351; Also see Kemp, p. 132). De La Rey's subsequent actions also seem to indicate that he set great store on Van Rensburg's 'vision' of the fifteenth. See below pp. 69-70, 105-110.
27. Kemp, p. 130; Webb, p. 10; Scholtz (b), p. 46; Personal information received from Mr. L.J. Rabe, who received verbal instructions to attend that meeting.
28. A General in the Anglo-Boer War.

was in command of the Lichtenburg military district, with his headquarters at Potchefstroom, heard of the proposed meeting²⁹ when he came to Lichtenburg early in August. On 10 August Kemp went to see De La Rey and De La Rey informed him of his plans for the 15th; if the burghers at Treurfontein agreed that the time had come to proclaim a republic, he would stay at Treurfontein on Sunday, the 16th and he would then move with his armed burgher force to Potchefstroom via Ventersdorp and Mooi River, recruiting followers as he went; he intended to hoist the Vierkleur and proclaim the republic at the Paardekraal Monument near Krugersdorp on 19 August; he would then lead his force to Pretoria to invite Botha to lead them.³⁰ Christiaan De Wet would be in charge of the movement in the Free State.³¹ In 1912, after the formation of the Union Defence Force, Kemp and some of his brother officers, while attending a Staff Officer's Course at Bloemfontein, had decided that they would make use of their positions in the Defence Force to recover their republican independence, when a suitable opportunity presented itself.³² It was therefore not surprising that Kemp agreed with De La Rey's scheme - his only objection was that the time was not yet ripe to put it into operation.³⁴ In an apparent attempt to dissuade De La Rey from taking precipitate action, he informed him that he would have to inform the Government of his plans.³⁵ That threat did not deter De La Rey,

29. Kemp, p. 131.

30. "Jy behoort aan ons en moet ons lei".

31. Kemp, pp. 132-134.

32.) Ibid., p. 109; Maritz, pp. 65-66; Also see U.G. 42-16

33.) p. 37. (Evidence of Lt.-Col. B.D. Bouwer.)

34. Kemp, p. 134.

35. Ibid., p. 135.

for according to Kemp, he told him that he had already discussed the matter with Smuts, and Smuts had simply said: "Com Roos, jy is te haastig".³⁶ Kemp sent a telegram to Beyers,³⁷ but Beyers had received news of De La Rey's plans from another source before he received Kemp's message. C.J. Greeff, who was related to De La Rey had written to Beyers, asking him to use his influence to prevent De La Rey from getting into trouble.³⁸ After receiving Greeff's letter, Beyers wrote to De La Rey on 11 August: "Matters are serious and I should like to discuss things with you. I do not mean that you must come to Pretoria specially for that purpose, but should you be coming to Pretoria, please be so kind as to let me know and to come and see me at my office."³⁹ In a postscript Beyers informed him of the proposed meeting of the Commandants on 14 August.⁴⁰ After receiving Kemp's telegram, Beyers sent a telegram to De La Rey: "I learn you will address meeting Treurfontein Saturday. Is it not possible to postpone meeting so that you can meet me here Friday to discuss urgent and important points?"⁴¹

Botha and Smuts had also been warned of De La Rey's intentions,⁴² and they also requested him to come to Pretoria.⁴³

36. Ibid.,

37. Ibid., p. 136; U.G. 10-15, p. 11. If Kemp had promised his support to De La Rey why would he wish to inform the Government of the plot? The only apparent explanation is that Kemp considered that their plans would have no hope of succeeding if they were put into operation at that time and that Beyers would succeed where he had failed - viz. to dissuade De La Rey from taking any hasty action.

38. U.G. 42-16, pp. 197-198 (Greeff's Evidence); Kemp, p. 136; Scholtz (a), p. 284, (b), p. 47.

39. U.G. 10-15, p. 11.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid., p. 12.

42. By J.C. Jutta, the Magistrate at Lichtenburg. See S.C. 1-15, p. 177 (Jutta's Evidence); Webb, pp. 13-14.

43. U.G. 10-15, p. 7; Scholtz (b), p. 49.

These requests had the desired effect and De la Rey arrived at Pretoria on 13 August. Many of the Staff Officers and commandants had also arrived in Pretoria by that time.

One of these Staff Officers, Lieutenant-Colonel S.G. ⁴⁴ ("Wenie") Maritz, was to play a prominent role in the rebellion and he had already, before the war been in communication with the German authorities in South-West Africa. In 1913 Maritz had met one Pieter De Wet. ⁴⁵ According to De Wet, Maritz had made the following statement to him: "I have nothing against the Germans, and it seems to me that the Government has placed me here in order to send me forward against the Germans as soon as the thing breaks out, because I know the country --- I have only one enemy and that is the Englishman and if I have to fight anyone, I will fight him. We have nothing in our hands to fight with. If we would do anything against them, we must have guns and ammunitions". He had asked De Wet if it would be possible for him to ascertain what the German attitude to those matters would be. De Wet had then pointed out that it would be extremely difficult for him to obtain the desired

44. Maritz (born 1876) had risen from the ranks to become a General in the Anglo-Boer War, and had served under Smuts in the North-Western Cape. In 1902 he had gone into South West Africa and from there he had gone to Europe and then to Madagascar (in his report on the Rebellion, Prof. Leo Fouché maintained that Maritz had left South Africa in 1902 because he was apprehensive of the possible consequences of certain of his actions during the war. Fouché did not provide any evidence to substantiate that statement. See U.G. 10-15, p. 7). After his return to South Africa, Maritz had had a variety of occupations (during the Herero Rebellion he organised a transport riding service in German South-West Africa). When the Union Defence Force was formed in 1912, Smuts (then Minister of Defence) had offered him a Commission provided that he attended an Officers' Course (It was at that course that Maritz and others had discussed a future rebellion - See above p.65.). At the outbreak of war in August 1914, Maritz was a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Union Defence Force; he was in charge of the North-Western Cape District with headquarters at Calvinia - i.e. he was in charge of that district which bordered on German South-West Africa. Maritz, pp.6-68; Reitz (a) pp. 314-318; 343-345; 367 (b), pp.25-33; Cost, pp. 27-28, 58-61.

45. A Boer-war colleague of Maritz, who had settled in German South-West Africa after that war.

information and he suggested that Maritz should contact someone who was a German and who was in close contact with the authorities; he suggested that the ideal man would be one Gustav Voigts, a mutual friend, who had considerable influence in Government circles. Maritz had then given De Wet a letter to deliver to Voigts.⁴⁶ Despite Maritz's statement that he had received a verbal reply that their hopes would be realised,⁴⁷ it is clear that, in fact, no agreement had been reached.⁴⁸

It was Maritz who was entrusted with the task of meeting De La Rey, on behalf of Beyers on 13 August on Pretoria Station. Beyers had asked Maritz to tell him not to do anything until he had contacted Beyers. As Botha's wife had also gone to meet De La Rey, to take him by car to the Prime Minister's residence, Maritz could not get him aside; he did, however, manage to get close enough to De La Rey to whisper the message.⁴⁹

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46. U.G. 42-16, p. 73 (F. De Wet's Evidence); Maritz, in his book confirmed the essential points. Maritz, p. 68.
47. Maritz, p. 68.
48. De Wet subsequently saw Voigts and asked him what the Governor's attitude had been. According to De Wet: (Voigts) "simply said that he had written to Maritz personally, but I could see myself from his demeanour that Voigts had not received a satisfactory reply from the Governor! Some time later De Wet spoke to Berthold, the Editor of a Windhoek newspaper, and he told him that the Governor was of the opinion that a good understanding existed between the Union Government and South West Africa and that he did not wish to see that destroyed. (U.G. 42-16, p. 73). Seitz himself declared that Maritz did not communicate with him before the war. (Seitz (a), p. 35). The fact that negotiations were entered into de novo after the outbreak of war (See below p. 88) seems to be an indication that nothing was agreed upon in 1913.
49. Maritz, p. 69. Botha also mentioned this incident in his evidence before the Judicial Commission: "My wife told me that when she went to fetch De La Rey at the station Maritz was close to him --- whispering something in his ear". U.G. 42-16, p. 353.

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Botha, Smuts, Schalk Burger and N.J. De Wet, spent a considerable part of the night arguing with De La Rey. Smuts, after the war, wrote about that meeting as follows: "General De La Rey was labouring under a deep religious impulse which made him hear the call of God for the release of the Boer people from the bondage imposed upon them at Vereeniging. The argument with him, therefore, necessarily took a religious turn --- until Botha said: "Com Kops, it may be the will of God that this nation shall be free and independent, but nothing will ever convince me that it is the will of God that this shall be brought about through treachery and dishonour".⁵¹ De La Rey made the following impression on Botha: "He gave me the impression that he had gone wrong somehow - not in his sober senses, but in a sort of spirit of mental wandering. Sometimes⁵² he would remain silent instead of replying to what I said. Then all at once he would break into prayer---- His whole conversation that evening was simply filled up with one thing

50. Minister of Justice.

51. J.C.Smuts's Introduction to the English Version of F.V.Engelenburg's life of Botha. Engelenburg, pp. 18-19.

52. De La Rey was also rather deaf. (See Oost, p. 119). But Botha must have known that.

and one thing only - what he had heard from the prophet." ⁵⁴
 According to Kemp, De La Rey warned Botha and Smuts of the
 serious consequences of their proposed invasion of South-West
 Africa; ⁵⁵ he also warned them that he would actively oppose
 that campaign and that he would recover the country's independ-
 ence without their help. ⁵⁶ In fact, it appears that the most

53. U.G. 42-16, p. 351. Botha was not the only person to receive this impression of De La Rey at that time. A Boer War Colleague of De La Rey, Gen. Tobias Smuts, met him early in September and came to the conclusion "that General De La Rey was not quite right in his head." (U.G. 42-16, p. 104). Denys Reitz described a conversation with De La Rey a few days before his death: "--I saw that his mind was affected, for his talk was of Christian Science, spiritualism and the dreams of Van Rensburg; and once when he had gazed at me in a strange manner, I asked him why and he said that he was testing our souls to bring them en rapport, a phrase he must have picked up at a seance." (Reitz (b), p. 49) Krige, a relative of De La Rey, had also told the Magistrate at Lichtenburg, that unless De La Rey could be persuaded not to hold the meeting on 15 August, he would make an affidavit that he was not in his right mind (S.C. 1-15, p. 177 Webb, pp. 13-14) Krige, though, was planning to make that statement simply to prevent De La Rey getting into trouble. It is doubtful if De La Rey's mind was in fact affected, for none of his close associates noticed anything wrong with him. See Kemp, passim; Oost, passim; Personal information from H. Oost; Personal information from E. L. J. Sabe who lived in the Lichtenburg District. What then prompted those statements that his mind was affected? De La Rey might well have acted strangely, but was that sufficient reason for the very serious imputations made by Botha and others? One can only speculate on their motives for making such statements. It may have been that Botha wished to imply that De La Rey had only acted as he did because his mind was affected; there may have been the desire to minimise the significance of that fact that a hitherto loyal member of the South African Party had been plotting to overthrow the Government. Perhaps too, it was prompted by the desire to show that as De La Rey was not wholly responsible for his actions, the stigma of rebellion should not be attached to his memory.
54. He based his account on a conversation he had with De La Rey after he had returned from Pretoria.
55. It is likely that Botha and Smuts informed De La Rey of that campaign. In any case he would have heard of it from Beyers.
56. Kemp, p. 137.

that was achieved by the Government spokesmen, was that they obtained a promise from De La Rey that he would not do anything rash at Treurfontein on 15 August.⁵⁷ De La Rey returned to his home a sadly disillusioned man; up to 13 August he seems to have been under the impression that the Government would support a movement to recover the country's republican independence.⁵⁸ On his return to Lichtenburg, he told Kemp:⁵⁹ "Louis het nou sy rug vir ons gegee"; for some reason he was more bitter about Smuts's attitude and said of him: "Hy het ons verraa!⁶⁰". De La Rey sent messages to the burghers to come unarmed to Treurfontein and as he spoke only in general terms⁶¹ the meeting on 15 August passed off without incident.⁶²

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57. According to N.J.Pretorius (M.P. for Witwatersberg District Transvaal and a Colonel in the U.D.F.) De La Rey told him in Pretoria at this time: "I have been called here by General Botha, who has said the meetings must stop. ---- The meetings will be considered as postponed for the present. But the same thing will happen again later on. (U.G. 42-16, p. 63.) Apparently Beyers also advised De La Rey to be careful. (Scholtz (b), p. 50.)
58. See above pp. 65-66 Also Webb, p. 12
59. Botha.
60. Kemp, p. 139.
61. According to a number of eye-witnesses, there were about eight hundred men present at the meeting and they only noticed one man with a rifle. See S.C. 1-15, p. 168, 173; U.G. 42-16, p. 205. On the other hand, Mr. L.J. Rabe states that he and four companions had brought their rifles and ammunition and they had hidden them in a cart; he believes that other men did the same. Personal information received from Mr. Rabe.
62. A personal friend of De La Rey, who was also a staunch Botha supporter, Senator S. Marks accompanied him to the meeting. He was probably sent by the Government to exercise a restraining influence on De La Rey. The burgher regarded him as De La Rey's 'Oppasser'. Oost, p. 102. According to Kemp, the Government feared the consequences of the Treurfontein meeting to such an extent that newspapers were given instructions not to publish any account of the meeting. Kemp. p. 140.

Although Botha and Smuts had succeeded, temporarily at any rate, in averting trouble in the Western Transvaal, it became evident at the military meetings in Pretoria on 14 August that there was strong opposition to their war policy. The Staff Officers' meeting was held first, followed by the Commandants' meeting. At the Officers' meeting, the proposed South-West African Campaign was not discussed, although some of the Officers knew of the Government's plans and others had strong suspicions that such an attack was to be launched.⁶³ Smuts addressed the meeting, and informed them of the Union Government's offer to take over the duties of the British troops in the Union; the meeting was also informed that the Government intended to raise a force for that purpose. When Kemp asked where such a force would be sent, Smuts replied that as an officer he ought to know better than to ask such a question. In reply to Kemp's further question as to what would happen if an officer was not prepared to take part in certain military operations, Smuts said that they were under military discipline and that under those circumstances, the officer would be court-martialled.⁶⁴ Botha and Smuts then addressed the meeting of Transvaal Commandants giving them the same information as had been given to the Staff Officers. Certain Commandants, also wished to speak about the South-West African question, but Botha and Smuts refused to discuss the matter.⁶⁵ It was abundantly clear to Botha and Smuts that a

63. Kemp and Maritz, for instance, had been privately informed by Beyers. Kemp, p. 142.

64. Ibid., p. 144; Webb, p. 20.

65. U.G. 42-16, p. 350 (Botha's Evidence). Botha said: "Kemp and certain other officers and Commandants constantly returned to the South-West African Question." But Kemp was not present at the Commandants' Meeting. Throughout his evidence, Botha spoke as if there were only one meeting; yet it is clear, that there were in fact two separate meetings. See Above p. 62; Webb, p. 20.

number of officers and Commandants were violently opposed to the Government's plans; that was evident even though the South-West African Campaign had not been discussed.⁶⁶ How widespread was that opposition? It is difficult to say exactly. Maritz, who undoubtedly exaggerated, told a friend in his district after he had returned from Pretoria: "The Government wants to take South-West Africa, but we have had a meeting in Pretoria of sixty old republican officers and of these there are no less than fifty-eight against the proposed attack. In fact only Botha and Smuts supported it"⁶⁷ One of the Commandants present, who probably also exaggerated, subsequently declared: "With a few exceptions the whole meeting was against participation in the war."⁶⁸ Botha, on the other hand, stated⁶⁹ that the overwhelming majority agreed with the Government.⁷⁰ Botha, nevertheless, was sufficiently concerned about the matter to invite all the officers and Commandants to his home that evening, where he spoke to them persuasively and warned them of the consequences of their hostile attitude.⁷¹ Botha's arguments were not in vain, for some of the men, who had⁷² opposed the Government's policy, changed their attitude.

66. U.G. 42-16, p. 351. Botha told the Judicial Commission: "I must confess that to my surprise I could plainly see that day a decided spirit of unrest among a certain section of the Commandants who were evidently opposed to our view."

67. U.G. 42-16, p. 74 (Evidence of P.G. De Wet).

68. Gen. C.H. Muller.

69. Muller, p. 195.

70. U.G. 42-16, p. 351.

71. U.G. 42-16, p. 351 (Botha's Evidence). Not all the Officers and Commandants accepted that invitation. Beyers, Kemp, Muller and Maritz certainly did not go. Muller, p. 196.

72. C.H. Muller wrote as follows in this connection: "Wat daar (at Botha's home) toe gebeur is, weet ek nie, want ek was nie daar nie. Maar om elfuur reis ek met enige van hulle wat daar was en wat in ons vergadering so sterk, teen die politiek van die regering gewees het, saam in die trein, en toe wil hulle net Duitsers skiet". Muller, p. 196.

Various Officers and Commandants also utilised the opportunity to discuss their plans to deal with the current situation. It has been suggested in fact, that Beyers summoned some of these people to Pretoria specifically with that object in mind. Botha told the Judicial Commission: "Another thing which gave me cause for suspicion was that when the Commandants came together, Beyers fetched Maritz up to Pretoria. There was no real reason to call Maritz away from his duties at all, to come and attend a meeting of Commandants here in Pretoria. Maritz had received orders to prepare for the training camps under his charge at Upington and in view of the condition of affairs generally, his presence was obviously required in his own district. Yet here he was in Pretoria".⁷³

2 Can Botha's evidence in this connection be accepted? If there were only a meeting of Transvaal Commandants, as Botha asserted, Maritz's presence in Pretoria on 14 August would certainly need some explanation. But it appears that there were, in fact, two meetings in Pretoria on that day - one of

73. U.G. 42-16, p. 353. According to Maritz, he was summoned to Pretoria by Beyers. (Maritz, p. 68), but that, of course, does not mean that he was necessarily summoned for ulterior motives. Beyers was Maritz's Chief and it would surely have been the normal procedure for him to summon Maritz and other officers to such a meeting.

It has also been asserted (by Prof. Leo Fouché) that Maritz's original appointment in the Defence Force had been made on the recommendation of Beyers, and that it had been sanctioned very reluctantly by Smuts as a result of the repeated and urgent demands of the Commandant-General (U.G. 10-15, p. 7). When he appeared before the Select Committee, Fouché was questioned about that statement, but he could provide no proof to substantiate it, beyond stating that the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence were aware of that fact (S.C. 1-15, p. 7). Botha, in his evidence before the Judicial Commission did state that Smuts "did not see his way to appointing Maritz", but Beyers insisted on the appointment (U.G. 42-16, p. 355). On the other hand Major J.M. Baker (Staff Officer for General Staff Duties) stated that the Department of Defence had no record of any recommendation being made by Beyers (S.C. 1-15, p. 343). There the matter must be left, except to note that Maritz, in his book stated that he was offered a commission by Smuts. As Maritz made no effort to conceal any of Beyers's other intrigues, it is difficult to see why he would have done so in this instance. (Maritz, p. 65).

Transvaal Commandants and the other of Staff Officers.⁷⁴
 Botha also stated that Maritz, had already, before 14 August, received his orders to prepare for the training camps. But, according to the Chief Clerk in the Department of Defence, Maritz only received those instructions from the Minister of Defence on 14 August in Pretoria.⁷⁵ The Government also

apparently wished Maritz to be in Pretoria, at that time, to discuss the proposed South-West African Campaign with him.⁷⁶

It would appear therefore that Maritz's presence in Pretoria was required by the Government for military reasons and that Botha's implication that he was summoned by Beyers solely for ulterior motives, can be discounted. On the other hand, there is no doubt that Beyers made use of Maritz's presence in Pretoria to discuss the current situation with him - a discussion which had nothing to do with official military exigencies.⁷⁷

There were private meetings in Pretoria, at this time, between Beyers and De La Rey, Beyers and Maritz, and Beyers and Kemp. What matters were discussed at these meetings? Was the conspiracy against the Government (a conspiracy which later developed into an armed rebellion) conceived at these meetings?

There is no first-hand account of the meetings between Beyers and De La Rey. Kemp, however, is of the opinion (although

74. See above p. 62.

75. U.G. 42-16, p. 209 (Evidence of A.E. Basden).

76. According to Maritz, Smuts and Col. Skinner (Chief of the Intelligence Department) interviewed him in connection with conditions in South-West Africa (Maritz, pp. 69-70). Maritz was also informed officially (probably by Smuts) of the Government's decision to invade South-West Africa. (U.G. 42-16, p. 133).

77. See below pp. 77-78; there can also be no doubt that Beyers wanted De La Rey to be in Pretoria at a time when the Commandants and Officers would be there - what other reason would he have had in informing De La Rey of those meetings? See Above p. 66

he admits that he did not actually know) that De la Rey sounded Beyers about his attitude if a rebellion were to break out. Kemp considered that Beyers's reply was to the effect that he needed time to consider the matter.⁷⁸

According to Kemp, he and Maritz went to see Beyers on 13 August and the Commandant-General told them of the proposed campaign against South-West Africa. He also told them that he opposed such a campaign although he refused to give his reasons for opposing it as he was still a Government official. If Parliament, however, sanctioned the Campaign he would resign and he would then give his full reasons. Kemp was apparently impressed with those arguments and he decided that in such an eventuality he would also resign his Commission.⁷⁹ Subsequently both Kemp and Maritz had private interviews with Beyers.

According to Kemp's account, he put forward the suggestion that they should organise what amounted to a coup d'état with the aim of overthrowing the Government and setting up a republic.⁸⁰ Beyers replied that he needed time to consider such a scheme; that he wished to discuss the matter with some friends, and that he would inform Kemp of his decision later.⁸¹

78. Kemp, p. 138.

79. Ibid., p. 142. Maritz does not mention this meeting in his book.

80. Ibid., pp. 147-148. He suggested that Beyers should go to Upington on the border with a force of 50,000 men. The English regiments would be disarmed and Botha and Smuts would then be informed that the force would return to the Union and would proclaim the Republic.

81. Ibid., p. 148. If Kemp's version is correct, Beyers's behaviour was, to say the least, most peculiar. On 13 August he was so scrupulously correct that he (according to Kemp) refused to tell Kemp and Maritz why he opposed the S.W.A. Campaign. Yet later he listened to Kemp propound a scheme which was highly treasonable and far from dissuading him from such a course or reporting it, he said that he would consider it!

According to Maritz, he also had a private interview with Beyers, and he suggested a somewhat similar scheme to that suggested by Kemp,⁸² except that Maritz planned to get German aid for their venture. According to Maritz, Beyers accepted his plan after some hesitation: "Generaal Beyers het na verdere beraad my voorstel aangeneem --- Generaal Beyers sou met die ander generaals gesels en dinge reël. Die verstandhouding was dat ek 'n afspraak met die Duitse goewerneur sou maak. Dan sou Generaal Beyers nadat hy met die ander generaals onderhandel het, self afkom, die Duitse goewerneur ontmoet en onderhandel".⁸³ Can Maritz's version of that meeting be accepted? Beyers's biographer discounts Maritz's version of the interview, because as he shows it contains a number of errors of detail.⁸⁴ Kemp has also expressed doubt as to whether Maritz's account was correct. Kemp did not think that Beyers showed Maritz his letter of resignation - he may, however, have told Maritz that he intended to resign if Parliament sanctioned the South-West African expedition. Kemp also cannot accept the statement that Beyers agreed to Maritz's

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82. Maritz, pp. 68-69. According to Maritz, Beyers showed him his letter of resignation which was already written. ~~est.~~ Maritz tried to dissuade him from such a step. Maritz asked Beyers whether he had not organised anything when he met the German Emperor, in Germany in 1913, and when Beyers said that he had not, Maritz told him that he had negotiated with the German authorities in South-West. Maritz suggested that Beyers should not resign, but should lead a force up to the German border. Botha and Smuts should then be invited to inspect those troops and when they arrived, they would be captured by the rebels.
83. Ibid., p. 69.
84. Scholtz (a), pp. 288-289. Dr. Scholtz maintains i) That as Beyers only wrote his letter of resignation on 14 September he could not have shown it to Maritz in August. ii) The fact that Maritz said that the Commandants meeting took place on the same day that he met De La Rey at the station (actually De La Rey arrived on 13 August and the meeting took place on the 14th) shows that he no longer clearly remembered the events of August 1914, when he wrote his book. iii) That Beyers did not meet the German Emperor in Germany (he met him in Switzerland) and that it was in 1912 and not 1913 as Maritz stated. Beyers, says Dr. Scholtz, would have corrected Maritz in this connection. iv) Finally, that as Maritz did not know Beyers very well, it is unlikely that Beyers would have told him of the Government's decision to invade S.W.A., nor is it likely that Maritz could have persuaded Beyers to change his mind as

scheme - he may, however, have told Maritz, as he told Kemp, that he could not decide yet, but wished to first discuss the matter with some friends.³⁵

The minor errors of detail in Maritz's version can be explained by the passage of time,³⁶ but it cannot be easily accepted that Maritz's memory would have let him down - even after twenty-five years - on the vitally important question as to whether Beyers supported his schemes or not. The following possibilities then present themselves:-

(1) Beyers had expressed support for Maritz's scheme on 14 August, but had not informed Kemp or any of the others of his decision.

(2) Beyers had not expressed support for Maritz's scheme, and Maritz deliberately twisted the facts when he wrote his book.

(3) Beyers had not expressed support for Maritz's scheme, but Maritz had at the time received the mistaken impression that he was in favour of his scheme.

(4) Beyers had not expressed support for the scheme on 14 August, but had sent a message to Maritz at a later date promising to support his scheme.

There the matter will be left for the moment; it will be discussed further in the light of Beyers's and Maritz's subsequent actions.³⁷ But whatever Beyers's attitude was on 14 August, it seems likely that plans for a rebellion against

35. Kemp, pp. 207-210. Kemp wrote: "Ek is egter positief seker dat Beyers nie sou met Maritz se planne ingestem het nie."

36. Maritz's book was published in 1939 - i.e. twenty-five years after the events he described in this connection.

37. See below pp. 98-100

the Government were suggested to him by Kemp, Maritz and probably De La Rey; Beyers did not report those conversations to the Government, nor did he even seriously attempt to dissuade them from taking such a step.⁸⁹

Botha, according to his own account, did, however, receive warnings from other sources about the intentions of some of the generals. As he was going to the Commandants Meeting he was warned that "there was a snake in the grass". Some of the Commandants who had gone to Botha's residence on the evening of the 14th had also warned him "that there was rebellion on the move---". Botha spoke to Beyers about the matter and he assured him that those reports were incorrect. Botha also stated that he had heard that Kemp had told one of the other Officers: "We are going to march up to the border and Botha is going with us, but when we get to the border, I shall say farewell and refuse to take any further instructions." Others had said that they would remain quiet for the present and then they would march up to the border and capture all the loyalists.⁹⁰ Botha then summoned Kemp to Pretoria.⁹¹ Botha's version of his interview with Kemp was as follows: "We had a meal together and discussed matters and he then explained that what he had said was more in the nature of a joke. It was not said in earnest and in that way he allayed my anxiety and satisfied me that there was nothing really serious intended."⁹² If that version is correct, Botha's suspicions were very easily allayed!

88. It is highly unlikely that Kemp's, as well as Maritz's evidence were complete fabrications.

89. Which would have been the proper course for Beyers to adopt, if his biographer's view that he was innocent of any complicity in a rebellious plot, is to be accepted. (See Scholtz (a), *passim*.)

90. Botha did not divulge his sources of information. U.G. 42-16 p. 351.

91. Beyers sent a telegram to Kemp and told him Botha wished to see him. According to Kemp, he had an interview with Botha on 26 August. Kemp, p. 149.

92. U.G. 42-16, p. 351.

Nevertheless, Botha commented: "--- at the same time all this sort of thing showed me quite clearly that there was something ⁹³ wrong somewhere". According to Kemp, Botha had inquired into his statement about not crossing the border. He had then told Botha that as he (Kemp) had made promises to people in his ⁹⁴ district, he would have no option but to resign if he were ⁹⁵ ordered to invade South-west Africa.

Despite those signs of unrest, the Government continued to organise for the Campaign. On 15 August the three State Commandants were summoned to Pretoria and they were given the same information which had been given to the Transvaal Commandants. According to Botha, the meeting passed off ⁹⁶ quietly. On August 21, military discussions were held to decide ⁹⁷ on a plan of campaign for the South-west African expedition.

Kemp was present for the greater part of the meeting but left before it was concluded, owing to an engagement. He apparently did not take a very active part in the proceedings, but he was present while the main features of the proposed campaign were discussed, and expressed his approval of the plans suggested by

93. Ibid., p. 351.

94. Presumably that he would not lead any troops over the border.

95. Kemp, p. 143.

96. U. 142-16, p. 353. (Botha's Evidence). Some of the three stations, who lived near the Bechuanaland border, requested that more rifles should be issued to them to enable them to deal with possible unrest among the Bechuanas. One Commandant (Van Rensburg of Brandfort) asked whether the Government intended to invade South-west Africa. Botha replied that that was a matter for Parliament to decide.

97. Those who took part in the discussions were Generals Smiths, Macdonald, Ingham, Kemp, Beyers; Colonels Devie and Strijner and Sir William Moy, General Manager of the South African railway and harbours.

98

General Sir Duncorn Mackenzie. After Mackenzie had been appointed to the Command of the forces to invade South-West Africa, Beyers sent him a telegram wishing him success in his venture.

99

In the latter half of August, the Union Government received news of two frontier incidents on the South-West African border. The first of these occurred on 15 August in the region of Nakob, North of the Orange River, a few hundred yards from the border, there was a water-hole in German territory; near the water-hole there was a German police post, known as Nakob. On the Union side of the border, a hill controlled all approaches to the water-hole, and in that region was a South African Police post, also known as Nakob. Normally small forces (seldom more than five men) occupied those posts, but on the outbreak of war, rumours started circulating that the German force had been increased for the purpose of attacking the South African police post. On 15 August a South African prospector discovered that the Germans had crossed the border. However, the fact that only a small force was involved and the fact that the violation of Union territory had taken place in a deserted region meant that in no way could the incident be regarded as a serious threat to the Union. The Union Government did not

98. Those plans were eventually adopted by the meeting. U.G. 46-16, p. 7.

99. On 11 September Beyers sent the following telegram to Mackenzie: "As one soldier to another, I wish you and the force under your command every success in the operations, which you are about to undertake." U.G. 10-15, p. 14. A remarkable telegram, when Beyers's views and subsequent actions are taken into account.

100. F.C. Cornell.

101. U.G. 42-16, pp. 3-4 (Cornell's Evidence)-- "I here distinctly saw hoofmarks and the fresh droppings of horses on the British side, --- loopholed schantzes had been built -- at one place the ground had been levelled' (apparently for a gun-site, Cornell decided). As he retaced his steps at dusk and looked back he saw two men standing on the hill (my emphasis). Also see Scholtz (b), pp. 70-71.

hesitate to make the fullest use of the incident as a justification for their invasion of German territory. On 21 August the following bulletin was released: "German troops from German-South-West Africa had crossed the border in the neighbourhood of Nakob and had invaded Union territory, where they were entrenching themselves".¹⁰² At the Special Session of Parliament in September, Botha cited the Nakob incident as an indication of the intentions of the Germans to invade the Union and used it to bolster his case for a South African attack on South-West Africa.¹⁰³

On 21 August another frontier incident occurred in the region of Schuitdrift, on the Orange River. Immediately after the outbreak of war, Seitz had issued a proclamation that all farmers and cattle had to move away from a strip fifty kilometers wide, along the Southern border of South-West Africa.¹⁰⁴ Three families of South African Citizens, living in that area tried in vain to obtain permission to return to the Union with their cattle.¹⁰⁵ They then decided to take matters in their own hands and to cross the border into Union territory. They were pursued by a German patrol and when the patrol came upon them on an island in the Orange River, near Schuitdrift, they were ordered to return.¹⁰⁶ When they refused, shots were exchanged, a German sergeant was killed and the South Africans got away.¹⁰⁷ This incident like the Nakob incident was obviously of no great significance and constituted no threat to the Union.

102. Rand Daily Mail, 21.8.1914; Scholtz (b), pp. 71-72. The bulletin gave the impression that a considerable German force had invaded the Union and the situation was serious, which was of course not the case at all.

103. See below pp. 83-84

104. Oelhafen, pp. 25-26; Scholtz (b), p. 75; Also see U.G. 10-15, p. 9.

105. Liebenbergs, Kennedys and Kriels.

106. The island was in Union territory, the boundary at that point was the highwater mark on the Northern bank of the river.

107. U.G. 42-16, pp. 57-59; U.G. 46-16, pp. 12-13; Scholtz (b), pp. 74-75.

The two Houses of Parliament were summoned to meet on 9 September to consider the Union's obligations in the War, in general and the proposed invasion of South-West Africa, in particular. According to one member of the South African Party, the majority of M.Ps. from that party were opposed to that invasion when they arrived in Cape Town, but were persuaded by Botha and Smuts, in a caucus meeting to support their policy.

Botha in his speech in the House said (inter-alia):

"They were an ally in the British Empire, and that Empire being involved in war, South Africa was ipso facto also involved in war with the common enemy --- . There were only two possibilities. The one possibility was one of faith, duty and honour. The other one was of dishonour and disloyalty --- Their duty and their conscience told them to be faithful and true to the Imperial Government in every respect in this hour of darkness and trouble --- and to take all measures necessary for defending the interests of the Union and co-operating with His Majesty's Imperial Government to maintain the security and integrity of the Empire." He also described the Nakob incident as a *casus belli* and informed the House of the Imperial loan of £7,000,000

108. H.C.Hull, who had resigned from the Cabinet but not from the party in 1912. On 27 August 1915 during the 1915 General Election Campaign, he addressed an open letter to the voters in the Barberton-Carolina Constituency and declared (inter-alia) "--- De meeste Parlementsleden der Z.A.P, waren tegen de inval toen ze in Kaapstad aankwamen---" De Volkstem, 27.8.1915.

109. Ibid. ; Engelenburg, pp.304-305; Neame, p. 167; Scholtz (b), p. 90.

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to the Union Government. Sir Thomas Smartt, leader of the Unionists, supported Botha's speech and declared that "The Government had a right to expect the full support of the people of the country".¹¹¹ Smuts, in his speech, referred to the necessity to silence the wireless stations in South-West Africa, and pointed out that those stations menaced shipping round the South African Coasts. The question to be decided, said Smuts was "whether we are going to do our duty, not only to ourselves but to the whole world ----. The question is whether this military autocracy is going to be 'baas' or whether we are going to keep the liberty for which we have sacrificed much blood". Hertzog opposed Botha's motion and while admitting that South Africa was at war as a result of the War between Britain and Germany, he still did not regard it as South Africa's War. He proposed an amendment to Botha's motion: "that this House being fully prepared to support all measures of defence which may be necessary to resist any attack on Union territory is of the opinion that any act in the nature of an attack or which may lead to an attack on German territory would be in

110. F.V.Engelenburg, whose biography of Botha is sympathetic towards him, criticised this speech on the following main points:-

He omitted to accentuate the threat posed to the Union's ocean routes by the Windhoek wireless station; he neglected to point out that it would not be in the interests of the Union to allow any but South African troops to occupy South-West Africa; the public was left in ignorance as to whether volunteers or commandeered troops were to be used; Engelenburg considered that he should not have mentioned the Nakob incident or the Imperial loan. Engelenburg, pp.306-307

111. Col. F.H.P. Creswell, the leader of the Labour Party, while stating that his Party did not approve of war, agreed with Botha that South Africa was duty bound to render every assistance in the struggle.

conflict with the interests of the Union and of the Empire".

With the Unionists and the Labourites supporting Botha's
112
motion, it was passed on 12 September by 92 votes to 12.

Parliament had given its approval to the invasion of South-
113
West Africa by Union troops.

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112. House of Assembly Debates (Special Session 1914) passim;
The Star 10.9.1914, 11.9.1914; Engelenburg, pp. 304-309;;
Van den Heever, pp. 367-373 ; Millin 1, pp. 307-309;
Scholtz (b). pp. 90-95.
113. Harm Oost was in the Press Gallery in the House when
the result of the division was announced. According to
him, certain M.Ps. started singing "God Save the King".
He told his friends: "dit beteken rebellie". Oost.p, 109.
Hertzog in a private conversation with one of his
supporters, Prof. Freemantle, declared that if the Government
commandeered troops, Civil war would break out.
S.C. 1-15, p. 232.

C H A P T E R I V .

The Conspiracy of 15 September and The Death of General De La Rey.

After the Officers' Meeting in Pretoria on 14 August, Maritz returned to Calvinia by train, via Bloemfontein. From Bloemfontein station Maritz telephoned Hertzog¹ and informed him in general terms of the events in Pretoria. According to Hertzog, Maritz told him that he had been ordered to Frieska to see to his commandos and that the Government intended to invade South-West Africa. That, said Hertzog subsequently, was the first definite intimation that he had had that the Government intended to invade South-West Africa, although he had heard rumours to that effect. Hertzog subsequently declared that he had always dreaded the coming of war, because he feared that the Government would be placed in an awkward position by some people who would demand a volunteer raid on South-West Africa. The Government's decision to sanction an official Campaign against the German Colony came as a surprise to him: "I can honestly say that I never dreamt they would do what they did, that is to go and decide upon an attack on German South-West Africa at their own risk". Maritz further told Hertzog that there had been considerable friction at Pretoria between the Government and (as Hertzog understood it) Beyers, and Maritz asked him to go and see Beyers.

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1. Maritz, before the war, had not allowed his position in the Defence Force to prevent him taking an active part in politics. He openly supported Hertzog's policies and came to see him, at the end of 1913 or the beginning of 1914 and asked him to address meetings in the North-Western Cape. When Hertzog informed the Select Committee about that in 1915, the Chairman asked him: "Did you think it right and proper that he (a Major in the Union Defence Force) should take an active part in politics"? Hertzog replied: "I must say I did not see any harm in it". S.C. 1-15, p. 15.

"Does Beyers want to see me?", Hertzog asked. "Yes, things are all upside down", replied Maritz. Maritz then mentioned, (as Hertzog put it) "something about the Treurfontein Affair," and rang off.²

When he arrived back at Calvinia, Maritz found a telegram, dated 15 August, from his friend Albert Stadler³ of Kakamas: "Joubert arrived safely yesterday evening. Everything quiet and peaceful. Telegraph particulars".⁴

The Joubert referred to in the telegram was F.J.Joubert ("Joubertjie") who had been Maritz's Adjutant in the Anglo-Boer War. After that war he had settled in South-West Africa. When war broke out in 1914 he was in the Orange Free State, according to Kemp, visiting his parents.⁵ On 4 August Joubert had returned to Kakamas and crossed into South-West Africa.⁶ Stadler's telegram was to inform Maritz that Joubert had returned from South-West Africa. Maritz was obviously eager to contact him and on 17 August he sent a telegram to Stadler at Kakamas.

"Very urgent. If "Joubertjie" is still there tell him to wait until I come to Kakamas."⁷

2. S.C. 1-15, pp.221-222 (Hertzog's Evidence). Maritz's version is as follows: "Op Bloemfontein terwyl die trein daar staan het ek Genl.Hertzog opgebel en hom gesê hy moes met die ander generaals in aanraking kom, dinge lyk maar lelik, doelende op die afspraak met genl.Beyers en menende dat genl.Hertzog die ander sou sien en uitvind wat die posisie is." Maritz, p. 70. Hertzog apparently did not see Beyers, as Maritz advised.
3. Albert Van Jaarsveld Stadler was a farmer from Kakamas who had served under Smuts and Maritz in the Anglo-Boer War (in the North-Western Cape). In 1914 Stadler was a Captain in the Active Citizen Force in Maritz's District and he subsequently went into rebellion with Maritz.
4. U.G. 10-15, p. 9; S.C. 1-15, p. 33.
5. Kemp, p.210. Whether his visit to the Free State had had a more sinister purpose is not clear.
6. Ibid. ; S.C. 1-15, p. 33. According to Kemp, the German authorities did not trust him and wanted to intern him.
7. U.G. 10-15, p. 9.

As Maritz had still not heard from Stadler by 19 August, he sent a second, more urgent telegram to the postmaster at Kakamas asking him to locate Joubert and to tell him to wait for him.⁸ Stadler, who had in the meanwhile gone to Keimoes, sent a telegram to Maritz on the same day confirming that Joubert was waiting for him; Stadler also informed him of the German proclamation that all cattle had to be removed from the border area.⁹ Maritz informed Beyers of the latter development on the 21st and added that he was leaving for the border immediately by car, "to prevent difficulties."¹⁰ Maritz was not successful in that object, for on the 21st. the Schuitdrift¹¹ incident occurred.

Another visitor from South-West Africa had in the meanwhile arrived at Stadler's farm. He was P.G. De Wet, who had played¹² a part in Maritz's negotiations with the Germans in 1913. De Wet was there as a result of the German Governor's decision¹³ to encourage an Afrikaner rebellion. Shortly after the outbreak of war, Seitz had sent for one ~~Max~~ Teinert, a German farmer, and after he had informed him of the message he had received from Maritz the previous year, he asked Teinert to contact P.G. De Wet. It was Seitz's intention that Teinert and De Wet should go to the border to find out what Maritz's intentions were. Teinert contacted De Wet and they moved towards the border; it was decided, however, that as Teinert

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid. Also see above p. 82

10. U.G. 10-15, p. 9.

11. See above, p. 82

12. See Above, pp. 67-68

13. See Above, pp. 56-57. Although nothing had come of the 1913 negotiations, Seitz knew from them what Maritz's feelings were and if he wanted to stir up rebellion, Maritz situated as he was on the border, was the obvious man to contact.

was well known as a German subject, he would not accompany De Wet across the border. A document was made out to state that De Wet was an undesirable British subject and he was being expelled from German territory for the duration of the war. In that way De Wet had no difficulty in crossing the frontier at Schuitdrift and from there he went through to Stadler's farm at Kakamas, where he met Joubert. When he asked Joubert where Maritz was, Joubert answered: "I am¹⁴ waiting for Maritz, myself".

Maritz met De Wet and Joubert on 23 August. He informed them of the Union Government's decision to invade South-West Africa and that a number of Officers, who were opposed to those plans intended to resist them. But, said Maritz, they needed arms and ammunition. Maritz and De Wet then went to Schuitdrift and finding no troops or police on the Union side of the River, they crossed the River by boat and entered German territory. Maritz apologised to a Sergeant at the¹⁵ German Police Post for the shooting and maintained that neither he nor his Government were in any way responsible for the affair. He then used the telephone to speak to Teinert. De Wet, who was present during the telephone conversation heard Maritz ask Teinert if it were possible to obtain guns and ammunition from the Germans. It was then agreed that De Wet and Teinert would go to Windhoek to see Governor Seitz.

14. U.G. 42-16, pp. 73-74 (P.G. De Wet's Evidence). It is difficult to ascertain whether Joubert was also an emissary of the German Governor. According to Maritz, he was. (Maritz, p. 68). According to Oost, Maritz, himself had requested that Joubert should return from S.W.A. so that he could act as an intermediary between Maritz and other like-thinking people in the Transvaal. Maritz, according to Oost, felt that he was too isolated from the Union and that he needed someone to act as a courier and to keep him informed of developments in other parts of the country. (Oost, p. 64). Joubert, subsequently did fulfil that task - Oost's account is probably the correct one.

15. The Schuitdrift incident on 21 August.

Maritz told De Wet that he wanted the Governor to meet Beyers to draw up an agreement, for he would not like "to start things on a loose footing."¹⁶

De Wet and Tainert went to Windhoek where they interviewed Seitz and Von Heydebreck on 26¹⁷ August. Although the German authorities had decided on a policy of co-operating with Boer¹⁸ rebels, it was evident to De Wet that Von Heydebreck, especially, was reluctant to commit himself and clearly distrusted Maritz. De Wet subsequently gave the following account of the interview: "They listened, but I cannot say they encouraged us by their reply. The Governor asked Von Heydebreck if they had sufficient guns and rifles in stock to assist the Boers. The reply was that he thought there would be rifles and perhaps guns, but that they had no men to spare to work the guns, because they required them for their own use. Maritz had especially impressed upon me that if we got guns we must get the men to work them because they had no men for that work. I came¹⁹ to the conclusion that the Governor and the German Government did not trust the Boers in these matters."

The German authorities were also informed of the Military Meetings which had been held on 14 August and of the Union

16. U.G. 42-16, p. 74.

17. Seitz (a) pp. 29-31.

18. See Above, pp. 56-57.

19. U.G. 42-16, p. 75. De Wet's conclusion was strengthened when he saw a letter from Von Heydebreck to Von Zastrouw (The Magistrate of Grootfontein, who was appointed by Seitz as his representative in the negotiations with Maritz): "I think it only right that you should tell them and make them understand that I simply consider them as traitors and we consider them as our enemies henceforth. How can I take the responsibility of providing the Boers with arms and ammunition when perhaps later on they will turn against us?" A German journalist, F.C. Berthold, confirmed the fact that the German authorities did not trust Maritz: "-- I can assure you that all of us including the military authorities were suspicious of Maritz and thought he was only making a ruse when he was told to ask for arms and ammunition and guns ---- from our side." U.G. 42-16, p. 82.

Government's decision to invade South West Africa. Seitz agreed to meet Beyers on the border to conclude a treaty whereby the Germans would recognise the independence of the old Boer Republics.²⁰

Maritz wasted no time in trying to get Beyers to the frontier. Before he knew the outcome of the De Wet - Teinert mission - in fact before his emissaries had seen the German authorities, he sent the following telegram to Beyers on 25 August:

"Am back from Kakamas. Everything is quiet and peaceful and no danger on border. I think it would be good if you could come down to Upington to see burghers. Reply when you can come ---- There is no truth whatsoever in all rumours re advance of enemy".²¹

Maritz also decided to send Joubert to Pretoria,²² ostensibly to inform the Intelligence Department about conditions in South West Africa,²³ but actually to see Beyers and De La Rey.²⁴

20. Seitz (a) pp. 30-31. Seitz also stated that the Germans would have no objection to the Republics annexing Delagoa Bay.
21. U.C. 10-15, p. 10., p.21.
22. When Maritz was in Pretoria on 14 August he had stated that he wanted Joubert appointed as one of his Staff Adjutants. He had apparently discussed the matter with Smuts, and Joubert's appointment (with the rank of Captain) was confirmed on 18 August. See S.C.1-15, p.345. (Maj.J.M.Baker's Evidence).
23. On 25 August, Maritz telegraphed Col.Skinner (Head of the Intelligence Department): "Capt.Joubert just arrived from German South-West Africa.Can give you full and reliable information re German South-West." U.C. 10-15 p. 10.
24. In December 1914 (after the collapse of the Rebellion) Joubert made the following statement to Capt.A.E.Trigger, Sub.Inspector in the S.A.Police: "He ---was sent to the Transvaal ostensibly to see General Smuts -- but the real reason of his going was not to see General Smuts but to see Generals Beyers and De La Rey." S.C. 1-15, p. 38. (A.E.Trigger's Evidence)

Joubert, accordingly came to Pretoria, either at the end of August or the beginning of September. He saw Smuts and in addition to giving him information about South-West Africa, asked for his resignation, because he said, that he felt he would be able to do more useful work if he were not a member of the Defence Force - Smuts did not agree.²⁵ Joubert also saw Beyers, and as there were no other witnesses present, the only available account of that interview is that of Kemp, who obtained his information from Joubert. According to Kemp, Joubert told Beyers of Maritz's negotiations with the German authorities and that Scitz would come to the border on 15 September to finalise those arrangements. Joubert brought a message from Maritz that Beyers should come to the border on that date (he could justify his visit by stating that he wished to inspect the training camp at Uprington).²⁶ Beyers, according to Kemp's version, agreed to that plan. After seeing Kemp, Joubert returned to the North-Western Cape and got back to Kakamas on 7 September.²⁷

Kemp's elation at the news that Beyers would support a rebellion was short-lived, for on 12 September, Beyers summoned him and informed him that he had decided to resign and that he would not support a rebellion. Kemp stated that he tried to persuade Beyers to change his mind, but he remained adamant and asserted that if sufficient officers followed his lead and resigned, it would be impossible for the Government to carry out its plans.²⁸ Kemp, impressed by Beyers's arguments, then

25. Kemp, p. 212. Smuts subsequently told one of the Staff Officers at Headquarters that he was suspicious of Joubert S.C. 1-15, p. 345 (Maj. J. N. Baker's Evidence).
26. Smuts also requested Beyers to go to the frontier- to inspect the training camps - That request was made before Smuts went to the Special Session of Parliament. See U.G. 46-16, pp. 87-90; Scholtz (a) p. 297, pp. 327-329.
27. Kemp, p. 213.
28. Ibid., pp. 193-194.

sent in his resignation on 12 September.

Despite Beyers's vacillating attitude, Kemp, De La Rey and Christiaan De Wet decided to go ahead with their plans for a rebellion. De La Rey, apparently embittered and disillusioned after his interview with Botha and Smuts in Pretoria in August, had not initially intended attending the Parliamentary session. On 3 September, however, De Wet visited De La Rey and after discussing the current situation, he persuaded De La Rey to go to Cape Town for the Special Session of Parliament.³⁰ De La Rey on that occasion revealed his plans for the future to De Wet: if Parliament approved of the Government's proposed South-West African Campaign, he would return to address protest meetings, call up his supporters and would then march to Pretoria to hoist the Vierkleur.³¹ He intended, in other words to carry out the same plan which he had intended to put into operation on 15 August.³² Christiaan De Wet agreed to support De La Rey, and it was decided that he (De Wet) would be in control of the rebellion in the Free State.³³ On 5 September De La Rey left Lichtenburg, but before going to Cape Town, he first visited Kemp's military training camp at Potchefstroom. Kemp allowed him to address the men and De La Rey told them that whatever happened they should obey^{the} orders of Kemp and their

29. Ibid., pp. 194-. On 15 September, after De La Rey's death, Kemp tried to withdraw his resignation, as according to him, he had come to the conclusion (in a discussion with some of his fellow-officers) that very few other officers would, in fact, follow his lead. The Government refused to reinstate Kemp. Also see U.G.42-16, p. 134, p. 211; U.G.10-15, p. 14; Maritz, p. 167.

30. Webb, p. 28; Kemp, p. 154.

31. Kemp, p. 154 (De La Rey informed Kemp of that discussion when he saw him on 5 September); De Wet's version (as told to his Secretary, Harm Oost) substantiates that. Oost, p. 108.

32. See above, p. 65

33. Kemp, p. 154; Oost, p. 141.

other Officers.³⁴ The interpretation which most Officers and men placed on De La Rey's words, was that they should obey Kemp's orders, whatever those orders might be.³⁵ It was also privately agreed between De La Rey and Kemp that if Parliament approved of the South-West African Campaign, De La Rey would return to the military camp at Potchefstroom, address a protest meeting and then lead the men to Pretoria.³⁶ According to Kemp they wished to ensure that Beyers would support their cause;³⁷ they therefore decided that De La Rey would go to Pretoria to persuade Beyers to support them.³⁸ Kemp would in the meantime make arrangements with the editor of the local newspaper, 'Het Western', to print a proclamation announcing the independence of the republics. Apart from that Kemp would take no further steps until the arrival of De La Rey, and it was hoped, Beyers in his camp.³⁹ It is not entirely clear what role Kemp and De La Rey had allocated to Maritz, for he still wanted Beyers to come to the border on 15 September. On 10 September, Maritz sent the following telegram to Beyers: "I consider it very

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34. According to one witness, De La Rey stated that they might be called upon to do great things in the future and they must obey their officers. U.G. 42-16, p. 16. (Capt. I.J. Geyser's Evidence); Also see U.G. 42-16, p. 62 (Col. N.J. Pretorius's Evidence).
35. Ibid.
36. Kemp, p. 154; Also see Webb, p. 28.
37. When that discussion took place, Kemp had not yet heard from Beyers that he intended to resign and that he would not support a rebellion. He had however heard from Joubert that Beyers had promised to support a rebellion. Despite the information which he had received from Joubert, Kemp still seems to have had doubts as to Beyers's intentions.
38. Kemp, pp. 154-155; Also see U.G. 42-16, p. 16 (Capt. Geyser, (one of Kemp's Staff Officers) overheard a conversation in Kemp's tent when De La Rey was present. Someone said: "The people were ripe for rebellion. All that is wanted is a leader".
39. Kemp, pp. 154-155.

desirable that you should come to address the burghers personally in the two camps, namely Upington and Kakamas. If you are coming telegraph me when you will be here. Everything still quiet and in good order."⁴⁰

Instead of informing Maritz that he was coming, Beyers, however, sent the following telegram to Maritz on 11 September:

2 "Commandant-General would like to see you here Tuesday. If impossible for you then send Joubert".⁴¹

Apparently unaware of the fact that De La Rey had decided to go to Cape Town, Beyers had sent the following telegram to him at Lichtenburg on 5 September:

"Very anxious to see you, important business. Can you meet me here Saturday 12th instant."⁴²

After De La Rey's family had informed Beyers that he had left to attend the Parliamentary session, he sent the following telegram to de La Rey at Cape Town:

"Would like to see you here Monday 14th or Tuesday 15th. If inconvenient telegraph earliest date. Important."⁴³

On 10 September De La Rey replied:

"Will see you when Parliament adjourns".⁴⁴

Beyers, on 10 September then sent the following message to Christiaan De Wet at Memel:

" "Do not come to Pretoria now. Our friend will not be here".⁴⁵

Beyers then tried to get Kemp, De La Rey, De Wet and Maritz to come to Pretoria in mid-September. Why did he wish to see

40. U.G. 10-15, p. 19.

41. U.G. 10-15, p. 14: Maritz p. 71: Tuesday=15 September.

42. U.G. 10-15, p. 13.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. De Wet had previously been to see Beyers and from the above telegram it must be assumed that it had been agreed that De Wet would come to Pretoria on 12 September and that De La Rey would also be there. Kemp was also summoned to Pretoria on that date.

those people? Subsequent events throw some light on the matter.

Maritz decided to send Joubert rather than to go himself, for as he stated in his book he felt that if he went to Pretoria Smuts would not allow him to return to Upington.⁴⁶ At De Aar, Joubert boarded the train from Cape Town. De La Rey was also⁴⁷ on that train - whether by accident or design, it is not clear -⁴⁸ and he and Joubert travelled together as far as Germiston. At Germiston they parted on the evening of 14 September; De La Rey went on to stay at an hotel in Johannesburg and Joubert went through to Pretoria. De La Rey had also originally intended to go to Pretoria, but he wished to elude the detective whom he believed, were trailing him. De La Rey subsequently told his friends that he had been cautioned by the Minister of Justice,⁴⁹ in Cape Town: "Om Koos jy moet jou gedra, ons sal die wet op jou toepas".⁵⁰ But of course De La Rey must have realised that the Police could not have arrested him merely for going to Pretoria; his only reason for not going^{straight} to Pretoria must have been that he did not wish it to be known that he was

46. Maritz, p. 71.

47. According to Kemp, it was by accident. Kemp, p. 175.

48. Kemp, p. 175; Oost, p. 118. James Rose-Innes, the Chief Justice of the Union was also returning from Cape Town in that train and he had a conversation with De La Rey. In his "Autobiography" he gives the following account of their meeting: "On 13th September General De La Rey (we were fellow-passengers as far as Bloemfontein) asked me into his coupé. I found him excited and anxious. He opened at once on the South-West topic; the grounds of his opposition were purely military; he enlarged upon the resources of the Germans and the need for caution. He had impressed this on General Smuts before leaving Cape Town; 'Jannie you must be careful, the Germans have mounds (berge, we were speaking Afrikaans) of ammunition'. And Smuts had replied: 'Om Koos I will be careful'. But he shook his head - he feared that Jannie was impulsive. He harped throughout our conversation on the same string. No word of objection on principle, nor any hint of active opposition, certainly not the speech of a man who was planning to overthrow the Government or taking aggressive action". Rose-Innes, pp. 253-259. Obviously, though, what De La Rey told Rose-Innes would have had no bearing on his actual plans. If, as was the case, De La Rey intended to start a rebellion, he would not have divulged those plans to Rose-Innes, nor indeed would he have given him any inkling as to what his plans were.

49. N.J. De Wet

50. Oost, p. 103; Scholtz (e), p. 316.

going to see Beyers, and if his business with Beyers was legitimate, why did he wish to keep that visit a secret? Joubert, it was arranged, would inform Beyers that De La Rey was in Johannesburg and Beyers would then meet him there. Joubert decided that he would see Beyers on the morning of the 15th.

It is no easy task to establish what Beyers's plans were, for there appears to be considerable justification for Prof. Leo Fouche's statement: "Beyers's first principle was to trust nobody entirely. None of his fellow conspirators appear to have been completely in his confidence".⁵² According to Kemp, Joubert, at the beginning of September had informed him that Beyers was willing to co-operate and that he was prepared to go to the frontier to meet the German Governor.⁵³ That plan could not have been put into operation if Beyers resigned his commission; if his visit to Maritz's district were not to arouse suspicion, he would have to go there in his official capacity. On 12 September, however, Kemp saw Beyers and according to Kemp's account, Beyers made no mention of his promise to Joubert, but simply stated that he had decided to resign and that he could not support a rebellion.⁵⁴ Now either Joubert had not told the truth or Beyers had promised support to Maritz but had subsequently changed his mind. Dr. G. D. Scholtz, whose biography of Beyers was written before the publication of Kemp's memoirs, states that at no stage in August or September⁵⁵ was Beyers contemplating rebellion. But even if Kemp's evidence⁵⁶

51. H. Mentz (S.A.P., Member of Parliament - later Minister of Lands) met Joubert on the train and spoke to him. Joubert's attitude struck him as being suspicious and on arrival in Pretoria, he told the Police of his suspicions: "--he did not know the man, but from his talk, he knew he was no good". (U.G. 42-16, p. 352).

52. U.G. 10-15, p. 16.

53. See above, p. 92

54. See above, p. 92

55. Scholtz (a), pp. 281-282.

56. That Joubert told him at the beginning of September that Beyers would support their plans.

is ignored, there are still certain factors which make it difficult to accept Dr.Scholtz's statement. The question that must be answered is: why did Beyers on 11 September summon Joubert to Pretoria, if there were no conspiracy between Beyers and Maritz?⁵⁷ Beyers's brother, subsequently stated that Beyers summoned Joubert to Pretoria to inform him and Maritz of his decision to resign and to let them know that the other officers who were opposed to the S.W.A. Campaign should not resign.⁵⁸ Dr. Scholtz also accepts that Beyers summoned Joubert to inform him of his resignation, and states that when Joubert asked Beyers what plans he, Kemp and De La Rey had, he answered: "Ons het geen planne nie. Ek bedank vandag".⁵⁹ To get Joubert to come all the way from Upington merely to give him such a message does not make sense, unless there was some previous agreement between Maritz and Beyers, which had now fallen through. But is that actually what Beyers told Joubert?

There are other versions of that interview. Kemp subsequently saw Joubert and he told Kemp that Beyers had said: "Julle moet reghou daaronder, maar julle moenie begin nie".⁶⁰ The version which Joubert gave to Harm Oost was even more explicit; according to that version Beyers said: "--- dat hulle nie daar moes begin nie. Hulle sal hier begin ---".⁶¹ When Joubert returned to Maritz he told him: " --- daar is besluit

57. In his biography of Beyers, Dr.Scholtz attempts to answer that question, (Scholtz (a), pp.301-304: Also see below p.98) but in his history of the Rebellion, he gives the impression that Maritz sent Joubert to Pretoria on his second visit, which was of course not the case at all. (Scholtz (b), p.98)

58. S.C. 1-15, p.205 (P.G.Beyers's Evidence): "He let him know that the other officers Maritz, Joubert and the others should not resign. He said: "I'll do it; I'll make that sacrifice to awake the people, to open their eyes so that they may see the folly of the policy of the Government in attacking German South-West Africa". Yet according to Kemp, Beyers on September 12 had expressed the hope that as many officers as possible would resign! See above p.92.

59. Scholtz (a), p. 304.

60. Kemp, p. 176.

61. Oost, p. 189.

om die opstand die volgende m⁶²ore vroeg in Generaal Kemp se laer by Potchefstroom te begin."

Prof. Leo Fouché also believed that a rebellion, supported by Beyers was scheduled to start in Potchefstroom on 15 September but when he was cross-examined by the Parliamentary Select Committee, he had difficulty in justifying that belief. The following exchange took place:

Chairman (P.Duncan): (Referring to Beyers's telegram to Maritz on 11 September) "Now if he was to start a rebellion on the German border on the 15th. it would be impossible for him to be in Pretoria on the same day?"

Fouché: "I do not know what the telegram means. It may mean more than it says. It may have been simply to indicate the date, but I do not know what it means ---"

Chairman: "Do you think that Beyers really wanted Maritz to come up to Pretoria? In any case he sent his Chief Staff Officer ----- ?"

Fouché: "Something may have happened. He may have wanted to postpone the day."

Chairman: " --- So that on the 10th September Maritz was telegraphing suggesting that Beyers should come down to Upington, and on the 11th Beyers was telegraphing to Maritz to come up to Pretoria. Do you think that is consistent with the theory that there was a general understanding to rise on the 15th?"

Fouché: "Yes. I think it is quite consistent with that theory. Perhaps they did not know where they would like to have Beyers, whether he would be of more value in the Transvaal or on the Orange River."

Chairman: But Beyers apparently wanted to see Maritz in Pretoria on the 15th. Does that not seem to show a difficulty in the way of your theory?"

62. Maritz, p. 71. Maritz was, however, mistaken in stating that De La Rey and Beyers had met in Johannesburg.

Fouche¹: "You can make a difficulty out of it if you like."

Chairman: "Can you make anything else but a difficulty out of it?"

Fouche¹: "Yes, I think it is explainable in other ways, but I am not prepared to put forward theories as I prefer to stick to the facts as I have done here."⁶³

On the available evidence the most convincing way out of this apparent impasse is that Beyers had originally (at the beginning of September) assured Maritz (via Joubert) that he would fall in with his schemes and that he agreed to meet the German Governor on the border; at some subsequent stage he had decided to resign (which would make the original scheme impracticable).⁶⁴ Notwithstanding his assertion to Kemp on 12 September that he could not support a rebellion, that decision to resign did not necessarily mean that he had turned away from rebellion.

After his interview with Joubert, Beyers dictated his letter of resignation to his Staff-Officer, Captain Van Manen. He then summoned some of his Officers to his office and announced his resignation to them. He explained that Van Manen would take his letter to the Acting Secretary for Defence. The Minister of Defence, then in Cape Town would have to be informed immediately and Beyers agreed that the telegram announcing his resignation to the Minister, should be put in cipher. Beyers, did not, however, tell his Staff that he had

63. S.C. 1-15, p. 21: Also see Scholtz (a), p. 291.

64. See above p. 97.

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 already sent a copy of his letter of resignation to the press. Botha received the news of Beyers's resignation on the afternoon of the 15th. He was playing golf with the Governor-General, and Buxton gives the following account: "We were about half way through the game when a messenger came from the pavilion to say that General Smuts had motored out and wanted to speak to the General at once. Botha thereupon went back to the pavilion. In about twenty minutes he returned looking very serious - 'Beyers has resigned, quite unexpectedly and as far as we can judge, the position is a grave one. Smuts and myself must go to Pretoria tonight' 66 That night Botha and Smuts returned to Pretoria by a special train. Before the train left Cape Town station, they received a message that De La Rey had been shot in Johannesburg. 67

After his interview with Beyers, Joubert had returned to Johannesburg where he had informed him of Beyers's resignation and that Beyers would come over to Johannesburg to see him. Beyers, however, decided to remain in Pretoria - according to his biographer, because he thought that the Government might wish to contact him - and he sent his wife and his brother to Johannesburg, in his car (driven by his Chaffeur, Wagner) to fetch De La Rey. 68 Once again De La Rey took elaborate

65. U.G. 10-15, p. 15; Scholtz (a) pp. 303-312; Oost, p. 123. In his letter of resignation Beyers set out in detail his objections to the Government's War Policy. (See U.G. 46-16, pp. 87-90; Scholtz (a) pp. 309-312). Special editions were hastily drawn up, but on instructions from the Government they were withdrawn from the streets. (See Oost p. 123). Beyers's biographer admits that his action in informing the press of his resignation before the Minister knew of that was hardly the correct procedure, but justifies it on the grounds that Beyers regarded his resignation as a protest against Government policy, and as such he wanted it to receive the widest publicity.

66. It should not have been completely unexpected. Beyers, had after all, according to Botha's own account, told him early in August that he did not approve of the Campaign, but that he would take no action until Parliament had decided on the matter. See above p. 62.

67. Buxton. pp. 42-43.

68. Scholtz (a). p. 313. Kern p. 176. Oost p. 118

precautions to throw any detectives off the trail. Mrs. Beyers got out of the car at the hotel and ordered the car to proceed. De La Rey then had his luggage taken to the station. After the servant had gone, De La Rey carried his luggage from the station to the car.⁶⁹ They arrived at "Beyerheim" (the home of P. Beyers, brother of the ex-Commandant-General, in Sunnyside Pretoria) at 5 p.m. Christiaan Beyers immediately gave instructions that the car was to be taken to a garage so that it could be thoroughly overhauled.⁷⁰ From five o'clock till half-past six De La Rey and Beyers were closeted together. Exactly what passed between them will probably never be known, for there were no witnesses present. Prof. Fouché in his Report on the Rebellion stated: "General Beyers it is clear, was still hoping to persuade General De La Rey at the last moment to join the conspiracy, or failing that to place him before a fait accompli at Potchefstroom".⁷¹ That view, however, is not acceptable. De La Rey, it is clear, needed no persuasion he had decided on 5 September to start the rebellion in Kemp's camp at Potchefstroom and there is no evidence that he had subsequently gone back on that decision.⁷² Dr. Scholtz, on the other hand, maintains that it was De La Rey who tried to persuade

69. Kemp, p. 181; Oost, p. 119.

70. Scholtz (a), p. 313.

71. U.G. 10-15, p. 14.

72. Kemp, pp. 154-155. Before he had left Johannesburg for the Parliamentary session he had met General Tobias Smuts and according to Smuts " -- he wanted me to join with others in a probable rising in the country which was expected to take place in the near future". Smuts told Louis Botha of that conversation. U.G. 42-16, p. 103. (Gen. T. Smuts's Evidence). On the morning of 15 September De La Rey told a close friend in Johannesburg that he was determined ('vasbeslote') to proclaim a republic with the help of the troops in Potchefstroom and that he intended to rebel against the Government (Die Transvaler 11.11.1940, cited by Scholtz (b), p. 99.)

the reluctant Beyers to join the conspiracy.⁷³ But was Beyers so reluctant? If Joubert's account of his conversation with Beyers⁷⁴ was correct, then Beyers, before he had even seen De La Rey, had decided on some form of rebellion.⁷⁵ Beyers, himself subsequently told the Commission of Inquiry into De La Rey's death, that when De La Rey arrived in Pretoria, he (De La Rey) asked him to go with him to Potchefstroom and Lichtenburg. Both of them were opposed to the South-West Africa expedition and for that reason De La Rey wanted them to address protest meetings at those places.⁷⁶ But even if that explanation is accepted at its face-value, Beyers's decision was, to say the least, extraordinary. Beyers, who after his resignation, no longer had any official standing, intended to go to a military camp in war-time to address the troops - an address which would of necessity have been a political one and which would have been directed against the Government's War policy. But if Beyers's motive in accompanying De La Rey was, as he stated, simply to address Protest Meetings, why was there the precipitate haste? De La Rey, who was an old man, had arrived in Johannesburg after a long train journey from the Cape, the previous evening; on the afternoon of the 15th. he had travelled to Pretoria by car, and yet only two hours after his arrival in Pretoria, he and Beyers were proposing to go on another long trip to Potchefstroom. The reason was that De La Rey and Beyers wished

73. Scholtz (a), p.300. "Prof.Fouche' wil dit laat voorkom of dit gen.De La Rey is wat gestoot is, terwyl dit hy is wat self gestoot het."

74. As given to Kemp, Maritz and Oost. See above pp.98-99.

75. Also there is the fact, stated by Dr.Scholtz that before he had spoken to De La Rey, Beyers had given instructions that his car was to be overhauled (presumably with a long trip in mind).

76. U.G. 10-15, p. 15.

to get to Potchefstroom before the troops dispersed.⁷⁷ But why was it deemed so necessary (if Beyers and De La Rey were merely going to address meetings) that of all the people in the Union, the troops at Potchefstroom should be chosen as the most important audience for Beyers's and De La Rey's speeches? According to Beyers's wife, Beyers had wanted to wait till the next day, but De La Rey had replied: "Christiaan ons het die ding klaar bespreek. Ek het die seuns beloof dat ek vandag⁷⁸ sou kom en Kemp wag op my". But of course the agreement which De La Rey had made with Kemp⁷⁹ was that the rebellion would be started in the Camp on 15th. Indeed, Kemp in his book stated categorically that if De La Rey and Beyers had arrived in the Camp on the night of the 15th., the rebellion would have⁸⁰ started, according to plan.⁸¹ Another officer, who was at Potchefstroom at the time, has stated: "The object of their (Beyers and De La Rey) visit has never been revealed in public but in fact it was to hoist the Vierkleur and march on Pretoria. I can personally vouch for this statement as I was an officer in the Potchefstroom Ruiters, one of the Regiments concerned, and as I was later, for more than ten years a friend and Cabinet Colleague of General Kemp, I have no doubt whatever that if the two generals had reached us that night we would have been on

77. The period fixed for the Potchefstroom Training Camp was as follows: for trained men from 2 September to 16 Sept; for recruits (who numbered 76 out of a total of 1,600 who attended the Camp) from 2 September to 23 September. S.C. 1-15, pp. 348-349; U.G. 42-16, p.340 (Evidence of J.M. Baker and A.E. Basden respectively). Prof. Fouche in his Report suggested that Kemp kept the men in the camp for longer than was originally intended so that they would still be there when De La Rey and Beyers arrived. (See U.G. 10-15, p.13). The Evidence of Baker and Basden made it clear that that was not so, for the Camp broke up on the days originally decided on.

78. Scholtz (a), p. 316.

79. See above, pp. 93-94.

80. Kemp, p. 195.

81. Oswald Pirow.

the march within twenty-four hours with half the Western Transvaal coming up to support us".⁸²

There can therefore be little doubt that De La Rey and Beyers were going to Potchefstroom to start the rebellion, and whatever Beyers's previous plans had been, once he agreed to accompany De La Rey to Potchefstroom, he had agreed to support a rebellion.⁸³

Beyers and De La Rey left Pretoria at 7p.m. in Beyers's Daimler driven by his Chaffeur. As they left, the onlookers saw a police constable standing on the corner and when De La Rey's attention was drawn to him, he remarked: "Hoe lyk dit my of hulle ons nou al dophou".⁸⁴ As the car drove off it appeared as if the constable turned his light so that he could see the number plates of the car.⁸⁵ Lieutenant-Colonel H.F.Trew, who in September 1914 was in charge of the Police in Pretoria, subsequently heard of those allegations and inquired into the matter: "I --- sent for the constable who was on the beat passing General Beyers house the night in question. When he arrived he told me he remembered seeing the two generals get into the car. He had made a point at the street corner where he had met his Section Sergeant. He stopped under a street lamp near the car to make a note in his official pocket-book to the effect that he had been visited by the Sergeant. He produced his note-book and showed me the entry, there was no mention in it of the departure of the generals."⁸⁶

82. Pirow, p. 70.

83. In a personal interview Mr. Harm Oost has expressed the view that Beyers was against rebellion, but that De La Rey probably persuaded him to support the conspiracy on the 15th. Beyers, apparently had a very high regard for De La Rey and Mr. Oost has expressed the opinion: "As General De La Rey gerebeleer het, sou Generaal Beyers dit ook gedoen het". Personal information received from Mr. Harm Oost.

84. Scholtz (a), p. 316.

85. Ibid. , : Also see Oost, p. 124.

86. Trew, p. 12.

As Beyer's Daimler reached the outskirts of Johannesburg, the occupants became aware of considerable police activity. Armed pickets had, in fact, been stationed on all the roads leading from Johannesburg. Those measures had been taken in an attempt to capture a dangerous gang of criminals, the so-called Foster Gang. Foster, aged about twenty-five, had been sentenced in May 1913 to twelve years imprisonment for a jewellery robbery. In February 1914 he had escaped from the Central Prison in Pretoria and had joined up with two associates, Maxim and Mesar. Between April and September the Foster Gang had been responsible for a number of armed robberies - and murders, for they did not hesitate to shoot to kill when cornered. In July 1914 the Government issued a reward of £500. for any information leading to the arrest of Foster, Maxim and Mesar. Their last exploit had taken place on 13 September when they attempted to break into the Imperial Bottle Store in Fairview, Johannesburg. When they were surprised by the Police, they had fatally wounded Sergeant McLeod and killed Sergeant Mansfield. Every effort was now made to track down the gang. On the morning of 15 September information was received that the Foster Gang was living in a house in Regent's Park, Johannesburg. Although not much reliance was placed on that information, Detective Mynott accompanied by Detective Layde and Plain Clothes Constable Murphy were sent to investigate. Mynott had instructions that if the gang were located he was to send for reinforcements. When Mynott and his colleagues reached the house, they found that their information had been correct, but Mynott did not carry out his instructions, apparently, believing that he and his comrades could deal with the situation on their own. Mynott and Murphy went round the house together, while Layde remained at the back of the house. Foster and Mesar were standing next to a car in which a woman with a baby, was sitting; Maxim was under the car making some repairs. Mynott went up to Foster, pointed his revolver at him and said: "Hands up, Foster!" Foster did not obey and Murphy shouted to Mynott to

shoot, but he hesitated. Foster then pulled out a revolver, and shot Mynott at point-blank range, killing him. Murphy and Foster then exchanged shots and after Murphy had used up his ammunition, he jumped over a fence to take shelter. Foster calmly removed Mynott's revolver from his body and the party then drove off in an Easterly direction towards Heidelberg. Civilian bystanders reported that the criminals escaped in a black four-seated car, supposed to be a Buick (it later turned out to be an Overland). Those events occurred on the ⁸⁷afternoon of 15 September between 5 and 5.15.p.m.

All police on the Witwatersrand were immediately alerted and parties of armed men were sent to scour the countryside. Orders were given that armed pickets were to be placed on all the roads leading from Johannesburg with the view to intercepting and examining all motor-cars. There was no time to issue detailed instructions ⁸⁸as to when the men were to shoot and when they were not to shoot. It apparently did not occur to the Police that there would be any danger of innocent persons being fired upon. It was assumed that all law-abiding citizens ⁸⁹would obey the police signals.

At about 8.45. Beyers's Daimler reached the first of the pickets they were to encounter, just North of the Orange Grove Hotel where the road was well illuminated. The police called upon the car to stop, but it did not do so. Police and

87. U.G. 48-14, pp. 1-3.

88. Apparently specific instructions were issued in only one case. At 7p.m. a message was sent from a Sergeant Briscoe at Hospital Hill to the Norwood Police Station: "If they refuse to stop (to be) fired upon". That message had been sent in answer to an inquiry from the Norwood Police as to what they were to do if cars did not stop. Briscoe sent that message on his own initiative; it was his interpretation of what ought to be done. The message was not acted upon at Norwood and no shooting took place there. Ibid, p.4.

89. Ibid.,

bystanders asserted that they heard a voice, from within the car, ordering the car to proceed. According to Beyers and Wagner, Beyers said to De La Rey: "Oom Koos, sal ons stop?" De La Rey replied: "Nee laat ons aangaan". When the car refused to stop the police did not interfere further as they saw that the colour of the car was grey (not black like Foster's); the grey overall and the Chauffeur's cap of the driver also averted suspicion that this could be the Foster Gang. From Orange Grove Beyers's party went past Killarney and then went on to Langlaagte via the Vrededorp subway and Fordsburg. At the subway they were again challenged and again they refused to stop. One of the policemen ⁹⁰ maintained that when he challenge someone from the car shouted: "Pas op voor" and he had to jump out of the way as the car nearly ran him over. ⁹¹ The car was next challenged in Fordsburg, at a place which was well lighted. The police stood in the middle of the road, held up their hands and shouted: "Halt!" The car had to pass a sharp corner and as there was a catch-water drain between the two streets, the car was forced to slow down; the people in the car must therefore have clearly seen the police. The car, however, immediately accelerated and swerved past the police. One of the policemen ⁹², after the car had passed, ran to the Fordsburg Charge Office and reported that a car had refused to stop and that it had proceeded along the main road towards Langlaagte. ⁹³ The next picket was in Langlaagte, at the corner of De Ville and Du Toit Streets. Constables Drury and Ives, both armed with rifles were stationed there; Drury had a bayonet attached

90. Constable Van Rooyen.

91. Beyers and Wagner subsequently denied that anyone had shouted from the car.

92. Constable De Wet.

93. That information had not been received at the Langlaagte picket when Beyers's car reached that point.

to his rifle. At about 9.15p.m. they saw a car approaching. Drury stood in the middle of the road and challenged the car when it was seventy or eighty yards away, by holding up his hand and shouting: "Halt, Police!" The car did not slow down. He challenged again when the car was about thirty yards away. As the car still did not slow down, and by this time it was only about twelve yards from him, he shouted: "Pull up, I am going to stop you". The car came straight on and apparently Drury made a thrust at the tyre with his bayonet and the left front mudguard struck his hand.⁹⁴ Drury subsequently stated that he could not see the colour of the car, or how many people were in the car. Ives, who was standing about thirty yards further on, also challenged the car, and when it still did not stop, Drury decided to shoot; the car was about forty yards from him when he fired. He subsequently stated that he aimed at the right hand rear-wheel. He fired too low, however, and the bullet was seen to strike the road at the back of the car. The car went on for about two hundred yards after the shot was fired, then it stopped and came back to the picket. Drury went to meet it and said: "Halt, are you going to stop this time?" The car immediately stopped and the report was made that General De La Rey had been killed.⁹⁵ As Drury had fired, De La Rey had collapsed and said: "Dis raak",⁹⁶ and he died almost immediately.⁹⁷ All the evidence pointed to the fact that the bullet had ricocheted off the road; the hole in the back of the

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94. Drury maintained that the car hit him in passing but Beyers asserted that Drury tried to puncture the tyre with his bayonet.
95. U.G. 48-14, pp. 7-11.
96. Oost, p.131; Scholtz (a), p. 318.
97. At the post-mortem it was found that De La Rey had been killed by a piece of the nickle casing of the bullet which had entered the left side near the waist, penetrated his chest, lacerated the heart and then lodged in the breast bone. The lead part of the bullet, with the rest of the casing dropped out of his clothing when the body was undressed and had done no more than cause a V shaped abrasion on the left side of the body. U.G.48-14,p.11.

car indicated that the bullet was rotating with its broad side on when it struck the car.

De La Rey was not the only police victim that night. A medical practitioner, Dr.G.Grace, who was travelling by car from Johannesburg to Springs, was shot and killed on the Main Reef Road, near Germiston. Grace, apparently did not hear the police instructions to stop.⁹⁸

The events of the night of 15 September led to the appointment of a Judicial Commission of Inquiry under Judge Greg^orowski. The Commission heard evidence for seven days and more than seventy witnesses were examined, but the publication of the report^{99/100} did not end all speculation about those events.

Many people at the time believed that De La Rey's death had been no accident, but that it had been deliberately planned by the Government to get rid of a dangerous man.¹⁰¹ Some of the points that aroused suspicion were: that although Beyers's car was grey and not black (like Foster's car) it was still fired on; that the other police victim, Grace was bearded and bore a slight physical resemblance to Beyers; the fact that although the Foster Gang had been seen to be driving in an Easterly direction, all cars from Pretoria were also stopped. In connection with the last point, Beyers subsequently claimed that on the night of the 15th. (after De La Rey's death) he had looked at the Instruction Books at the Fordsburg Police Station

98. Ibid., pp. 1-7. The Foster Gang actually eluded the Police on the night of the 15th., but were eventually traced by the police and driven into a cave on the outskirts of Johannesburg. The police surrounded the spot and eventually Foster, and his gang, and his 'wife' and baby were found shot inside the cave.

99/100. U.G. 48-14. Only the report was published. The minutes of evidence were not published and are even today not yet available for reference.

101. See for instance Oost, p.13⁴; S.C. 1-15, p.21⁴; Kemp, p.200; ~~Beshoff~~ ^{Beyers} believed that the shot was intended for ~~Beyers~~.
him

and had seen the message: "Intercept all cars coming from Pretoria. 7.15p.m."¹⁰² But even if Beyers were correct in his belief that he had seen such a message, it cannot from that be assumed that the police had received instructions to stop Beyers and De La Rey. If that were the intention of the message then it surely needed to have stated more than "Intercept all cars from Pretoria". How could the Police have understood that to mean that Beyers and De La Rey were to be stopped? As the message stood it could have meant that cars from Pretoria should be searched to find the Foster Gang, or that people travelling from Pretoria should be warned of the Police activities in Johannesburg, but it could not have had any bearing on the Police stopping De La Rey and Beyers.

103

There were certainly peculiarities about the shooting and they were indicative of laxness and of vague, unsatisfactory instructions issued to the Police, but there is no evidence indicating that the Police deliberately shot De La Rey or that they even intended to stop Beyers's car.

Considerable speculation must also have arisen in Government circles as to why Beyers and De La Rey did not stop when challenged. Any explanation which assumed that they did not see the police or did not understand their commands, can be discounted. Before the fatal shooting at Langlaagte, the car had been clearly ordered to stop on three separate occasions at other pickets and those commands had been ignored.

102. Scholtz (a), p. 318; Oost, p. 140; S.C. 1-15, p. 214. (Evidence of P. Beyers). After P. Beyers had given his evidence (to the Select Committee), the Minister of Justice pointed out that C. Beyers, at the Inquiry had denied that P. Beyers insisted, however, that his brother had told him about the instruction.

And of course the fact that the Foster Gang had been seen to drive off in an Easterly direction did not mean that they would continue to travel in that direction. It was only natural that all the roads from and into Johannesburg should be watched by the Police.

103. See for instance Oost, pp. 137 - 139.

It is inconceivable that there could have been any doubt in the minds of the occupants of the car as to what the Police intended them to do. According to the Report on De La Rey's death, Beyers at the inquiry gave no explanation as to why they did not stop, but apparently tried to create the impression that they did not understand the Police signals. In connection with the attempt to stop the car at Vrededorp (that is after they had already been challenged at Orange Grove), Beyers said "that he saw one or two policemen whom he took to be regulating the traffic there."¹⁰⁴ How could Beyers have believed that after their previous experience at Orange Grove? Why would policemen with rifles be regulating the traffic? In any case even if he did believe that (which is highly unlikely) why did he not instruct Wagner to stop the car when the Police ordered them to do so?¹⁰⁵ If as Beyers maintained they were merely going to Potchefstroom to address meetings, they would have had nothing to fear when challenged by the police; if their plans went no further than that, it is surely unlikely that they would have risked their lives by defying the commands of armed policemen. Their behaviour was that of desperate men who were determined not to stop at any cost; one is brought to the conclusion that they believed that the authorities had got to

104. U.G. 48-14, p.8. In fact, it appears that Beyers's evidence before the Commission of Inquiry, was not always reliable. Oost, who obtained his information from A.S. Van Hees, (an advocate who represented De La Rey's family at the inquiry) asserts that Beyers made the following statement: " --- 'n man met die naam Joubert het oorgekoi Ek dink hy was op pad van Kaapstad af" (My emphasis - Oost, p. 122)

If Beyers did say that, then that statement was blatantly untrue. Byers knew that Joubert did not come from Cape Town, but that he came from Upington - in fact he himself had summoned him to Pretoria!

105. Beyers, in his evidence, said: "Wagner (his chauffeur) had to wait for instructions to stop from me --- he cannot stop whenever he likes, but I gave Wagner no special instructions that evening." U.G. 48-14, p.11. Wagner, at the inquiry, stated that even after the shot was fired he would not have stopped, had Beyers not instructed him to do so. Ibid., p. 10.

know of their plans to start a rebellion. That conclusion is strengthened by accounts of Beyers's behaviour after the shooting. Rev. Daniel Theron, who was a personal friend of Beyers, went to the Police Station shortly after the shooting, to see him. He gave the Select Committee the following account "When I got there General Beyers was seated in the motor-car outside the office. I took his hand and he said: "Are they going to arrest me!"¹⁰⁶ Another person received the same impression of Beyers: "At a later date Colonel Truter told me¹⁰⁷ that when the police brought General Beyers to the police office that night he appeared to be very excited and said to Truter: 'What am I to be charged with?' Truter was surprised and said: "We have no charge against you; the whole affair is the result of an unfortunate accident which I very much regret".¹⁰⁸

Kemp, who was expecting De La Rey and Beyers in Potchefstroom heard of De La Rey's death at 2 a.m. on the morning of 16 September. Kemp considered that that was the end of their plans to start a rebellion. In his memoirs he commented as follows: "Om twee-uur voormiddag van 16 September 1914 was die hele rebellie op 'n end. Ek het besef dat die planne wat ons gemaak het, nie uitgevoer kon word sonder Generaal De La Rey nie, en hy was nou dood".¹⁰⁹ Kemp's attitude of mind after he had heard that news, was confirmed by one of his brother officers: "He remarked that the strong men had now fallen and the whole thing would now collapse; it was also the Hand of God, he said, showing us that we should not go any further".¹¹⁰

106. S.C. 1-15, p. 152.

107. Truter, the Deputy Commissioner of Police gave H.F. Trew that version.

108. Trew, p. 8. Beyers at the Inquiry said: "I disassociate myself from the suggestion that for political reasons I feared the arrest of myself or the passengers in my car. I did not expect my arrest for any reason whatever." Beyers's words were recalled by the Minister of Justice, after Rev. Theron had given his evidence to the Select Committee, S.C. 1-15, p. 159.

109. Kemp, p. 195.

110. U.G. 42-16, pp. 62-63 (Evidence of Col. N.J. Pretorius).

In the Free State, too, the death of De La Rey upset the plans of the rebels. Christiaan De Wet had intended to call up the burghers in the Vrede District to support De La Rey on the morning of 16th. Before that could be done, De Wet received¹¹¹ news of De La Rey's death and no action was taken.

Of all the conspirators, Maritz was placed in the most awkward situation by the breakdown of their plot caused by De La Rey's death. It will be recalled that Maritz had originally made arrangements for a meeting to take place¹¹² between Beyers and Seitz on the fifteenth. When Joubert was summoned to Pretoria, Maritz must have realised that there had been a change of plan.¹¹³ Seitz and Von Heydebreck came to the border on the 15th. as had been arranged, but they received no¹¹⁴ communication from Maritz. The Germans had from the first been wary of Maritz's intentions; the fact that no meeting took place on the border, together with the facts that Union troops had attacked Ramansdrift and that the British Cruiser "Armandale" had shelled Swakopmund, led Seitz to decide that¹¹⁵ they could no longer keep to the agreement. Surprisingly,

111. Oost, pp. 141-142.

112. See above p. 91

113. According to Oost, Maritz had also received messages from his fellow-conspirators in the Transvaal, not to start the rebellion on the 15th. Oost, p. 71.

114. Seitz (a), p. 31. On 15 September Seitz issued the following proclamation to the 'Boer People of South Africa: "whereas British troops have attacked the German Police Station at Ramansdrift and have come over the German border, thus bringing the European war to South Africa: I expressly declare hereby that the Germans carry on no war against the Boer people of South Africa. On the other hand I declare that we Germans shall repel the attack of the British troops at all points and by all means and carry to its conclusion the war against the British and against the British only." U.G.46-16, p. 15.

115. ^{See (a), p. 31} Leipoldt, (an emissary from Colonel Coen Brits to Maritz- see below p. 47) saw a letter from Seitz dated 20 September. Leipoldt told the Select Committee: "The Governor stated in that letter that as Maritz and the other people who had signed the treaty had not been able to prevent the invasion of German South-West Africa and also had not by force of arms tried to arrest that invasion, the whole treaty was null and void." S.C. 1-15, p. 114. (Leipoldt's Evidence).

Maritz, as far as it can be ascertained, did not send anyone to the border on the 15th. to explain matters to the German authorities. It was only after Joubert had returned from the Transvaal that any attempt was made to contact the Germans. ¹¹⁶

Joubert and a Lieutenant Piet Botes went to Nakob and when they did not find anyone in the vicinity they left a letter for the Germans under a lamp. The Germans were informed that their plans were not yet in order and that they were awaiting further instructions. ¹¹⁷ When Maritz heard the news of De La Rey's death, he expected to hear of an uprising in the Transvaal in the near future; he hoped that the rebellion would start on 20 September, ¹¹⁸ the day of De La Rey's funeral.

De La Rey's death undoubtedly increased the tension in the Union. The funeral was arranged to take place at Lichtenburg on 20 September, but the previous day there was a service conducted by Rev.H.S.Bosman, in the Groot Kerk, Pretoria. Many of De La Rey's colleagues from Anglo-Boer ^{war} days, soon to be fighting on opposite sides in a rebellion, were present. In his

116. Joubert had wanted to accompany Beyers and De La Rey to Potchefstroom, but for some reason he did not. On the night of the 15th. he left Johannesburg by train to return to the Cape. At Potchefstroom he heard the news of De La Rey's death and he left the train to go to Kemp's camp. Kemp confirmed that news and told Joubert that he was trying to get his resignation cancelled. Joubert then asked: "Wat nou van my af ek dan soos 'n hond moes doodgeskiet word?" Kemp said he could do nothing for him and that he certainly could not spend the night in the camp; he did, however, arrange for Joubert to spend the night at a friend's house and later Joubert received a message from Kemp that he should return to Upington. It is not clear when Joubert got back to Upington. See Maritz, pp.165-168 (Bylae 1 - Verklaring van F.J.Joubert).

117. Kemp, p.215. According to Kemp the letter lay there for eight days before it was discovered, but he does not say when it was put there.

118. Maritz, p.71. It is not clear when Maritz received the news of De La Rey's death, but it was presumably before 20 September.

sermon Bosman thought fit to warn the congregation against
 119 rebellion.

That evening, when the body was taken to the
 120 station, a man came up to Botha and warned him that there was
 treason and rebellion afoot. Botha took him into one of the
 rooms at the station and they had a private conversation.
 Botha was told "that Maritz was not to be trusted - that he
 was actually in communication with the Germans ---. The names
 of four or five leaders were being openly used and Maritz had
 121. actually been over the border himself to meet the German leaders.
 Botha, subsequently commented: "I could see that there was
 122. something deeper going on than appeared, on the surface ---"

Feelings were running high at the funeral at Lichtenburg
 on 20 September. Vierkleurs were displayed and there were
 people who suggested to C. De Wet and Kemp that Botha and Smuts
 123 should be captured or shot. Standing next to De La Rey's
 grave, Beyers solemnly repudiated the suggestion that there
 was any thought of rebellion: "In de kerk te Pretoria is
 gesproken over rebellie. Er is daarbuiten openlik gezegd
 dat Generaal De La Rey en ik op pad waren om rebellie te stoken.
 Namens die held die hier ligt verwerp ik die aantyging met
 124. verachting van my; niets is verder van my gedachten as rebellie"

119. Oost, p. 165; Kemp p. 199; U.G. 10-15, p. 18. According to
 Oost, Christiaan De Wet could not contain himself at
 those references and he made a protesting noise, which
 to Oost and his friends sounded like the growl of an
 angry lion.

120. One Botes, who said that he had especially come from the
 North-Western Cape to warn Botha.

121. U.G. 42-16, p. 353 (Botha's Evidence). That was evidently
 not the first warning Botha had received. A S.A.P. member
 of Parliament told the Commission of Inquiry: "While in
 Cape Town for the **Special Session**, someone spoke to him
 and said Maritz was playing traitor. He spoke to Botha
 and Botha was not surprised - it was evident that his
 attention had been drawn to the matter already".
 U.G. 42-16, p. 122 (Evidence of Col. J.J. Alberts)

122. U.G. 42-16, p. 353.

123. Kemp, pp. 198-199; Webb, p. 43; Scholtz (a), p. 322.

124. Scholtz (a), p. 323; Kemp, p. 199. Beyers went on to
 say that he did not believe in violence.

Beyers's biographer regards that speech as conclusive evidence that he was not intending to start a rebellion on 15 September.¹²⁵ But was Beyers telling the truth? To suggest that on an occasion of that sort, Beyers would not tell the truth, is a very serious accusation, but Kemp's evidence and the circumstantial evidence¹²⁶ make it difficult to believe Beyers's statements. Kemp, himself, had serious doubts about the accuracy of Beyers's statements. Kemp, in his memoirs commented: "Beyers was beslis teen rebellie. Ek vermoed egter sterk dat De La Rey hom die 15de September omgepraat het om sy lot met ons in te gooi.¹²⁷ Na die skokkende dood van Generaal De La Rey het Beyers, sowel as ons almal goed besef dat die rebellie, vir die oomblik altans, op 'n end was. Dit is dus moontlik dat hy onder die omstandighede so ver gegaan het om daardie verklaring te maak, wetende dat dit onjuis was, alleen met die doel om Generaal De La Rey se goeie naam, sowel as homself en ons ander wat in die voorgenome rebellie betrokke was, te beskerm. Beyers en almal van ons was sterk onder die indruk dat Generaal De La Rey opsetlik doodgeskiet is om daardie rebellie te stop."¹²⁸ In other words Kemp felt

125. Scholtz(a), p.323. "In 'n geregshoof word groot waarde geheg aan die indruk van geloofwaardigheid wat 'n getuie maak. Beyers staan by die geopende graf van iemand wat in sy arms gesterf het; hy verkeer diep onder die indruk dat hy kon gewees het ---; hy is 'n spreker by 'n godsdienstige plegtigheid; hy staan met die Bybel in die hand. Indien Beyers op daardie oomblik 'n onwaarheid sou vertel het, dan was sy lewe soos tot dusverre beskryf is, een groot onwaarheid. En so iets kan nie aanvaar word nie. Beyers het op 15 September nooit aan rebellie gedink nie, alle beskuldigings teen hom ten spyte."

126. See above, pp. 97-100, 103-105, 111-113.

127. But according to Kemp's own evidence (substantiated by Oost) Beyers's statement to Joubert, before he had seen De La Rey indicated that he intended to rebel. See above pp. 98-99, 103. In any case there is little doubt that Beyers had received information of Maritz's negotiations with the Germans. See above p. 92.

128. Kemp, p. 200.

that Beyers, from the point of view of expediency, repudiated all suggestions of rebellion, even though that was not the truth.

While one must admit that a number of pieces of the puzzle are missing, it is, nevertheless, still possible to draw conclusions about the events of 15 September. There can be no doubt that De La Rey, Kemp and De Wet planned to start the rebellion in the Transvaal and Free State on 15 September. Maritz, although not cognizant with all the details, also believed that it would start on that date. Beyers's attitude remains something of an enigma. From the available evidence it would appear that there was a change of plan as far as he was concerned - a change of plan which did not necessarily mean that he had decided not to rebel, but that a different plan of rebellion was envisaged - instead of starting the rebellion on the German border, it would be started in the Transvaal and Free State.

The accidental death of De La Rey undoubtedly upset the plans of the rebels. According to Prof. Fouché¹²⁹; one of the conspirators, borrowing an historic phrase, stated that "it upset their whole apple-cart". The first phase of the rebellion was at an end and never again would the conspirators have such a favourable opportunity for launching the rebellion.

129. U.G. 10-15, p. 18.

CHAPTER V.

The 'Protest' against the South-West African Campaign.

On 24 September, the Governor-General of the Union wrote to the Secretary of State: "--- the position had been really serious and ugly, people talking and writing freely of Civil War, and Botha and Co. very much disturbed, (but) it seemed to be now confidently thought that the dangerous position had been safely passed". Buxton, however, wisely added the caution that¹ "it would be folly to prophesy in this country".

The recent events had clearly revealed how strong the opposition to the Government's proposed South-West African Campaign actually was. In an attempt to mollify that opposition, Botha publicly announced that no men would be commandeered for the campaign - only volunteers would be used.²

Those Afrikaners, who were opposed to the South-West African Campaign, decided, immediately after De La Rey's funeral, to organise a number of meetings with the aim of protesting against the Government's war policy and to forward a resolution of formal protest to the Government. The first meeting was held at Lichtenburg on 21 September. According to Kemp, the Government tried to prevent that meeting taking place, but notwithstanding those efforts, Kemp and the others decided to go ahead with the meeting.³

1. Buxton, p. 53.

2. On September 20, Botha and Smuts had announced that to a number of Officers and Commandants at Lichtenburg; On 28 September, Botha made a speech at Bank Station and reiterated that statement. It seems as if these announcements were the first public statements as far as the question of volunteers were concerned. U.G.42-16, p.368. (Botha's Evidence); The Star 29.9.1914; U.G.10-15, p.19; Engelenburg p.311; Scholtz (b), p.102.

3. Kemp, p. 200.

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At the meeting feeling was running high - Beyers's Daimler (with the bullet hole clearly in evidence) was prominently displayed; the Old Republican flags were hoisted.⁵ Kemp was elected as Chairman and explained that the meeting had been requested by the public to give them an opportunity to protest against the Government's policy. Kemp, C. De Wet, P.J. Liebenberg,⁶ Dr.J.D.Du Toit, Rev.W.J. De Klerk and Rev. H.D. Van Broekhuizen made speeches protesting against the Government's policy.⁷ Christiaan Beyers explained why he had resigned.

A resolution was passed protesting against the Government's plans to invade South-West Africa. The motion stated that the Government's policy was in conflict: i) with the wishes of the overwhelming majority (de overgrote meerderheid) of the Union's population ii) with the Defence Act iii) with the honourable Christian traditions of the South African people ('onze eervolle Kristelike volkstradisies'). The Government was asked to stop all offensive operations against South-West Africa and to recall all the Union troops. It was requested that the Government should reply to the petition before 30 September so that that reply could be considered at a 'volks-

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4. There are varying estimates of the number of people who were present at the meeting. Kemp stated that there were 1,200 (Kemp, p.201); P.Beyers considered that there were about 1,000 present (S.C.1-15, p. 215); J.C.Juta, the Magistrate at Lichtenburg, considered that there were about 400 present (S.C. 1-15, p.188). Dr.Scholtz, who does not state on what evidence his figures are based, states that there were between 700 and 800 present. (Scholtz (a), p.324).
 5. Kemp, acting on instructions from Beyers gave orders for them to be removed. Kemp, p. 201; S.C. 1-15, p. 215. (P.Beyers's Evidence) S.C. 1-15, p. 188 (J.C.Juta's Evidence)
 6. The Afrikaans poet 'Totius'.
 7. Kemp, pp. 200-201; Cost, pp. 165-166; Scholtz (a), pp.324-325

vergadering'.

How much validity was there in the points made in the resolution? As far as the first point is concerned, the Government's motion approving of the South-West African Campaign, had been passed by a large majority (92 votes to 12) in the House of Assembly.⁹ Admittedly that was probably not a true reflection of the feelings of the Union electorate. As has been shown all members of the South African Party in the Assembly did not initially support Botha's policy and it was necessary for F.S.Malan to address his constituents to explain the Government's policy to prevent protest meetings being held.¹⁰ There is also the fact that some (but surely only a small number) of Government Members of Parliament, no longer enjoyed the support of their constituents as a result of the Hertzog-split.¹¹ But even if those facts are taken into account, it cannot be accepted that the

8. Kemp, pp.201-202; U.G. 46-16, pp.30-31; Oost, p. 166. According to Oost only nine people voted against the motion. Other motions were passed: electing a Committee consisting of De Wet, Beyers, Kemp and Liebenberg to organise protest meetings throughout the country; thanking Beyers for his sacrifice (his resignation) and promising him their future support; the appointment of a Committee to collect money so that a monument to De La Rey could be erected. Beyers probably played a prominent part in drafting the protest motion; the points made (and even some of the wording) were essentially the same as those made by him in his letter of resignation to Smuts.
9. See above p.85
10. See above pp.38-40, 83.
11. Cloete, pp. 321-322.
12. See above p.32 Steyn commented: "Het kan niet ontkend worden dat de houding van Generaal Botha en zijn party tegenover de Vrijstaat en vooral van de leden van de Volksraad die het vertrouwen van hun konstituaten hadden verloren en desnietegenstaande hun zetels behielden en voor oorlog stemden zonder hun kiesers te raadplegen, een gevoel van verontwaardiging en bitterheid heeft opgewekt, zodat de grond voor het zaad van rebellie goed voorbereid was". Van der Merwe ii, pp. 324-325.

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majority of people in the Union were opposed to the campaign; the most that can be said was that there was considerable opposition to the Government's war policy. In any case the malcontents at Lichtenburg had no way of knowing what the majority of people in the Union felt about the matter. An undoubted factor which increased the discontent was that many Afrikaner voters felt that they should have been directly consulted on the war issue - they felt that a General Election or a referendum should have been held.

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The second point made in the resolution - that an attack on South-West Africa was in conflict with the Defence Act, had no basis in fact. In fact there was not even anything in the Defence Act which stipulated that only volunteers had to be used.

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The third point made by the Lichtenburg protestants was that the campaign was in conflict with "onze eervolle kristelike volkstradisies". Some Afrikaners claimed that their opposition to the campaign was based on religious grounds. In his

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13. If that were so, then surely the Nationalists would have won the 1915 General Election, whereas they gained 27 seats as opposed to the 93 seats won by the Pro-war parties. (S.A.P. 54; Unionists 39) - See below, p. 240.
14. See Scholtz (b), pp. 104-106; Also Steyn's comment (n. 12 above)
15. The Defence Act (Act No. 13 of 1912) stated that the Union Defence Force was to be divided into four sections. i) The Permanent Force ii) The Coastal Garrison. iii) The Citizen Force iv) The Royal Marine Volunteer Reserve. The Citizen Force was to consist of all persons liable to render personal service in time of war and was to consist of three divisions (The Active Citizen Force; the Citizen Force Reserve and the National Reserve). All sections of the Defence Force were to be controlled by the Minister of Defence aided by a Defence Council. ~~The~~ Article 1 of the Defence Act that every citizen of European descent was liable between his seventeenth and his sixtieth year to render in time of war, personal service in defence of the Country in any part of South Africa within or without the Union (My emphasis) See Act No. 13 of 1912; House of Assembly Debates (2nd Session 1912, pp. 619-646; Y.B. No. 3. (1910-1918), pp. 411-413. Dr. Scholtz, in his history of the Rebellion agrees that the S.W.A. expedition was not in conflict with the Defence Act. (Scholtz (b), pp. 106-107).
16. See Above p. 120

proclamation issued at Steenbokfontein on 29 October 1914,¹⁷
 Beyers referred to "de goddeloze inval van Duits Zuidwest".¹⁸
 De Wet, too, repeatedly referred to the "goddeloze oorlog".¹⁹
 It was claimed that the Bible denounced any invasion of foreign
 territory. But of course "onze eervolle --- volkstradisies"
 were not entirely free of that stigma. To mention two instances:
 in 1880-1881 and in 1899-1902 Boer generals had had no qualms
 about invading British territory. The crux of the matter was
 really the fact that the invasion of South-West Africa was being
 undertaken at the request of the British Government, and that
 the enemy was Germany, who in the minds of many Afrikaners had
 the reputation of having done much to help the Boers in the past.¹⁹

Christiaan De Wet appears to have been the only one of the
 'Protest' Committee to have carried out the intentions of the
 Committee to organise further protest meetings. The first of
 these was held at Kopjes, in the Free State, between Kroonstad
 and Vereeniging, on 23 September. The Government knew of that
 meeting and sent the Magistrate of Heilbron with a telegram
 which contained the message that there would be no commandeering
 for the South-West Africa Campaign - only volunteers would be
 used.²⁰ The Magistrate read the telegram to the meeting and

17. See **Below**, p. 178.

18. Kestell, pp. 183-184; S.C. 1-15, p. 223. Also see Kemp, p. 201.

19. Although that view of a sympathetic Germany was not really
 in accordance with the facts, it was nevertheless, widely
 held. In his evidence before the Select Committee, Hertzog
 in analysing the reasons for the outbreak of the Rebellion,
 stated: "The one (reason) was that during the war (The
 Anglo-Boer War) the Germans had done everything to assist
 our people --- and after the war in alleviating distress".
 S.C. 1-15, p. 223; Also see Scholtz (b), pp. 108-110.

20. A.G.H. Daller. Daller stated that he went to the meeting
 on his own accord. U.G. 42-16, pp. 294-295. That is
 doubtful, since obviously the Government sent him the
 telegram with the intention that its contents should be
 revealed to those who were opposed to the S.W.A. Campaign.

distributed copies of it, but it did not achieve its desired object. De Wet expressed the distrust felt by many Afrikaners that even if the Government only used volunteers at the start of the campaign and if that force suffered setbacks leading to a German invasion of the Union, then the Government would be forced to commandeer troops to defend the country.²¹

After a subsequent meeting of his had been broken up at Potchefstroom on 2 October,²² De Wet and Kemp decided to call together the Committee which had been elected at Lichtenburg to discuss their further plan of action, since the Government had not replied to their Lichtenburg resolution.²³ A Committee meeting was planned to be held at kopjes on 13 October.²⁴

Beyers had not taken any part in addressing protest meetings as he held the view that his resignation was sufficient protest.²⁵ He did, however, agree to speak at a function to be held in the Opera House, Pretoria on the evening of 10 October in memory of Paul Kruger's birthday. That function had been

21. Kemp, p. 203.

22. Webb, p. 48; Kestell, pp. 184-190; U.G. 46-16, p. 32. De Wet had also previously held meetings at Klerksdorp, Heilbron and Vrede. See Webb, p. 47.

23. There seems to be no valid reason why the Government did not reply to the resolution. The Judicial Commission in their report commented: "-- it is much to be regretted that some reply pointing out the impossibility of such compliance was not given" (U.G. 46-16, p. 31.) When Botha was questioned about the matter he stated: "It was a monstrous resolution. Parliament met and passed an almost unanimous vote in favour of the Government's policy. It was impossible to reply to a thing like that". U.G. 42-16, p. 360.

24. As the original Committee had been given the power to co-opt others on to the Committee a number of other Afrikaners, P. Grobler, Fouche, Rev. Vorster, A.P. Bezuidenhout, Jacques Fienaar, Rev. Van Broekhuizen and Van Veijeren were invited to serve on the Committee. Kemp, p. 204; Kestell, p. 190.

25. He expressed that view in a letter to Hertzog on 26 Sept. He also subsequently expressed that view to his friend, Rev. Naude. Oost, p. 166; Scholtz (a), p. 335.

arranged in July already and was to take the form of a sacred concert and was organised by the Christelike Jongeliede Vereeniging, under the Chairmanship of Rev.H.D. Van Broekhuizen. Assurances were given that it would not be a political meeting. Nevertheless it was considered in that light by many Government supporters.²⁶ The known views of Beyers and Van Broekhuizen, Beyers's resignation and the subsequent suspicious events leading up to De La Rey's death, together with the state of tension existing in the country as a result of Allied defeats in Europe, made the occasion a provocative one.

A large section of the crowd at the meeting was comprised of hostile elements. Beyers was to be the only speaker, the rest of the programme being of a cultural-religious nature. The programme had hardly started when a large Union Jack was lowered from the gallery; "God Save the King" and "Rule Britannia" were sung. At interval Major Trew appeared on the platform and urged the unruly elements to grant the speaker a hearing; again it was promised that no political views would be expressed. When Beyers rose to speak, however, the platform was bombarded with eggs and tomatoes and he was greeted with the epithets of "traitor" and "coward". The reaction now set in: the old republican anthems were sung by the Afrikaners in the audience and violent fist-fights started. At length the Police succeeded in dispersing the unruly elements and Beyers made his speech. A hostile mob had, however, gathered outside the building and when Beyers and Van Broekhuizen left under police protection, stones were thrown and the tyres of Beyers's car were slashed.²⁷

26. Van Broekhuizen's political views were well known. On 13 September (i.e. the day after Parliament had approved of the S.W.A. Campaign), Van Broekhuizen preached a sermon on the text "Trekt niet op --" and **attacked** the Government's war policy. Oost, p. 168.

27. Trew, pp. 21-24; Oost, pp. 168-173; S.C. 1-15, pp. 206-207, pp. 325-326; U.G. 46-16, p. 33; Webb, pp. 48-49; Scholtz (a), pp. 340-342.

Many Afrikaners were understandably deeply shocked and incensed at those occurrences.²⁸ It must be admitted, however, that in the prevailing circumstances, any meeting addressed by Beyers was bound to be a provocative occasion. It was also not entirely true that the meeting was to be non-political. A section of Beyers's speech, prepared before he knew that there would be unruly elements in the audience, was in fact a²⁹ thinly veiled attack on the Government's War policy.

The prevailing tension was immeasurably heightened when on Monday 12 October the Government released the news that Maritz had gone into open rebellion on 9 October, and had joined the German forces with practically all his men.

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28. 'Jopie' Fourie, the only rebel to subsequently receive the death sentence, referred to those events of 10 October, as one of the reasons for his going into rebellion, when he spoke at his Court-Martial in December 1914.
29. Referring to Kruger, Beyers said: "Hij wist dat om met sukses een oorlog te voeren was het eerste vereischte het moet rechtvaardig en populair zijn ---. Het Volk moes t verklaren of het recht was en of zijn hart daarin was. De Volkswil moet de koningstem blijven van een land, alles moet daarvoor buigen, dat is een ingeschapen volksrecht het welk niet verkracht mocht worden --- "
- Scholtz (a), p. 340.

CHAPTER VI.THE MARITZ REBELLION.

Maritz, who had originally intended that Beyers and the German Governor should finalise arrangements for the rebellion¹ on 15 September, had realised even before De La Rey's death that that plan would have to be modified. He then, according to his own account, expected that the rebellion would start in the Transvaal and Free State on 15 September; instead he received² news of De La Rey's death. His subsequent hope, that De La Rey's funeral would be the occasion for the rebellion to be launched,³ was also disappointed. Maritz, it would appear, was not very well informed of the situation in the Union in the latter half of September. According to one source, the only information he received of the intentions of his fellow-conspirators in the two Northern Provinces, were messages from Joubert and others, that he was not to start the rebellion, at any rate he was not⁴ to start it yet. In addition it would appear that apart from leaving a message at Nakob informing the Germans that their plans were not yet in order, Maritz had no further communication with the Germans (before 7 October). He was awaiting developments in the Union.

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1. When it became apparent that Beyers did not intend to come to the frontier and when he summoned Maritz or Joubert to Pretoria (on September 11) - See above, pp. 94-95.
 2. See Above p. 115.
 3. See Above pp. 115-117.
 4. See Oost, p. 71. " --- Maritz se afgesante Joubertjie, Ben Nel en Lev. Maritz kom almal met berigte van Generaal Beyers en ander leiers: moenie; moet in elk geval nie nou nie. Chris Muller het hom in 'n telegram met bedekte woorde dieselfde advies gegee".

Maritz had left his headquarters at Calvinia on 6 September⁵ to take command of the training camps at Upington and Kakamas. The troops at Upington were mostly members of the Active Citizen Force; the troops at Kakamas, under Stadler's command, were mostly volunteers. Altogether there were about 1,100 troops⁶ in the two camps, the vast majority of whom were not volunteers, but Active Citizen Force trainees.⁷

On 23 September, Maritz received the following telegram from Smuts:

"Minister wants to know if you can move strong force to Schuitedrift from Kakamas and advance Upington force towards border in direction of Ukamas. He thinks it might then be possible⁸ for you to cooperate with Lukin in march to Warmbad".⁹

That message, on the face of things, was a clear order to Maritz to invade German South-West Africa with the forces at his disposal. On the same day as Smuts sent that telegram to Maritz, the Government, it will be recalled, had sent a message to the Kopjes meeting, promising that only volunteers would be used for the South-West African Campaign.¹⁰ But, as has been

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5. Upington, the chief settlement of the Gordonia District, was about ninety miles from the frontier. Kakamas was about fifty miles South-West of Upington.
 6. Oost, p. 66. According to him there were 1,127 White troops in addition to 204 African servants in the two camps. His figures appear to be substantially correct. According to the official figures 1,059 men went into rebellion with Maritz (U.G. 46-16, Annexure N; South Africa and the War, p. 25) and 60 refused and were arrested.
 7. According to one of the A.C.F. lieutenants under Maritz, Stadler at Kakamas had raised a volunteer force of about 150 men, and about 200 of Maritz's men were volunteers - the rest belonged to the Active Citizen Force. U.G. 42-16 pp. 7-8 (Evidence of D.P. Rousseau).
 8. Brigadier-General T. Lukin, in command of Force A, was to cross the Orange River and march on Warmbad in South West Africa. U.G. 10-15, p. 22; U.G. 46-16, p. 7. See below pp. 130-131.
 9. U.G. 10-15, p. 22; Maritz, p. 71.
 10. See Above, p. 123.

shown, only a small proportion of Maritz's force consisted of volunteers. So on the same day as the Government had made a special effort to reiterate their promise that only volunteers would be used, they ordered a non-volunteer force across the border.

Both Botha and Smuts attempted to explain that apparent duplicity after the Rebellion had taken place. In June 1915, at General De Wet's trial, Smuts was questioned about the matter and his explanation was that on 21 September he had received information that Maritz was negotiating with the Germans and that his telegram of 23 September was sent with the intention of putting Maritz to the test.¹¹ On a subsequent occasion, in reply to a question at a political meeting, Smuts stated that it was not his intention to send Maritz over the border.¹²

When Botha gave evidence before the Commission of Inquiry, in 1916, he was asked: "Is it not somewhat inconsistent - this telegraphic instruction and the decision to employ only volunteers?¹³ If Maritz had gone off like that to co-operate with Lukin it would have meant taking people who were not volunteers."¹³

Botha replied as follows: "I saw the wire in question. It was sent at the same time as the notice was sent round that volunteers were to be used. But the position in regard to Maritz was this: Maritz would not do anything and would not hand his command over to any other officer we sent. We sent¹⁴ Enslin there, but we could get nothing done by Maritz, and our information was to the effect that he was in communication

11. The Star, 15.6.1915.

12. Webb, p. 52.

13. U.G. 42-16, p. 362.

14. Major B.G.L. Enslin, see below pp. 134-135.

with the Germans. Still we did not know the full position and as Maritz would not carry out our instructions, Smuts wanted him to move away so as to find out what he was going to do, and to make him show his hand as it were. It was not seriously intended or expected that Maritz would be able to be of effective assistance in the direction indicated. It was just to test the genuineness of the man. We had already sent Enslin and Brits¹⁵ to tell Maritz to come back so that we could discharge the lads to their homes --- . Smuts sent this telegram off in order to see whether Maritz was willing to make a demonstration towards the border. But he could not have reached Warmbad under a month or more and in the meantime we had arranged things up here in order to send the commandoes of volunteers and we had already dismissed the men called¹⁶ together for the training camps."

When Botha was again asked : "Then you do not think Maritz could by any possibility have assisted Lukin?", he replied: "I do not think he could have assisted in two or three days. He might possibly have done something in a week's time. Maritz had not gone into open rebellion then; at that moment he was not ready for it and we considered it wise to send that message¹⁷ in order to make him move one way or another."

Botha's reply contained a number of inaccuracies. Botha stated: "We sent Enslin there but could get nothing done by Maritz"¹⁸. But Enslin only arrived at Upington on 26 September; the telegram in question was sent on 23 September. Nor is there any evidence that Maritz had refused to obey instructions from

15. Colonel Coenraad Jacobus Brits.

16. U.G. 42-16, pp. 362 - 363 (Botha's Evidence).

17. Ibid.

18. See below. pp. 134 - 135.

19

headquarters before 23 September. It was also not true that Maritz had refused to hand over his command to any other officer at the time that the telegram was sent - no such instructions were issued to Maritz before 23 September. Botha, too, apparently contradicted himself: he first stated that Maritz could not have reached Warmbad in under a month; then when he was again questioned about the matter, he asserted that it may have been possible for Maritz to have done something in a week's time.

20

In addition, Botha omitted to mention the fact that originally it had been the intention of the military authorities that Maritz's force should play a vital part in the South-West African Campaign. On 21 August, Smuts and his military advisers had decided on the composition of the invading army:

Force A would be commanded by Brigadier Lukin.

Force B would be commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Maritz.

Forces C and D would be commanded by Brigadier-General

21

Duncan Mackenzie.

22

According to one authoritative source, it was the intention that Maritz's Force B would supplement Lukin's Force A, which

19. According to Kemp, Maritz had received a prior instruction from Smuts on 19 September: "Trek vorentoe met die sterkste magte waaroor jy beskik om dekking te gee vir Kakamas, Keimoes en Upington. Hou die vyand soveel moontlik tee wat uit die rigting van Schuitdrift of Nakob kom. Met die oog op die feit dat Lukin met 2,500 man intrek is dit onwaarskynlik dat die vyand magte van enige betekenis in die Unie kan stuur, want dan sou hulle Lukin in die flank en rug hê. Jy moet probeer om deur middel van rapportryers en naturelle in voeling met Lukin te kom". Maritz replied (according to Kemp): "Ek sal u bevele uitvoer". Kemp, pp. 216-217.

20. Maritz told Oost that he could have reached Warmbad in three days time. Oost, p. 177.

21. U.G. 46-16, p.7; U.G. 42-16, p.134; Kemp, p.151.

22. Colonel M.C. Rowland, acting-Secretary for Defence in 1914.

was to attack the Southern border of South-West Africa from
 Port Nolloth.²³

There is some doubt as to whether the Government originally intended Maritz's Force B to be entirely a volunteer force or not. Major B.G.L. Enslin told the Commission of Inquiry:

" --- so far as I know it was the intention that volunteers should be asked out of Maritz's force to join the expeditionary force, but this was never done".²⁴ When Botha was questioned about Enslin's statement, he replied:

"I had very little to do with those matters myself. They were mostly in the hands of General Smuts. There may have been some such arrangements - I do not know".²⁵ The vagueness of Botha's reply is somewhat surprising. While it was obviously not to be expected that he would have been conversant with all the military details of the campaign, this was surely more than just a routine matter. Botha had given repeated assurances that only volunteers would be used for the expedition, and in having given those assurances it should have been incumbent upon him to ensure that they were not contradicted in any way by the Government's actions.

According to another source it would appear that Maritz's Force was to be mainly comprised of Active Citizen Force men, supplemented by

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23. U.G. 42-16, p. 133 (Rowland's Evidence); Also see S.C. 1-15, p. 345 (Baker's Evidence).
 24. U.G. 42-16, p. 145 (Enslin's Evidence). According to Enslin the reason why it was not done was that "the position was painted so black by Maritz that it would have been very difficult to get volunteers at all".
 25. U.G. 42-16, p. 366.

26

supplemented by volunteers.

But whatever the plan was, it is clear that Maritz's force on 23 September, when he was ordered to cross the border was not entirely, or even mainly, a volunteer force.

If the statements of Botha and Smuts that they were merely testing Maritz and that they did not intend him to cross the border are to be fully accepted, then it must be assumed that Maritz's force had been relieved of its original task.²⁷ Botha implied that that was the case.²⁸ But was it, in fact, so? According to Buxton, Maritz was ordered to advance in order to co-operate with the Southern Force in its advance against German South-West Africa, and indeed Buxton attributed the defeat of a detachment of the Southern Force at Sandfontein on 26 September largely to the fact that Maritz had not supported them as he had been instructed to do.²⁹

26. Ibid., pp. 132-133 (Colonel M.C. Rowland's Evidence) "Maritz had to mobilise 1,000 men - but it was very uncertain how many Active Citizen Force men were to come in. If there were not sufficient Active Citizen Force men he had to get volunteers to supplement them". In fact one is driven to the conclusion that the question of using volunteers or commandeered troops only became a live issue after De La Rey's death, when the Government became aware of the volume of opposition to the campaign. Certainly some people were commandeered for service in South-West Africa before 15 September. See U.G. 42-16, p. 139. Botha stated: "There may have been some Commandants who commandeered the people before Maritz's rebellion- but not that I know of". U.G. 42-16, p. 360.
27. To supplement Lukin's Southern Force.
28. U.G. 42-16, p. 363. "-- we had arranged things up here in order to send the commandoes of volunteers and we had already dismissed the men called together for the training camps". There is no other evidence that the men in Maritz' training camp had been dismissed.
29. Buxton, pp. 53-54. The authors of the Official South African War history, also believed that Maritz's force was intended to be part of the invasion force. Commenting on Maritz's subsequent rebellion, they stated: "Instead of being a component in the outward acting force directed against the enemy, it had swung round in a menacing way --- We may now compare the situation to three cables that had been arranged to sustain a heavy weight, when -- one of the cables broke high up and falling on the weight added to what the remaining two had to sustain. (The three 'cables' referred to were the forces under the command of Lukin, Maritz and Duncan-Mackenzie). South Africa and the War. p. 13.

The crux of the matter, however, was that if Maritz obeyed Smuts's instructions and crossed the border, it would have meant that contrary to the solemn assurances made by the Government a non-volunteer force would have been committed to participation in the South-West African Campaign. How could Smuts be sure that Maritz would not obey his instructions? The Government had, it is true, received disquieting reports from various sources about Maritz's intentions, but they had no definite information. That Botha and Smuts were suspicious of Maritz's intentions cannot be doubted, and up to a point their explanations can be accepted. But it would appear, that if their suspicions were unfounded, they still intended Maritz's force to fulfil its pre-ordained task, regardless of the fact that that entailed a violation of the Government's promises in connection with volunteers. That course of action was hazardous in the extreme, for not only did it jeopardize Lukin's Southern Force if Maritz was disloyal, but it also meant, whether Maritz was loyal or disloyal, that if their instructions to Maritz became known,³⁰ the prevailing tension, and distrust of the Government's policies in the Union, would be greatly increased.

Smuts's instructions to Maritz to advance across the border placed him in a quandary. His agreement with the Germans had been cancelled on 20 September and he had had no further communications with them. He had also received no further news of the progress of the rebel cause in the Transvaal and Orange Free State. After considering the matter for two days he sent a telegram to Smuts on 25 September. It was, said

30. It soon did become known in the Union that on the very day that the Government had promised that they would only use volunteers, they had ordered Maritz's non-volunteer force to cross the border. Maritz sent his wife to Hertzog with copies of his correspondence with Smuts. Hertzog showed the correspondence to Steyn and Christiaan De Wet. See below pp. 139, 155.

Maritz, ridiculous ('belachelik') to suppose that he could trek to Schuitdrift with a large force, as Smuts knew that he did not even have all the requirements to equip his men. He asserted that the majority of his men were untrained and that it was quite out of the question for him to advance on the Germans, of whom, he said, it was rumoured that there were 3,000 well-equipped troops at Ukamas. He stated that he only had three machine guns, and his machine-gun detachment were under the command of two English-speaking lieutenants, who were, Maritz maintained, not capable of dealing with the enemy.³² He went on to state that he had warned Smuts while he was in Pretoria, that the public would refuse to countenance an invasion of South-West Africa. All his Active Citizen Force and 'Schietvereniging' officers would resign if he ordered them across the border. He stressed the fact that both Botha and Smuts had assured him that only volunteers would be used for the campaign, and that that assurance had been repeated in a circular telegram on 21 September. The best advice he could give the Government was to reconsider their decision to invade South-West Africa. He promised to support the Government on the Union side of the frontier and stated that he would advance in the direction of Ukamas for defensive purposes, but that he refused to cross the border. If the Government refused to reconsider their instructions he wished to resign his commission.³³

Smuts seemed to have anticipated Maritz's refusal to cross the border, for before he received his reply, he sent Major B.G.L. Enslin and Captain P.E. Erasmus to Maritz, nominally to

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31. See U.G. 42-16, p. 145. Enslin told the Commission of Inquiry that Maritz had no guns except Maxims. He stated: "They were certainly badly equipped in regard to guns."
32. Maritz put in stronger than that: "Twee Engelse luitenantjke die mij schijnt schaars hun broek te kunnen vast maken."
33. U.G. 10-15, p. 20; Maritz, p. 73.

serve on his staff, but actually to investigate and report on the state of affairs existing in Maritz's camp. Enslin was informed that Maritz would probably follow the example set by Beyers and that he would resign; in that case Enslin was to take command of his force.³⁴ Maritz was under no illusion as to the real reason for Enslin's appointment but he does not initially seem to have suspected Erasmus.³⁵ According to Enslin, he and Erasmus then evolved the following plan: "Erasmus was to bring Maritz under the impression that he sympathised with him and that he was dissatisfied with the Government. On the other hand I was to play open cards with Maritz."³⁶

Enslin sent his first report to Smuts on 28 September. He stated that Maritz and his officers were prepared to defend the Union, but he was convinced that under no circumstances would they cross the border. He considered the situation to be critical and recommended that 2,000 experienced troops should be sent up to the border; when they arrived at Upington, men from Maritz's force should be asked to volunteer for the South-West African Campaign.³⁷ He recommended that Colonel Coen Brits should be placed in command of the new force.³⁸ Under no circumstances should Maritz's resignation be accepted before the arrival of additional troops; Enslin considered that the Germans would learn of that and that they would then launch an attack on the Union. Enslin stated that Maritz believed that

34. U.G. 42-16, p. 144 (Enslin's Evidence).

35. Maritz, p. 71.

36. U.G. 42-16, p. 145; Also see U.G. 42-16, p. 262 (Erasmus's Evidence).

37. That confirms the view that the Government intended to send Maritz's force across the border and that they had not made any provision for a substitute force.

38. Enslin was of the opinion that the appointment of Brits would make a good impression on the local inhabitants.

an attack on South-West Africa by South African non-volunteer troops would probably lead to civil war in the Union; he had, however, no justification for believing that Maritz would fight for the Germans. In addition Enslin asked for further instructions.³⁹

Smuts reacted to that information by sending two telegrams. The one to Maritz ordered him to temporarily hand over his command to Enslin and instructed him to come to Pretoria immediately.⁴⁰ The one to Enslin informed him of the instruction which had been sent to Maritz and that he was to assume command of Maritz's force until other arrangements had been made. If Kakamas were attacked by the Germans he was to fall back on Upington and defend it as best he could. Reinforcements in the form of the Durban Light Infantry and the Imperial Light Horse⁴¹ would be sent as soon as possible.

In the meanwhile Enslin and Erasmus put their plan into operation, and after Erasmus had won Maritz's confidence, Maritz told him of his negotiations with the Germans and showed him⁴² an agreement which he had drawn up with the German authorities. Enslin immediately sent a telegram to Smuts informing him that the situation was critical and that a disaster could be expected if Maritz's resignation were accepted, although he did not specifically inform Smuts of Maritz's negotiations with the Germans. He suggested that either he or Erasmus should be⁴³ summoned to Pretoria on some pretext.

That telegram of Enslin was sent before he had received Smuts

39. U.G. 10-15, p. 20; U.G. 46-16, Annexure Q, p. 137.

40. U.G. 10-15, p. 20; U.G. 46-16, Annexure Q, p. 137.

41. U.G. 10-15, p. 20 ; U.G. 46-16, Annexure Q, p. 137.

42. U.G. 42-16, pp. 263-264 (Erasmus's Evidence). That must have been the agreement which the German authorities had repudiated on 20 September. There is no evidence that any fresh agreement had been drawn up at that time (28 September).

43. U.G. 10-15, p. 21; U.G. 46-16, Annexure Q, p. 137.

telegram informing him that Maritz had been ordered to hand over his command and that reinforcements were being sent to Upington. Smuts, on receipt of Enslin's telegram, sent a message to him on the 29th, asking if his (Smuts's) earlier telegram had not altered Enslin's opinion. He wanted to know if Enslin still considered it advisable to keep Maritz in command of the ⁴⁴force.

Enslin, in his telegram sent on the same day, did not reply directly to Smuts's queries, but he informed him of the fact that Maritz had told Erasmus of his negotiations with the Germans. He stated that he believed that Maritz had treasonable ⁴⁵intentions.

Erasmus was then summoned to Pretoria on the pretext that his wife was seriously ill. In addition Smuts ordered all ⁴⁶available forces to advance on Upington.

Any hopes that Smuts still had that the situation could be retrieved by Maritz coming to Pretoria, were dashed when Maritz informed him on the 29th that it was impossible for him to hand over his command to Enslin as "matters will certainly go wrong". He also requested that he be given a definite answer ⁴⁷to his telegram of the 25th.

But Smuts, acting on a further message from Enslin, reiterating that no definite action should be taken in connection with Maritz's resignation until reinforcements had arrived at Upington, did not immediately accept Maritz's resignation. Instead he informed him on the 29th that it was necessary for him to come to Pretoria to discuss the matter. Smuts stated

⁴⁴. U.G. 10-15, p. 21; U.G. 46-16 Annexure C, p. 138.

⁴⁵. U.G. 10-15, p. 21; U.G. 46-16 Annexure C, p. 138.

⁴⁶. U.G. 42-16, p. 263 (Erasmus's Evidence)

⁴⁷. U.G. 10-15, p. 21.

that he considered it to be quite safe for Maritz to hand over his command to Enslin. Maritz was also informed that reinforcements were on their way to Upington.⁴⁸

Maritz, aware now that troops were being sent to Upington and still not having received any confirmation that his resignation had been accepted, was driven to send an extremely insolent telegram to the Minister of Defence on 2 October. He stated that he did not believe that it was necessary to discuss the matter any further as he had already informed Smuts of his attitude and what the consequences of the Government's actions would be. As far as the safety of his handing over his command to Enslin was concerned, he stated that his view was that Smuts knew as little of that matter as he knew of his own affairs.⁴⁹ He further stated that to defend his position he had no need for reinforcements. He once again referred Smuts to his telegram of the 25th and requested him to carefully consider it.⁵⁰

Smuts, on the same date, reacted to Maritz's telegram by informing him that Colonel Wylie was coming to Upington to take over the command of the Durban Light Infantry and the Imperial Light Horse. Although Wylie was to co-operate with Maritz in defending the Upington-Kakamas District, his was to be an independent command. Smuts informed Maritz that he hoped to give him an answer to his telegram of the 25th within two days.⁵¹ What Maritz was not told was that Wylie had been given the authority to arrest him if he deemed it necessary.⁵²

48. U.G. 10-15, p. 21.

49. "Re veiligheid van mijn bevel aan Majoor Enslin te overhandigen beschouw ik dat u er net zo min van weet als van de toestand van eigen zaken."

50. U.G. 10-15, pp. 21-22.

51. Ibid, p. 21.

52. U.G. 46-16, p. 138.

Maritz, nevertheless, realised that his position was desperate. He had by his insolent telegrams to the Minister of Defence, burnt his own boats and had placed Smuts in a strong position. He had made no further agreement with the Germans and he had no idea of the situation in the Union. He knew that Government troops were on their way to Upington and Smuts had still not informed him whether his resignation had been accepted or not. He decided therefore to abandon his passive attitude and to take action.

On 2 October he sent his wife to General Hertzog in Bloemfontein with copies of his correspondence with Smuts. On the same day he moved his force to Van Rooisvlei, twenty-five miles West of Upington and nearer the South-West African frontier. His negotiations with the Germans and thoughts of rebellion apart, Maritz knew that he had been guilty of gross insubordination and was liable to be arrested if he remained at Upington.

Enslin did not accompany the force, but stayed behind at Upington on the pretext that he had to see to the commissariat arrangements. He informed Smuts of the fact that Maritz and his force had left Upington, but stated that he was uncertain of his intentions. Although he regarded the move as suspicious, he thought that it may have been prompted by a belief on Maritz's part that it would clear him of the charge of disobeying

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53. Apparently Maritz had communicated with Beyers, immediately after he had been ordered across the frontier, and had asked him what he should do. Beyers telegraphed him stating that he had resigned and now it was a matter for every man to decide for himself. Beyers told his fellow rebels of those communications on 1.12.1914. Boshoff (a), p.44.
54. Maritz, p.73. "Iets moes ek doen; wag kon ek nie langer nie. Die Unie-troepe was aan optrek."
55. Ibid., pp. 73-74.
56. Ibid., p. 77.
57. According to Maritz, his wife on her way to Prieska was informed by one of Colonel Brits's Officers that they were moving forward with the intention of capturing Maritz. Ibid., p. 73.

orders. Enslin, nevertheless warned Lieutenant Freer, who was in charge of the Maxim section, to be on his guard.⁵⁸

But in fact Maritz had not moved away from Upington to give the Government the impression that he was obeying orders; nor indeed was he merely taking evasive action. He reached Van Rooisvlei on 4 October and on 7 October he again contacted the German authorities.

P.J.Joubert and H.Bergmann, two of Maritz's officers who were in his confidence, went to Nakob where they met the two De Wets and about fifty troops of the Afrikaner Vrykorps;⁵⁹ apparently they were not expected and were nearly shot.⁶⁰ Andries De Wet, after hearing that they had been sent by Maritz, immediately informed Von Zastrouw, the Magistrate of Grootfontein⁶¹ and Von Heydebreck the Commander-in-Chief of the German forces, both of whom were at Ukamas. Maritz, who had sent his two officers ahead, was then summoned, and he met the German Official at Ukamas on 7 October. Von Heydebreck, who had been reluctant to enter into the original agreement with Maritz,⁶² clearly still distrusted him. Piet De Wet, whose brother, Andries, was present at the meeting, made the following statement to the Commission of Inquiry: "My brother told me that Maritz told Von Heydebreck that if he wanted to resist the Government he must have rifles and guns and he asked whether the Government

58. U.G. 10-15, p.22; U.G. 46-16, Annexure Q, p. 139.

59. Andries and Piet De Wet.

60. A force which the German authorities had recruited from the Afrikaners living in South-West Africa.

61. Oost, p. 75.

62. After the Germans had not received any news from Maritz on 15 September, Von Zastrouw had been instructed to stay near the border to represent the German Governor in any future possible negotiations with Maritz.

63. See above, p. 90.

could supply him with these - Von Heydebreck then said: 'Maritz you are a British officer really and therefore our enemy at the present time. You cannot expect me to supply you with rifles and guns in view of that fact'. Maritz then got angry and said: 'If you do not trust me you should take me prisoner then. If you consider me an enemy, arrest me.' Von Heydebreck then altered his tone, so I understand and decided that a certain Lieutenant-Colonel Hausdenk (Hauszding) should go with us with four guns, and two machine guns, in command of my brother and he was to join Maritz at Van Rooyensvlei (Van Rooisvlei), but he had strict orders --- that if anything went wrong -- to return immediately with the guns over the border. Maritz then went back with his motor-car and we followed the night after with the guns and the Vrykorps⁶⁴".

An agreement had also been drawn up but apparently Maritz did not sign it as he considered that he did not have the authority to do so - he wanted some more responsible person to sign it.⁶⁵ In the agreement Maritz proclaimed the independence of South Africa and announced his intention of fighting against England. The Germans for their part, promised to recognise all Afrikaner forces fighting against England and promised that they would support them after further negotiations had taken place. If all or part of British South Africa were declared independent, the Governor of South-West Africa would do his utmost to obtain recognition for it from the Imperial German Government. In return for their services, the Germans were to obtain Walvis Bay and the off-shore islands. The middle of the Orange River would be the boundary between South-West Africa and the Cape.

64. U.G. 42-16, p. 76 (P.De Wet's Evidence); Also see: Oelhafen, p.50; Oost, pp 75-77; Scholtz (b), pp.136-137.

65. Oost, p. 78. It will be recalled that Maritz had wanted Beyers to come to the border for that purpose on 15 September.

Germany would not object if the Boer State or States annexed Delagoa Bay. If the rebellion failed, the rebels were promised sanctuary in South-West Africa, and they would be treated as German subjects.

When he returned to Van Rooisvlei on 8 October, Maritz found Major J.G.W. Leipoldt, an emissary from Colonel Coen Brits, awaiting him. Leipoldt had been sent to Maritz to discover his intentions and to induce him to hand over his command to Colonel B.D. Bouwer. Maritz then showed Leipoldt his correspondence with the German authorities and also showed him the agreement. He also told Leipoldt that he was acting on his own; no other people were involved. He once again asked for his resignation to be accepted and he told him that if it were accepted he would return to his farm in the Free State - according to Leipoldt, Maritz said that he would only follow that course if he got his resignation accepted in time; he said it had to be in time. Leipoldt then returned to Upington.

On 9 October, the force from Kakamas, under Stadler arrived at Van Rooisvlei. Maritz then summoned all the units for a meeting. The Maxim section, consisting mostly of English-speaking troops, were placed in the centre and disarmed. Maritz then addressed the troops. He told them of the instructions he had received to invade South-West Africa and that he had refused

66. U.G. 10-15, p. 64; Maritz, pp. 187-188.

67. S.C. 1-15, p. 114. (Leipoldt's Evidence); Maritz, p. 77. According to Maritz, he told his men of Brits's message and said that they could return to Upington if they wished - they all said they wished to stay with him. There is no verification of that and it seems unlikely that that was so.

68. According to Leipoldt, the agreement which Maritz showed him was the one which Seitz had repudiated on 20 September. S.C. 1-15, p. 137.

69. S.C. 1-15, pp. 114-119. It is not clear what Maritz meant by 'in time'. Did he mean before the German guns and troop arrived? Or before he went into rebellion?

to obey those instructions. To confirm his statements in that connection he read his correspondence with Smuts. He then delivered a violent tirade against the policies of Botha and Smuts and told his men of his agreement with the Germans. He justified his attitude by stating that he wished to fight for an independent South Africa. The Transvaal and Free State were behind him, he said, because he had arranged matters with⁷⁰ Generals Hertzog, Beyers and De Wet. The last time he saw Beyers, Beyers had expressed wholehearted support for his schemes. He concluded by removing his insignia of rank, because he said he wanted to fight as an ordinary burgher for the freedom of his country. He realised that his proposed course of action was a dangerous one, and he had a wife and two children whom he loved dearly, but his country came before them. With tears streaming down his cheeks, he stepped down and gave his men one minute to decide whether they would follow him or not. About sixty men refused and they were arrested.⁷¹ According to some witnesses some of the prisoners told Maritz: "It is a low trick that you have played us, not giving us a chance to defend ourselves with our Maxims."

Maritz, greatly irritated, replied: "Man, do you think I fear a Maxim? I do not fear hell, much less a Maxim, but I will give you a chance to get even with me. I challenge anyone of you to a revolver duel."⁷² None of the prisoners accepted that

70. According to some accounts he also mentioned Steyn's and De La Rey's names. He was definitely misleading his men in stating that Hertzog and Steyn supported his plans. There is no evidence that either of them even knew of his plans. As far as the others were concerned it seems likely that they had supported his original scheme, but there is no evidence that they knew of his intention to rebel in October.

71. S.C. 1-15, Appendix K (Copy of Affidavit by Quartermaster-Sergeant S.J. Heynes, Sergeant-Major Naude, Sergeant A.W. Van Wyk and Sergeant D.R. Burger); Maritz, p. 78. (but he does not give a full description of those events); Oost, pp. 87-89; Scholtz (b), pp. 140-141; U.G. 46-16, pp. 22-23; U.G. 10-15, Appendix B, pp. 63-66.

72. S.C. 1-15, Appendix K. Also see Oost, pp. 85-86.

challenge and they were sent into German territory with an armed escort. The rebellion had begun.

It has been asserted that Maritz was forced into rebellion by the instructions to invade South-West Africa and by Smuts's subsequent ⁷³maladroit handling of the situation. How valid is that view?

In the first instance, it must be stressed that Maritz had made preparations to start a rebellion long before he was ⁷⁴ordered across the border. That rebellion which was supposed to have started on 15 September was still-born. The accidental death of De La Rey, the subsequent cautious attitude adopted by Maritz's fellow-conspirators and the repudiation of their agreement by the Germans, were all factors which had prevented the outbreak of rebellion in mid-September. There is, however, no evidence to suggest that Maritz had become averse to the idea of rebellion, and that he would not have co-operated with rebels in the Transvaal and Free State if he had received instructions to do so. He did, nevertheless adopt a passive, waiting attitude after De La Rey's death. When he received Smuts's telegram on 23 September he was forced to abandon that attitude. But it does not seem likely that he was contemplating rebellion when he replied to Smuts on 25 September. If he were what purpose would have been achieved by his insolent telegram? It would have been far better from his point of view (if he

73. See Oost, pp. 82-83. "Om Maritz sy straf nie te laat ontgaan nie, is die Afrikanervolk in 'n burgeroorlog gestort en ook die imperiale belange in die weegskaal gegooi." Also see Scholtz (b) p.129. "--- Met 'n onverbidlikheid wat aan hom eie is het hy (Smuts) daarop begin aanstuur dat Genl.Maritz tot 'n daad moes oorgaan waarvoor hy hom kon pak Genl.Smuts het miskien nie kon dink dat Genl.Maritz tot openlike rebellie sou oorgaan nie, maar hy het ten minste gehoop dat Genl.Maritz iets sou doen waardeur hy vir die een of ander oortreding gearresteer kon word."

74. See Above, pp.81-90. Indeed, he had made an attempt to draw up an agreement with the Germans even before the outbreak of war. See Above, pp.67-68.

were contemplating rebellion) to have attempted to deceive Smuts by a policy of open obedience coupled with secret betrayal.⁷⁵ But as no new plot had been fomented and as he was uncertain as to how he would be received by the Germans, such a scheme was out of the question. Maritz, after 15 September seems to have been content to wait until he received word from the Transvaal and Free State to start the rebellion. At the same time it would appear that his earlier negotiations with the Germans was by no means a closely guarded secret confined to a few trusted confidants.⁷⁶ When it became apparent to Maritz that Smuts was not only not prepared to immediately accede to his request to resign, but was in fact sending troops to Upington, his position which had been difficult before, now became virtually untenable. Maritz must have wondered: how much did Smuts know? Considered in that light there is no doubt that the instructions to invade South-West Africa, the despatch of additional troops to the border and the delay in granting him his resignation, forced Maritz to play his hand. Whether in due course he would have played it anyway, is another matter.

The resignation of Beyers, the death of De La Rey in suspicious circumstances, the attitude of the burghers at De La Rey's funeral and the disquieting reports received about Maritz, must have made it clear to the Government that there was more than just resentment to their war-policy. It would appear that the Inquiry into De La Rey's death had had a dual purpose: the Government had wished to exonerate themselves of all blame and they had also wished to discover what lay behind the events of 15 September.⁷⁷ From the Government's point of view neither

75. See Webb, p. 54.

76. Witness the various warnings which the Government received.

77. Advocate Van Hees told Oost that Advocate De Waal, appearing for the Government, tried with his examination of witnesses to discover everything in connection with Beyers's resignation and the purpose of the visit of the two generals to the military camp at Potchefstroom. Oost, p. 135.

object, particularly not the latter, had been fully achieved. Nevertheless to a man of Smuts's perspicacity the recent events must have provided if not an insight, at any rate a disturbing and tantalising glimpse of the smouldering fires beneath the surface. From the Government's point of view it was essential that those fires be located and extinguished immediately. No external military operations could be confidently undertaken before that object had been achieved; it would have been extremely hazardous to send the bulk of the loyal troops out of the Union while there was the possibility of internal disorder. To force Maritz to reveal his intentions and to throw light on the underground opposition, Smuts ordered Maritz across the border.

Oost and Scholtz both hold the view that if Smuts had accepted Maritz's resignation immediately, the Maritz Rebellion and possibly the Rebellion as a whole could have been avoided. To understand Smuts's handling of the situation it should be borne in mind that the earlier resignation of Beyers had been followed by alarming events; in any case the information which Smuts received from his agent in Upington predicted disaster if Maritz's resignation were immediately accepted. Whether the acceptance of Maritz's resignation could have prevented his rebellion, depends in the final instance as to whether one believes that under those circumstances he would have returned home and abandoned all thought of rebellion. Maritz told Leipoldt on 8 October that that was his intention if his resignation were granted⁷⁸ "in time". That that would have been the case is, of course, to say the least, extremely doubtful. Apart from anything else it would have entailed a violation, on Maritz's part, of the agreement with the Germans.⁷⁹

78. See above, p. 142. Also see Oost, p. 80.

79. Even though that agreement was apparently not signed, the Germans had already acted on it by sending guns to Maritz.

Nevertheless it does appear that even after he had drawn up the new agreement with the Germans on 7 October, Maritz was still unsure of his future course of action. On 10 October after Leipoldt had returned to Upington, Major B.D. Bouver arrived at Van Rooisvlei. He had been sent by Brits⁸⁰ to take over Maritz's command; he also brought Maritz his discharge. He was promptly arrested by Maritz and informed of the events of 9 October. Maritz told him of his reason for rebellion and showed him his agreement with the Germans. According to Bouver, Maritz made the following statement: "I want you now to return and explain everything you have seen here to the Government and to General Smuts ---. I would like them to send Generals Hertzog, Beyers, De Wet, Kemp and Muller to see me at Kakamas, because I would like to consult them. And whatever these officers advise me to do, I will do. I will follow their advice, whatever it is. If they tell me to lay down my arms and hand myself over to the Union Government, I will do it and the Government can do with me what it pleases." If his request were refused, Maritz stated that he would attack Upington and advance deeper into the Cape Province.⁸¹ Bouver was then given back his freedom⁸² and allowed to return to Upington.

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80. The arrangements made by the Government to deal with the situation in the Upington District were communicated to Enslin on 5 October. They were as follows: "Coenraad Jacobus Brits is being appointed Colonel ---. He will take over Command all Union forces in Upington and District including Wylie's command and will relieve Maritz. You will be his Chief Staff Officer. Major Bouver will take over command at present under Maritz when latter has been relieved by Colonel Brits." U.G. 46-16, Annexure Q, p.139.
81. Maritz wanted an assurance from the Government, that they would send one of the generals to see him, before 10 a.m. the following morning. If no assurance were received by that time, he would attack Brits's forces. It was in fact an ultimatum.
82. U.G. 42-16, pp. 38-39 (Bouver's Evidence).

Brits having received an account from Bouver about his visit to Van Rooisvlei, cabled Smuts on 10 October informing him of Maritz's rebellion and of his request to see the generals.⁸³ That was the first news the Government received of the Maritz Rebellion.

83. U.G. 10-15, p. 23.

C H A P T E R VII.

The Rebellion in the Transvaal and Free State.

On 11 October Botha sent a circular telegram to all Transvaal Commandants, informing them that Maritz had rebelled and that as he had threatened to attack the North-Western Districts of the Cape, Brits urgently needed help. For that reason the Government had decided to proclaim martial law and to commandeer troops to deal with the rebellion. Each Commandant was ordered to commandeer 100 men and to be ready by 15 October for further action. The commandeered men, were in the first instance, to come from those men who had volunteered to fight in South-West Africa and thereafter wherever possible from unmarried men and those who were the best and most willing fighting men. In the serious crisis which had arisen the Government expected every man to put all personal feelings aside and to co-operate with the Government.¹ Admittedly Maritz's act of rebellion was a serious matter, but were those measures necessary? Was it necessary for the Government to proclaim martial law and to commandeer troops? Maritz's rebellion was, after all, confined to one district of the North-Western Cape and the Government knew that he only had about 1,000 troops at his disposal. Surely Brits's force at Upington was powerful enough to deal with the rebels under Maritz.²

1. U.G. 10-15, p.26. Most of the commandeered men were Transvaalers. According to Hertzog, in the Free State people were commandeered but the moment they objected they were left in peace. S.C. 1-15, p. 291. According to one Free Stater who served with the Government forces throughout the rebellion, men who had been called up in the Free State were subsequently allowed to go home. His Commandant (one Naude) stated "-- that the Govt. forces were quite strong enough to deal with the rebels, But that we would not be so hard on the rebels as troops from overseas would be; therefore he considered our duty to the Rebels as well as to the Govt. to stay in the field. However all who were not willing to do their duty were at liberty to go home provided they left their guns and ammunition with him." A.R.Walker's Diary, November 5th.1914.

2. Subsequent events showed that Brits's force was quite powerful enough to defeat Maritz's force.

The fact of the matter was that the Government believed that Maritz's rebellion would have repercussions in other parts of the Union. The explanation for their action which the Cabinet gave the Governor-General substantiates this view. According to Duxton: "The Cabinet informed me that this step (the proclamation of martial law and the commandeering of troops) was rendered necessary by the dangerous state of affairs which was shown to exist as evidenced by the shameful treachery of Colonel Maritz combined with the previous resignation of General Beyers and Major Kemp. It seemed also that collusion existed at least between Maritz and these two officers and possibly between them and De Wet and others who had been publicly named by Maritz."³ Despite their earlier assurances in connection with volunteers, the Government intended the commandeered troops to cross the border if necessary. In fact those commandeered troops were used in the campaign against the Germans in South-West Africa once the rebellion had been crushed.⁵

3. Duxton, p. 55. My Emphasis.

4. U.C. 42-16, p. 360 (Botha's Evidence) "The men who were commandeered to fight Maritz would have to go over the border if Maritz crossed the border."

5. U.C. 46-16, p. 78.

On Monday the 12th. the Government released a statement to the press informing the public of Maritz's rebellion and of his request to see certain generals. On the same date, the Government issued a Proclamation in a Government Gazette Extraordinary, placing all magisterial districts in the Union of South Africa under martial law. As a result of these actions of the Government, the public received the impression that the Maritz rebellion had ramifications in all parts of the country.

Botha took further steps. Mindful of Steyn's standing and influence amongst Afrikaners, he privately informed him of Maritz's rebellion, hoping that he would repudiate Maritz's actions. "A word from you", Botha wrote, "will go far".

6. U.G. 10-15, p. 26-27; U.G. 46-16, pp. 23-24: "Ever since the resignation of General C.F. Beyers as Commandant-General, Citizen Force, there have been indications that something was wrong with the forces in the North-West of the Cape Province which were placed under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel S.F. Maritz. The Government at once arranged to send Colonel Coenraad Brits to take over the command from Lieutenant-Colonel Maritz. On the 8th instant Colonel Brits sent a message to come in and report to him. To this message Maritz replied in a most insolent manner that he was not going to report to anybody. All he wanted was his discharge and Colonel Brits must come himself and take over his command. Colonel Brits then sent Major Ben Bouwer to take over the command. On arrival at Maritz's camp, Major Bouwer was taken prisoner with his companions, but he personally was subsequently released and sent back with an ultimatum from Maritz to the Union Government to the effect that, unless the Government guaranteed to him before 10 o'clock on Sunday morning the 11th October, that they should allow Generals Mertzog, De Wet, Beyers, Kemp and Muller to meet him where he was, in order that he might receive instructions from them, he would forthwith make an attack upon Colonel Brits' forces and proceed further to invade the Union. The public was also informed of Maritz's agreement with the Germans and of the fact that he had arrested some of his men and handed them over to the Germans.

7. U.G. 10-15, pp. 67

8. Van der Merwe ii, p. 201; U.G. 46-16, Annexure J, p. 119; U.G. 10-15, Appendix C, p. 69.

Botha, however, was not successful in obtaining the desired response from Steyn. Steyn stated that although he condemned Maritz's actions, he could not issue a statement to that effect without also informing the people that he disapproved of the Government's policy in invading South-West Africa. He also pointed out that: " --- as far back as three years ago I warned you against such a policy and that on the outbreak of the European War I had again repeated that warning to General Smuts ---. As a result of that policy a number of officers and men, who as far as I know, were loyal have become rebels.⁹ You will see thus that a letter written in that spirit will not have the desired effect, but, on the contrary will do more harm than good and yet I cannot intervene¹⁰ in the matter without making my standpoint clear."

Although Steyn was not prepared to issue a public statement against Maritz's rebellion, a number of Cape Ministers of Religion, belonging to the Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk,¹¹ did issue such a statement. That Manifesto gave rise to the¹² utmost resentment amongst some Afrikaners.

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9. If Steyn included Maritz in that category then his knowledge of the matter was certainly not correct.
 10. Van der Merwe ii, p.302; U.G. 46-16 Annexure J.p.120; U.G. 10-15, Appendix C, p. 69. A similar situation had arisen in 1901 when Chief Justice De Villiers was asked to use his influence to induce the Dutch in the Cape to hold aloof from the rebel movement in aid of the two Republics. His reply was: "If I were to address an appeal to them, I should have to admit that there had been faults on both sides". Neame, p. 176.
 11. U.G. 46-16, p. 37. They pointed out, inter alia, that an act of rebellion "would be a faithless breach of the Treaty signed at Vereeniging and a positive sin against God". They also reminded the public that "incalculable calamities - bloody civil war and the destruction of those who take part therein" - would result. According to Oost that Manifesto was not a spontaneous expression on the part of the Ministers concerned, but it was drawn up in answer to a request from the Government. Oost, p.178. It is highly likely that that is correct.
 12. See S.C.1-15, p. 263 (Hertzog's Evidence).

What effect did the news of Maritz's rebellion have on those people in the Transvaal and Free State, who were opposed to the Government's War Policy? The Report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry stated that there was no conspiracy between Maritz and the other leaders at that stage of Maritz's rebellion.¹³ Dr. Scholtz also asserts that the Maritz Rebellion¹⁴ was a thing apart. But that view is acceptable only up to a point. As has been shown there were undoubtedly communications of a rebellious nature between Maritz and other leaders before 15 September. Nevertheless Maritz and the other leaders do not appear to have been informed of each other's intentions after that date. While the news of Maritz's rebellion could not have come as a complete surprise to men like Kemp and Beyers, in view of their knowledge of the earlier conspiracy, they do not appear to have been informed of Maritz's intention to rebel on 9 October.

At the beginning of October a meeting of the Lichtenburg Protest Committee had been arranged to be held at Kopjes on 13 October.¹⁵ Christiaan De Wet, who had been the leading organiser of the earlier protest meetings, went to Kopjes via Bloemfontein so that he could discuss matters with Steyn.¹⁶ The first De Wet heard of Maritz's rebellion was when he arrived at Bloemfontein.¹⁷ At Steyn's farm, "Onze Rust", De Wet met

13. U.G. 46-16, pp. 101-102.

14. Scholtz (b), p. 142. N.G. Garson also states: "There was no collusion between Maritz and the Transvaal and Free State leaders" (History Today - Feb. 1962. p. 136)

15. See above, p. 124.

16. Steyn had sent a telegram to De Wet on 7 October asking him to come to Bloemfontein to discuss the current situation. Van der Merwe ii. p. 301.

17. Scholtz (b), p. 158.

Hertzog who had come to show Steyn copies of the Smuts - Maritz¹⁸ correspondence, which Hertzog had received from Maritz's wife. De Wet and Steyn now became aware of the fact that on the very day (23 September) that the Government had sent a message to Kopjes assuring the burghers that only volunteers would be used, Smuts had ordered Maritz's non-volunteer force across the border.

From Bloemfontein De Wet went to Kopjes. Before the Committee Meeting started a Government messenger arrived with the Proclamation announcing martial law and he announced that public meetings had been prohibited. But it was not intended to hold a public meeting and De Wet told the crowd of about 200 burghers who had assembled that the meeting was to be a private one. He told them that there was a dark cloud hanging over the land, but he hoped that in a short while the sun¹⁹ would shine through again. The Committee members then went inside. De Wet was the first to speak. He stated that he considered that the time for action had arrived. They had protested against the South-West African Campaign and it had been decided to hold 'Volksvergaderings' to protest further. The Government had, however, proclaimed martial law and that course of action was no longer possible. He considered that there was no time to be lost and he proposed that Maritz should be helped; they did not have any weapons, but according to²⁰ the Government's Proclamation, Maritz had plenty. Liebenberg, one of the Committee was alarmed at De Wet's speech and he wanted to know where Hertzog and Beyers were. De Wet replied: "I have come from General Hertzog - he is not coming to the

18. See above, p. 139 ; Maritz, p. 74.

19. Kestell, p. 194; U.G. 10-15, p. 25; Oost, p. 260.

20. Kemp, p. 257; S.C. 1-15, p. 142 (General P.J. Liebenberg's Evidence).

meeting because he says he is already the scapegoat. But you know where he is if you want him. We all know that General Hertzog is not a fighting man; he is more a man of the law²¹ and if you want him for that you can have him."

Major J.J.Pienaar explained Beyers's absence by telling the meeting of the incidents at the Opera House on 10 October and of Beyers's subsequent decision not to appear in public again.²² The majority were not in favour of De Wet's drastic proposal and instead adopted a proposal put forward by Liebenberg that a deputation should be sent to the Government.²³ Nine delegates were elected and it was decided, that after having seen the Government spokesmen they would report back to the Committee at a meeting to be held on 22 October, on the farm Middellyn, near Kopjes.²⁴

On 14 October the delegates interviewed Botha and F.S. Malan and it was apparently a lengthy and stormy interview.²⁵

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21. S.C. 1-15, p. 143 (P.J.Liebenberg's Evidence). Hertzog subsequently explained that when he had said that he was already the scapegoat (zondebok) he was referring to the fact that Maritz had mentioned his name and that people were coupling his name with that of Maritz. As far as the statement: " --- you know where he is if you want him", was concerned Hertzog stated that he meant that he would be available for addressing meetings. S.C. 1-15, p.231, p.233 (Hertzog's Evidence).
 22. S.C. 1-15, p.143.
 23. Jan Brand Wessels, D.Fouché, A.P. Bezuidenhout, R.P. Serfontein, Rocco De Villiers, Rev.Louis Vorster. Rev. Ferreira, Rev. Naude, and Rev. Van Broekhuizen. Van Broekhuizen refused to serve on the deputation and Liebenberg took his place. Kemp, p. 260.
 24. Ibid. ; Oost, p. 184. According to Oost, De Wet sent a message to Bloemfontein informing Hertzog and Steyn of the meeting on 22 October and requesting them to be present.
 25. The interview lasted four hours. S.C. 1-15, p.144; Also Kemp, p.262. Kemp obtained his information from J.B.Wessel.

Botha apparently accused them of trying to start a rebellion and threatened to arrest them if they did not cease their agitation against the Government's policies.²⁶ In 1916 Botha was questioned about that by the Commission of Inquiry. He stated: "I cannot remember with certainty what I said --- . I may have said it would be my painful duty to arrest people --- But I remember I did tell them that I was determined to see that law and order were maintained by all the means in my power, no matter how painful it might be."²⁷

Botha's words apparently made an impression on Liebenberg and he remained behind when the other delegates left and told Botha that he intended to support the Government in future. He also told Botha of De Wet's speech at Kopjes the previous day and of the intention to hold the next meeting on 22 October. Botha tried to persuade Liebenberg to attend that meeting, but²⁸ he refused.

The delegates returned to the home of Christiaan Beyers's brother in Sunnyside where De Wet was waiting to hear the outcome of the meeting. They had hoped to find General Beyers there as well, but they were informed that he had been summoned by Botha. That was in fact the second time since Maritz's²⁹ rebellion that Botha had had an interview with him. After the Opera House meeting on 10 October, Beyers had gone to his farm 'De Dammen', about nine miles South-East of Pretoria. Shortly after hearing the news of Maritz's rebellion on the

26. Oost, p. 184; S.C. 1-15, pp. 144-145; Scholtz (a), p. 344.

27. U.G. 42-16, p. 364 (Botha's Evidence).

28. S.C. 1-15, pp. 144-145 (Liebenberg's Evidence). According to his own account Liebenberg told Botha: "They would not let me into their meeting."

29. Beyers's biographer incorrectly states that Botha saw Beyers for the first time on 14 October. Scholtz(a), p. 344. Oost who received his information from Beyers's wife states that the first interview took place on 12 October. Oost, p. 182. That is confirmed by Botha's Evidence before the Commission of Inquiry U.G. 42-16, p. 363.

morning of 12 October, a messenger arrived with the request that Beyers² should go into Pretoria to see Botha. In his interview with Beyers, Botha asked him to go to the South-West African border to see Maritz, but Beyers refused to go.

According to Botha, Beyers said: "You must give me time I cannot decide now. I must consult my friends."³⁰ Whether

Beyers did ask for time to consult his friends is not clear;

Mrs. Beyers was of the opinion that he did not.³¹ Be that as it may, Botha made a second attempt to persuade Beyers to go to Maritz on 14 October - again with no success. According to what Beyers told his wife and friends, Botha on that

occasion offered to re-instate him as Commandant-General if he did go.³² Botha also told Beyers that he could take any or all of the other five generals mentioned by Maritz with him, but Beyers remained adamant.³³ Beyers, when he returned to his brother's house, told the delegation of his interview.

When the delegates left, Beyers gave them the assurance that if it were possible he would be present at the Kopjes meeting on

30. U.G. 42-16, p. 363; Also see Oost, pp. 182-183.

31. Oost, p. 187.

32. Ibid., p.187; Scholtz (a), p. 344. Whether that was so is not clear. Botha made no mention of it in his evidence before the Commission of Inquiry. If Botha did make such an offer then it could surely not have been seriously intended. Botha had in fact taken over the position of Commandant-General himself by this time. (See U.G.46-16, p.32 (although that fact was not immediately made public). It may have been a ruse on Botha's part to test Beyers's reaction to such an offer and to persuade him to go to Maritz.

33. U.G. 42-16, p.363 (Botha's Evidence) Beyers also told his friends that he had asked Botha what he would do if the people organised an armed protest against the Government's policies. According to Beyers, Botha replied that: "so iets in sy guns sou wees aangesien hy dan aan die Engelse regering kon sê dat hy niks kon doen nie." Beyers's friend, Rev. Neethling warned Beyers not to rely on that assurance.

22 October.³⁴

Maritz, after he had sent Boucher back to Upington on 10 October, moved closer to the German frontier. On 11 October he occupied Keimoes with a section of his force, while another section led by Captain Adam Boshoff occupied Kakamas. At Kakamas there was a labour-colony of the Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk. The Superintendent of that settlement, J.H. Conradie, who opposed the invasion of South-West Africa, but did not approve of Maritz's actions, had a conversation with Boshoff and subsequently spoke to Maritz on the telephone. Maritz reiterated his request to see De Wet, Beyers, Kemp or Hertzog.³⁵ Conradie offered to contact Smuts in an endeavour to find a solution. Conradie cabled Smuts informing him that he had got the impression from Maritz that if one of those generals were sent to him and he were advised to lay down his arms, he would do so. The answers he received from the Government on 14 October were to the effect that Botha was still trying to persuade Beyers to go to Maritz; that Beyers was still keeping the Government waiting and that it was difficult to contact De Wet and Hertzog.³⁶

Maritz, in the meanwhile had decided on 13 October to re-open negotiations with Brits and he proposed that they should meet. Brits refused, correctly pointing out that he had received no instructions from the Government to negotiate with Maritz.³⁷ Maritz then changed his approach and tried to win

34. Scholtz (a), p. 344; Oost, p.185.

35. Apparently Muller's name was not mentioned on that occasion.

36. U.G. 42-16, pp. 274-277 (Conradie's Evidence).

37. Maritz, pp. 174-177; U.G. 46-16, pp. 24-25.

38

over Brits to his side.

On 17 October Conradie received a telegram from Smuts stating that Beyers had asked for more time to consult his friends.

Maritz had now moved away from Keimoes to Kakamas and when he was informed of Smuts's telegram, he told Conradie that he could not wait any longer as he believed that Botha and Smuts did not seriously intend to send any of the generals to him. ³⁹ Conradie in 1916, told the Commission of Inquiry: "I felt at the time that Maritz was mistaken and that it was not the fault of the Government, but later on I could not help suspecting that there was truth in what he said and I began to suspect that this was just a trick on the part of General Smuts in order to win time and that he did not intend to send them at all. Because at that time I did not know what I subsequently learned, namely that General Hertzog was in constant communication with the Government at this time. Therefore the telegram which General Smuts sent me was not strictly true as far as that is concerned." ⁴⁰

Hertzog also communicated with the Government as a result of a telegram received from two Prieska men, Coetzee and Le Roux. They urged him to do everything in his power to put an end to the Maritz Rebellion without bloodshed. They also

38. U.G.46-16,p.26; U.G. 42-16,p.49 (Coen Brits's Evidence) Maritz, p. 178. On 16 October Maritz sent the following letter from Keimoes to Brits: Brits did not reply.
"Dear old friend,

There was a time when we fought and suffered together in the sacred cause of our country and people. We have now once more the opportunity to fight for the same ideals. I know that you are a true Afrikaner and that your heart still beats warmly for our people.

Enclosed you will find a copy of a Treaty entered into with the German Government and I ask you to give us your support in this matter. The place of the veteran Coen Brits is vacant and the people are calling you. Give heed to the voice of the people.

Your old comrade in arms,
S.G.Maritz.
General."

39. U.G. 42-16, pp. 276-277 (Conradie's Evidence).

40. Ibid., p. 277.

sent a telegram to Botha urging him to make use of Hertzog's services for that purpose. Hertzog accordingly on 15 October sent the following telegram to Botha:

"The following telegram has just been received by me ---:
'Representations are being made to the Government to end the Maritz rebellion without bloodshed. Please come forward with your co-operation for the furtherance of this purpose.' If I can be of any service in effecting the result aimed at in the telegram, I place my services at the disposal of the Government"⁴¹

Botha replied that he had received a telegram from those people and "--- I replied --- for nobody regrets the treacherous acts of the rebels more than I, especially in view of the fact that a number of inexperienced men were scandalously misled - in this way: 'There are no negotiations with the rebel leader. The rebellion can only be suppressed by force'. I deeply sympathise with the parents. Much depends upon the influence which they will bring to bear. The general opinion is that an immediate public repudiation of Maritz's action by you and the other members mentioned in his ultimatum will do much towards reaching the results aimed at. What do you propose further?"⁴²

In view of the fact that the Union was at war and bearing in mind the seriousness of Maritz's offence, such an attitude was not unreasonable - but it was not one which was consistently followed. Botha, on his own evidence interviewed Beyers on four or five separate occasions and tried to persuade him to go to Maritz. What is more Botha stated: "I gave him (Beyers) clearly to understand that I was disposed to allow any

41. U.G. 46-16, p. 72.

42. Ibid., pp. 72-73.

or all of these other men whom Maritz mentioned in his message (i.e. Hertzog too)⁴³ to accompany Beyers if he so wished.⁴⁴

Yet Hertzog was informed: "There are no negotiations with the rebel leader. The rebellion can only be suppressed by force."

The Commission of Inquiry questioned Botha about that inconsistency and his explanation was as follows: "Beyers was the man who had influence over Maritz and he was the man I asked to go. Maritz was appointed by Beyers. Beyers gave him orders and my idea certainly was that Beyers was the proper person to go and talk to Maritz."⁴⁵

Now if the Government intended to end the Maritz Rebellion without bloodshed, then they had apparently also decided that of all the men mentioned by Maritz, only Beyers could achieve that end, for they made no attempt to contact De Wet, Kemp or Muller and delivered a crushing snub to Hertzog when he offered his services. Why did the Government consider the presence of Beyers to be such an essential factor in bringing about a peaceful solution? Botha said that Beyers was the best man for the task because he had influence over Maritz. But did Botha believe that none of the others had any influence over Maritz?

Moreover, is it even feasible that the Government could have considered Beyers the best man to bring about a peaceful solution? Beyers, who had felt such strong opposition to the Government's War Policy, that he had resigned and what is more had been prepared to act incorrectly by having his letter of

43. My interpolation

44. U.G. 42-16, p. 363 (Botha's Evidence)

45. Ibid.

resignation published in the press before it was received by the Minister. But not only was Beyers opposed to the Government's policy, but his actions on 15 September must have caused the Government to have grave suspicions as to his intentions. Indeed according to Botha's own account he had become suspicious of Beyers as early as 14⁴⁶ August. Hertzog, on the other hand, had not deviated from a strictly correct constitutional approach. He had opposed the Government's policy in Parliament, but he had not even addressed any protest meetings after the Parliamentary session and there was no suspicion that he had any extra-constitutional plans to overthrow the Government.

It seems probable^e, therefore, that Botha did not want Beyers to go to Maritz for the purpose of putting an end to the rebellion without bloodshed, but for some other reason. What that reason was cannot be definitely stated on the available evidence, but was it not perhaps a hope that if Botha sent Beyers to Maritz, Beyers would be forced to reveal his intentions as Maritz had been forced to do? The events of 15 September must have made the Government aware of the possibility that there were other South Africans who had thoughts of rebelling. It was therefore in the interests of the Government to bring any conspiracies into the open and to crush them as soon as possible. The longer they delayed, the longer the conquest of South-West Africa would be delayed.

47

Botha saw Beyers for the last time on 17 October. On the same date Botha saw fit to release his correspondence with Hertzog to the press. Beyers now became aware of the fact that at the same time as Botha was trying to persuade him to go to Maritz, Hertzog's offer of aid had been scorned.⁴⁸ Late on

46. When he found that Maritz had been summoned to Pretoria. See above, p. 74.

47. U.G. 42-16, p.367 (Botha's Evidence).

48. See Scholtz (a), pp. 347-348.

the night of 19 October, Beyers left the immediate vicinity⁴⁹ of Pretoria and went to the farm 'Damhoek' in the Magaliesberge.⁵⁰

What persuaded Beyers to leave Pretoria, and what were his intentions? According to his biographer he was influenced by a variety of factors.⁵¹ The distrust he felt towards the Government was understandably deepened when he became aware of the Hertzog-Botha correspondence. He had also apparently been considerably shaken by the hostility shown towards him on the night of 10 October and by various anonymous threatening letters⁵² he had received. But his main reason was undoubtedly a feeling that as his resignation and the subsequent protest meetings had not had the desired effect of changing the Government's policy, more drastic measures were called for.⁵³ He subsequently told S.P.E. Boshoff: " --- Ek (het) gevoel dat dit mij heilige plig was om te protesteer teen die skandelijke belediging, wat mij volk aangedaan werd, deur hul teen hul gewete te verplig 'n ras van rowers te word."⁵⁴ He told his friend Rev.C.A. Neethling: "Ek gaan om ons volk wakker te maak⁵⁵ al kos dit ook my lewe."

49. He had earlier left his farm, 'De Dammen', to live with F.C. Eloff, a son-in-law of President Kruger, and from there he had gone to the house of Rev.C.A. Neethling, a few miles North of Pretoria.

50. Scholtz (a), p. 348.

51. Ibid. pp. 347-348.

52. See S.C. 1-15, p.205 (Evidence of P.G. Beyers). According to his brother, he had left Eloff because it had been found out that he was there. When P. Beyers was asked how he knew, he stated that some dogs had been stabbed to death there and people were convinced that this was done by people who knew he was there. S.C. 1-15, pp. 211-212.

53. A member of his commando during the Rebellion.

54. Boshoff (a), p. 39.

55. Scholtz (a), p. 348.

When it became known where Beyers had gone, groups of burghers, many of whom were armed, joined him. Some of these burghers joined Beyers because they had been commandeered by the Government to fight against Maritz.

The commandeering of burghers also caused the first overt act of rebellion in the Transvaal. Commandeered troops in the Lichtenburg District under Field-Cornet Izak Claassen refused⁵⁶ to obey orders to entrain, and they returned to their homes.⁵⁷ Claassen then issued instructions that all burghers in his district should attend a meeting on 27 October at Haakboschlaagte⁵⁸ near Lichtenburg.

On 22 October, the meeting which had been arranged on 13 October, took place at the farm Middellyn, near Kopjes. Many of those who had been invited to attend did not appear - apparently the proclamation of martial law and the ban on public meetings acted as a deterrent in many cases - but a number of armed burghers, who had heard about the meeting, were present. Despite the presence of those people, no public meeting was held; the delegates held a private meeting and the others waited to hear their decisions. De Wet and Kemp were present, but Beyers, Steyn and Hertzog were not. Beyers sent a representative (Engelbrecht) with the message that he had been obliged to leave Pretoria and that he was at Damhoek under the

56. Claassen had been informed by De La Rey of his earlier plans to rebel to recover their independence. Personal information received from Mr. Harm Oost.

57. Kemp, pp. 263-264; De Volkstem, 12.2.1915; Oost, pp. 222-223; Scholtz (b), p. 185.

58. Personal information received from Mr. Harm Oost.

protection of a group of burghers; he also sent a message that he would support any decision taken by the others. Steyn also⁵⁹ sent a representative with a message that more 'volksvergaderings'⁶⁰ should be organised.

After J.B.Wessels told the members that nothing had been achieved as a result of the delegation's visit to Botha, the general feeling was that some action had to be taken. De Wet, who had not originally been in favour of the delegation to Botha, now suggested that his original scheme (to arm themselves and join up with Maritz) be implemented. One of the members then demurred on the grounds that from all accounts Maritz had concluded an agreement with the Germans. According to Kemp, De Wet then stated that if it were found that Maritz had concluded a definite agreement with the Germans, they would return home; if he had not concluded an agreement they would obtain arms and ammunition from him, and they would then march⁶¹ on Pretoria to demand a satisfactory answer. De Wet's scheme did not meet with general approval and various less drastic⁶² proposals were considered, but no general agreement could be reached. It was eventually decided that all further plans would be left in the hands of De Wet in the Free State and Beyers⁶³ in the Transvaal. As the meeting was well aware of De Wet's views, that decision was tantamount to accepting his proposal and indeed he made it clear that he intended to start mobilising

59. C.J.Fichardt, M.P. for Ladybrand.

60. Fichardt was also instructed to report back to Steyn on the decisions taken at the meeting.

61. Kemp, p.263. It is extremely unlikely that De Wet could still have had any serious doubts as to Maritz's dealings with the Germans.

62. To have more 'volksvergaderings'; to adopt an attitude of passive resistance.

63. My description of the proceedings at the meeting is based on the accounts of various eye-witnesses. Kemp, pp.262-266; S.C.1-15, pp.295-312 (Evidence of C.G.Fichardt); Oost, pp.262-264; also Personal information received from Mr.Oost.

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commandos as soon as possible. According to Kemp, a definite plan of action was also agreed upon: **he** (Kemp) would immediately contact Beyers and they would start mobilising their forces in the Transvaal; De Wet would leave some of his forces in the Free State and with the remainder he would trek along the South bank of the Orange River until he made contact with Maritz; Kemp would also move his force in a South-Westerly direction, trekking along the North bank of the Orange until he contacted Maritz; De Wet and Kemp would then return to the Free State and Transvaal with arms and ammunition and it was felt that they would then be in a position to dictate terms to the Government.⁶⁵

On the same day as those decisions were taken at Middellyn, Botha sent Schalk Burger to Steyn with a letter informing him that the Government had obtained information that preparations were being made for a general armed insurrection and that De Wet, Beyers and Kemp were at the head of the movement.⁶⁶ Botha appealed to Steyn to despatch his son, Colin, and other reliable men to De Wet, Beyers and Kemp summoning them to 'Onze Rust'; Botha wanted Steyn to do his utmost to dissuade them from rebellion. Botha also stressed the need for haste; the outbreak of the rebellion could be expected any day.⁶⁷

On 24 October Colin Steyn arrived in Pretoria with his father's reply. M.T. Steyn wrote as follows:

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64. According to Fichardt, he also said that if they needed any equipment or goods they should take them by force. S.C. 1-15, p. 298.
65. Kemp, p.266; Also see Oost, p.264.
66. It is not clear what exact information the Government had received, but Liebenberg had certainly told Botha of De Wet's speech at the previous meeting at Kopjes and it is possible that they obtained further information from that source.
67. Van der Merwe ii, p. 307; U.G. 46-16, Annexure J, pp. 121-122; U.G. 10-15, p. 31.

"And so the thing against which my prayers and labours and warnings have for the past ten years been directed - viz. Civil war - has come at last ---- . I am sending Colin with a view to averting, if possible, at the last moment the danger feared. I shall therefore request Generals De Wet, Beyers and Kemp to meet me here at 'Onze Rust'. How far your information is correct as to the last I cannot judge. I accordingly assume it is so. I question its accuracy as regards De Wet."

He went on to insist that the most distinct assurance must be given that if they abandoned their resistance, the Government would not arrest them or their followers. But Steyn wanted the Government to go even further, and to extend those conditions to include Maritz and his followers as well, "for --- if the allegation is correct that Generals Beyers and Kemp were in the plot with Maritz, they will not be inclined to leave him in the lurch in order to save themselves. In a matter of this kind, General, statesmanship is frequently of more effect than force of arms --- . Colin is at your service to proceed further, immediately upon arrival in Pretoria. I do not know where General De Wet is. Please find out -----".

In a postscript, Steyn requested Botha to keep the matter out of the newspapers, as publicity might defeat their plans; he also informed Botha that he intended to inform Hertzog of the latest developments.⁶⁸

The Government had in the meanwhile decided that as Kemp⁶⁹ was a subordinate, it was not necessary to consult him. It was decided that Colin Steyn should go to Damhoek immediately to see Beyers. Before he arrived at Damhoek, two other Government emissaries had interviewed Beyers. On 23 October the Government

68. Van der Merwe ii, p. 308; U.G. 46-16, Annexure J.p. 122; U.G. 10-15, p. 31.

69. U.G. 10-15, p. 31.

had sent Commandant Sarel Alberts to Beyers with the assurance that the Government would not commandeer the burghers assembled at Damhoek. That assurance had made no impression on the burghers, and after they had made it clear that they had come together of their own accord and that they had not been mobilised by Beyers, they had asked Alberts to convey the following message to Botha; "The Government had to recall the South-West Expedition and if the Government would not do this then Botha must resign." Beyers had told Alberts that he was prepared to meet Botha anywhere except in Pretoria. Alberts had returned to Pretoria and in addition to delivering those messages to Botha, informed him that his own opinion was that Botha should resign. With justifiable asperity Botha had retorted: "The majority are English speaking and the whole of them are on my side, besides which I have half the Dutch - I shall not resign and I am going to suppress the rebellion."

Smuts had, however, succeeded in persuading Alberts to return to Damhoek to make further attempts to persuade the people to return home and to offer himself as a hostage, as a guarantee that the Government would not shoot them or Commandeer⁷¹ them.

The second Government emissary to Beyers, Rev.A.P.J.Kriel, a close friend of Beyers and a man who was thought to have considerable influence with him, had arrived at Damhoek on 24 October, shortly before the arrival of Colin Steyn. He, like Alberts, had not been able to persuade Beyers and his followers⁷² to return home.

Colin Steyn delivered his father's letter requesting Beyers to come to 'Onze Rust'. He also informed him that the

70. The Commandant of the Krugersdorp District.

71. U.G. 42-16, pp.159-162 (S.Alberts's Evidence); Also see Oost, pp. 224-226; Scholtz (a), pp.353-355.

72. U.G. 10-15, p. 31.

Government was prepared to provide a special train to convey him to the Free State without delay. Beyers's reply was that he would go to 'Onze Rust' if De Wet also agreed to go.⁷³

Attempts had been made in the meantime to trace De Wet, but no success had been achieved.⁷⁴ Under the circumstances the Government decided that it would be best for Colin Steyn to return to Bloemfontein for further consultation with his father. After he had reported to his father, it was decided that immediate efforts should be made to contact De Wet. Colin Steyn was reluctant to go to De Wet on his own, for he did not consider that he had sufficient influence with him. M.T. Steyn therefore asked Hertzog to accompany his son. They left Bloemfontein on 26 October by motor-car, but they were held up by heavy rains. On 28 October Colin Steyn suggested that to save time he would go to Pretoria to fetch Beyers while Hertzog went on to contact De Wet. Hertzog agreed to that plan and they parted at Heilbron.

Before dealing with those visits it is necessary to consider the movements and actions of the leaders of the anti-government faction after the Kopjes meeting of 22 October.

On the night of 22 October the Government had made an abortive attempt to arrest Kemp, Pienaar and A.D.W. Wolmarans when they returned from the Kopjes meeting.⁷⁵ Kemp had gone to a farm near Klerksdorp and from there he had sent out messages for the burghers to gather at Haakboschlaagte, near Lichtenburg

73. Van der Merwe ii, p.311; U.G. 10-15, p.31; S.C. 1-15, p.251.

74. Before leaving Pretoria to see Beyers at Damhoek. Colin Steyn had sent a telegram to De Wet at Memel requesting that he leave word with a mutual friend at Vrede where he could be contacted. No reply was received. U.G. 10-15, p.31; Kestell, p.200.

75. U.G. 10-15, p.31; Personal information received from Gen. J.J. Pienaar.

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on 27 October. He also sent a messenger to Beyers with a message asking him to meet him at Haakboschlaagte or any other convenient spot. The message was delivered to Beyers and in due course Beyers's reply was delivered to Kemp.⁷⁷ Beyers stated that it would not be possible for him to come to Haakboschlaagte, but suggested that they should meet at Steenbokfontein in the Rustenburg District.⁷⁸

On 26 October F.J.Liebenberg arrived at Haakboschlaagte and advised Kemp to lay down his arms and that the malcontents should send further deputations to the Government.⁷⁹ Kemp replied that they did not believe any good could come of that and that, in any case, he could take no action until he had discussed matters with Beyers.⁸⁰

Kemp addressed a meeting at Haakboschlaagte on 27 October and stated that he was awaiting news of Beyers's plans, and that when he had obtained that information he intended to join up with Maritz. Kemp and about forty of his men, including 'Siener' Van Rensburg then trekked to Steenbokfontein. On their arrival there on 28 October they did not find Beyers immediately, but heard that Beyers's force had been attacked

76. C.Jooste.

77. On his return Jooste was stopped and searched by Government troops, but as he had taken the precaution of hiding Beyers' reply between the tyre and inner-tube of his motor-cycle, it was not discovered.

78. Kemp, pp. 269-271.

79. Liebenberg, it will be recalled, had been one of the deputation which had interviewed Botha on 14 October. After that interview he had promised to support the Government. Botha had tried to persuade him to attend the meeting at Kopjes on 22 October, but with no success. Liebenberg did, however, subsequently promise to see Comdt.I.Claasen (who had mutinied on 19 October) as he knew him well. It was while he was on that mission that he met Kemp. S.C. 1-15, p. 145 (Liebenberg's Evidence); U.G. 42-16, p. 119. (Liebenberg's Evidence).

80. S.C. 1-15, p. 146; Kemp, pp. 271-272. Liebenberg was not allowed to return immediately, but after Claasen's force was scattered by Government troops at Treurfontein on 29 October, he was allowed to go. He then reported back to Botha and Smuts.

and dispersed by Government troops at Commissiedrift the previous day.

Beyers had agreed to address a meeting at Rustenburg on 27 October. Apparently there was great dissatisfaction in the Rustenburg District in connection with the commandeering of burghers after the Maritz Rebellion.⁸¹ But a large force of Government troops led by Botha himself had moved into the vicinity of Rustenburg; when Beyers became aware of that, he decided to alter his plans and to hold the meeting further South at the farm Commissiedrift. But Botha, who was determined to disperse Beyers's force must have obtained information of his movements, for early on the morning of 27 October, Beyers's men were surrounded by Government troops. Botha stated at the Inquiry in 1916 that he had given orders that Beyers's men should be captured.⁸² If he had not given those instructions, very heavy casualties could have been inflicted by the Government force, for it appears that Beyers's Commando was completely taken by surprise.⁸³ Beyers's men fled, closely pursued by the Government force. In that pursuit shots were fired. One of the Government troopers was wounded, and about eighty of Beyers's men were captured.⁸⁴

Two days after the Commissiedrift affair a more serious clash took place in the Treurfontein District in the Western

81. Scholtz (a), pp. 353-355.

82. See Trew, p. 29.

83. U.G. 42-16, p. 355.

84. Information which Oost received from Rev. Van Broekhuizen, who was at Commissiedrift. Personal information received from Mr. Oost.

85. U.G. 42-16, pp. 159-162; Trew, pp. 29-30; South Africa and the War, p. 167; Oost, pp. 228-229; Scholtz (a), pp. 356-357.

Transvaal. When Kemp moved off to Steenbokfontein he had left Izak Claassen in command of the main portion of his force at Haakboschlaagte. Contrary to Kemp's instructions, Claassen moved the force in the direction of Treurfontein.⁸⁶ At the railway siding, Oppaslaagte, the rebels damaged Government property and stopped a train (after it was ascertained that there were no rifles or ammunition on the train, it was allowed to proceed).⁸⁷ On 29 October a Government force commanded by Commandant J.J. Alberts⁸⁸ attacked Claassen's force and inflicted heavy losses. Thirteen rebels were killed, thirty-six were wounded and two hundred and forty, including Claassen, who was heavily wounded, were captured. One of the Government officers, Captain Nolte, was killed in a manner which reflected little credit on the rebels.⁸⁹

The situation in the Free State was, from the Government's point of view, even more critical. Shortly after 22 October rebel forces occupied a number of towns in the North-Eastern Free State and destroyed and commandeered Government and private

86. Kemp, p. 279.

87. U.G. 46-16, p. 41.

88. Alberts was one of the men who had voted against the peace terms at Vereeniging in 1902. He was proceeding with about 1,000 men from Standerton to the S.W.A. border. Before they reached Potchefstroom, Botha sent instructions that they were to turn back and proceed to Treurfontein.

89. Nolte, with the intention of negotiating with the rebels, walked over unarmed to the rebel forces in response to the rebels waving their hats. According to some reports Nolte carried a stick to which he had tied a white handkerchief; some reports also state that the rebels waved white flags. As Nolte neared the rebel ranks he was shot. Dr. Scholtz, who shows sympathy for the rebel cause, comments as follows on this incident: "Dit was 'n gruwelike daad wat gelyk aan moord gestaan het." Scholtz (b), pp. 221-222. For descriptions of this skirmish see: U.G. 42-16, pp. 122-123 (J.J. Alberts's Evidence); Oost, p. 238; South Africa and the War, p. 17.

property. On 24 October a rebel commando of two hundred men under Rocco De Villiers and J.M. Els occupied Heilbron. No resistance was offered as Smuts had given the magistrate instructions not to shoot. The Union Jack was hauled down and trampled underfoot, telegraph lines were cut and railway lines were put out of use. On the same day a rebel commando under N.W. Serfontein occupied Reitz. They stopped a train and seized rifles and ammunition. On 25 October, the rebel Commandant J.W. Meyer occupied Kopjes and in addition to commandeering horses, rifles and ammunition, took £500. from the bank. On 27 October rebel forces occupied Parys and Vredefort. The first shots of the rebellion in the Free State were fired outside Parys.⁹⁰

Christiaan De Wet had gone to his home near Memel after the Kopjes meeting on 22 October. From there he had moved to Vrede with a small commando; more men joined him on the way.⁹¹ At Vrede De Wet entered the post office and demanded to see the latest cables; when he did not receive immediate satisfaction he hit one of the clerks with his sjambok. His men then smashed the telegraph instrument. De Wet announced that he would address a public meeting that afternoon and he insisted that the magistrate, C. Fraser, be present.⁹² Fraser at first refused to come, but when De Wet threatened to send men to fetch him by force, he agreed to come. At the meeting De Wet instructed a shorthand writer to take down every word he said. De Wet then seemed to lose all control and delivered a violent tirade, the tone of which can be gauged from the following extracts:

90. U.G. 10-15, pp. 28-29; U.G. 46-16, pp. 46-47; Kestell, pp. 203-204; South Africa and the War, p. 16; Scholtz (b), pp. 223-226.

91. Oost, pp. 264-265; Kestell, pp. 203-204; Scholtz (b), pp. 227-228. According to Kestell, De Wet led a commando of about 100 men.

92. Fraser was M.T. Steyn's brother-in-law.

"I am going through to Maritz where we will receive arms and ammunition, and from there we are going to Pretoria to pull down the British flag and proclaim a free South African Republic ----. I signed the Treaty of Vereeniging and took the oath to be true to the British flag, but we are so down trodden by the miserable, pestiferous English that we can no longer endure it. His Majesty King Edward VII promised to protect us but he has not kept his promises and has placed over us a magistrate (he is one of the pestiferous English) who is a tyrant and he has made it so unbearable for us that we decided to suffer him no longer. I was accused before him of assaulting a little kaffir (I had only done it with a light shepherd's whip) and for that I was fined five shillings."

When Fraser interrupted to say that he had pleaded guilty, De Wet reacted in a violent manner and told Fraser: "If you won't hold your tongue I will make you hold it". He then continued in the same vein: "--- after the Magistrate had given sentence, instead of warning the kaffir to be obedient in the future and to do his duty, he looked at the kaffir with sympathy as if he would like to kiss him."

De Wet then announced his intention of commandeering horses, equipment, rifles and ammunition and threatened to use his sjambok on any person who tried to prevent him. He advised the English-speaking citizens of the town to return to their homes and if they did not follow his advice he threatened to deal with them when he returned. De Wet concluded by asking the Magistrate to help and to protect his wife and
 93
 children.

From Vrede, De Wet moved his force in the direction of Reitz and it was at Bezuidenhout's Drift, on the Wilge River,

in the vicinity of Reitz, that Hertzog met him on 29 October. Hertzog gave him Steyn's letter, but when De Wet heard that Government troops had attacked Beyers at Commissiedrift, he flatly refused to go to 'Onze Rust'. According to Hertzog he said: "They want to get me away from my men in order that they may come here and surround me."

The Commissiedrift affair therefore prevented Colin Steyn from contacting Beyers, and seems to have been instrumental in deciding De Wet not to go to 'Onze Rust'. It would appear therefore that the attack on Beyers's force was premature and that it had ruined the Government's chances of achieving an early peaceable solution. The Government's point of view must also be considered, however.

There is no doubt that initially the Government had tried to avoid bloodshed. On 23 October Smuts^{had} informed the Commissioner of Police that "he wishes to avoid bloodshed by us at this stage. If arrests could only be effected by bloodshed they were not to be attempted unless specially authorised by the Minister."⁹⁴ The Government had also sent Alberts,⁹⁵ Kriel and Colin Steyn in an attempt to bring about a solution. In view of the rebel actions in the Free State between 22 October and 27 October,⁹⁶ it was surely understandable that the Government should have decided to abandon its passive attitude - steps had to be taken to prevent similar occurrences in the Transvaal. Acts of sabotage and occupation of towns by rebel forces could obviously not be tolerated. The longer the Government delayed, the stronger the position of the rebels was becoming. For not only were the rebels destroying communications and occupying

94. U.G. 10-15, p. 32.

95. See above, p. 169.

96. See above, p. 174.

strategic points, but they were also stirring up feeling against the Government and adding⁹⁷ their own numbers. There seems to be little doubt that Beyers's proposed meeting at Commissiedrift had had the latter end in view. His apologists maintain that Beyers organised the meeting to explain the reasons for his resignation. But there must have been very few people in the Union, at the end of October, who were not familiar with his reasons. In any case, in terms of the proclamation of martial law, Beyers's proposed meeting at Commissiedrift was an illegal act. The Government had a clear obligation towards all law-abiding citizens. On 26 October they had issued a statement to the press informing the public of recent developments and stating: "Under these circumstances the duty of the Government is clear. They are determined to deal with the matter with a firm hand and are taking all⁹⁸ necessary steps to that end."

Beyers and Kemp met on 28 October at Steenbokfontein and from there Beyers issued a manifesto in his and De Wet's⁹⁹ names, announcing their disapproval of the South-West African Campaign and stating their intention of protesting against the

97. See for instance Oost, p. 228.

98. U.G. 10-15, p. 32.

99. Although De Wet had no part in drafting it.

100
Government's policy.

Beyers also sent a telegram to the Government in which he stated that he was merely protesting against their policy and complaining about the attack made on his men at
101
Commissdrift.

Kemp, after the Commissdrift and Treurfontein episodes, decided that the rebels would have to fight back; for that purpose they needed arms and ammunition. He decided therefore to try to get through to Maritz with a force of 1000 men. A Meeting, addressed by Beyers and Kemp was held at Vleeskraal, North-~~Ea~~st of Schweizer-Reneke. Both Beyers and Kemp made an
102
appeal for volunteers to accompany Kemp on his trek to Maritz.

100. "To All Burghers of the Union."

"It is made known that whereas the Government of the Union has decided to conquer German South-West Africa, and has made the members of Parliament approve of the decision of the Government on inaccurate reports and assertions. We appeal to all burghers to do their utmost and exercise all their influence for the prevention of the conquering of German South-West Africa, and at the same time to refuse to be used by the Government to fight us with arms as our only aim is the honour and welfare of the people and mother country."

C.R. De Wet.

C.F. Beyers.

Generals of the Protesting Burghers.

Steenbokfontein
October 28th.1914"

On the same day a further proclamation was issued stressing that the objects of 'the protesting burghers' were "not to shed fraternal blood" and that they did not intend under any circumstances to assume the offensive. U.G.46-16, pp. 117-118; U.G. 10-15, p.37; Kemp, p.277; Sampson, pp.142-143.

101. Kemp. p. 278.

102. Ibid., pp. 281-285. According to Oost there were about 1,800 burghers present at the meeting. Personal information received from Mr. Harm Oost.

Kemp stressed the difficulties which lay ahead: "Ons sal koue en honger moet ly en veral warmte en dors --- Ons wil mahne hê wat sal wees soos die duisend vryheidshelde van Garibaldi".¹⁰³ Kemp obtained 610 men to accompany him and on 2 November his force left Vleeskraal with the intention of getting through to Maritz. Beyers with the remaining men moved off towards the Free State. It was decided that if any agreement were reached with the Government, Beyers would contact Kemp, but according to Kemp, Beyers was not very hopeful that such an agreement would be reached.¹⁰⁴ According to Kemp, it was also agreed that Beyers would occupy Wolmaranstad and from there he would issue a proclamation¹⁰⁵ announcing the independence of South Africa.

103. Kemp, p. 285.

104. Ibid., p. 283.

105. Ibid., p. 288. No such proclamation was ever issued by Beyers.

C H A P T E R V I I I .

Further Negotiations and the Breakdown of Negotiations.

After Christiaan De Wet had informed Hertzog that he would definitely not go to 'Onze Rust', Hertzog had returned to Heilbron where he met Colin Steyn. Colin Steyn informed Hertzog that as a result of the Commissiedrift Affair he had not been able to contact Beyers, but that Smuts had promised to do his utmost to contact him. Steyn also showed Hertzog a confidential memorandum which Smuts had drawn up for M.T. Steyn's guidance in his negotiations with the rebels.¹ Hertzog considered that that memorandum would enable them to re-open negotiations with De Wet. C.Steyn and Hertzog accordingly returned to De Wet on 30 October and Colin Steyn read it to him.² De Wet then agreed to go to 'Onze Rust' on 5 November provided that Beyers and Kemp also went. Hertzog persuaded De Wet to insist on only Beyers being present. De Wet agreed somewhat reluctantly, saying: "I do not want them (meaning

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1. S.C. 1-15, pp.253-254 (Hertzog's Evidence). The memorandum read as follows:

"Very Confidential".

- 1.) "The Government is not prepared to make any proposal or to take any step in regard to which it is not assured that it will be acted upon.
 - 2.) If any proposal is to be made, as suggested by C.S. (i.e. exemption from criminal prosecution for all disaffected who surrender to their local magistrate within a prescribe period and hand over all rifles obtained from the Government in their possession and after that go home without delay) then this must come from the other side as a proposal which the disaffected burghers are prepared to accept.
 - 3.) In that case the Government will be disposed to give such proposal its most serious consideration, as it desires ardently to avoid bloodshed.
 - 4.) It is not clear why burghers think they will be commandeered for German South-West Africa as Prime Minister has already officially declared that this will not take place and that only volunteers will be used." U.G.10-15, p.33.
2. S.C. 1-15, p.254. According to De Wet's biographer, Steyn did not read the whole of it: "Dit moet hier bygevoeg word dat die hele nota nie van De Wet voorgelees was nie - en dit uit vrees dat hy dadelik sou weier om te gaan as hy wis wat daar alles in was". Kestell, p. 209.

the Government) to have the impression that I am only too willing to run to President Steyn". Steyn and Hertzog then returned to 'Onze Rust'. At Kroonstad Hertzog was informed (incorrectly as it happened) that Kemp was on his way to 'Onze Rust'. Hertzog, believing the report, sent a message to that effect to De Wet, hoping to expedite matters. On 1 November Ex-President Steyn was informed of the latest developments. M.T. Steyn then wrote to De Wet urging him to come to 'Onze Rust', even if it meant that he would be the only rebel leader there; he urged him to come not later than 5 November. He also pleaded with De Wet to give instructions to the rebels that there should be no further hostile actions - shooting or destroying property -. The Government on 1 November also issued an instruction to their forces to desist from any aggressive action against the rebels until further notice.

Provided De Wet and Beyers went to M.T. Steyn there was still a chance of preventing further bloodshed. A further impediment soon revealed itself, however. On Colin Steyn's

3. By one Commandant Botha.

4. S.C. 1-15, p. 254.

5. Van der Merwe ii, p. 312.

6. South Africa and the War, p. 17. On 30 October the Government had also issued proclamations stating that the ringleaders (of the rebels) should be arrested and that the rank and file should be allowed to go home. J.J. Albert in the Western Transvaal, on 31 October replied saying that his officers considered those terms to be too lenient (apparently Albert's men were still incensed as a result of Captain Note's death - see above, p. 173.) On the same day the Government replied: "It is in the interests of the Government to put an end to the rising in the Western Transvaal as speedily as possible."
U.G. 10-15, p. 34; Oost, p. 240.

third visit to Pretoria, he was informed that the Government did not know the whereabouts of Beyers and that they could not give any assurance that he could be found in the next few days. If he were found, the Government undertook to inform him that De Wet was going to 'Onze Rust'⁷ and they promised to give Beyers a safe-conduct so that he could go to Bloemfontein.⁸

Colin Steyn then returned to De Wet on 2 November and informed him that Beyers could not be found. According to De Wet's secretary, that news was an important factor in deciding De Wet not to go to see M.T.Steyn. According to Harm Oost, De Wet, after he had spoken to Hertzog on 30 October, had told him (Oost) to hold himself in readiness to go to Bloemfontein on 5 November. Then he received the news that Beyers could not be found; according to Oost he doubted the veracity of that report.⁹

Did the Government really not know where Beyers had gone after the Commissiedrift Affair? According to Fouché, the Minister of Defence believed that Beyers had retreated North of Rustenburg.¹⁰ But Botha in his evidence before the Commission of Inquiry stated that after 27 October he had returned to Koster and there he had received information that Beyers and Kemp had gone in the direction of Lichtenburg.¹¹ That information was correct and indeed on 4 November a Government emissary had no difficulty in contacting Beyers.¹² Yet on 2 November the

7. De Wet had written a letter to Beyers informing him that he intended to go to 'Onze Rust' provided that Beyers went as well. De Wet had given that letter to Colin Steyn to deliver. Kestell, p.209; Webb, p.85. The Government undertook to deliver that letter.

8. U.G. 10-15, pp. 32-33.

9. Oost, pp. 236-237.

10. U.G. 10-15, pp. 32-33.

11. U.G. 42-16, p. 356.

12. See below, p. 183.

Government maintained that they did not know Beyers's whereabouts.

On 3 November, one Cecil Meintjies, acting on Government instructions, left Lichtenburg to contact Beyers. Surprisingly he did not take De Wet's letter¹³ to him, but he was instructed to inform Beyers of the Government proclamation of 30 October stating that if they laid down their arms the rank and file¹⁴ of the rebels would not be arrested. Meintjies located Beyers' force at Katbosfontein in the Wolmaranstad District, apparently without any difficulty and he had a long conversation with Beyers. Meintjies received the impression that Beyers did not wish to overthrow the Government, but that he was protesting against their war policy. Beyers, after consulting his officer drew up the following document:

1) "Unhappily blood has been shed because Government people charged the opposing party¹⁵ -----

2) If the Government continues the war against German West with original undertaking, i.e. with volunteers, then there will be, so far as we are concerned, no objection to a friendly solution of the present position.

3) If the Government continues the War against German West with volunteers alone and under no obligation then we are disposed to disband and go home quietly.

4) It is also a condition of the Council of War that all officers and leaders will not be prosecuted".¹⁶

As Beyers's biographer points out, his views had become considerably modified since he had issued the Steenbokfontein Manifesto, a week earlier; Dr.Scholtz attributes that

13. See footnote.7.

14. See footnote 6.

15. A reference to the Commissiedrift Affair.

16. U.G.46-16,Annexure G.,pp.117-118; U.G.10-15,p.37. According to Meintjies, Beyers stopped after dictating paragraphs 1) and 2), but Meintjies then stated that that was too general. Beyers then dictated paragraphs 3). After Meintjies had asked him what his attitude was as far as the leaders were concerned,he dictated paragraph 4).

to a desire on Beyers's part to meet the Government half way¹⁷
in an endeavour to prevent further bloodshed.

It was agreed by Beyers and Meintjies that the Government's reply would be sent by an emissary under a white flag. Meintjie informed Beyers that he personally doubted whether the Government would allow the leaders to go unpunished as that¹⁸ would show too much weakness on their part. Meintjies then returned to Wolmaranstad, and the Magistrate of that town, one De Castilla, informed Smuts of Beyers's conditions on 5¹⁹ November. Smuts's instructions to De Castilla, on the same date, were as follows: "To proceed under white flag to General Beyers and to explain to him that the circular notice sent out to rebel commandos applies to the leaders and that the Government will not prosecute them for rebellion, provided²⁰ they surrender without further delay ----".

De Castilla could not immediately contact Beyers with that message for he had moved his force in the direction of the Vaal River and he had attempted to cross the railway line²¹ near Kingswood on 5 November. In attempting to cross the railway line Beyers's force was fired upon by Government troops under a Commandant Swartz; the rebels were pursued to the Vaal River where they returned the fire.²² Fouche's comments on those developments were as follows: "In acting as he did

17. Scholtz (a), p.368. When he issued the Steenbokfontein Manifesto, Beyers was apparently opposed to the South-West African Campaign in any form. See above p.178, footnote 100.

18. U.G.46-16, Annexure G., p.118; U.G.10-15, p.37.

19. U.G. 10-15, p.38.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.; Scholtz (a), pp.369-370.

22. According to Fouche, Beyers's force attacked the Government force (U.G.10-15, p.38) But both the Report of the Judicial Commission and the Official History of the War state that the rebels were attacked. (U.G.46-16, p.60; South Africa and the War, p.20). Also see Scholtz (a) p.370

therefore Beyers clearly showed that his professed anxiety for peace was not sincere and that far from seeking a peaceful solution, he was deliberately courting a collision."²³

It cannot be denied that Beyers's movement in the direction of the railway line precipitated the skirmish and hampered further peace negotiations, and even his biographer admits that perhaps it would have been better if he had not trekked away from Katbosfontein.²⁴ There were no Government patrols in the immediate vicinity of Katbosfontein and surely Beyers should have realised (if he did not actually know) that there would be Government forces guarding the railway line. But Beyers's apparent lack of judgement is not necessarily proof that "he was deliberately courting a collision". The hesitancy he showed in taking the offensive and his subsequent actions, make such an interpretation unacceptable. According to his biographer, Beyers was prompted by two motives in moving away from Katbosfontein; a desire to get closer to Steyn in Bloemfontein and a fear that he would be attacked by Government troops if he remained too long in any one place.²⁵ There can be little doubt that the memory of the Commissiedrift Affair weighed heavily in Beyers's calculations.

When the Magistrate of Wolmaranstad had not been able to immediately contact Beyers, he had informed Smuts on the 5th. and had inquired: "If I find there have been actual military operations will that qualify the Government's offer?"²⁶ On the 6th (after the skirmish between Swartz's force and the rebels had taken place), Smuts replied: "In view of yesterday's events²⁷ it is not necessary for you to proceed with your mission²⁸

23. U.G. 10-15, p. 38.

24. Scholtz (a), p. 369.

25. Ibid.,

26. U.G. 10-15, p. 38.

27. The skirmish at Kingswood.

28. U.G. 10-15, p. 38.

De Castilla had, however, already moved off early on the morning of the 16th to locate Beyers, and Smuts's message did not reach him in time. Late that night (6 November) De Castilla informed Smuts that he had followed Beyers into the Free State and had located him. Beyers's reply to the Government's offer was that although he could speak for Kemp, he wished to see De Wet before reaching a definite decision.²⁹ De Castilla stated that Beyers would wait where he had been interviewed, provided that his force was not 'molested' by Government troops. The Magistrate requested that no Government force should move against Beyers's force, and he inquired whether Beyers would be allowed to see De Wet. Smuts's reply was to be sent to the Commander of Government troops in the area, Commandant Swartz and he would deliver it to Beyers.³⁰

Smuts (on 6 November) telegraphed Swartz giving permission for Beyers to be granted a safe conduct through the Government lines, to enable him to go to 'Onze Rust'. For Beyers's benefit Smuts also stated that according to his information De Wet and Colin Steyn had left Lindley that morning on their way to Bloemfontein.³¹ It was further stated that the Government could not undertake to suspend military operations.³²

29. Yet in the 'Meintjies Document' of 4 November, Beyers had not mentioned De Wet. See above, p. 183.

30. U.G. 10-15, p. 38.

31. That was incorrect and it is not clear where Smuts obtained that information. He had certainly not obtained it from M.T. Steyn. On 6 November M.T. Steyn had informed Smuts that according to his information, De Wet still intended to come to Bloemfontein; but Steyn did not state that De Wet and Colin Steyn had left for Bloemfontein. See below p. 189; Van der Merwe ii, p. 314; U.G. 46-16, Annexure J., p. 126.

32. U.G. 10-15, p. 39.

When that telegram arrived at Kingswood, it was delivered to Lieutenant-Colonel A.S.Lemmer.³³ On 7 November, Government forces, under the command of Lemmer, attacked Beyers's force at Gruisdriest, nine miles North-West of Hoopstad. The rebel force was scattered and 400 prisoners were taken.³⁴ The safe conduct was only delivered to Beyers after the skirmish had taken place.³⁵ According to one source, Beyers had sent two messages under the white flag to the Government force, informing them that negotiations were still proceeding and requesting that his commando be left 'unmolested'.³⁶ It is not clear whether Lemmer (bearing Beyers's safe conduct) had assumed command at that stage, but in any event he apparently made no attempt to deliver the safe conduct before the attack was launched.³⁷

On the 7th, Smuts informed M.T.Steyn that Beyers had been found the previous day on the Vaal River, between Bloemhof and Wolmaranstad, and that he was being sent to 'Onze Rust'.³⁸ Actually, however, a Government emissary had contacted Beyers on the 4th already, but the Government had not forwarded De Wet's letter, nor granted him a safe conduct on that date.³⁹ It seems, therefore that Smuts was playing a double game in his negotiations with Beyers - it seems that he did not only or even primarily, intend to induce Beyers to go to 'Onze Rust'.⁴⁰

33. Lemmer was proceeding to take command of the forces which had pursued Beyers into the Free State.

34. U.G. 10-15, p.39; South Africa and the War, p.20; Scholtz (a), pp. 370-371.

35. U.G. 46-16, p. 60.

36. Oost, p. 241.

37. On the available evidence, it is not possible to ascertain whether that was Lemmer's own decision, or whether he was acting under orders.

38. Van der Merwe, ii, p. 314; U.G. 46-16, Annexure J., p.127.

39. Cecil Meintjies.

40. See above, p. 183.

(as soon as possible. It seems that Meintjies's mission to Beyers was prompted by a desire to induce him to surrender and then to confront De Wet with that fact. When that object was not achieved, Beyers's force was attacked and only after his position had been considerably weakened was he allowed to proceed to Steyn.

De Wet, it will be recalled, had been informed by Colin Steyn on 2 November that Beyers could not be contacted.⁴¹ De Wet did not believe that report and considered that, if under the circumstances, he went to Bloemfontein he would be playing into the Government's hands; he believed, apparently, that the Government intended to weaken the rebel forces by luring away their leaders.⁴² Despite M.T. Steyn's earlier request to him not to commit any hostile acts,⁴³ De Wet occupied Lindley on 3 November and allowed his followers to loot shops and damage property.⁴⁴ From Lindley he moved his steadily growing forces in a Westerly direction.⁴⁵ Dr. Scholtz asserts that De Wet moved in that direction in order to get closer to M.T. Steyn at Bloemfontein.⁴⁶ But De Wet's actions make it difficult to accept that view. On the 4th the rebels blew up a railway bridge South of Kroonstad, and on the 5th after

41. See above, p. 182.

42. Oost, pp. 236-237; Webb, p. 86.

43. See above, p. 181

44. Kestell, p. 210. At Vechtkop on 2 November, De Wet's officers had urged him to go to Bloemfontein to consult Steyn. De Wet had replied that he first wished to occupy Kroonstad and Lindley. As there was a strong Government force at Kroonstad, he decided to occupy only Lindley. (U.G. 10-15, p. 40).

45. Kestell, p. 210; U.G. 10-15, p. 41.

46. Scholtz (a), p. 363.

crossing the Kroonstad-Bethlehem railway line, they blew it up in two places and cut the telegraph lines. If De Wet intended to go to Steyn with the intention of discussing peace terms, why were these acts of sabotage committed? Letters written at that time by De Wet to his subordinates also do not indicate any desire for peace. On the contrary, the support which he received in the North-Eastern Free State and the fact that his own forces were growing seems to have persuaded De Wet that the Rebels' hopes of success were high and far from desiring peace he tried to stir up rebellion in the Western Free State as well.

Colin Steyn, still hopeful that De Wet would accompany him to his father, had been waiting at Lindley from 3 November. M.T. Steyn, not aware of De Wet's actions, had on that date suggested to Smuts that it would facilitate matters if he or Botha could be in the vicinity of 'Onze Rust' on the 5th when De Wet was expected. Smuts replied that under the circumstances it was not possible for ^{him} or Botha to leave Pretoria. When De Wet had not arrived by the 5th, M.T. Steyn informed Smuts, but stated that he might have been delayed by the rains.

47. U.G. 10-15, p. 41; Scholtz (b), p. 245.

48. On 5 November, for instance, De Wet wrote as follows to the rebel leader N.W. Serfontein: "-- Without making any promise now already (we are not going to divide the bear's skin before the bear is shot) I wish it to be known that my intention is that if we attain our ideal, those burghers who support our endeavour to attain independence are to receive a reward. The money for this must come out of an assessment levied upon the burghers who remained at home, the unfaithful who fought against us, and the mines". U.G. 10-15, p. 42.

49. Vide U.G. 10-15, pp. 41-42; U.G. 46-16, Annexures L (I), M (I); U.G. 46-16, p. 50. M.T. Steyn in a dictated statement to his biographer after the Rebellion expressed the following view: "In deze moet ook de blaam gelegd worden op genl. De Wet doordat hij zich niet aan zijn beloften hield om Donderdag 5 November hier te zijn". Van der Merwe, ii, p. 324; Also see Scholtz (b), p. 313.

50. Van der Merwe ii, p. 313.

51. Ibid., p. 314.

Colin Steyn was however still waiting for De Wet at Lindley. On 6 November he did meet De Wet on the Ventersburg road. De Wet's officers had unanimously decided that he should go to 'Onze Rust' but De Wet insisted that Beyers and Kemp should be present as well.⁵² De Wet wanted Colin Steyn to wait at Lindley until the 9th, but he deemed it advisable to return immediately to Bloemfontein. De Wet then asked him to return on Monday the 9th and stated that he might then accompany him to his father. Colin Steyn was doubtful whether De Wet would in fact go to 'Onze Rust'.⁵³ Smuts was informed of the latest developments and Colin Steyn then returned to Bloemfontein and reported to his father on the 7th.⁵⁴

M.T. Steyn immediately (on the 7th) sent Colin Steyn and C. Fichardt⁵⁵ back to De Wet with a letter requesting that De Wet should come to 'Onze Rust' and that he should avoid any clash with Government troops; Smuts was informed of that mission and Steyn requested that there should be no attack on De Wet's force in his absence.⁵⁶ Colin Steyn and Fichardt travelled by car via Brandfort and Winburg. When they reached the bridge at Sand River (Doornberg) early on the morning of the 8th, they

52. De Wet then decided that he would write to M.T. Steyn; as far as can be ascertained that was never done.

53. Colin Steyn : "I do not know whether he will". He nevertheless considered that if De Wet's advance were stopped, there was still a chance of peace.

54. U.G. 10-15, p. 73; U.G. 46-16, p. 127; Oost, pp. 273-274; Scholtz (b) pp. 245, 247-248.

55. M.P. for Ladybrand.

56. Van der Merwe ii, p. 315, p. 318.

~~they~~ came upon a violent skirmish which was taking place between De Wet's force and a Government force under Major F.R.Cronjé.⁵⁷ Cronjé, with a force of 170 men, had moved his force out of Winburg in the direction of Kroonstad on the 7th; he intended to camp at Doornberg.⁵⁸ It appears that De Wet had sent a message to one of Cronjé's officers, informing the Government force that De Wet intended to visit Steyn and requesting that the Government force be moved to prevent a collision.⁵⁹ Cronjé did not move his force, but according to his evidence before the Select Committee, he gave orders⁶⁰ that his men were not to fire first. Cronjé had posted some sentries on the Northern bank of the Sand River and on the morning of the 8th they captured some rebels. Cronjé then sent a small patrol of about thirty men over the river and when this patrol came into contact with a section of De Wet's force,⁶¹ the skirmish started. It is not entirely clear who started the shooting, but it seems that the Government men started firing on the rebels when De Wet's men charged the Government force.⁶² The rebel advance was momentarily checked due to heavy fire, but when the remainder of the rebel force

57. S.C. 1-15, pp. 313-314 (Fichardt's Evidence).

58. Ibid., pp. 332-333 (Cronjé's Evidence)

59. Oost, p. 280; Also see S.C. 1-15, p. 313^{p. 316} (Fichardt's Evidence)
S.C. 1-15, p. 333 (Cronjé's Evidence).

60. S.C. 1-15, pp. 332-336 (Cronjé's Evidence); De Wet apparently had given similar orders to his men, but according to Oost he had added: "--- as iemand op jou skiet gee hom drie koeëls vir een van hom". Oost, pp. 280-281; Also see Kestell, p. 210.

61. S.C. 1-15, pp. 333-336 (Cronjé's Evidence); Kestell, p. 210.

62. It would appear that De Wet intended to capture the Government men. For an account of the skirmish vide Oost pp. 250-251; S.C. 1-15, pp. 333-336, pp. 353-362; U.G. 42-16 pp. 303-305; Scholtz (b), pp. 250-252.

arrived on the scene, the Government force fled and they were pursued and scattered by De Wet's men.⁶³ That skirmish made the task of Steyn's emissaries more difficult. The skirmish could have been avoided but neither De Wet nor Cronjé appear to have made an attempt to avoid a collision.

Colin Steyn and Fichardt were only able to contact De Wet after the skirmish had taken place. When they spoke to him, De Wet, according to Fichardt was very angry; he claimed that he had been attacked while negotiations were proceeding. Fichardt, nevertheless, received the initial impression that their mission would be successful; according to him De Wet "seemed to realise that things had assumed a serious aspect", and that he had decided to go to Steyn. Then one of De Wet's⁶⁴ men rode up and informed De Wet that his son, Danie, had been killed in the skirmish. According to Fichardt, De Wet stiffened up and said: "That is the first sacrifice; I am prepared to make more. They have spilled blood and there is nothing more to be done". After violently blaming Botha and Smuts for the bloodshed,⁶⁵ he quietened down. Fichardt then pointed out that he had already lost his son and under the circumstances he should go to Bloemfontein immediately. According to Fichardt, De Wet stated that he would go to Bloemfontein on the 12th. When Fichardt gave De Wet his pass to proceed through the Government lines, the old general⁶⁶ flared up again because it was written in English. De Wet did however, according to Fichardt, give a definite assurance that

63. Oost, p. 283. According to him the rebel losses were eight killed and eleven wounded (two of the wounded men subsequently died); the Government force lost ~~one~~ three men killed and six wounded.

64. According to his memoirs, it was Oost. Oost, p. 283.

65. "Dit bloedvergieten het ons te danken aan de vervloekte regering van Botha en Smuts."

66. "Generaal Botha schrijf aan zij ou kameraad en mede Afrikaner in Engels."

he would go to Bloemfontein on the 12th, but he stated that he would be accompanied by a bodyguard.⁶⁷

Notwithstanding Fichardt's evidence before the Select Committee, it seems doubtful whether De Wet did promise to go to 'Onze Rust' on the 12th. After Fichardt and Colin Steyn had reported back to M.T. Steyn, he sent a telegram to Smuts on the 9th, in which he stated, inter alia: "Fichardt en Colin juist terug. Zij rapporteren dat Generaal De Wet nu weigert te komen".⁶⁸ After giving De Wet's version of the skirmish, Steyn informed Smuts that Colin Steyn had not gone to find Beyers (presumably because De Wet had not promised to come to 'Onze Rust'). Steyn concluded: "Mijn pogingen zijn tot mijn droefheid mislukt en moet ik tans maar geduldig wachten om te zien of er niet later een anderen gelegenheid zicht, mocht⁶⁹ voordoen."

Steyn's telegram was an admittance of defeat; his attempt to bring about a peaceful solution had failed and his only hope was that some future opportunity to re-open negotiations would present itself. If De Wet had indeed promised to be at 'Onze Rust' on the 12th (as Fichardt subsequently asserted), Steyn would surely not have adopted such a pessimistic tone. It cannot be denied that Steyn was sincere in his desire to bring about a peaceful solution and that he had spared no

67. S.C. 1-15, pp. 314-315 (Fichardt's Evidence).

68. "De Wet zegt dat terwijl hij zoals gewoonlik de Zondag stil wou houden, zag hij mannen op een kopje een eind van hem. Denkende dat zij van zijn manschappen waren, reed hij er heen en toen hij op het kopje kwam werd op hem geschoten." That De Wet had approached the kopje in the belief that it was occupied by his own men seems highly unlikely. De Wet knew that there were Government troops in the vicinity and according to his Secretary, he approached the kopje with the knowledge that it was occupied by Government troops. Oost, pp. 280-281.

69. Van der Merwe ii, p. 315; U.G. 46-16, Annexure J., p. 128; U.G. 10-15, p. 74.

efforts to attempt to achieve that end. It cannot be doubted, therefore, that he would have grasped eagerly at any evidence - no matter how flimsy - to persuade Smuts that there was still hope of a peaceful outcome. Yet Steyn in his telegram to Smuts made no mention of De Wet's promise to come to 'Onze Rust' on the 12th.

De Wet's secretary maintains that De Wet did intend to go to 'Onze Rust' on the 12th and asserts that an error had crept into the wording of Steyn's telegram. According to Oost, the sentence: "Zij rapporteren dat Generaal De Wet nu weigert te komen", should have read: "Zij rapporteren dat Generaal De Wet weigert om nu te komen".⁷⁰ But Fichardt's evidence apart, there is no justification for such an explanation. The rest of Steyn's telegram is a clear indication that he believed that De Wet had cancelled, and not merely postponed, his visit to 'Onze Rust'. A statement on the rebellion, which Steyn dictated at his leisure in 1915, confirms that view: "Zij (Fichardt and Colin Steyn) kwamen Maandag (9 November) terug en brachten mij de tijding dat Generaal De Wet nu niet van plan was te komen---".⁷¹

One can only reach the conclusion that De Wet did not promise to go to 'Onze Rust' on the 12th and that Fichardt's statement to that effect in 1915 may have been prompted by a desire to portray De Wet in the best possible light. In any case, if De Wet genuinely intended to go to Steyn, why did he deem it necessary to delay his visit to the 12th? Why did he not (on the 9th) accompany Fichardt and Colin Steyn to 'Onze Rust'? Oost maintains that De Wet postponed his visit to Steyn as a result of the change in the attitude of the opposing forces; a change which necessitated special measures being taken.⁷²

70. Oost, pp. 286-287.

71. Van der Merwe, ii, p. 318.

72. "Die generaal (De Wet) het net sy besoek aan die president vir 'n dag of vier uitgestel as gevolg van die skielike verandering in die verhouding van die teenstander te velde. Die verhouding het nou ontaard tot 'n krygstoestand. En dit het spesiale matriëls vereis." Oost, p. 286.

What 'special measures' did De Wet have in mind? Oost does not say, but De Wet's subsequent actions indicate that he had decided to move away from Bloemfontein, and judging by his actions at Winburg, to intensify his marauding activities. Winburg was occupied by De Wet's force on 9 November. The rebels looted stores and ransacked private houses; De Wet assaulted the Mayor of Winburg (Wright). In fact, according to the Magistrate of Winburg, (Raymond Harley) De Wet's men acted as if they were "a belligerent force occupying an enemy⁷³ country". Those actions were not the actions of a man who desired peace at the earliest opportunity.

On 10 November, Beyers and Van Broekhuizen arrived at 'Onze Rust'.⁷⁴ The arrival of Beyers gave Steyn renewed hope that a peaceable solution was possible. Steyn informed Smuts of Beyers's arrival and requested that he (Beyers) be given a safe-conduct to see De Wet. Smuts replied on the 11th that Botha was not in Pretoria, but that he had forwarded Steyn's telegram. On the 12th Smuts informed Steyn that the Government refused to allow Beyers to go to De Wet and that Beyers was to return to his commando. In a subsequent telegram Smuts explained his refusal by stating that he did not believe that a meeting between Beyers and De Wet could lead to peace.

73. U.G. 42-16, p.128 (Harley's Evidence). Also see Kestell, p.215; South Africa and the War, p.19; Scholtz (b), pp. 263-264. Cronje's commando which had been scattered at Doornberg, came from Winburg, and De Wet's raid on Winburg was probably intended as a reprisal.

74. Van der Merwe ii, p.316; U.G.46-16, Annexure, J, p.128. Scholtz (a), p. 372; U.G. 10-15, p. 74.

Smuts, in fact, feared that De Wet, confident and resolute as a result of the success of the rebel movement in the Free State, would persuade the discouraged and dejected Beyers to continue fighting.

That refusal virtually ended the Steyn-Smuts efforts to achieve a peaceful solution, although on 16 November Steyn made an attempt to re-open negotiations.⁷⁵ However, on the 16th Government forces attacked and defeated De Wet's force at Virginia,⁷⁶ and from Smuts's reply to Steyn on the 18th it was clear that the Government intended to suppress the rebellion by force and that they were not prepared to go beyond the conditions which they had set out in their Proclamation⁷⁷ dealing with the surrender of rebels.

One of the prime reasons for the failure of the Steyn-Smut attempts seems to have been the mutual lack of trust on the part of the opposing factions. The Government's action at Commissiedrift and the apparent duplicity in their instruction to Maritz had an important bearing on the lack of trust on the rebel side. On the other hand, while negotiations were proceeding, rebel forces were also active, particularly in the Free State. It must also be doubted, on the basis of the available evidence, whether De Wet ever seriously intended to go to Steyn. It is futile to speculate as to whether Government or Rebel forces fired the first shots in the various skirmishes while hostile armed forces were at large, clashes were virtually inevitable.

75. On 16 November J.B.Wessels was sent to Steyn by De Wet to request him to re-open negotiations. Van der Merwe ii, pp 318-319; U.G. 46-16, pp. 62-63, Annexure J, 129-130; U.G. 10-15 pp. 75-78.

76. See below, p. 198.

77. Van der Merwe ii, pp. 319-320; U.G. 46-16, p. 62; U.G. 10-15, p. 76.

C H A P T E R IX.

The Rebellion - the last Phase.

The Government decided to direct its main military efforts against the forces commanded by the chief rebel leaders, De Wet, Beyers, Kemp and Maritz. In addition to the main rebel forces, small isolated bands of rebels were in the field in the Transvaal and Free State; those bands it was decided, would be subdued by locally raised Government¹ forces.

De Wet

The successes achieved by De Wet and the strength of the rebel movement in the North-Eastern Free State, decided Botha to personally assume command of the operations against De Wet. On 10 November when he arrived at Theunissen, Botha had under his command a strong force of Transvaal Commandos under Colonel Myburgh and Tobias Smuts, a force of Free State burghers under Colonel Brand, and the South African Mounted Rifle Brigade under General Lukin; in addition Colonel Coen Brits had been summoned from the North-Western Cape and had been given command of a further Transvaal burgher force.² Botha's forces occupied Winburg on 11 November without encountering any op-³position. -De Wet's force having left the town the previous day. From Winburg De Wet had moved his force in a South-Easterly⁴ direction, to the farm Mushroom Valley. Botha was informed of de Wet's

1. South Africa and the War, (p. 18.

2. Ibid., pp. 18-19.

3. Ibid., p. 19; Trew; p. 30; Ritchie, p. 7.

4. Oost, p. 291. According to Oost, De Wet still intended to go to Steyn. But if he intended to go to Bloemfontein why did he trek in a South-Easterly and not a South-Westerly direction?

whereabouts by the owner of the farm.⁵ On the evening of the 11th, Botha moved his force out of Winburg in the direction of Mushroom Valley, some thirty miles to the South-East. Colonel Brand's force from the West and General Lukin's force⁶ from the South-West were also directed towards that point.⁷ The Rebels, who were heavily outnumbered,⁸ were defeated, but De Wet and the main portion of his force escaped through a Nek to the South.⁹ After the battle, the Government issued a proclamation stating that any rebel who voluntarily surrendered¹⁰ before 21 November, would not be criminally prosecuted, provided that he took no further part directly or indirectly in the rebellion. The amnesty did not, however, apply to people who had taken a leading part in the rebellion, or who had committed acts in violation of the rules of civilised warfare.¹¹ A number of rebels in De Wet's force took advantage of that proclamation and his force was apparently greatly depleted.

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5. Apparently the owner of the farm, Mushroom Valley, had been captured by De Wet and locked up in a room, in which there was a telephone. He contacted Botha by telephone. Trew, p.30; Also see Engelenburg, p. 315; Oost, p. 291.
 6. Botha's orders were transmitted to Brits by heliograph and he in turn transmitted them to the other leaders. There was apparently some friction between Lukin and the eccentric Brits. Trew who was with Botha, relates that Brits sent the following message to Botha: "As jy nie die verdomde Lukin hier weg neem nie dan skiet ek hom". Trew, p. 31.
 7. According to one estimate, De Wet had 2,000 men at his disposal, while the Government force numbered 20,000. Oost, pp. 294-295.
 8. 22 rebels were killed and 500-600 were captured; 6 Government soldiers were killed. Ritchie, p. 9.
 9. According to Botha's plan, Lukin should have been holding the Nek and should have prevented De Wet's escape, but Lukin failed to reach the Nek in time. Trew maintains that Botha's orders had miscarried (Trew, p.32); the authors of ^{the} Official History adopt the same view (South Africa and the War, p.19). However, Oost, who was with De Wet, maintains that the old Boer general realised what Lukin's intentions were, and managed to get most of his force through the Nek before the escape route was plugged. (Oost, pp.291-293).
 10. U.G.10-15, pp. 45-46; Buxton, p. 68.
 11. Kestell, p. 218.

On 14 November at Uintjieshoogte, East of Marquard, a meeting of De Wet's officers requested him to re-open negotiations with Steyn.¹² Jan Brand Wessels took a message to Steyn and Steyn once again communicated with Smuts, but to no avail.¹³ The Government forces in the meanwhile were ordered to drive all rebel forces Westwards, with the object of effecting a large rebel concentration.¹⁴ From Uintjieshoek De Wet trekked towards the Bloemfontein-Kroonstad railway line and attempted to cross it at Virginia. On 16 November he was attacked by a detachment of the Active Citizen Force under Lieutenant-Colonel Badenhorst. That engagement led to his force being split into two; De Wet, with the main body of his men, did however succeed in crossing the railway line and he trekked on Westwards towards the Vet River.¹⁵ The series of setbacks which he had suffered apparently decided De Wet that it was futile to trek further with his full complement. According to his biographer, he asked for twenty-five volunteers to accompany him to South-West Africa;¹⁶ according to his Secretary, he trekked away from Vet River with only twelve followers.¹⁷ His intention was to trek through the Kalahari to South-West Africa, where he hoped to obtain supplies and war materials; he then intended to return to the Free State to continue the struggle.¹⁸

On 22 November De Wet's small band crossed the Vaal River and continued moving in a Westerly direction through the

12. That request was probably largely prompted by the setback suffered at Mushroom Valley, together with ^{the} effect of the Government Proclamation. Ibid., pp. 216-217; Oost, p. 298.

13. See above, p. 195.

14. South Africa and the War, p. 19.

15. Oost, pp. 277, 327.; Kestell, p. 217; South African and the War p. 19. Boshoff (b), pp. 41-56.

16. Kestell, p. 218.

17. Oost, p. 305. Oost was one of them. The remainder of the force returned to their homes.

18. Ibid., pp. 305, 327.

Transvaal.¹⁹ Constantly harassed by Government troops, De Wet's²⁰ followers had by that time dwindled to five, but they still managed to evade capture. Near Schweizer Renske, De Wet's small band was augmented by a force of fifty men under Hans and Cornelis Wolmarans, Commandant Strydom and Commandant Japie Naser; apparently it was with reluctance that De Wet agreed²¹ to those men accompanying him. On 27 November De Wet crossed the Bechuanaland railway line near Devondale, 18 miles North²² of Vryburg. Government forces under Coen Brits, aided by motor cars were pressing De Wet hard. Government forces had seized the main water-holes but De Wet and his men, enduring²³ fearful privations, tekke²⁴ on. On 1 December, however, on the farm Waterburg, in the Kuruman District, De Wet's men were surrounded by a Government force under Colonel J.F. Jordaan and compelled to surrender.

Beyers.

After his visit to 'Onze Rust' Beyers rejoined his Commando at Bultfontein on 12 November. On 16 and 17 November his Commando was attacked by a Government force under Colonel Celliers at Verhelslaagte (12 miles West of Bultfontein).

19. Ibid., p. 305.

20. Ibid., p. 327.

21. Ibid., pp. 324, 327-328; Kestell, p. 220.

22. Oost, p. 329; Kestell, p. 221; South Africa and the War, p. 21.

23. Some of De Wet's men tried to quench their thirst by killing a horse and drinking its blood; others drank their urine. Oost, p. 338; Sampson, p. 202.

24. Oost, pp. 339-348; U.G. 42-16, pp. 176-178 (Evidence of J.F. Jordaan); Kestell, pp. 223-224. According to Oost, De Wet, after he had surrendered, asked the opposing officers: "Is julle Engelse of Afrikaners?" When told that they were Afrikaners, De Wet said: "God dank dan het die Engelse my tog nooit gevang nie." (Oost, p. 346).

The sharp, running fight which ensued developed into a rebel²⁵ rout. With the remnants of his force, Beyers moved Eastwards and crossed the railway line between Kroonstad and Vereengigin. Between Ventersburg and Senekal they received reinforcements. After Government forces had again attacked them on 1 December, Beyers with a small band of 23 men moved off in a Northerly²⁶ direction.

It was Beyers's intention to reach Schweizer Reneke, where²⁷ he hoped to receive some news from Kemp. On 8 December the rebel band came into contact with a small Government force under Field-Cornet De Necker, in the Hoopstad District. The rebels were pursued to the farm, 'Greyling's Request', about twenty-five miles South of Maguassi, on the Transvaal side of the Vaal River. Beyers's men retreated to the banks of the river only to find that there was a Government force on a ridge on the opposite bank of the river. As the rebels were surrounded and outnumbered, capture seemed certain. Beyers and one of his men, Jan Pieterse, nevertheless attempted to cross the river on horseback. Both men got into difficulties and disappeared beneath the water. To eyewitnesses on both the rebel and Government sides, it appeared as if Beyers and Pieterse had been shot, but a post-mortem examination carried out on their bodies subsequently, showed no signs of bullet²⁸ wounds. The rest of the small rebel band, including Van²⁹ Broekhuizen surrendered.

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25. In addition to some losses (killed and wounded) 487 rebel were captured (259 of those surrendered voluntarily). South Africa and the War, p.20; Scholtz (a), p. 378.
26. Scholtz (a), pp. 378-379.
27. Boshoff (a), p. 107.
28. Beyers's body was found on 10 December and Pieterse's body was found the next day. Smuts refused to give permission for Beyers's body to be brought to Pretoria for burial and he and Pieterse were buried in the Maguassi District. Boshoff (b), pp. 98, 102, 107.
29. Boshoff (a), pp. 114-118, (b), pp. 74-96, (b), pp. 98-102; U.G. 42-16, p. 273 (Evidence of P.H. De Necker); U.G. 46-16, p. 64.

Maritz and Kemp.

On 17 October Maritz and the German authorities in South West Africa signed the provisional agreement which had been drawn up on 7 October.³⁰ It is not clear whether that agreement was ever ratified by the Imperial German Government in Berlin.³¹

Maritz then sent two detachments to attempt to stir up rebellion in the North-Western districts of the Cape. Kenhardt was occupied without resistance and rebel bands under Major Ben Coetzee and Captain Louw entered the Calvinia and Carnarvon districts. Both missions failed, for by 26 October both detachments had been compelled to surrender by strong Government forces.³²

Maritz's position at Kakamas was hardly a strong one. There were daily desertions of his men and some of his officers appeared to be wavering. The German Officers who formed part of Maritz's force were particularly concerned at the situation and were anxious that some of their guns might be captured. An interview took place between Andries De Wet, Colonel Hansdenk and Maritz, and Maritz was plainly told that he must either fight or give up his plans. Maritz replied that: "he wished to wait a little longer to see if he could not get any tidings from the Transvaal or Orange Free State because if the people there did not rise he could not go on with his plans and he would only be the means of killing a few people without any beneficial result!" The outcome of the interview was that Maritz reluctantly agreed to attack the Government force at Keimoes.³³ The rebel attack on Keimoes on 22 October was a half-

30. See above, p. 141; Oelhafen, pp. 51-52.

31. Oelhafen maintains that Berlin ratified it on the same day by radio telegram (Oelhafen, p. 54). Seitz, however, maintains that the Windhoek wireless station could not contact Berlin and that he was not able to give the rebels the assurance that the German Government supported their uprising. (Seitz (a), p. 37).

32. Kemp, p. 241; U.G. 46-16, pp. 27-28.

33. U.G. 42-16, pp. 76-77 (P. De Wet's Evidence); U.G. 46-16, p. 28; Maritz, pp. 78-79. Maritz maintains that he only agreed to the attack when it became apparent that the Government

hearted affair and was called off after Maritz had been wounded in the knee.³⁴ Maritz retreated to Kakamas and from there he went to Jerusalem in German South-West Africa, where he spent two weeks in hospital recovering from his wound.³⁵ The rest of Maritz's force (commanded by Stadler) was pursued by Colonel Coen Brits and a further skirmish took place on 24 October near Kakamas. Kakamas was reoccupied by Government forces on 26 October.³⁶ Those setbacks so disillusioned Maritz that he had decided to disband his commando; before he could do that, however, he received the news of the outbreak of the rebellion in the Transvaal and the Free State, and he then decided to continue the struggle.³⁷ Nevertheless he took no further aggressive action until the arrival of Kemp and his commando.

Kemp, it will be recalled, had left Vleeskraal on 2 November with a force of 610 men, with the intention of getting through to Maritz.³⁸ Kemp occupied Schweizer Reneke and held a meeting. He told the people that he was protesting against the Government's war policy and that any men who sympathised with his aims would be welcome to join his force; he advised all others to quietly return to their homes. To cloak his true intentions he told the meeting that he was going to join De Wet's commando and to substantiate that statement he moved

34. Maritz, pp. 78-79; Kemp, p. 241; Oost, p. 92.

35. Maritz, p. 79; Oost, pp. 92-93.

36. Kemp, p. 241; South Africa and the War, p. 17.

37. Maritz, p. 79; Kemp, p. 241; U.G. 42-16, pp. 76-77.

38. See above, p. 179.

his commando off in an Easterly direction, towards Carolina. As soon as it became dark he swung his column round and they trekked in a Northerly direction along the dry Harts River to Kuruman.³⁹

His commando had been augmented and numbered 720 men when he left Schweizer Reneke, but they were badly armed.⁴⁰ At Kuruman, Kemp's force came into contact with a small Government force of 75 men under Captain J.P.Frylinck and a skirmish ensued. Kemp camped some three miles outside the town and sent an ultimatum to the local authorities demanding the surrender of Government property in the town; the so-called 'town guard' were disarmed and the rebels obtained additional rifles and ammunition. After cutting the telegraph wires the rebel force moved on.⁴¹

From now on Kemp experienced great difficulties - to the hardships of a scarcity of food and water, were added the harassing attacks of Government forces.⁴² On 14 November they reached Taungs only to find that there were only limited supplies of water and no fodder for the horses.⁴³

The Government had in the meanwhile been taking steps to prevent Kemp's force getting through to Maritz. Local troops were raised in the districts through which it was assumed the rebel force would travel and Colonel Boucher's force at Upington was strengthened. Some nine thousand men were sent to Upington via Prieska, and Botha, after the battle of Mushroom Valley, left the Free State and came up to the North-Western Cape, to

39. Kemp, pp. 308-311.

40. Only about two-thirds of the force was armed (with a miscellaneous assortment of rifles) and they had little ammunition. Ibid., p. 312.

41. Ibid., pp. 312-317; South Africa and the War, pp. 20-21; U.G. 42-16, pp. 92-94 (Evidence of J.P.Frylinck).

42. Kemp, pp. 320-322; South Africa and the War, p. 21.

43. Kemp, p. 322.

personally supervise operations against Kemp.⁴⁴

On 16 November the rebels repulsed an attack by 300 Government troops led by Commandant Van Zyl.⁴⁵ Kemp continued his advance and attempted to cross the Orange River at Kheis, but found that the area was occupied by the Natal Light Horse under Colonel Royston. A sharp skirmish developed and Kemp⁴⁶ was forced to pursue a more Northerly route towards Upington. A member of Kemp's force, Russel,⁴⁷ asked to be sent forward with a report to Maritz. As Kemp did not trust him, he sent Russel forward with a letter to Maritz telling him that he intended to attack Upington.⁴⁸ Needless to say that was not Kemp's intention at all; in fact he intended to get through to South-West Africa by moving his force North of Upington.

Kemp had heard that Maritz had been wounded and that he was in South-West Africa.⁴⁹ Government troops were, however, massing in Kemp's path and his chances of reaching South-West Africa seemed slight. On 23 November mist helped the rebels to elude large Government forces and Kemp took the fullest advantage of it by leading his men on a forced night march of 30 miles. His men who had had no water for a considerable time seemed at the end of their tether; they threw away their coats and even their rifles.⁵⁰ On the 25th they approached

44. South Africa and the War, pp. 18-19; Trew, p. 37; Ritchie, p. 1.
45. Kemp, pp. 326-328; South Africa and the War, p. 21.
46. Kemp, pp. 331-334; South Africa and the War, p. 21.
47. Russel, a rather mysterious individual, came from the Lichtenburg District. Kemp did not trust him and the Government considered him to be a German spy.
48. Russel went to Upington and when the letter was discovered he was sentenced to death as a spy and executed. Kemp, p. 339.
49. Ibid., p. 342.
50. Ibid., pp. 340-342.

Rooibdam, where it was hoped water could be obtained. As a Government force had occupied the place, a sharp skirmish developed - the Government force was driven off, not without⁵¹ rebel losses, and the rebels were able to get to the water. Shortly after that engagement, however, fresh Government troops under Colonel Bouwer attacked Kemp's force, and surrounded them. Bouwer informed Botha (who had arrived at Upington) by heliograph, that Kemp's position was hopeless and that he would have to surrender in the morning.⁵² During the night, however, Kemp's force managed to slip through the Government cordon and to move further towards the border.⁵³ On 26 November, in the vicinity of Zwartmodder, Kemp's force was met by a detachment of Maritz's men and on 28 November Maritz and Kemp met near Nakob.⁵⁴ Kemp's force then crossed the border into South-West Africa.

Kemp's journey from Vleeskraal to Zwartmodder was undoubtedly a military feat of the highest order. He had had to pass through territory occupied by overwhelming enemy forces; he had had no food or water dumps laid out ahead of him and the nature of the terrain his men had to traverse was

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51. Ibid., pp. 346-349. According to Kemp, 122 of his force were captured and 3 killed.
52. Trew, p. 38.
53. Ibid., p.39-40; Kemp, p.350; South Africa and the War, p.21 Botha, according to Trew, who was with him, was extremely angry that Kemp had been allowed to escape. (Also personal information from Mr. Harm Oost, who received his information from Bouwer). Bouwer was made the scapegoat and on 2 December Van Deventer took over the command at Upington.
54. Kemp, pp. 354-358; Maritz, pp. 79-80; Also see U.G.46-16, p.43 for an account of Kemp's Trek as a whole. (This account was partly based on a diary kept by J.J. Heyneke, who accompanied Kemp. The diary was picked up at Upington on 24 January, 1915).

rough and often desert-like. So arduous had the journey been, and so badly equipped were Kemp's forces, that there was no thought of their embarking on immediate offensive action.

In the first week of December, Kemp and Maritz, together with some of their officers, met the German Governor Seitz at Keetmanshoop. According to Kemp, Seitz told them that in the event of the rebellion being successful, the German Kaiser had promised to recognise their independence; they were also promised arms and ammunition, and were informed by the German authorities that the sum of £10,000 would be put at their disposal. According to Seitz's own account, he, at that stage had high hopes that the rebellion would succeed, and that as a result German South-West Africa would be safe from an attack from the Union. By means of radio he attempted to contact Admiral Von Spee's East Asian Squadron operating off the coast of South America, with the object of getting it to occupy Luderitzbucht harbour. On 10 December, however, Seitz received the news that Von Spee's Squadron had been defeated by Sturdee off the Falkland Islands.

On 16 December Maritz issued a Manifesto, addressed to the people of South Africa, proclaiming the republic and announcing that the provisional Government would consist of Generals C.F. Beyers, C. De Wet, Maritz, Kemp and A.P. Bezuidenhout. On 21 December Maritz and Kemp launched a successful attack on Nous; the rebels took 282 prisoners and obtained valuable

55. 3 December according to Oelhafen (Oelhafen, p. 95); 5 December according to Seitz (Seitz (a), p. 34); 6 December according to Kemp (Kemp, p. 369).

56. Kemp, p. 369. Seitz makes no mention of that assurance; on the contrary he states that he never received any instructions from Berlin in connection with the Boer Rebels. Seitz (a), p. 37.

57. Kemp, p. 369. According to Kemp, the rebels did not accept that offer of money, but only took £1. for each burgher and between £2.10. and £5. for each officer.

58. Seitz (a). pp. 34-35.

59. Maritz, p. 80, pp. 188-190; U.G. 46-16, pp. 67-68. Maritz did, of course, not know that by that date Beyers had been drowned and De Wet captured.

supplies. At Nous the rebels found a telegram telling of the capture of De Wet and a newspaper telling of Beyers's death. On 18 January 1915, a successful rebel attack was launched on Iutzputs; the rebels' hopes of further successes were, however, dashed when they learnt from the captured troop that the rebellion in the Union had been crushed.

On 23 January Maritz and Kemp advanced against the Government stronghold at Upington. Maritz and Kemp had, ~~however~~, decided, without consulting their German allies, that they would first attempt to negotiate with General J. Van Deventer, who was in command of the Government forces at Upington. A parlementaire, Captain Henry Williams, was sent to Van Deventer asking for terms of surrender. When Williams did not return immediately, the rebels attacked Upington on 24 January. After six hours fighting the rebels had suffered heavy losses: one of their most talented leaders, Stadler, had been killed, 70 of their men had been captured and the attack had been repulsed. The representative of the German Governor, Von Zastrouw, still not aware of the attempts which had been made to surrender, then suggested that he should return to German territory to obtain reinforcements; according to Kemp, Maritz did not approve of that plan. Instead Maritz sent a further letter to Van Deventer stating that he was

60. Kemp, p. 373; Maritz, p. 81; South Africa and the War, p. 24. The authors of the Official War History commented that Nous was captured "in circumstances reflecting small credit to the Union troops concerned."

61. Kemp, p. 375.

62. Ibid., p. 381; Maritz, p. 82; U.G. 42-16, p. 78.

63. Kemp, p. 390.

64. He was detained by Van Deventer pending the receipt of telegraphic instructions from Pretoria.

65. Kemp, pp. 386-389; Maritz, p. 82. South Africa and the War, p. 24. Maritz maintained that one of the reasons why the attack failed was that Stadler disobeyed orders.

66. Kemp, p. 390.

disposed to surrender, but requesting a conference to discuss terms of surrender. Van Deventer sent Williams back with the reply that Smuts had informed him that only an unconditional surrender would be accepted by the Government; the rebel leaders would have to stand trial before the Courts, and after sentence had been passed, the Government would consider whether the sentences would be reduced; voluntary surrender on the part of the rebels, in an attempt to avoid further bloodshed, would be a factor which would be borne in mind by the Government in considering sentences.⁶⁷ On 26 January⁶⁸ Maritz once again requested a meeting with Van Deventer. Van Deventer acceded to that request and on 30 January, Maritz, Kemp and Bezuidenhout met Van Deventer half way between Christiana and Upington and they agreed that their commandos would surrender unconditionally.⁶⁹ They returned to their commandos and Kemp and his commando returned to Upington and surrendered on 2 February. Maritz refused to surrender the German guns to Van Deventer⁷⁰ and he did not accompany his commando when they returned to surrender - instead he went⁷¹ to Windhoek and from there he went to Angola.

Other Rebel Bands.

In addition to the main rebel forces, isolated bands of rebels seldom in contact with the chief leaders, were active

67. Maritz, pp. 184-186; Kemp, pp. 390-392; U.G. 46-16, pp. 69-70.

68. Maritz, pp. 186-187; U.G. 46-16, p. 71.

69. Kemp, p. 394; Maritz, p. 83; U.G. 46-16, p. 71. According to Maritz, Smuts (through Van Deventer) offered him the following three possible courses of action:
 (a) He could take up his Commission again.
 (b) He could leave the country.
 (c) He could surrender and receive his punishment.
 It is of course unlikely in the extreme that Smuts offered to re-instate him in the Union Defence Force.

70. Maritz, p. 83; Seitz (a), p. 35.

71. Maritz, p. 85.

in the Transvaal and Free State. In the Free State the rebel cause had received most support in the North-Eastern part of the province, where rebel commandos under the command of Wessel Wessels, Niklaas Serfontein (M.P. for Reitz) and Dawid Van Coller, had been active since 22 October. In the Transvaal rebel bands under the command of General C.H. Muller, to the East of Pretoria, and Major J.J. Pienaar and Commandant 'Jopie' Fourie, to the North of Pretoria, had also been active.

Initially it had been the policy of the Government to direct its main military efforts against De Wet, Beyers and Kemp and to deal with the other rebel forces by means of locally raised troops. By the end of November, however, when the main rebel forces had been defeated, captured or temporarily immobilised, Botha turned his attention to the smaller bands of rebels.⁷²

After Kemp had eluded the Government forces, Botha left Upington on 29 November and reached Kroonstad on the evening of 30 November where he had a consultation with Smuts, who had come from Pretoria for that purpose.⁷³ On 1 December Botha left for Bethlehem where he interviewed, and received reports, from his generals and commandants,⁷⁴ prior to moving against rebel forces under Wessels in the vicinity of Reitz.⁷⁵ Wessels had previously (on 15 November) made an effort to enlist the sympathy of the Basutos for the rebel cause and in certain eventualities ("in case the British arm the coolies") to

72. South Africa and the War, pp. 18, 22.

73. Ibid., p. 22.

74. Lukin, Tobias Smuts, Dirk Van Deventer, Fouché and Manie Botha.

75. Ritchie, p. 13.

76

obtain their armed co-operation; the letters had, however, been intercepted by the police on the Basutoland border.

On 2 December, in driving rain, Government forces began a concentrated attack on Reitz, which was evacuated by the rebels without any resistance.⁷⁷ On 5 December Wessels opened negotiations for surrender with Botha, but requested that De Wet should first be consulted.⁷⁸ On 8 December Wessels, Serfontein and Van Collier surrendered unconditionally to Botha at Tiger River.⁷⁹ With their surrender the rebellion was virtually at an end in the Free State.

The rebels operating to the East of Pretoria were led by C.H. Muller, who had been a General in the Anglo-Boer War. After

76. The letters to Chiefs Lutsaanie, Griffiths and Joel read as follows:

"I approach you herewith to inform you that we shall place no guards on the Basuto border on the understanding that we can rest assured that you and your people will remain quiet.

We wish to carry on a war of white people against white people and only in case the British arm the coolies do we reckon on your then desirable help.

We guarantee to you, seeing that we are assured of conquering the British, your independence and the unhindered possession of your country on condition that you remain quiet until we desire you to do otherwise.

----- Spread this news as widely as possible in Basutoland, particularly that we stand on the side of the German Government and Emperor William whose troops and cannon are already on the way to meet us in order to join with us". U.G. 46-16, p. 54; South Africa and the War, p. 22. Also see Oost, pp. 370-371.

77. Ritchie, p. 14.

78. Wessels was not aware of the fact that De Wet had already been captured.

79. U.G. 46-16, p. 57; U.G. 10-15, pp. 57-60; South Africa and the War, p. 23.

the War (in 1907) Muller had become one of the directors of the Land Bank and also a member of the Land Council. In 1913, Beyers had placed him in charge of the commando organisation in the Lydenburg District. Muller had attended the meeting of Transvaal Commandants in Pretoria on 14 August. He had not approved of the Government's war policy, but when he was interviewed by Botha he had reassured him of his support. After Maritz had gone into rebellion, Muller was instructed to commandeer 100 men in his district. He left for Lydenburg, but as a result of some remarks he made in which he expressed his disapproval of the Government's policy, he was summoned to Pretoria where he was interviewed by Botha, and he was subsequently dismissed as Commandant of the Lydenburg District. Despite attempts made by Botha, and Muller's friend, Major J.P. Meyer, to dissuade him from going into rebellion he left Pretoria on 24 October. He organised a meeting at Kleinfontein, near Bronkhorstspuit on 26 October. Speeches were delivered by Muller, Rev. H.C.M. Fourie (the local parson) and Captain J.M.A. Wolmarans (an ex-officer of the Staatsartillerie). The gist of the speeches was that they should protest against the Government's war policy and that they should use their opportunity to recover their republican independence. The small gathering of 54 men elected Muller as their General and Fourie and Wolmarans as their Commandants. Muller sent two messengers to Beyers to discover his plans and orders were given that the police at Bronkhorstspuit were to be disarmed. By 5 November Muller's Commando had grown to over 200 men. The messengers who had gone to Beyers returned

80. Muller, pp. 191-192.

81. U.G. 42-16, p. 351 (Botha's Evidence).

82. Muller, pp. 197-198; Oost, p. 207; U.G. 42-16, p. 360.

83. U.G. 42-16, pp. 87-89 (J.P. Meyer's Evidence), 360 (Botha's Evidence).

84. Muller, p. 199; Oost, p. 210; U.G. 42-16, pp. 227-228.

85. Muller, pp. 199; Oost, p. 210.

with the news of the Commissiedrift Skirmish; they also brought a message from Major J.J.Pienaar stating that "Muller would know what to do next"⁸⁶. Muller then moved his commando forward and they spent the night at the Albert Silver Mine.⁸⁷ The next day (5 November) Government troops attacked the rebels in that vicinity inflicting heavy casualties and capturing 70 prisoners (including Fourie, who was wounded). The rest of Muller's force managed to escape, but two days later they were again defeated and the majority were captured. Muller, badly wounded in the leg, managed to escape but he was captured a few days later.⁸⁸ With the capture of Muller's Commando the rebellion to the East of Pretoria was at an end.

The rebel bands operating to the North of Pretoria were not subdued as easily. In fact they caused the Government such anxiety that at one time it was contemplated that the Governor-General and the greater part of the Cabinet should go to Cape Town - it was feared that Pretoria might be isolated from the rest of the Union.⁸⁹ Those rebel bands operating in the Northern Transvaal were under the command of Major J.J.Pienaar and Commandant Josef ('Jopie') Fourie. Pienaar had been an officer in the Union Defence Force, but he had resigned his commission before the outbreak of war.⁹⁰ He had been with Beyers at Damhoek and when Beyers had gone to Commissiedrift on 26 October, he had been left in charge of the burghers who had remained at Damhoek; he had been given the rank of General by Beyers.⁹¹ 'Jopie' Fourie had as a young man fought in the Anglo-Boer War. When the Union Defence Force

86. Muller, p. 199; Oost, pp. 211-212.

87. The Natal Carbineers and a Detachment of Police.

88. Muller, pp. 200-203; U.G. 42-16, pp. 227-228; U.G. 46-16, pp. 64-66; Oost, pp. 212-218; South Africa and the War, p. 22.

89. Buxton, p. 61.

90. U.G. 46-16, p. 34; Personal information received from Gen. J.J.Pienaar. His main reason for resigning was that he objected to the way in which the Union Defence Force was being drawn into the orbit of Imperial defence.

91. Personal information from Gen. J.J.Pienaar; Oost, p. 209.

had been formed in 1912 he had been offered a commission by Beyers. Fourie had declined that offer, however, as he felt that the leg wound which he had sustained in the Anglo-Boer War would hamper him in the execution of his duties. He therefore carried on as a farmer and a Government inspector, but he did accept a Commission (a Captaincy) in the Active Citizen Force. He had been involved in the fracas at the Opera House on 10 October. On 24 October Botha summoned him and wished him to go to his district to inquire how many of his burghers supported Beyers; he refused to go, and instead he went to Klipfontein where he joined the rebel commando led by Pienaar.⁹² Fourie did not resign from the Active Citizen Force and when he was questioned about that by one of his fellow-rebels, he replied as follows: "Waarom? Dis nie nodig nie, ons gaan nie veg nie, die Regering sal met ons onderhandel. Dink jy Generaal Botha sal op sy eie mense skiet? Ons protesteer wel met gewere maar dis maar die Boer se gewoonte - En dan verder, ek het nooit iets by my aanstelling as offisier van die Burg⁹³ermag geteken nie en ek trek as offisier ook geen salaris nie."⁹³

On 30 October, Pienaar's commando was attacked by Government troops at Zoutspansdrift, but the attack was repulsed. From that date onwards, however, the rebels in the Northern Transvaal were isolated to such an extent that they had no knowledge of the progress of the rebellion in other parts of the Union.⁹⁴ In the latter part of November and early December, Fourie was particularly active in skirmishes against government forces. Particularly fierce engagements in which heavy

92. J.M. De Wet, pp. 58-59 , 69-74, 76-77.

93. Ibid. , p. 85.

94. Ibid. , pp. 86-87; Personal information received from Gen.J.J.Pienaar.

casualties were sustained by both sides took place at Warmbaths and at Rondefontein (near Hammanskraal).⁹⁵ It was the intention of both Fourie and Pienaar to try to get through to German South-West Africa.⁹⁶ The Government was, however, organising forces to deal with these rebel bands, the last of any consequence operating in the Transvaal. On 15 December a force composed of 200 Mounted police and 100 members of the South African Mounted Rifles, together with 200 Active Citizen Force men, moved out of Pretoria towards Roodekoppies, on the Crocodile River. The Government force was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonels N.J. Pretorius and H.F. Trew.⁹⁷ At 4.30p.m. on 16 December, the rebel force was discovered entrenched in a donga, on the farm Nooitgedacht. A sharp engagement lasting only some fifty minutes resulted in the defeat and capture of most of the rebel force, including 'Jopie' Fourie; Pienaar, however, managed to escape, but he too was captured shortly afterwards.⁹⁸

'Jopie' Fourie and his younger brother Johannes were brought to Pretoria where they were tried before a Court Martial on charges of treason, on the grounds that being officers of the Union Defence Force,⁹⁹ they had gone into armed rebellion. Evidence was led as to their appointment as officer in the Defence Force and to their participation in attacks on Government forces. 'Jopie' Fourie made a speech explaining why he had gone into rebellion. He declared that he had been

95. U.G.46-16,p.66; South Africa and the War,p.22; J.M. De Wet, pp. 87-90.

96. J.M. De Wet, p. 91; Personal information received from General J.J.Pienaar.

97. Trew, p. 44; South Africa and the War, p. 23.

98. Trew,pp.45-49; Ritchie,pp.17-19; J.M.De Wet,p.91; U.G.46-1 p. 66; South Africa and the War, p. 23.

99. Their regiment, the Botha Ruiters, had been called up for active service on 29 October. J.M. De Wet, p. 122.

against the attack on German South-West Africa because he could not see why South Africa should go to war against Germany; he also could not see why any Afrikaner lives should be offered to the benefit of, or to uphold the honour of England. "The Afrikaners", he declared, "owe very little to Great Britain." He cited the examples of Slachter's Nek and the Concentration camps. As far as the Government was concerned, he stated: "I am disappointed in the Government - There is talk of equal rights. Go to the gaol and take an ordinary receipt for a pipe and see if there is a single Dutch word on it. Where are the equal rights?". His brother, he said, acted under his influence. As far as he himself was concerned: "I am not asking the Court for mercy - the mercy of God, who led me is enough - but I ask the Court to treat mercifully the men who acted under me".

The verdict of the Court was that 'Jopie' Fourie be shot
 at daybreak;¹⁰⁰ Johannes Fourie was sentenced to five years
 hard labour.¹⁰¹

A Petition asking that 'Jopie' Fourie's life be spared was hastily drawn up and hundreds of signatures were obtained. A deputation consisting of Fourie's advocate, three ministers
 of the Dutch Reformed Church and Jan Joubert (son of General
 P.J.Joubert)¹⁰² went to Irene on the afternoon of 19 December¹⁰³ to present it to Smuts. They were not successful in seeing Smuts, and it appears as if he deliberately avoided the

100. Dr. Gey Van Pittius, 'Jopie' Fourie's advocate had no doubt, after the evidence had been presented that the death sentence would be passed. Malan, p. 22.

101. J.M. De Wet, pp. 103-106.

102. Rev. Bosman, Dr. D.F.Malan and Rev. C.Neethling.

103. Fourie was due to be executed the following morning.

104

deputation. At 5 a.m. on the morning of Sunday, 20 December 'Jopie' Fourie was executed by a firing squad.¹⁰⁵

106

That 'Jopie' Fourie has come to be regarded as one of the martyrs of Afrikanerdom is partly due to the fact that he was the only one of the rebels to be sentenced to death. The seriousness of his actions in war-time and while a state of martial law existed, cannot be denied. Indeed it cannot be doubted that in most countries at that time, the death sentence would have been pronounced under like circumstances. If

104. Dr.D.F.Malan, who was a member of the deputation described their experiences as follows:- "By sy huis aangekom, meld ons ons aan en vra Genl.Smuts te spreek. Die antwoord was dat hy nie tuis was nie, maar vir 'n lang wandeling in die veld uitgegaan het. Toe ons later vra om Mev.Smuts te sien, kry ons tot antwoord dat sy nie tuis was nie, hoewel 'n seuntjie wat buite gespeel het, ons net tevore meegedeel het dat sy moeder binne besig was om die 'baby' aan die slaap to maak. Na 'n tyd word ons weer van binne meegedeel dat ons nie hoeft te wag nie, omdat die Generaal nie na sy huis sou terugkeer nie. 'n Motor sou hom dan in die veld opgelaa en na Pretoria geneem het. Op ons vraag hoe hulle dit dan t wete kon kom as hy nie eers weer uit die veld na sy huis gekom het nie, kon geen verstaanbare antwoord verkry word nie. Teleurgestel moes ons deputasie toe na Pretoria terugkeer, met die oortuiging ten minste van een lid, te wete myself, dat Genl.Smuts wel deeglik in sy huis op Irene was, maar hom opsetlik skuilgehou het. Ds.Bosman het egter onderneem om te probeer om in Pretoria nog daardie selfde aand kontak met hom te verkry. Soos hy egter later aan ons gerapporteer het, het die kantoor van die eerste Minister gesê dat hy by die Pretoria Club was, waar hy gewoonlik tuis gegaan het, en die klub weer het gesê dat hy by sy kantoor was. Ons was magteloos". (Malan, pp. 22-23).

Smuts's version, given at the S.A.P.Congress in 1915, does not invalidate Malan's version. Smuts's version was as follows:- "For months he had not been at his home but had lived at his office. On that Saturday afternoon, for the first time, he visited his home and after a while he went for a walk over the farm. While he was out certain gentlemen came to see him, but they did not say for what purpose. He, however, telephoned to Irene to stop the deputation but he could not get them. That evening he returned to Pretoria, the sentence had been pronounced and he went through the papers. He confirmed the sentence". (S.A.P. Speeches, p. 21)

105. J.M. De Wet, p. 115.

106. See ^{for example,} ~~inter alia~~ Malan, p.24; Oost, pp.303-304; Scholtz(b) pp.218,296; J.M. De Wet, passim.

Fourie's case is considered in isolation, one cannot dispute the validity of the sentence. It is when one compares his sentence with the lenient sentences pronounced on other rebel leaders - men who had played a far more important rôle in fomenting the rebellion, and in some cases men who had actively co-operated in arms with the Germans - that Fourie's sentence appears excessively harsh. Smuts, in 1915, referred to 'Jopie' Fourie's case as follows: "--- the case was being used throughout the Union to blacken the name of the Government and to abuse him personally as a murderer. Fourie was a Captain in the Defence Force. He was called out with his regiment. Instead of answering the call, he went into rebellion, and that a couple of days after he had discussed matters with General Botha and himself. Fourie went into rebellion and took his men into rebellion with him. He was responsible for more bloodshed than any other rebel officer --- In the first week of December the rebellion was over and only the gang of 'Jopie' Fourie remained in the field. A small commando with some police was sent to capture Fourie (Beyers had meanwhile been drowned and De Wet had surrendered without bloodshed). On Dingaan's Day Fourie came across this force and killed twelve men at Nooitgedacht. That was a week after the end of the rebellion. Some of the men had been shot point-blank. As Minister of Defence he bore a certain responsibility and he was not afraid of accepting that responsibility. ----- He would not have been fit to occupy the position he did, if he had not acted as he had done. For the other rebels something might have been said, but there was nothing to be

107. Actually Fourie had already rebelled when his regiment was called up. Fourie joined Pienaar's force on 25 October; his regiment was called up on 29 October. See above, pp. 213-214

108. It is difficult to ascertain whether Fourie did in fact persuade members of his regiment, serving under him, to go into rebellion.

109. Smuts's interpolation.

110
said for Fourie".

Smuts's reasons for the execution of 'Jopie' Fourie seem to be threefold:-

- i) That he was a member of the Defence Force when he went into rebellion.
- ii) That he was responsible for more bloodshed than any other rebel officer.
- iii) That he carried on fighting after the other rebel leaders had been defeated or had surrendered.

The fact that Fourie had not resigned from the Defence Force meant that he was tried by a Court Martial, whereas the other leaders were tried by Special Courts. But were the two Fouries the only members of the Defence Force to rebel without first resigning? It has not been possible to definitely ascertain whether that was so or not, but it seems extremely unlikely.
111

While it would appear that Fourie fought in a more resolute and determined manner than most other rebel leaders, it is extremely unlikely that he caused more bloodshed than any other rebel officer;
112
in any case in some of the engagements against Government forces, Fourie was serving under Pienaar's command.

As far as Smuts's third reason is concerned, Fourie did not know that the other rebel leaders had surrendered and, in any

110. S.A.P. Speeches, pp. 20-21.

111. Mr. Harm Oost maintains that there were other rebels who had not resigned from the Defence Force (Personal information received from Mr. Oost). Oswald Pirow seems to imply the same thing: "This Anglo-Boer War veteran was no more and no less guilty than any other defence force officer who went into rebellion". (Pirow, p. 72). Also see A.R. Walker's Diary: "--Only two prisoners were taken. Both had deserted from the Defence Force and still wore the uniform". A.R. Walker's Diary, 17th November, 1914.

112. Oswald Pirow states: "He certainly had caused far fewer casualties than for example General Kemp, who later was a member of the Union Cabinet for more than fifteen years" (Pirow, p. 72).

case, Kemp and Maritz (supported by German troops) were engaged in military operations against Government forces as late as 24 January 1915.

A more convincing explanation of Fourie's execution will only be possible when the archives on this period are made available for research purposes. ¹¹³ On the basis of the available evidence, it is at this stage only possible to put forward tentative theories. It is possible that the Government originally intended further death sentences to be pronounced on rebel leaders, but that the effect that Fourie's execution ¹¹⁴ had on public opinion, persuaded them to abandon that scheme.

The Sentences.

In March 1915 the Union Parliament passed 'The Indemnity

113. At the end of 1964.

114. Oost has stated the following: "die uitleg van daardie beleidsverandering van die regering wat betref die lot van die gevange leiers, word verklaar deur 'n rapport wat afkomstig is van 'n amptenaar (When Mr. Oost was personally questioned about the matter he could not recall who the official was). Hy was op 'n kabinets vergadering aanwesig waar daardie kwessie behandel is. --- Mr. Harry Van Heerden (Landbou) -- sê: "Ek hoor die plan is om nog meer mense (behalwe Jopie) dood te maak". Genls. Botha en Smuts bevestig dit. Van Heerden (sê): "Ek gee kennis dat ek my ontslag as minister sal indien". Sir Jacobus De Villiers Graaff, Minister sonder portfeuille steun Van Heerden en verklaar dat ook hy sal bedank. -- Die Kabinet het naderhand besluit dat die rebel - prisoniers nie meer voor 'n krygshof sal verskyn nie, maar dat spesiale howe oor hulle sal moet regsprek en dat daardie howe nie die reg sal hê om die doodstraf op te lê nie." (Oost, p. 302).

According to Dr. D. F. Malan: "--- daar gegronde rede was om aan te neem dat 'Jopie' Fourie nie die enigste sou wees wat vir sy protesterende daad sy lewe sou moes opoffer nie. Soos later geblyk het, was die name vryelik genoem ook van Jack Pienaar --- en van Generaals Manie Maritz, Kemp en Wessel Wessels. ---

Die vergadering (van die Raad van die Kerke) (het) 'n besluit aangeneem om die Regering dringend te versoek om geen verdere gevange rebelle dood te skiet nie. Dit, tesame met die geweldige indruk wat die teregstelling van Jopie Fourie op die volk gemaak het, het ongetwyfeld lewens gered." (Malan, pp. 26, 29).

and Special Tribunals Act, 1915¹¹⁵; which indemnified the Government for acts done in suppression of the rebellion and embodied the policy to be employed in punishing the rebels. The labour troubles in July 1914 had given rise to 'The Riotous Assemblies and Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1914¹¹⁶. which provided for a Special Court of not less than two and not more than three judges of the Supreme Court to try cases arising out of a national emergency - this was to provide the machinery for trying the rebels. Act No. 11 of 1915 laid downⁱⁿ some detail the policy to be followed in punishing the rebels. A distinction was drawn between the leaders and the rank-and-file. If the leaders were found guilty of high treason, the maximum penalties were to be imprisonment for life and a fine not exceeding £5000. The death penalty was not prescribed unless they had committed murder and would have been guilty of the crime under the common law. For the rank-and-file, who had not surrendered under the Amnesty Proclamation, and for those people who were found guilty only of seditious or rebellious acts, not amounting to high treason, the punishments provided were fines and terms of imprisonment until the cessation of military operations in the Union and German South-West Africa. Discretion was granted to the Minister of Justice to authorise release at an earlier date and provision was made for appeals to be heard by specially appointed Commissioners within one month of the sentences having been pronounced. All proved rebels (i.e. those who had surrendered after the Amnesty had expired, and those who had been captured), were to be subject to certain disabilities whether they were indicted or not; for a period of ten years they were to be disqualified from membership of Parliament,

115. Act No. 11 of 1915.

116. Act No. 27 of 1914.

Provincial Councils or any local or educational authority; for the same period they were to be disqualified from holding any public office, or serving on a jury or licensing court; for a period of ten years they were not allowed to deal in or possess firearms.

Mild as those terms undoubtedly were, the sentences passed within the framework of the Act were even more lenient. No rebel leader was sentenced to the maximum (or anything like the maximum) penalty prescribed and all the rebel leaders were released before they had served their full terms of imprisonment.

All the rebels with the exception of 293 were treated as rank-and-file. The remaining 293 were treated as leaders by virtue of the fact that they had been Government Officials or persons of standing in the community, or because they had occupied leading positions in the rebel ranks. The heaviest sentence was that pronounced on Kemp on 23 July, 1915; he was sentenced to a term of imprisonment of seven years and a fine of £1,000. Kemp, although he had played a less important rôle than De Wet in the rebellion, was accounted the more guilty of the two, because he had held a Commission in the Defence Force on the eve of the rebellion and because he had actually joined arms with the Germans; De Wet's age was probably also an ameliorating factor. De Wet was sentenced on 22 June, 1915, to a term of six years imprisonment and a fine of £2,000. Wessel Wessels was sentenced to five years imprisonment and a fine of £1,000. The other sentences were all more lenient.¹¹⁷

Of the other leaders concerned, De La Rey and Beyers were dead and Maritz had fled into Portuguese territory. Maritz, after staying for varying periods in Angola, Portugal, Spain and Germany, returned to the Union at the beginning of

117. Some of the other sentences were :-

B.P. Coetzee.....	5 years imprisonment.
F.G.A. Wolmarans.....	4 years imprisonment.
N.W. Serfontein.....	4 years imprisonment.
E. Conroy.....	4 years imprisonment.
P.J. Joubert.....	3 years imprisonment.
H.D. Van Broekhuizen	2 years imprisonment.

118

1924. He was then sentenced to three years imprisonment. In July 1924, however, after the Nationalist-Labour Pact Government had come into power, he was released.

A public subscription fund was started to pay the fines and the other financial claims levied against the rebels. The response was such that not only could all the fines and claims be paid, but there was sufficient money left over to launch the so-called Helpmekaar Organisation.

119

In August 1915 a vast demonstration was staged by 6,000 women who marched from Church Square in Pretoria, to the Union Buildings to present a petition to the Governor-General pleading for the release of De Wet and other rebel leaders. Buxton replied to it by stating that he would refer the matter to the Cabinet. Within four months the first rebels were set free.

120

During the November session of Parliament (1915), the strengthened Opposition made strong representations that the rebels be released. On 20 December 1915 De Wet and 118 other rebels were set free. A further 27 (including 'Siener' Van Rensburg) were set free in May 1916. Kemp was set free on 22 November 1916 and before the end of 1916 all the rebels had been released from prison.

121

They were set free on probation and were subject to certain restrictions for the duration of the war or the duration of the

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118. According to Maritz: "Ek is na 'n lange en vervelende verhoor gevonniss tot drie jaar tronkstraf". Maritz, p.105

119. Helpmekaar-Gedenkboek, passim; Kemp, p.401; Malan, pp.36-38

120. Buxton, pp.88-89; Rosenthal, pp.164-166; Scholtz(b) pp. 296-297.

121. Buxton, pp.88-89; Kemp, p.416.

122. No active participation in politics; no participation in any public meeting or gathering; they were not allowed to leave their districts without obtaining permission from the Minister of Justice. Kemp, p.416.

uncompleted portion of their sentences - whichever proved the
¹²³longer. Not all the rebel leaders heeded those conditions -
 De Wet made a series of speeches after his release, which led
¹²⁴to his being cautioned by Botha, and Kemp, according to his
 own account, ¹²⁵started taking an active part in politics
 immediately after his release.

In the Governor-General's speech at the opening of
 Parliament in 1919 it was announced that the disqualifications
 and disabilities which had been imposed on the rebels would
 be removed on the Proclamation of Peace. The Amnesty Bill
¹²⁶came into force on 10 July 1919.

123. Ibid.

124. Vide letters quoted in Rosenthal, pp. 167-169.

125. Kemp, p. 416.

126. Buxton, 90.

CHAPTER X.CONCLUSION.1) The Causes of the Rebellion.

The rebellion, which had been planned to start on 15 September, was to have been a coup d'etat, which it was hoped would have as its outcome not only a change of policy as far as the South-West African Campaign was concerned, but also the overthrow of Botha's Government and the establishment of a republic.¹ The death of De La Rey, the breakdown in communications between Maritz and the other malcontents in the Transvaal and Maritz's rebellion in October, brought about a radical change in circumstances. By the end of October the rebel leaders could obviously no longer rely on the vital element of surprise contributing towards the achievement of their ends. But what of their ends? Had those also undergone a change as a result of the changed circumstances? Were those men who had been plotting to set up a republic in September, prepared to trim their sails to the wind and to be satisfied with the achievement of a limited objective - the cancellation of the South-West African Campaign?

Maritz, it is clear, despite his attempts to parley after he had gone into rebellion, was certainly not. It must also be doubted whether De Wet and Kemp had undergone a change of heart in that respect, although it has been asserted that initially they simply wished to protest against the Government's

1. See above, pp. 89-118.

war policy. As far as Beyers is concerned, it is not entirely clear what role he intended to play in the conspiracy of 15 September; but once he agreed to accompany De La Rey to Potchefstroom, he had thrown in his lot with the rebel conspirators. Whatever Beyers's earlier intentions were-- and it appears that he intended to support the republican conspiracy from October onwards he seems to have been motivated exclusively by a desire to protest against the Government's war policy. At no stage, once he was in the field, did he appeal to republican sentiments. He was also averse, unlike De Wet and the others, to taking any aggressive action against Government forces, occupying towns or strategic points or destroying

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2. When he appeared before the Select Committee, Hertzog was asked: "--- is it your impression that his (Gen. De Wet's) intention to pull down the flag and that sort of thing, came later?" He replied: "That, I am positive, was a thing that simply came later on, after he saw he was in the thing. Then he said: 'Let us go on'". (S.C. 1-15, p. 251). Beyers, a few days before his death, told a friend: "Dit was oorspronklik ewemin Generaal De Wet se bedoeling as my bedoeling om te rebelleer. Ons wou net protesteer teen die handelswyse van die Regering insake Duits Suid-Wes Afrika". (Boshoff (a), p. 84). Kemp, in his memoirs, stated: "(Ons doel) --- was nie om onmiddelik met rebellie te gaan nie -- (maar) om die burgers te organiseer om 'n grootse protesbeweging teen die Regering se oorlogsbeleid te hou." (Kemp, p. 267). But if Kemp and De Wet only wished to protest against the Government's policy, why did they consider it so necessary to get through to Maritz? According to Kemp, De Wet on 22 October at Kopjes, stated that they should go to Maritz to obtain arms and ammunition and that they would then return to Pretoria to demand a satisfactory answer to their protests. (Kemp, p. 263). But were those the real reasons why De Wet wished to get through to S.W.A? On 28 October at Vrede De Wet stated: "I am going through to Maritz, where we will receive arms and ammunition and from there we are going to Pretoria to pull down the British flag and proclaim a free South African Republic." (U.G. 42-16, p. 284)= Also note that when De Wet went into rebellion he carried with him a flag, 'Vyfkleur' - A combination of the old Free State and Transvaal Republican flags. (Oost, p. 265). Why did he carry such a flag if he only intended to protest? As far as Kemp's intentions were concerned, it is significant, that his last advice to Beyers, according to his own account, was that Beyers should proclaim the republic. (Kemp, p. 288).

3. Even Beyers's biographer admits: "Toe die twee manne uit die kamer kom het die Leeu van die Wes-Transvaal oor die Leeu van Noord-Transvaal geseëvier". (Scholtz (a), p. 315)

Government property. But even if one accepts that Beyers regarded his actions as being the ultimate protest when all other measures had failed, the distinction between an 'armed protest' and a rebellion is largely an artificial one. In a recent assessment of the rebellion, N.G. Garson states: "The precedents for such protests that were said to exist in the former republics was⁴ very doubtful. Significantly, ex-President Steyn of the Free State did not use this argument: neither in his 'model republic' nor in President Kruger's would armed protes⁴ts have been tolerated". In fact as Garson points out, "the taking up of arms was an overt action⁵ of rebellion that made fighting almost unavoidable". When Beyers visited 'Onze Rust' in November, Steyn's secretary made the point: "Om te protesteer met die wapen in hand⁶ beteken niks nie, tensy jy gewillig is om die wapen te gebruik". It seems as if Beyers came to realise the futility of his methods, for shortly before his death, he told one of his fellow-rebels that most of the people did not understand the concept of passive resistance; it was something which was foreign to the Boer's nature.⁷ It would also appear that some rebels were advised after their capture to state that they were merely protesting and not rebelling, as it was apparently considered that that would be a mitigating factor when sentence⁸ was pronounced.

4. 'History Today', February 1962, p. 137.

5. Ibid.

6. Van der Merwe ii, p. 317.

7. Boshoff (a), p. 26. "Van 'n lijdlike verset het die meeste niks begryp nie: dit is iets wat vreemd is aan die boer se geaardheid".

8. Mr. Harm Oost relates that while he was in prison awaiting trial, one of his fellow rebels (Edwin Conroy) whispered to him: "Ons het geprotesteer,, hoor; nie gerebelleer nie". Mr. Oost considers that Conroy had been advised by his legal representative to adopt that attitude. Personal information received from Mr. Oost.

As far as the rank-and-file of the rebels were concerned, it appears that they were motivated by a variety of factors: a desire to recover their republican independence - a desire prompted by the feeling that 'England's adversity was their opportunity'; a desire to protest against the Government's war policy; a fear that unless they joined the rebels they would be commandeered for service against the rebels (and many believed against the Germans in South-West Africa); local conditions in individual districts also persuaded some men to take up arms against the Government;⁹ others again rebelled as a result of their general discontent against the Government's policies since 1910, and particularly since 1912;¹⁰ misrepresentation of the position by some of the leaders undoubtedly gave some of the rank and file exaggerated hopes of the venture succeeding, and induced some of the waverers to join the rebel¹¹ cause.

What of the Government's policy? Could the rebellion have been averted or brought to an end without bloodshed? On the face of things it would appear that the Government's decision to invade German South-West Africa was the vital causal antecedent of the rebellion. From the point of view of

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9. J.C.Juta, the Magistrate at Lichtenburg, stated: "A good many went (into rebellion) because they were afraid of being looted and a good many went with the rebels when they saw they were in the majority" (presumably in their district S.C. 1-15, p. 187.
 10. As Prof. Eric Walker puts it "--- a vague malaise, a feeling that the Afrikanders were somehow an oppressed people, oppressed by all the social, political and economic forces which, rightly or wrongly, they associated with the name of Britain". Walker (b), p. 562.
 11. Maritz, for example, stated that people like Steyn and Hertzog supported the rebel cause. See above, p. 143. De Wet also implied that Hertzog was on their side. See above, p. 156.

retrospective probability one cannot state categorically that if the Government had decided not to invade German South-West Africa no rebellion would have taken place, for no one will ever know what might have taken place under those circumstances. It does, however, seem likely that if the Government's policy in connection with the war had been different, the rebellion would not have taken place when it did; and if a rebellion did ensue at a later date, the motives¹² and spirit of the movement would have been different. One is forced therefore to recognise the causal significance of the Government's decision to invade German South-West Africa.

Botha's reluctance to allow other Allied troops to undertake the South-West African Campaign is understandable and the Government's policy in connection with South-West Africa provided Botha with an opportunity to prove the sincerity of his oft-stated policy of conciliation and imperial co-operation. Those factors certainly made it difficult to refuse the imperial request.¹³ It would also appear, however, that the Government's expansionist aims contributed towards that decision.¹⁴ But even if it is accepted that Botha had to accede to the imperial request, one of the conditions of acceptance should have been that only volunteers would be used for the conquest of the German protectorate; in view of the fact that South Africa had been a United Country for only four years and that the divisions and wounds of the Anglo-Boer

12. Kemp's comment on this matter is as follows: "Dit wil nie sê dat indien die Regering besluit het om Suid-Wes Afrika nie aan te val daar geen rebellie sou plaasgevind het nie. Op daardie tydstip sou dit definitief nie plaasgevind het nie omdat die tyd en die omstandighede nie geleë was daarvoor nie. Gen. De La Rey en ons ander kêrels in wie se are die vryheidsbloed gebruis het sou 'n beter geleentheid vir die vrymaking van Suid-Afrika uitgekies het." Kemp, pp. 152-153.

13. Also see Garson, p. 133.

14. See above, pp. 50-52.

War had not yet had time to heal, the British Government and the British section in South Africa surely could not have expected more. Such a policy would probably not have satisfied all elements in the Union,¹⁵ but it would certainly have led to less antagonism than the policy which was adopted. In fact the Government only announced its volunteer policy after the death of De La Rey;¹⁶ that was too late - distrust and suspicion had already been aroused. Those feelings amongst the opponents of the Government became more pronounced when Smuts's instructions to Maritz became known. The commandeering of troops after the Maritz rebellion further intensified opposition to the Government; and while the Government admittedly had good reason to believe that the ramifications of the Maritz rebellion were such that a general outbreak might follow his action, could that general outbreak not have been crushed with volunteers, seeing that the Government apparently had confidence (after 15 September) in undertaking a campaign against German South-West Africa with a volunteer force?¹⁷ As it happened, however, the campaign against South-West Africa was not undertaken finally solely by volunteers.¹⁸

15. Hertzog, for instance, said subsequently that he had always dreaded the coming of war because he feared that the Government would be placed in an awkward position by some people who would demand a volunteer raid on South-West Africa. S.C. 1-15, p. 221.

16. See above, p. 119.

17. Cf. Garson, p. 138. He states: "--- the commandeering after Maritz's revolt was clearly justified. While there were other ways of dealing with Maritz alone, from the Government's point of view preparations were called for in case a general outbreak followed his action."

18. See above, p. 151

The Government's attempts to end the rebellion without bloodshed revealed great restraint and patience, but the method employed increased the distrust of the Government and made a peaceful solution unlikely. However, it must be doubted whether the rebellion would have been averted if any of the generals had gone to Maritz after he issued his ultimatum, for at that stage he was already deeply involved with the German authorities. Nor is it likely that further bloodshed would have been averted if De Wet and Beyers had been allowed to meet. At that stage nothing short of the cancellation of the South-West African Campaign would have satisfied De Wet (and would he have been satisfied^{even} with that?)-clearly the Government would not have sanctioned such a volte face. Beyers was apparently amenable to making peace if the Government promised to use only volunteers, but the Government had already repeatedly given that assurance - even though it was not finally honoured.

Hertzog and Steyn may have sympathised with the motives of the rebels, but they were unquestionably opposed to the idea of armed violence being used in the pursuit of those motives. Yet neither of them were prepared to publicly repudiate the rebellion. Hertzog's statement to the Select Committee to the effect that if he and Steyn had condemned the rebellion, not only six or seven districts would have rebelled, but the whole of the Free State would have rebelled, understandably caused surprise amongst some members of the Committee. How, indeed, could such a statement on their part have led to more people going into rebellion? Hertzog further stated that "in the

19. See above, pp. 159-163, 182-187.

20. See above, pp. 140-142, 147-148.

21. See above, pp. 194-195.

22. See above, p. 183.

23. S.C. 1-15, pp. 260-262.

24. What might have happened was that Hertzog might have lost the confidence of some of his supporters, but even that is doubtful, so great was his influence.

Cape there was a tendency to talk and to repudiate. But what²⁵
 did that effect?"²⁶

But Hertzog's comparison is not valid. Obviously a statement coming from him or Steyn would have carried more weight than a Manifesto issued by a number of clergymen.

When Hertzog was further questioned as to why he, as a recognised leader, did not give a clear lead to the people, he replied: "I think I could hardly have given a better lead than by doing as I did, that is remaining at home and not²⁷ joining them in the field."

That attitude adopted by Hertzog, and Steyn's reluctance to condemn the rebellion, gave most people the impression that they tacitly approved, and it is possible that Hertzog, at any rate, from the point of view of political expediency, was not averse to the Free Staters putting that interpretation on his attitude.

While the German Governor, Seitz, welcomed the idea of a rebellion in South Africa, it cannot be accepted that he, or the German Government, played a notable part in fomenting that rebellion. It must be accepted that the rebellion was an indigenous plant with its roots well planted in South African soil, though it was unquestionably watered with the hopes of German aid.

25. A reference to the Manifesto issued by some Cape Ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church. See above, p. 153.

26. S.C. 1-15, p. 286. Hertzog also said: "I am not going to play the part of a prostitute. What I felt and what I feel today is that if I had told the people simply to go home, they would immediately have said: "Hertzog is playing the part of a prostitute'"

27. Ibid., p. 285.

ii) The Nature of the Rebellion.

According to the official figures, 11,472 men, in all,²⁸ went into rebellion. The rebel cause received the greatest support in the Free State where 7,123 men went into rebellion; in the Transvaal 2,998 rebels took the field and in the Cape²⁹ 1,251 (including 1,059 who went into rebellion with Maritz).

To suppress the rebellion the Government used, 32,000 troops. The major portion of this force (25,000) was comprised of members of the Burgher Commandos; the remainder was comprised of 5,000 Active Citizen Force men and 2,000 Permanent Force³⁰ soldiers. Botha's decision to primarily use the Burgher Commandos meant that the majority of Government troops were³¹ Afrikaners.

The known rebel casualties were 190 killed and 300 to 350 wounded; on the Government side 132 were killed and 242³² wounded. Those comparatively light casualties indicate that the rebel resistance was not of the fierce and determined nature that is usually associated with a Civil war. Many of the rebels initially held the naive view that the Government would³³ not use armed force against them. When the contrary became

28. It is likely that the actual number of rebels was even greater, for many were not captured nor did they surrender, but simply returned to their homes when it was apparent that the rebellion had failed. Cf. Buxton, p. 69. His estimate was that there were altogether between 12,000 and 13,000 rebels in the field.

29. U.G. 46-16, Annexure N.

30. U.G. 42-16, p. 211. (Evidence of A.E. Basden, Chief Clerk in the Department of Defence).

31. It has been estimated that 20,000 were of Dutch descent. U.G. 46-16, Annexure N; Buxton, p. 69; South Africa and the War, p. 25.

32. On the rebel side only about 1% of their men lost their lives; on the Government side less than .5%

33. See Boshoff (a), p. 25; Oost, pp. 188, 204; Van der Merwe ii, p. 317; J.M. De Wet, p. 85; Scholtz (a), pp. 344-345.

apparent and particularly when the Amnesty proclamations made it possible for the rank-and-file to surrender without fear of repercussions, many gave up their arms.³⁴

The rebellion cost the Government the sum of £5,100,000.³⁵

The rebellion was, in effect, confined to the two former republics. Apart from Maritz's uprising, the rebellion made virtually no headway in the Cape, despite Maritz's attempts to gain adherents in that area. The organisation of the military forces on both Government and rebel sides was based on the Boer Commando system, for as has been shown, Botha largely relied on the Burgher Commandos to suppress the rebellion and the rebel leaders also called out the old Commandos.³⁶

iii) Reasons for the Failure of the Rebellion.

For the rebels to have had any chance of achieving initial success it was essential that there should have been a swift, unexpected, and well organised, coup d'etat. Any hope that that object could have been achieved was lost when De La Rey was accidentally shot on 15 September. From that moment on the Government was on its guard, and the vital element of surprise was lost.

But even if De La Rey and Beyers had succeeded in reaching Potchefstroom and starting the rebellion there on 15 September, it must be doubted whether from the point of view of the rebels that would have been the most opportune time to launch the rebellion. From their point of view it would probably have

34. According to Buxton, 3,900 surrendered under the Amnesty proclamations. Buxton, p. 69.

35. South Africa and the War, p. 25.

36. Also see Garson, pp. 136-137. The Maritz rebellion was the **only** instance of a Defence Force Unit going into rebellion.

been better to have waited until the South-West African Campaign had commenced and the bulk of the Union's military resources were committed. That would have meant that the rebels would have forfeited any chance of receiving aid from the Germans, but in any case, as it happened, the aid which they received from that source was negligible.

It is clear, however, that even if the initial efforts of the rebels were crowned with success, there was little prospect of their being able to maintain their ascendancy. Apart from the overwhelming resources which the Union Government had at its disposal, it is clear that the Imperial authorities were prepared, even to the detriment of the war effort elsewhere, to render Botha every assistance. When the British Cabinet first received the news of the outbreak of the rebellion, the situation was deemed to be so serious that it was felt that Botha should not be left to his own resources. Australian and New Zealand troops, on their way to Europe had just left Australia under powerful naval escort and on 25 October the British Government decided that the whole convoy should proceed to Europe by way of the Cape instead of Egypt. Botha, however, after the Commissiedrift skirmish, assured the Imperial authorities that he had the internal situation well in hand and the convoy was ordered to proceed as originally intended.³⁷

By sheer weight of numbers the Government was bound to be successful. Although there were probably many additional people who secretly supported the rebel cause, they were not prepared to openly associate themselves with the movement, particularly as the rebels gained few spectacular successes.

In addition to having a numerical superiority the Government forces were far better equipped and organised.³⁸

37. Naval Operations: i, pp. 331-332; Also see Engelenburg, p. 314.

38. The majority of rebel commandos were very poorly equipped as far as arms and ammunition were concerned. See Kemp, pp. 281, 312; Muller, p. 199; Oost, pp. 211, 234, 294.

At no stage did the rebels succeed in occupying places of strategic importance, or seriously and permanently damaging the Government lines of communication. The fact that the main railway lines remained in their possession enabled the Government to rush powerful contingents of troops to wherever they were most needed.³⁹ The most the rebels could hope for was to force their way through to South-West Africa and to receive aid from the Germans. The nature of the terrain to be traversed and the powerful Government forces barring their way prevented all but Kemp in succeeding in that object.

Above all, the rebellion was badly planned and organised and the lack of communication between the leaders prevented any co-ordinated plan of campaign being put into operation.⁴⁰

iv) The Inquiry.

The first attempt to analyse the causes and events of the rebellion was a Blue Book written by Professor Leo Fouché,⁴¹ Professor of History in the Transvaal University College; that report was laid before Parliament on 1 March 1915. During the rebellion Fouché had been employed by Smuts to write daily bulletins for the Cabinet. The report was compiled hastily and Fouché admitted that it had certain shortcomings.⁴² Nevertheless he maintained "that the narrative

39. See for instance Trew, pp. 29-30, 37-38, 43-44.

40. See Scholtz (b), pp. 205-212 for a good discussion of the reasons for the failure of the rebellion.

41. 'Report on the Outbreak of the Rebellion and the Policy of the Government with regard to its suppression' U.G. 10-15.

42. Fouché stated: "A mass of material in the hands of the Government could not be used, as it forms important evidence in the cases of individuals on trial or awaiting trial. In the case of certain German agents investigations are still being pursued, and it would be premature to disclose the information so far collected. On certain points again, the available evidence had not yet been properly sifted at the time of writing. It is therefore possible that the narrative may require subsequent amplification as to details". U.G. 10-15, Preface.

of events has been compiled in as objective a manner as possible, and that it contains no statement which is not borne out by evidence in possession of the Government".⁴³

The Report did, however, reveal a pronounced pro-Government bias and when Fouché was subsequently cross-examined by members of the Select Committee, he could not always substantiate all the statements he had made in his Report.⁴⁴ Not surprisingly, Hertzog regarded the Blue Book as a Government brief and he moved for a Parliamentary Select Committee to inquire into the rebellion. The terms of his motion were re-cast by Merriman and the motion, as amended, was accepted by the Government.

A Committee of Seven, with Patrick Duncan as Chairman, sat from 5 March to 16 April and examined 24 witnesses before Parliament was prorogued on 21 April. The Committee, when it presented its Report,⁴⁵ stated that they were not able to come to any conclusion, because the time at their disposal was inadequate, because many witnesses who were in a position to give evidence of importance were serving in South-West Africa, and because the evidence of many people who had played a prominent role in the rebellion, could not be heard, as they were in prison.⁴⁶

The suggestion that a Judicial Commission of Inquiry should be held, had already been made, while the question of appointing a Select Committee was still being debated. Such a Commission could, however, only commence its work when the trials of the rebels had been concluded. On 5 November 1915 a Commission consisting of three Judges of the Cape Division of the Supreme Court,⁴⁷ was appointed. After hearing evidence from 136

43. Ibid.

44. S.C. 1-15, pp. 1-25, 75-105.

45. 'Report of the Select Committee on the Rebellion, S.C. 1-15. The Minutes of Evidence were also published.

46. S.C. 1-15, p. ix

47. Justices Lange, Searle and Hutton, with Justice Lange as Chairman. The same three judges had presided over the Special Courts which had tried the rebels.

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witness, including the Prime Minister, the Commission
⁴⁹
 presented its Report in December 1916. Their Report was an
 objective account of the causes and circumstances of the
 rebellion, on the available evidence, but it had serious
 short-comings as a composite analysis, as many people whose
 evidence would have been of the greatest value refused to
⁵⁰
 give evidence.

v) The Aftermath.

"When it comes to civil war, the leaders are by
 no means forbidden to fight in gloves, but they must not
 expect the gloves to keep the blood from soiling their hands
 or even penetrating under their nails". (Morny to Louis
 Napoleon after his successful coup d'etat of December 1851.
 T.A.B. Corley - 'Democractic Despot - A Life of Napoleon III'
 (1961), p. 108)

"Die boompie wat vandag geplant en met my bloed
 benat word, sal groei en groot word, en heerlike vrugte vir
 ons volk dra" ('Jopie' Fourie before his execution. Malan,
 p. 24; J.M. De Wet, p. 108).

Before the rebellion had been completely suppressed,
 Botha had issued a Manifesto on 10 December 1914, which fore-
 shadowed the policy he intended to adopt in connection with
 the rebellion. The revelant section of the Manifesto read
 as follows:

"I have noticed, latterly, a growing sense of anger and
 bitterness in the public mind; but let us remember that it has
 been a quarrel in our own South African household, that all of

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48. 'Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Causes and
 Circumstances relating to the Recent Rebellion in South
 Africa' - Minutes of Evidence, U.G. 42-16.
49. 'Report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the
 Causes and Circumstances relating to the Recent Rebellion
 in South Africa'. U.G. 46-16.
50. Ex-President Steyn and his son Colin refused to give
 evidence; all M.Ps who had appeared before the Select
 Committee refused to give evidence - with the exception of
 Stuart and Cronje; rebel leaders refused to give evidence;
 members of the Nationalist Party were advised by their
 Transvaal leader, Tielman Roos, not to give evidence.
 U.G. 46-16, p. 1.

us will have to continue to live together in that household in future, and while we do our duty in seeing that never again shall there be a recurrence of this criminal folly, let us be on our guard against all vengeful policies and language and cultivate a spirit of tolerance, forbearance and merciful oblivion of the errors and misdeeds of those misguided people

While just and fair punishment should be meted out, let us also remember that now more than ever it is for the people of South Africa to practice the wise policy of forgive and forget⁵¹

The Government's magnanimous policy at the conclusion of the rebellion did not, however, have that effect. The rebellion in fact, left a legacy of bitterness and division amongst Afrikaners. It is difficult to see how it could have been otherwise when former colleagues and close friends and even members of the same family, fought on opposite sides in a rebellion, which was, in effect, a civil war in miniature.⁵²

Even the Main Afrikaner Churches were affected by the schism; this was particularly pronounced in the Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk. A Minister of that Church in the Free State, Rev. J. C. Hefer of Parys, instigated a campaign, which had as its object the repudiation of the rebellion by his Church. Some congregations were split into pro- and anti-rebel groups. The Nederduits Hervormde of Gereformeerde Kerk, the Gereformeerde Kerk and the Hervormde Kerk were similarly

51. Buxton, p. 86; Sampson, pp. 222-223.

52. See ~~inter alia~~ ^{for example} Trew, pp. 45, 49; Boshoff (b), p. 59; A. R. Walker's Diary, 15th December 1914. Walker relates the following: "Early this morning a rebel came in with a white flag to say there were 38 of his pals who wished to surrender. Unfortunately for him, his father - who was one of ours - was out looking for a horse on the edge of town. Recognising his son, he did not fall on the prodigal neck, but on his back - with a sjambok. There ensued a race up the street to the Town Hall (at Lindley). The father administering as thorough a thrashing as the racing horses and shortness of the street permitted. It was quite a job to rescue the son and to get him away safely after he had seen the Commandant."

affected, although to a lesser extent. Wiser counsels, however, prevailed and the differences did not lead to permanent schisms.⁵³

It was, of course, in the political sphere that the effects of the rebellion were most pronounced. The attitude adopted by the Government during the rebellion was proof positive that Botha and Smuts regarded the imperial tie as being permanent and that they intended to honour the Union's obligations implicitly in that connexion. Writing in the Cambridge History of the British Empire, J. Ewing stated: "History has shown that the suppression of a rebellion generally adds to the immediate strength of a Government. -- Such --- expectations took no account of the fact that conditions in South Africa were exceptional"⁵⁴. The rebellion did, in fact, have the effect of greatly strengthening the Nationalist Party to the detriment of the South African Party.⁵⁵ Some Afrikaners considered the rebellion to have been a continuation of the Anglo-Boer War, as they considered that both were essentially struggles between Afrikaner Nationalism and British Imperialism; it was considered that Botha and Smuts had transferred their allegiance from the former to the

53. Hefer, *passim*; Malan, pp. 20-21, 26-31; Scholtz (b), pp. 293-295.

54. C.H.B.E. VIII, Chap. XXVIII, p. 718.

55. See Garson, p. 140. "Denys Reitz's comment that 'it was but a more acute phase of our original differences' and that 'whilst not every Nationalist was a rebel --, every rebel was a Nationalist' misses the point; the rebellion turned people into Nationalists who had not been Nationalists before".

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latter. According to that view Botha and Smuts were the modern equivalents of the National Scouts and their opponents were the 'bittereinders'. Whether one accepts that view or not, the point is that it was generally held. It had become apparent that Botha's and Smuts's wider ideal of a South African Nationalism, embracing both English and Afrikaans inhabitants, had been prematurely conceived.

Botha's South African Party had in 1910 received virtually unanimous support from the Afrikaans-speaking electorate of the Union. In his strict adherence to the principles of conciliation and in his desire to win over more English-speaking voters to his standard, he had already by 1912 forfeited some of that support; the Government's attitude in 1914 and 1915 alienated even more of his supporters.

The 1915 General Election was an extremely bitterly contested one and the results indicated the growth of support for the Nationalist Party. When Hertzog had opposed the invasion of South-West Africa in 1914, he had had eleven supporters in the House of Assembly. In 1915 the Nationalist Party obtained 27 seats (they obtained all except one of the seats in the Free State); the South African Party obtained 54 and the Unionists, 39. The South African Party no longer had an over-all majority and they had to rely on the support of the Unionists. It cannot be said that that outcome was entirely due to the effect of the rebellion, for the 1915 General Election was the first opportunity presented to the

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56. J. Crafford described it as their "transmutation from Afrikaner Nationalism to British Imperialism" (Crafford, pp. 64-173-174, 226). Dr. D.F. Malan also considered the Botha-Hertzog divergence as being due to a difference of principles - that of Imperialism against Nationalism. Malan, pp. 43-44. According to Mr. Harm Oost, Tielman Roos in 1918, in the Central Committee of the Nationalist Party, expressed the view: "dat deelname van Suid Afrika van Duits Wes se verowering 'n argument teen ons onafhanklikheid was. Deur daardie deelname het die Boere die anneksasie van hul land deur die imperiale regering as 'n voldonge feit erken en daarin toegestem dat hul land 'n deel moet bly van die besittings van Groot Brittanje" (Personal information received from Mr. Oost)

electorate to pass judgement on the 1912 Hertzog-split.⁵⁷
 Five years later the Nationalists obtained 44 seats, the
 South African Party 41, the Unionists 25 and the Labourites⁵⁸
 21 (in addition 3 Independents were elected). An attempt⁵⁹
 was made in September 1920 to form a Nationalist-South Africa
 Party Coalition but the divergent viewpoints on the republican
 issue prevented that.

A month later the Unionist Party was disbanded and its
 followers supported the South African Party. In 1924, however,⁶⁰
 the Nationalist-Labour Pact defeated the South African Party.

Professor L.M.Thompson has expressed the view that "the
 triumph of Afrikaner Nationalism in South African politics was
 a matter of simple political arithmetic, granted two premises;
 that the Afrikaners remained a majority of the electorate and
 that they were organised for the purpose."⁶¹ Both premises
 were fulfilled, the first as Professor Thompson points out
 reinforced by the electoral system laid down in the Constitution⁶²

57. Also see Garson, p. 140.

58. According to his biographer, F.S.Malan, in a memorandum
 recommended that as leader of the strongest party in the
 House, Hertzog should become Prime Minister. Smuts did
 not agree. Cloete, p. 345.

59. Ibid., pp. 346-347; Malan, pp. 68-71; Walker (b), pp.
 572-573; C.H.B.E. VIII, Chap. XXVIII, pp. 754-755.

60. Nationalist Party 63
 South African Party 53
 Labour Party 18
 Independentz 1

61. Article by L.M.Thompson - 'Fifty Years of Union - Political
 Review' in 'Race Relations Journal', Vol. XXVII No 2 -
 April-June 1960, p. 63.

62. Ibid.

The achievement of the second obviously depended upon the climate of political opinion existing amongst Afrikaners - for it was not inevitable that the Afrikaners could be organised to ensure the triumph of Afrikaner Nationalism; the rebellion was one of the factors which made it possible.

One of the chief effects of the rebellion was to bring the issue of republicanism into the sphere of party politics in the Union. The failure to realise their republican aspirations by military force in 1914, led to the Nationalist Party striving for that end through constitutional channels.⁶³ When the Nationalist Party was formed in January, 1914, the realisation of a republican form of government had not been included in their programme of principles.⁶⁴ The rebellion, which had been caused partly by the strong republican sentiments existing among a section of the Afrikaners, and the Nationalist Party's gains in the 1915 election, led to the republican issue being discussed at Nationalist Party Congresses in 1916, and in July 1917 a resolution was passed recognising the fact that "--- bij een zeer aanzienlik gedeelte van de bevolking van Zuid-Afrika er een sterke drang bestaat naar volkomen onafhanklikheid". It was decided, however, to proceed cautiously: "--- het niet wenselik is dat voor het tegenwoordige enige stappen woorden gedaan tot een aktieve republikeinse propaganda, waardoor aangstoot of maatschappelijke verbittering kan veroorzaakt worden."⁶⁵

⁶⁶ The doctrine of self-determination formulated by Lloyd George and Woodrow Wilson at the conclusion of the Great War,

63. As Garson points out: "The political lesson of the rebellion was that the Nationalist movement must work through constitutional channels; there were no short cuts". Garson, p. 140.

64. S.A. Parties and Policies, pp. 69-72.

65. De Volkstem, 20.7.1917; Scholtz (b), pp. 303-304.

66. Prime Minister of Great Britain.

67. President of the United States of America.

led to the Nationalist Party sending a deputation to the Peace Conference in Paris in 1919, with the object of recovering their republican independence.⁶⁸ Although their object was not achieved,⁶⁹ the Nationalist Party had succeeded in stressing their championship of the republican aspirations of many inhabitants of the Union. The question of the nature of the imperial connexion and the republican question were to remain the major issues in the South African political arena. It is, in fact, no exaggeration to state that up to the time of the realisation of the republic, political alignments have been largely determined by those issues, although economic factors played their part in the re-alignment of forces in 1924 and 1933.

It can therefore be asserted that the old wounds reopened by the rebellion and the new divisions which it brought in its train, revived the bitter legacies of the Anglo-Boer War and kept those issues before the electorate. The apparent corollary to that statement - that if party politicians and the electorate were not preoccupied with those matters, the history of the relations of the White population with their African, Coloured and Indian fellow-citizens, would have been radically different in the last half-century - cannot, however be assumed. Although the Nationalist Party "has always presented itself to the electorate as the party which possesses a special capacity for preserving white supremacy",⁷⁰ there has, until recently, been little indication that any of the other major political parties have seriously challenged that concept

68. The deputation led by Hertzog consisted of Hertzog and N.C. Havenga from the Free State, A.D.W. Wolmarans and Hjalmar Reitz from the Transvaal, F.W. Beyers and A.T. Spies from Natal.

Havenga and Reitz took the places of two former rebels C. De Wet and P. Grobler, whose passports were withdrawn by the Government.

69. Malan, pp. 56-64; H. Reitz, pp. 1-42.

70. Thompson - 'Fifty Years of Union', p. 65.

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