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1982-06
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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

A F R I C A N S T U D I E S I N S T I T U T E

African Studies Seminar Paper
to be presented in RW
4.00pm JUNE 1982

Title: The South African Rebellion of 1914: The Influence of Industrialisation, Poverty and 'Poor Whiteism'.

by: John Bottomley

No. 118

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A F R I C A N S T U D I E S I N S T I T U T E

African Studies Seminar Paper
to be presented at Seminar in
RW 319 at 4.00 pm on Monday,
14 June, 1982.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN REBELLION OF 1914: THE INFLUENCE OF INDUSTRIALISATION, POVERTY AND 'POOR WHITEISM'

John Bottomley

> Die sprinkaan en die droogte
> is swaar op onse land
> en wat van ons moet worde
> is bowe myn verstand
>
> Die geld is ook te danig skaars
> en die koffie word so duur
> die vreemde bank is ons baas
> en die "intres" vreet soos vuur[1]
>
> But already in the long drought many of these people had lost what little they had and rebellion does not seem such a serious thing to desperate men.[2]

In 1914, just four years after Union and twelve years after the Anglo-Boer War, armed struggle again broke out in South Africa. This time the struggle was fraternal, a *broedertwis*, or civil war between Afrikaner forces.

The established interpretation of the rebellion sees the 'Imperial connection' as being responsible for the aberration of Afrikaner fighting Afrikaner. According to this viewpoint, when the First World War broke out, thousands of patriots shrewdly judged their chances against a weakened Britain; still deeply bitter at the Anglo-Boer War and anxious for a true Afrikaner republic, they rose in rebellion against a government which no longer reflected their interests.

In common with much South African history, the rebellion has tended to be observed from a strictly political perspective, with scant attention being paid to other possible causes. E.A. Walker wrote only of 'a vague *malaise*, a feeling that the Afrikaners were somehow oppressed by all the social, political and economic forces which rightly or wrongly they associated with the name of Britain'.[3] N.G. Garson too, was content only to note the 'interesting but fruitless speculation of how many 'poor whites' joined in,[4] whilst T.R.H. Davenport in a footnote indicated that 'poverty

and drought were certainly conditioning factors', but that '... one looks in vain for attempts to exploit economic grievances in the speeches of the rebel leaders'.[5] Memoirs written by the rebel leaders and their biographers tend to support such views by ignoring all but political motivations as causes of the rebellion.[6]

In the face of such seemingly conclusive evidence it is not surprising that the political interpretation of the rebellion has become dogma. It was the historian W.M. Macmillan though, who warned us against an unwary acceptance of primary material in South African history. He pointed to the distorting effects of the political polarization that accompanied the Anglo-Boer War. The instance he gave of such distortion was the 'seemingly illogical' lack of expressions of discontent amongst Afrikaners, at the forced trek of farmers to urban areas. He wrote: 'It is highly characteristic of South Africa that no such voice is ever heard, and that the form of discontent is a peculiar *non-sequitur* - an almost delirious demand that 'the Government' should 'tackle the Native problem'. There is a danger that this 'red herring' will go on all too completely distracting attention from the defects of these purely European institutions and customs of the country side - the abuse of the great land 'heritage' we hear talk of. In this rather than in direct British-Dutch feuds the country suffers the penalty for the events of 1899-1902. A sentimental bond of Afrikaner (not South African) national unity distracts men's minds from the essentials of bread-and-butter politics. Blinded by national sentiment, the poor voter, even the landless, is really too little class conscious.'[7] The dogma which has evolved since the rebellion contains some semblance of truth, and undoubtedly many of the rebels were patriots. Yet the monocausality of such an approach denies the enormous complexity of motivations which must underline a rebellion against kith and kin. More particularly this interpretation denies the element of self-preservation, a fundamental fact of life. It is only in terms of an understanding of both the causes and extent of the crisis conditions facing so many farmers by 1914, that the rebellion can truly be understood.

There were those even at the time of the rebellion mainly in government circles, who questioned a strictly political interpretation of events, as in two apprehensive letters Merriman wrote to Smuts in December 1915: ' ... I refer to the question of the Poor White ..... This question constitutes a great and growing evil - of the four really important questions before us it is by far - to my mind - the most important as its growth and persistence threaten the very foundations of our national existence. I need not enlarge to you on the magnitude of the disease - recent events both in the rebellion, and in the elections that followed, must have convinced even the dullest of us - and I hope neither of us is dull - of the dire possibilities that lie before us from this course!'[8] In a further letter written on the same day, he expanded on the theme: 'I did

not for obvious reasons enlarge on the political side - that is very important. These wretched folk are the rank and file of the Nationalist brigade ready for any mischief. They are the raw materials in which the Predikant, the country attorney, all the carpetbaggers and Graeculi esuventes of the Bar work.'[9] Similarly, Raymond Harley, the magistrate of Winburg in the Orange Free State, told the Judicial Commission on the rebellion that, '... Conroy (a rebel leader) had been canvassing very acutely for recruits in the northern part of the district and part of the Hoopstad district and most of his recruits were gentlemen whom he found it necessary to equip with new clothes and boots ... At that time he had a half dozen men with him who could be called wealthy and influential, but the great majority of his followers were of the *bywoner* class. He also commandeered foodstuffs and fed these people and issued foodstuffs to their families.'[10]

Mr A.M. Baumann, a 'law agent' in Winburg, concurred with the magistrate saying that very few of the larger landowners went, and that the rebels were mainly people heavily in debt and youngsters, 'but not men of substance or standing'.[11] E.A. Learn, the magistrate of Harrismith similarly told of large poor white support for the rebellion in the Harrismith and Bethlehem districts where 'people of the poorer or *bywoner* class and youngsters rebelled, but men of property or standing stayed at home, and sent their sons'.[12] A.J. Brand, son of the late President of the Orange Free State and magistrate of Lindley agreed: 'the class of people who joined the rebels did not bother much about politics they were on the "loot": that was their object. They were not people of standing or responsibility. The more influential and the wealthier class kept quiet'.[13] Commandant H.J. Lombard of Lichtenburg in the western Transvaal pointed out that in his area 'the greater part of the people are quite simple ... Many people suffered big losses in the war and got nothing in return and for money they will do anything'. Whilst economic motivations have often been dismissed as legitimating causes of the rebellion yet, as some contemporaries were aware and as this paper will show, the rebellion was caused in part, by the ruinous economic environment prior to the rebellion.

In real terms the first phase of the 1914 rebellion began on 9 October 1914 when Lieutenant-Colonel S.G. 'Manie' Maritz, district staff officer of the frontier region with German South West Africa, went into rebellion. The 'Maritz Rebellion' was relatively unsuccessful, and Maritz was unable to motivate much support for his cause in the western Cape. He was considering disbanding his forces when rebellion broke out in the two former republics and convinced him to continue the struggle. The rebellion by Maritz influenced the second phase of the rebellion on 22 October 1914. The ringleaders of this phase were C.R. De Wet who, thereafter, mobilized rebel commandos in the Free State and C.F. Beyers, former Commandant-General of the Union Defence Force, who mobilized rebel forces in the Transvaal. Another important rebel leader in the Transvaal was Major J.C.C. Kemp, officer

commanding the 1,400 men in the defence force camp at Potchefstroom.

During November 1914 rebel resistance in the Free State collapsed. The following month Government forces overran the Transvaal and January of the following year saw the rebel resistance in the northern Cape overwhelmed. It was subsequently revealed that 190 rebels had been killed and 132 government troops. The estimate of the number of men who went into rebellion was given as 11,472, of whom 7,123 came from the Free State, 2,998 from the Transvaal and 1,252 from the Cape.[14]

We now turn to an examination of conditions in the Orange Free State, this being the most intensive area of rebellion in South Africa. The Free State was also the province most ravaged by wars, rebellion, natural depredations, economic depressions and industrial unrest. There were wars against the Basuto in the years 1858, 1865 and 1867-68 of which a contemporary wrote '... Dire were the effects of the long protracted struggle upon the country, commercial and other business was pretty well ruined, the burghers impoverished to the last degree, their farming operations having been neglected for so long a period'.[15] Major droughts occurred during the years 1846, 1851-4, 1884 and 1885 and were followed by the devastating Rinderpest epidemic of 1896. During this epidemic thousands of transport riders were ruined by the wholesale destruction of their spans of oxen and, because of the carnage, the lifeline of the country was practically severed. The economy was thereby paralysed and many farming communities were isolated and unable to transport their produce to market. As a result: 'The Uitlander farmers turned to storekeeping and transport riding with donkeys. The Afrikaner stockmen, used in times of adversity to turning to their richer bretheren and becoming *bijwoners* or quasi-tenants of small plots on their lands, now had no source of help and drifted as 'Arme-Blankes' or poor whites to the towns'.[16] From the 1860s there was a growing rift in Afrikaner society between those of substance benefitting from the opportunities provided by industrialisation, and those in the process of being dispossessed as a result of the new economic environment. The devastation caused by the Rinderpest epidemic magnified this rift in society; Thelma Gutsche went so far as to pronounce that 'it was now that the Boer War was lost'.[17] The societal differentiation certainly seems to have had a deleterious effect on the Boer War as noted by Sir Arnold Theiler who fought with the Boer forces: 'An exceptionally meticulous and observant recorder, Theiler now saw the moral and physical deterioration of the burghers through years of ruination by Rinderpest, drought, locusts and pestilences which had abased the economy and broken their fighting spirit. The war had come as a godsend to the impoverished denizens of the many 'Burghersdorps'. They had flocked to enlist and, palpably not fighting material, were the least suitable 'to go on commando'. With the war not two months old, Theiler wrote of 'those who fled from conflict and otherwise showed no signs of patriotism'.[18] Recent research supports

Theiler's observations, and has revealed that even in the first year of the Anglo-Boer War, Afrikaner society failed to present a homogeneous front to the enemy. In the face of this onslaught, the solidarity of Boer society became dangerously eroded by divisions between 'Bittereinders', who were prepared to fight the war to the end, and 'Joiners' who collaborated in enormous numbers with the British forces against their own people. We now know that 'the majority of rank and file collaborators during the war were members of a disgruntled, landless and under-privileged pre-war class within Afrikaner society'.[19]

The Anglo-Boer War was to have an even more devastating impact on the Free State. Discussing the war G.B. Beak, an official in the British reconstruction programme wrote, '... being almost a purely pastoral and agricultural area, perhaps no portion of South Africa was thrown back further by the war than the O.R.C.'[20] Whole towns such as Lindley and Frankfort were razed to the ground and the southern districts were left a 'barren wilderness' whilst the northern districts fared little better.

In the immediate post-war period thousands of Boers had to be forced from British prison camps, having nothing left to begin life anew. At the end of Septmber 1902, four months after the cessation of hostilities, there were still 17,005 people left in British prison camps, mainly in the Free State.[21] In September 1904 a congress was convened at Brandfort to discuss conditions in the Free State. The crux of the Brandfort congress was an appeal for assistance from the reconstruction government published in *De Vriend:* 'we are aware that the poverty in our land has reached a crisis. We know that there are many families lacking the bare necessities. The grievances we have are legion. Misery increases every day.'[22] A severe recession had manifested itself the previous year which was to last until 1908, and it was only in the latter year that conditions improved with European markets opening up for South African produce and encouraging Free State production.[23] However, 1910 saw the 'Great Depression' in that province, and although the drought lifted somewhat during 1911, the years following to 1916 were years of intense and ruinous drought. Concurrent with the drought the recession returned, and was heightened by industrial unrest during 1913 and 1914, the outbreak of the Great War in August 1914, and the rebellion which followed still later in that year.

In examining those economic conditions in the Free State which helped to precipitate the 1914 rebellion, it is important to note the uneven effects of industrialisation as a result of the geographical diversity of the province. Following the discovery of diamonds in the 1860s, industrialisation began affecting land usage in the Free State with far-reaching results on the existing society. In the south-western districts of the Free State, the growth of the diamond fields created enormous agricultural opportunities for those progressive farmers capable of responding away from subsistence agriculture. Those who were very successful amongst such farmers evolved into a class of '*heeren-*

boeren' or gentlemen farmers, distinguished from other cattle-farmers by their wealth and the size of their landholdings.[24] This burgeoning class was able to expand its landholdings by buying out smaller farmers, particularly after the Anglo-Boer War when it proved impossible for many of the smaller stockmen to reconstitute their farming operations. Inflated stock prices in the post-war period thrust many smaller stockmen from their lands, but there was also the severe and recurrent drought conditions. Such conditions particularly affect pastoral farming because, 'in pastoral farming droughts destroy not only the costs of labour of one year, as in arable farming, but also a considerable part of the capital'.[25] Those farmers whose income was wholly tied up in their farms often lost all during the war, unlike many of the *'heerenboeren'* class who had diverse sources of income in mining, stocks and shares, land and other forms of speculation.[26] Following the war this class with ready cash, was able to restock and reconstitute its farming operations. Additionally, Milner's reconstruction programme allocated what were for this desolate period, large cash loans of between £300 to £500. In order to bring about rapid reconstruction, loans were granted to those farmers who had the best chance of survival and growth, most often the *'heeren-boeren'* class. In the harsh post-war environment only the man of private means could hope to survive. For those farmers that failed, all that was left was to trek outside the Free State. The number of failed farmers migrating from the Free State increased rapidly soon after the war although the process was to some extent masked by inter-provincial migration into the Free State. Between 1911 and 1921, however, the exodus from these districts became so great that each of the south-western districts recorded a decrease of more than 10% in their White populations.[27]

The south-western Free State is only one of three broad regions in the Orange Free State. The distinction between the regions is drawn geographically by greatly differing annual rainfall rates, and broad changes in soil fertility.[28] The natural line of demarcation between the diamondiferous and largely pastoral south-western region, and the north-eastern region, runs diagonally across the Free State and through the districts of Boshoff, Winburg, Thaba Nchu and Wepener. Thus the south-western districts are taken to include Bethulie, Boshoff, most of the Bloemfontein district, Edenburg, Fauresmith, Jacobsdal and Philippolis. Whilst included in the north-eastern districts are Bethlehem, the other parts of the Bloemfontein district, Frankfort, Harrismith, Heilbron, Hoopstad, Kroonstad, Lindley, Senekal, Vrede, Vredefort and Winburg. The northern districts, with higher rainfall and greater fertility evolved into the 'maize triangle' of the Free State.

The other broad region of the Free State is that area in the east along the Caledon River, the so-called 'conquered territory'. The eastern districts include Ficksburg, Ladybrand, Rouxville, Smithfield, Wepener and Thaba Nchu.[29] This eastern region differs from either the north-east or south-west by virtue of being the most fertile area of the Free

State, the 'wheat granary' of the province. Here the price of agricultural land was high, farms were on average smaller, and these districts more closely settled than either of the other two regions in the Free State. Here the agricultural communities tended to be old, settled and well-to-do.

Of the six eastern districts only Ficksburg and Smithfield went into rebellion. Ficksburg was closely tied to, and influenced by the neighbouring district of Bethlehem which was the seat of rebellion in the Free State. Smithfield, Hertzog's own constituency went into rebellion somewhat perfunctorily, and very late. The eastern Free State was largely self-sufficient and, being less affected by economic vagaries than the other regions, remained to some extent an observer in the rebellion. As such it is not proposed to discuss this region in any detail.

One is immediately struck by the fact that the rebellion in the Free State was largely confined as Hertzog noted, to '... those six or seven districts in the north'.[30] In the other region of the Free State, the south-west, only Brandfort and Dewetsdorp in the Bloemfontein district, the rural parts of a much urbanised district went into rebellion.

In accounting for the focus of the rebellion almost solely in the north-east of the Free State, it is misleading to point to the influence of a leader such as General de Wet who lived there, without determining why the south-eastern districts as a whole, refused to join the rebellion. It would seem that a major reason why there was no rebellion in the south-western districts, was that as a result of industrialisation, the traditional pre-industrial society was in the process of dissolving. As has already been shown, the coming into being of the *'heerenboeren'* class, together with the comparative strength of this class after the war, led to the enclosure of large areas of land, and the forced exodus of a significant proportion of the existing population. Discussing the population decline in the pastoral south-west the census of 1920 noted: '... the decrease in population .. could only be attributed to the fact that certain of the more prosperous farmers have bought up all the farms coming into the market during the past few years and used them as cattle farms, thus displacing one or more European families... the chief factor was the tendency of farms to change hands at high prices and to come under the control of progressive farmers. It has been observed in many parts of the country that this phase of agricultural progress has sounded the death knell of the agricultural class peculiar to South Africa known as *bijwoners*.'[31] At war's end British reconstruction officials found that they were helping to create a new society rather than reconstituting the pre-war society: 'The object of the Department was to provide employment for indigent burghers or "poor whites", and to assist in closing the Refugee Camps of the people to whom it was otherwise impossible to repatriate. The *"Bywoner"* problem - a serious and abstruse one even before the war - was rendered infinitely more troublesome by the inability of farmers who employed these men on their farms to take them back at the close of hostilities ...'[32] In the

decade from the war to the rebellion, the position of the *'bywoners'* and poor whites deteriorated even further as the price of land spiralled. As Mr O.A. 'Ockie' Oosthuisen, a Member of Parliament, noted: 'Of course these people, with few exceptions have been used to working with live animals, and one of the greatest difficulties is to find room on the land for them to farm stock. The landowners now have made it almost a universal rule that they cannot afford to let people run their stock on their lands. Formerly these people had their own land, with perhaps 200 to 300 head of stock but now the land has become so expensive that their owners do not allow them to bring their stock on their lands ... They had to dispose of it because they had no stock to run it on.[33] *'Bijwoners'* and 'poor whites', those on the lowest rung of White society with little to contribute to the emerging commercial environment, were being undermined and dispossessed. This class of Free State society was not the only group to experience insecurity, however, smaller farmers were also suffering.

The dismemberment of the pre-industrial society in the south-west was made easier by a concurrent and apparently contradictory process: in those pastoral districts where smaller farmers were facing collapse following the war, land prices were simultaneously rising. The closing of the land frontier began a period of escalating prices as land hunger spread. With land being the only source of wealth, status and existence in rural areas, it is easy to understand why farmers were prepared to pay high prices for obviously unprofitable land. Farmers unable to afford land in the Cape where the land frontier was first reached, and where prices escalated in advance of the other provinces, moved northwards into the Free State. Between 1904 and 1911 the Free State experienced a 29.6% increase in White population in rural areas, and a 9.12% increase in urban areas.[34] After 1911, however, even this enormous influx could not mask the exodus of farmers from the south-eastern districts. Many of these farmers were forced to move to the peripheral, and more arid areas of the country or further northwards to the Rhodesias, Kenya, etc.[35]

There was a dramatic increase in the White population of the less fertile areas of South Africa between 1904 and 1911; the population of Kenhardt in the north-western Cape increased by 78.29% during this period, whilst that of the north-western Transvaal including such areas as Lichtenburg and Wolmaranstad increased by 40.43%.[36] The considerable influx of population into these districts indicated both increasing land scarcity, and the failure of many pastoralists to recover from the Anglo-Boer War. Extensive inter-provincial migration had far-reaching effects on the older pre-industrial society of the southern Free State; this society was not destroyed but was forced to reconstitute itself in the more arid areas of South Africa. The pull which these arid regions exerted through the appeal of lower land prices meant that such areas became pools of defeated Free Staters nurturing their grievances against a government which they believed had

failed them. Discussing the influx and influence of Free Staters in the Lichtenburg district, the postmaster told the rebellion commission: 'About that time a number of Free Staters trekked into the Lichtenburg district, and greatly influenced political opinion there. That was in 1914. Ground was then being sold at unprecedented high prices in the Free State, and they were selling out and buying twice as much land with the money in Lichtenburg as they had in the Free State. They also brought their Free State ideas with them of course .... I think the influx of Free Staters brought the people over to the rebels' side. Of course every Free Stater brought into the district was against the Botha government.'[37] The bitterness caused by the failure of the government to support these smaller pastoralists was nurtured amidst the harsh conditions of their new homes and these areas all went into rebellion in 1914.

As had already been indicated, the situation in the agrarian north-eastern Free State was dissimilar to that in the pastoral south. In the south the war delivered the *coup de grace* to what remained of the older society. In the north-east, the influence of industrialisation was only felt from the 1890s, following the discovery of gold, when the ripple effects of this huge new industry began the process of class differentiation. Thereafter, the pre-industrial social structure came under increasing pressure. Following the war first Milner and then Selborne, the British High Commissioners, sought to reconstruct South African agriculture. It was primarily the agrarian areas of the Transvaal and north-eastern Free State which benefitted from the input of substantial new financial resources; the granting of compensation payments for war losses, state loans and subsidies, credit for fencing and dam-building, the provision of creameries and experimental farms and the extension of the railway system.[38] Agricultural supports were intended to assist mainly progressive, capitalizing farmers as was the case with the southern *'heerenboeren'*. In the north-east, however, the agrarian base of agriculture and the improved agricultural environment provided by reconstruction supports enabled smaller farmers with little capital to survive. As a result, the pre-industrial society was to some extent reconstituted in the north, but it was not long before intense pressures arose, which threatened the poorer farmers, the 'poor whites' and *'bywoners'* in the north. These pressures were to be an important factor in the rebellion.

In the north-eastern districts of the Free State, under-capitalized farmers had long found their means of survival in land subdivision, and by resorting to the system of land tenure known as sharecropping. In the post-war environment, however, these former agricultural supports had evolved instead into factors precipitating the dispossession of farmers.

Following the war the farms of many of those killed in action were subdivided amongst all the heirs according to Roman Dutch law. Although the legislation relating to subdivision was repealed in 1901, it continued to influence land conveyancing in the province. Further impetus was

given to subdivision by the closing of the land frontier and resultant rise in land prices. Subdivision was more practical in the fertile northern districts because of the arable nature of farming, as opposed to the pastoral south where far larger landholdings were required to keep stock. As a result of subdivision northern farms diminished in size and proliferated. The prevailing belief was that no matter how hopelessly small or uneconomical subdivided farms became, relatives would at least have a 'sitplekkie' or 'little place to live'. They would thus be safe-guarded from pauperism and the desperate trek of the dispossessed.[39,40] The process of subdivision was widespread in the north and was a means whereby large families unable to purchase more land once prices spiralled, were able to stay on the land. Yet subdivision, more often than not, was a short-term expedient bought at the cost of long-term security. Smaller agricultural units frequently became uneconomical for those farmers unable to evolve away from their traditional, extensive farming methods. Additionally, 'poor whites' and *'bywoners'* were the first to be dispossessed when subdivision began. In this way, as a result of subdivision, the pre-industrial social structure in the north-east was coming under severe pressure, and the insecurity thus created was certainly a factor in the rebellion.

The other means of survival for the smaller farmer in the north was sharecropping, the system of land-tenure whereby the farmer allowed Black families to settle on his land in return for a 'share' of their agricultural produce. During the first post-war decade, with the intense need for both capital, and labour, sharecropping offered a modicum of income for a minimum of effort and expense. As long as agriculture remained relatively unaffected by industrialisation - under-capitalized and technologically backward, this type of farming was bound to be the resort of poorer farmers. Sharecropping also suited absentee landlords with extensive labour requirements in districts such as Harrismith and Vrede. This form of land tenure was the cause of intense conflict in the northern districts and was certainly a factor in the rebellion. At bottom the struggle was between smaller farmers and their larger brethren for labour. The availability of labour meant the difference between the success or failure of farming operations, hence the intensity of the struggle, as S. Trapido indicated: 'The drudgery imposed by the Boer farmer with a limited amount of land and a limited surplus production that could be allowed the black labour-tenant meant that the smaller farmer was always in danger of losing his labour tenants to the large landowners. The small settler farmer was always hard pressed to find labour apart from immediate kin ... The inability of these families to acquire labour contributed in no small way to their failure to survive as economic entities.'[41] This life and death struggle between farmers underwent transition. Early moves aimed at introducing anti-squatting legislation came from smaller farmers interested, not so much in ending the system, as in redistributing squatter labour

from their larger brethren to themselves. The Squatters Law, Chapter XXXIV of the Free State Law Book and Law No 4 of 1895 came about as a result of 'populist' pressure: 'Those behind the anti-squatting legislation were clearly that great mass of little men; the small occupier - owners on subdivided farms, the tenants and bywoners who were concerned not only with labour supply, but also with their security, their social standing and their access to land. There was an upsurge of resentment against the independence and prosperity of African peasants. Indignation at having to compete for markets and for patronage from landowners and large landed neighbours was a constant theme in agitation against squatter communities. The threat of economic competition was a very real one for the smaller producer lacking resources and capital and landed security.'[42] The legislation was a failure as a result of worsening economic conditions prior to the Anglo-Boer War, together with the opposition of larger landowners and land companies intent on squatting and retaining their labour, who conspired to ensure that this legislation had little effect.

From 1908 onwards, however, agitation began again for an end to squatting. Now it was the larger commercial farmers who provided the impetus to coercive action aimed at ending share-cropping. T. Keegan believes the crucial new variable came with the opening up of export markets for maize, which stabilised the market, ending the glut-famine cycle.[43]

Also prominent in the anti-squatting lobby were Afrikaner 'populist' politicians. These politicians were moved by the increasing dangers of 'poor whiteism' facing their people, dangers believed to have resulted in large part, from the competition of Black sharecroppers. The solution in 'populist' terms was two-pronged, firstly an end to Black squatting, but secondly and crucially, extensive governmental support for poorer White farmers was demanded, in terms of economic assistance, labour procurement and labour regulation. This assistance was to be given in order to offset the effects of ending share-cropping.[44] It was the failure of the Botha/Smuts government to provide support for poorer farmers suffering as a result of the introduction of this act, which was greatly responsible for alienating these politicians.

The anti-squatting provisions of the 1913 Land Act were found to have an adverse effect on large numbers of poorer farmers and *bywoners* in the Free State. The ambiguity and inequitable application of this new legislation became a source of great confusion and subsequently, of disaffection amongst Free Staters. In particular great confusion existed regarding the continued existence of contracts with Black labourers entered into prior to the promulgation of the Land Act legislation. It was pointed out that if such contracts were subject to immediate cancellation this 'would result in grievous hardship being inflicted on a very large number of persons especially in the Northern districts of the Free State ... where such conditions were in general

existence'. It was even suggested that the powers of the Governor General be used to circumvent the Land Act legislation, and allow the continuation of such leases. As was to be expected, the law officers replied that existing contracts might be fulfilled, but on termination such contracts were not to be renewed. Resort to the Governor-General could not be entertained to circumvent restrictive statutes, and render legal the continued existence 'of a class only technically servants - with sowing and ploughing rights', as this would defeat the purpose of the legislation.[46] A regular supply of cheap labour was essential to agrarian operations in the northern Free State. The Land Act served to further confuse a chaotic and increasingly desperate situation in which poorer farmers were being denied labour by larger farmers better placed to attract and retain labourers.

With the advantage of hindsight, we can see that the deteriorating labour situation in the north was caused by the extensive capitalisation and commercialisation of agriculture. Resentment, however, focussed on the government for failing to take strong action to provide the necessary labour for all needy farmers. It was felt that labour controls had weakened since Republican times, and the 1913 Land Act with all its anomalies and restrictions, was castigated for further weakening the labour structure. All the magisterial reports mention intense dissatisfaction with the poor supply of labour following the promulgation of the Land Act. As Mr A.M. Baumann, the 'law agent' in Winburg, noted to one of the rebellion commissions: 'Then there was also the Native Land Act. A great deal was made out of that, of course. It was asserted that the farmers could not make their own agreements with the Native labourers anymore, and were in short no longer masters of their own farms'.[47] General De Wet, the leader of the rebellion in the Free State, frequently used labour grievances to garner support for the rebellion. For example, at a meeting at the Kopjes 'poor white' settlement on 22 October 1914, he '.. referred to the question of the natives being allowed to roam about and not being controlled as they used to be controlled ...'[48] Discontent at deteriorating labour conditions was certainly a factor in the 1914 rebellion.

Intense disappointment was felt throughout South Africa during 1910 at the failure of the Union of South Africa to fulfil expectations: 'Pathetically people continued to believe that the poverty, insecurity, violence and confusion would disappear with one wave of the wand of Union .. All sections of the population and especially 'poor whites' ... had expected the mere act of Union to wreak miracles. Conditions in fact grew worse and frustrated.[49] The bitterness of failed expectations was compounded as economic conditions rapidly deteriorated from the 'Great Drought' of that year, when post-war recovery was abruptly curtailed.

The magistrate of Smithfield stated in his report for 1910, that 'the drought was the worst that had been experienced in the past thirty years, no crops had been

reaped and nearly all lambs had died, whilst there had been an estimated loss of 50,000 sheep'.[50] The magistrate of the Jacobsdal district reported that the year had been disastrous, with the near ruination of many farmers.[51] Conditions were so severe that large numbers of poorer farmers and 'poor whites' in districts such as Kroonstad, Wepener and Ficksburg resorted to liquor smuggling and gun-running into Basutoland.[52] Wretched conditions afflicted all of the Free State. In the north, the districts of Senekal, Winburg and Vredefort were worst affected.[53] A large percentage of the Vredefort district was reported to be 'not far above the line of actual want'.[54]

Amidst such conditions the population needed some form of assistance to see them through the abnormal period of drought. Yet the position facing poorer farmers requiring credit was precarious. On 1st October 1912 the Land and Agricultural Bank of South Africa was established, creating hope amongst struggling farmers that government support would be forthcoming. Such hopes were soon dashed, however, and bitterness against the government grew as a result. The Land Bank report for the first year announced that 'the main object is to assist the farming population by providing *bona fide* and deserving applicants with funds at a cheap rate, repayable in instalments over an extended period'.[55] From the outset the Land Bank was run along strictly business lines, discouraging the hopes of many that it would provide venture capital by means of which the state could assist struggling farmers. Advances were only considered on first mortgages, which generally meant only the wealthier, more self-sufficient farmers who had been able to survive those dismal years following the Anglo-Boer War, without resorting to credit from financial institutions. In addition bonds were considered only up to 60% of the security. Again, richer farmers were favoured because it was frequently the case that 60% of the value of smaller farms was hardly worth the trouble in terms of the miniscule loan which would thereby be advanced. There was also a minimum amount which could be advanced of £50, which immediately denied landless farmers any hope of help and meant that farms had to be going concerns rather than virgin land or small plots. As was explained: 'At the time the Land Bank was under consideration it was urgently represented in Parliament that provision of some kind should be made to assist the farmer who had no kind of land to offer as security ... Whilst the claims of these farmers were recognised, Parliament at that time was not prepared to extend the scope of the Act. Applications have been continually made to the Bank by this class of farmer and the Board feels that the grants of small loans to them would be the saving of many farmers who otherwise would become poor whites'.[56] There does seem to be some substance to Dunbar Moodie's claim that the establishment of the Land Bank ' ... further concentrated the hegemony of the Boer gentry ...' and we can see that this was perhaps the case, not only in the Transvaal, but also in the Free State.[57]

The failure of the Land Bank to offer any support for struggling agriculturalists led to farmers turning to storekeepers and private individuals for credit, as Macmillan noted: '...the Land Bank is useful today chiefly to the relatively strong men who wish to undertake fencing, irrigation or other such capital schemes. This being so, and the ordinary banks being necessarily similar, I shall not say more than that the storekeepers and others are to-day doing at a high rate of interest what ought to be done by agricultural credit banks set up for the purpose of tiding the producers over the period they must want for their crops to mature. As a result it is not too much to say that South Africa is something like a Seventh Heaven of the non-producing speculator and middleman.'[58] The net result of the failure of the Land Bank to support poorer farmers was, as the magistrate of Harrismith indicated, 'the iniquitous system of long credits' given by storekeepers.[59] In the Frankfort district there was also 'perhaps too great a habit for a population without methods or experience of buying or selling to give long credit, a habit which although derived from past necessity was more or less dangerous'.[60] In the Hoopstad district also, 'storekeepers gave long and rather unlimited credit which did not tend to place trade on a sound basis'.[61] Particularly in the agrarian north-eastern districts, smaller farmers unable to find readily available and affordable credit, were being forced to resort to moneylenders. The increased cost of using 'storekeeper' credit in terms of higher interest rates and greater insecurity, placed agricultural concerns in jeopardy particularly during the long drawn-out period of drought from 1910 to the rebellion.[62]

By the end of 1912, 152 of 224 farms in the Jacobsdal district were bonded: 'The magistrate did not consider this tendency a good one as, with few exceptions, the money market was not being used for improvements, and in the course of time he feared the result would be that the present landowners would be landowners no longer'.[63] The magistrate of Lindley bore out this prognosis by indicating that: 'The increase in civil cases in this district to nearly double the total for the previous year ... could only be accounted for by the fact that the mercantile community was getting tired of giving unending credit and had during the past year handed over a large number of overdue accounts for collection.'[64] Thoughts of rebellion amongst indebted farmers grew, as agricultural conditions steadily worsened.

The money market had begun to collapse, credit was drying up, hastened by the worsening drought and the consequent decline in trade. During 1913 industrial unrest added to this situation as moneylenders, themselves caught in a credit squeeze situation, began panicking and calling in bonds.

The *Select Committee on Drought Distress Relief* examined the factors leading to the collapse of the credit market and the effect this had on farmers. Mr John Robb, chairman of the South African Mutual Life Assurance Company was

questioned: '- From what you say, I take it that the private person will advance too much, far more than you will, in proportion to the value of the land? - Well he advances more than we would. We want a bigger margin, because we want a margin that will stand almost any fluctuation, really.'[65] Mr Robb was asked whether there was anything in the story of 'a lot of cruel moneylenders going about looking for the blood of the people'.[66] Did he not think it was pretty much a bogey that moneylenders were 'wanting to snaffle farms and screw the people out of them?'. Mr Robb would only say that 'there may be an exceptional case here and there'. He was also asked whether he did not think that 'it frequently happens that a farmer in order to obtain money to pay off his interest, borrows money from a friend or an attorney, or some other institution?'. Mr Robb replied that he 'knew that this was the case'.[67] It was the private individual or institution holding the second bond, who was likely to foreclose the mortgage when the farmer fell behind on interest payments. Mr Gother Mann, the General Manager of the South African Association for the Administration and Settlement of Estates concurred with Mr Robb. His institution also advanced money largely on first mortgage, leaving others to loan money at higher interest rates on the second bond. He was asked whether it was his experience that private bondholders were much more likely to press the farmer than companies or institutions holding first mortgage bonds. He replied, 'Yes, I daresay that would be the case'.[68] The position facing smaller, struggling farmers requiring credit was thus increasingly bleak. They could expect little or no help from the Land Bank, and Building Societies were only prepared to grant small loans on first mortgage bonds which excluded the majority of the agriculturalists. Those farmers who resorted to taking out loans on second mortgages faced increasing risks of foreclosure as the drought dragged on, affecting their interest repayments and worsening the credit squeeze situation.

In their desperate search for some form of support amidst the impoverished environment of the Free State, large numbers of *plattelanders* were turning to the English-dominated Labour Party which was prepared to promote their economic interests forcefully. There was a spontaneous swing to Labour as a result of the industrial unrest of 1913, which elevated the Labour Party to prominence, and 'remarkable progress' was achieved in the Free State districts of Ficksburg, Brandfort and Bloemfontein.[68] Elsewhere: 'Labour gained a majority in the Transvaal provincial elections and gained considerable Hertzogite sympathy. For a while it seemed as if the British Labour and Afrikaner Hertzogites would unite on economic grounds ... This the outbreak of the Great War prevented. Hertzogites and some S.A.P. members were anti-war. Labour dropped its bread and butter politics to assert its British allegiance.'[69] The thrust of the Labour Party, and its appeal to *plattelanders*, can be seen in *Die Nuwe Politiek*, one of the Afrikaans pamphlets issued by the party. The theme of

this pamphlet was, 'the mutual interest of the small landowner and the white worker as against those of finance capitalists of the Unionist Party and the land capitalists of the South African Party'.[70] The sinking of the Lusitania on 7 May 1915, and the Labour Party commitment thereafter, to support the British war effort, ended the appeal of the party for most Afrikaners. Yet prior to the sinking, the success of the Labour Party provides evidence that political behaviour in the Free State was motivated by distress: 'During the first half of 1915 the Party optimistically pursued its rural propaganda, "Never was there a time in the history of South Africa" maintained a contemporary Labour leaflet, "that the Backveld was as receptive to our message as it is now". Indeed Bunting reported to the administrative council at the beginning of April:'There is no question that the Dutch speaking population, especially in the Transvaal, but also in the Free State and Cape Colony, is at present very favourably inclined towards the Labour Party though to a less extent, to the Hertzog or National Party, which latter they seem to realise promises them no real help.'[71] The political success of this predominantly British party on the Free State *platteland* reveals the desperation of Afrikaners alienated from their government, and oppressed by economic forces they barely understood.

The year of the Great War dawned particularly inauspiciously in South Africa, with the outbreak in January of a general strike involving the railways and mines, which was an extension of the strike of July of the previous year. The industrial unrest was to have severe consequences on the agricultural sphere. In 1911 the magistrate of Lindley had prophetically warned: '... it is difficult to see how such prices are warranted for dry agricultural land which in some years could barely bring in the interest on the mortgages with which many of the farms are encumbered. He thinks the prices are due, not to speculation, but to land hunger, and that when improved they will go considerably higher unless the money market at any time becomes sufficiently disturbed as to cause withdrawals of capital advanced when a bad fall in prices is expected'.[72] In 1914 the fear expressed by the magistrate of Lindley came to pass. The money market, unsettled by the industrial unrest of the previous year, was panicked by a recurrence in 1914, and moneylenders began foreclosing mortgages. The Land and Agricultural Bank report for the northern districts of Vredefort and Kroonstad noted: 'Through the unsettled state of the money market and as a result of the drought bonds have been called up. Many farmers will not be in a position to pay off these bonds and now that they will require the assistance of the Land Bank to help them out of their difficulties funds are not available'.[73] The report also noted that conditions were steadily deteriorating in the Free State through prolonged drought, severe hailstorms, loss of stock, slump of produce and the general depression. Also important was: 'The closing down of the diamond mines in consequence of the European War, which closed the markets to

a number of farmers, caused a great scarcity of ready cash, and in consequence a great number of debtors were unable to pay their interest'.[74] Economic conditions were so depressed that formerly solvent farming concerns which had met the stringent requirements of the Land Bank were falling further into debt; the situation facing those poorer farmers who were not eligible for Land Bank loans must have been far worse.

It had become apparent that demands upon the Land Bank could not be met from available funds and a limit of £500 was placed on cash advances. In January 1914, however, owing to the industrial crisis and its effect upon the availability of funds, the Land Bank resolved to make it a condition of grants that advances would only be paid out as and when funds were available. Soon afterwards the operations of the Land Bank were entirely curtailed and all available funds were chanelled to the Treasury as a loan at 4½% in order to assist the war effort. As a result of this action £50,000 had been redirected as of 31 December 1914, money which would otherwise have been made available for the relief of farmers.[75] The Land Bank report for that year indicated: 'It was particularly distressing to the Board to have to curtail the operations of the Bank at a period when the farming community was so urgently in need of assistance. Many of them had lost a year's return through drought or absence in the field, and were precluded from carrying out their farming operations in a manner beneficial to themselves and to the State generally'.[76] Considerable pressure was being exerted on the Land Bank by the agricultural community claiming governmental responsibility for extraordinary support during this period of crisis, a responsibility which the Land Bank was reluctant to assume: 'The Central Board has been faced with a position of considerable difficulty regarding the time beyond the date for the payment of interest and instalments, and this difficulty has been accentuated by the peculiar light which many borrowers of public moneys are inclined to regard such debts - a remission or an abatement at the least is looked for. The legislature was careful to disabuse Land Bank debtors of any such possibility ... '[77] No help would be forthcoming from this source.

The rapidly worsening conditions led even magistrates to plead for support. In a minute to the Minister of Justice, the magistrate of Lichtenburg, J.C. Juta called for a state moratorium and warned 'The Government should also consider the advisability of granting postpon for payment of debts. People who are in debt and cannot pay become quite desperate when sued and this creates a great deal of dissatisfaction'.[78] The government at this stage, was not prepared to intervene: 'With regard to a Moratorium, the government has at present no powers to deal with the matter, but it is having earnest consideration and will probably be one of the things dealt with during the coming special session of Parliament. I shall be glad if you would report any cases of people who are being unfairly harassed in this

connection'.[79] In denying any tangible form of assistance to those struggling farmers with only mortgage foreclosure ahead, the government was ensuring that they had little to lose in rebellion.

The option of selling up and migrating elsewhere was no longer open once the money market crashed, for buyers were thereafter unable to obtain bonds in the depressed money market. Plummeting land prices resulting from the credit squeeze meant that sales would not realise the capital needed to cover existing bonds obtained during earlier years of land hunger and price inflation. The situation was graphically outlined by the magistrate of Frankfort in the annual report of 1914, 'land at the end of the year was stated to be unsaleable and the magistrate expressed the opinion that at a forced sale for cash farmland would probably not realise more than £1 to 25s per morgen'.[80] This price was for land that had been selling at over £3 per morgen the previous year. Where land prices remained stationary it was only because, as in Senekal, 'all selling stopped, sellers holding out for their price and buyers refused to give'.[81] Sellers were not holding out from a position of strength, on the contrary, 'most farms carried heavy bonds and as farmers owing to a succession of bad seasons, had not been able to reduce them, many were in a precarious situation financially'.[82]

The drought of the previous three years continued throughout 1914, with devastating effects in most regions of the Free State. In the Bethulie district, 'considerably more than half the farmers were compelled to trek to the Cape in search of grazing'. Farmers were likewise compelled to trek from the Bethlehem, Brandfort, Lindley, Philippolis, Rouxville, Thaba Nchu, Vredefort and Winburg districts. Farmers in the Fauresmith district were reported to have lost 75% of their stock and in the Thaba Nchu district 50% of stock perished'.[83] In the Bethlehem district which was 'one of the best districts in the Free State', crops were very small in comparison with former years, and in some cases were a total failure. In the Vredefort and Kroonstad districts, farmers were unable to pay the interest on their bonds and White labourers were stated to be obtainable at 2/6d per day where 'poor whites' had formerly refused to work for 5/- per day'.[84] In the Frankfort district land was unsaleable, whilst in Senekal, the low prices offered by buyers meant that farmers could not cover their bond repayments. The drought led to a great increase in stock diseases such as anthrax, 'gallamziekte', 'gielziekte', 'lamziekte', 'spons-ziekte' and wireworm which took a heavy toll of cattle and smaller stock. 'Lamziekte' was particularly devastating, with the result that the livestock industry 'so essential to general revenue was faltering' and 'a situation comparable to the Rinderpest epidemic had developed.[85] Worse still was to come, as wool and cattle prices slumped after the out-break of the First World War in August. The magistrate of Smithfield reported, 'owing to the slump in the price of wool, farmers were compelled to hold back their clips or

sell at a great sacrifice and, as a result they were very short of cash'.[86]

Because of the industrial unrest and the decline in trade, the commercial depression worsened, and the economy rapidly approached a crisis.[87] The rise in the price of basic commodities during this period added to the misery, and in the Bethulie district the magistrate met with shopkeepers in an effort to fix the price of necessities.[88] There are indications though, that elsewhere commodity prices were not moderated such as in Hoopstad, which was soon to go into rebellion: 'In Hoopstad the outbreak of the European War disastrously affected all trade in wool, hides, mohair and livestock. At the same time bills were falling due, cattle dying of gallamziekte and, later, from poverty, and foodstuffs in the way of meal and flour rising in price'.[89] During the second half of the year destitution became readily apparent, particularly in Fauresmith which: 'probably felt the effects of the European War more severely and instantaneously than any other district in the Province, for within seven days of the outbreak of the war both the big mines at Jagersfontein and Koffyfontein closed down. In Jagersfontein the effect was appalling as many men with large families were thrown out of employment and faced with destitution and starvation ..... The Koffyfontein Mine continued work on a smaller scale with White labour only for a couple of months then shut down altogether. Rations were issued to the families of needy employees ... The Provincial Administration also came to the rescue, dispensing with native labour gangs as opportunity offered, and substituting White labour. Local distress funds were also started to deal with the more needy cases.'[90] The majority of miners thrown out of work had no chance of obtaining employment in the Free State and were forced to migrate to the Transvaal mines. In an investigation of the unrest at the Van Ryn Deep goldmine at Boksburg during 1917, it was pointed out that the labour force contained approximately 2,500 Afrikaners from the Free State who had obtained employment in place of those miners leaving on active service.[91] The inspector of police in charge of the investigation was 'inclined to think that the majority have been forced to seek employment on the mines through failure of crops and drought on the farms'.[92] He added: 'It is without doubt, a fact that the largest proportion of Dutch miners are members of the Nationalist Party and it is there that the danger lies for they would seize any pretext to jeopardise the position of the Government and with it the British regime in South Africa. For this reason should there be a strike, I believe that "race hatred" will replace "class hatred" making a rebellion possible'.[93] The forced migration of *platteland* miners from the south-western districts further reveals the growth of discontent in those areas which had become centres for the dispossessed.

There was no hope of relief for Free State farmers amidst such conditions of widespread destitution, and as a result, the promise of reward by the rebels was certainly a factor which influenced some Free Staters into rebellion. In the

Heilbron district there was a 'poor white' settlement run by General De Wet. This area was turned into a focal point of the rebellion by the General who promised rewards to those who would join him: 'I wish it to be known that my intention is, that if we are to attain our ideal, these 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'.[94] The rebels deliberately spread the rumour that they had received a great deal of financial support from the German government, in order to attract struggling men to their cause.[95] We can see the influence of such financial inducements on simple country folk, in the evidence of Mr F.W.C. Buitendag of Lichtenburg who was approached by a man called Bodenstein: '... he told me that ... the five shillings a day which the burghers were promised in the last war would be paid out with our own money. In this connection he referred to the bars of unminted gold which were taken away from the Transvaal. All that, he said, had been sent to Germany to be minted into money out of which the 5s a day would be paid'.[96] The failure of most of the earlier interpretations of the rebellion is that the element of self-interest is denied the rebels. An examination of the motives of the rebel leaders similarly reveals the self-interest motive, often concurrent with political idealism. Far from acting according to any resolute plan of rebellion, rebel leaders vacillated, assessing their support and chances of success. As such, patriotic fervour takes on the appearance of calculated opportunism.

Of the rebel leaders, only Colonel S.G. 'Manie' Maritz on the border of German South West Africa appears to have had implacable resolve: his hatred of the British led him unerringly into rebellion. Yet lack of substantial support outside the Kenhardt area and its surrounds, doomed his uprising to failure: 'Maritz's efforts to spread his revolt in the north-western Cape failed completely, both in the early stage and after Kemp's arrival. Properly viewed the rebellion was confined to the former republics.'[97] Maritz was forced to rely on young men brought 'off the veld'[98] lacking in experience and coerced by a variety of tactics, 'in other words they went into the thing without knowing what it really meant'.[99]

As has already been recognised, the Orange Free State was the focal point of the rebellion. The history of this province to the end of the Anglo-Boer War was one of great adversity. The Free State in particular, was subject to wars, natural depredations and widespread economic dislocation. In the post-war period, far from conditions improving, the province was now faced with the effects of the extensive capitalisation and commercialisation of agriculture. Those sections of the pre-industrial society which were unable or unwilling to evolve, found themselves engaged in a grim struggle for survival on many fronts.

In the pastoral south-west of the Free State the lack of

support by the government in the post-Anglo Boer War period led to this society being unable to reconstitute itself, and thus migrating to other areas of South Africa where land was still cheap. The resentment felt by such farmers was made manifest when most of these pools of defeated Free Staters joined the rebellion against a government which they felt had failed them.

In the north-eastern Free State, however, the forces of the past and those of the industrial future locked in mortal combat. The struggle was uneven and the pre-industrial society received scant assistance from the government either through the Land Bank, or in terms of securing a regular supply of labour. The failure of support from the government in a period of high mortgage rates thrust more and more of these agriculturalists into the unkindly clutches of money-lenders. The Labour Party too, which had aroused hopes, lost its credibility for such farmers when it leaned towards confrontation with Germany in 1914.

The conditions facing the smaller agriculturalists in the north-east steadily worsened towards a crisis. The outbreak of the war, together with industrial unrest, the devastating drought of the past three years and the slump in produce prices, concurrent with the rise in the price of consumer items, led to a severe depression. This depression was to push farmers to the limit. Accumulated grievances had long been focussed on the government by a discontented society too poorly educated to comprehend the reasons for its predicament. Amidst such conditions, the political opposition to the invasion of German South West Africa, and the distaste felt at fighting for Britain found a ready ear. So too, did the financial inducements held out to farmers by the rebels who well knew that 'rebellion does not seem such a serious thing to desperate men'.

NOTES

1. The following is a loose and personal translation of the passages of Afrikaans poetry by 'anonymous' written in the early Twentieth Century in D.J. Opperman, *Groot Verseboek* (1951), 26:

   The locuts and the droughts
   are thick upon our land
   and what will result
   is beyond my comprehension

   Money is also so scarce
   and the coffee has become so expensive
   The foreign banks rule us
   and their 'interest' consumes like fire.

2. Patrick Duncan to Lady Shepstone, 9 December 1914, quoted in A.M. Grundlingh, 'Die Rebellie van 1914: 'n historiografiese verkenning', *Kleio*, 11, 1 & 2 (1979), 29.

3. E.A. Walker, quoted in N.G. Garson, 'The Boer Rebellion of 1914', *History Today*, xii, 2(1962), 137.

4. Garson, ibid.

5. T.R.H. Davenport, 'The South African Rebellion of 1914', *The English Historical Review*, 306 (1963), 94.

6. For instance, J.D. Kestell, *Christiaan de Wet* (1920); G.D. Scholtz, *Die Rebellie* (1942); J.C.G. Kemp, *Die Pad Van Die Veroweraar* (1946); S.G. Maritz, *My Lewe en Strewe* (1939); C.H. Muller, *Oorlogs-herinneringe* (1939).

   In this respect the layman biography, *President Steyn* (1929), 248, by Johannes Meintjes, seems to be the only work among the biographers to mention the economic factors underlying the rebellion: 'It is not usually mentioned that a large number of the poor white element was drawn into the Rebellion, the misfits, the rolling stones, the defeated - as well as the idealists and conscientious objectors. Then too, there were many adventurous youths. Having missed the Boer War and all its excitements ...

7. W.M. Macmillan, *Complex South Africa* (1930), 85.

8. Merriman to Smuts, 20 December 1915, *Smuts Archives*, Pretoria, 190/101/1915.

9. Merriman to Smuts, 20 December 1915, *Smuts Archives*, Pretoria, 190/102/1915.

10. U.G. 42-1916 *Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the causes and circumstances relating to the recent Rebellion in South Africa*, Minutes of Evidence, 127.

11. Ibid, 298.

12. Ibid, 293.

13. Ibid, 313.

14. U.G.46-1916, *Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the causes and circumstances relating to the Recent Rebellion in South Africa.*

15. Quoted in Dr M.T.S. Zeeman, *Die Armesorgwerk van die Ned. Geref. Kerk in Suid Afrika* (1957), 56.

16. Thelma Gutsche, *There was a Man* (1979), 105.

17. Ibid, 92.

18. Ibid, 148.

19. Peter Warwick, *The South African War* (1980), 9, Preface to Chapter II; A.Grundlingh, 'Collaborators in Boer Society'. See also A. Grundlingh, *Hensoppers and Joiners* (1979). Grundlingh states that it was the 'poor white' class which was particularly susceptible to self-interest.

20. G.B. Beak, *The Aftermath of War* (1906), 76.

21. Cd 1551, *Papers Relating to the Progress of Administration in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony*, 64.

22. C.M. Van den Heever, *General J.B.M. Hertzog* (1946), 110.

23. Tim Keegan, 'The Restructuring of Agrarian Class Relations in a Colonial Economy: The Orange River Colony, 1902-1910', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 5, 2 (1979), 246.

24. J. Visscher, *Ondergang Van Een Wereld* (n.d.), 124. Points to the wife of Louis Botha and to J.B.M. Hertzog as being members of this class. Hertzog was certainly a landowner and held mortgages on property. For instance he held a £1400 bond on the farm Rust kraal No. 439 of Mr G. Van Schalkwijk, the leader of the rebellion in Hertzog's own constituency of Smithfield. See Jus 225, File 5/26/15.

25. J.F.W. Grosskopf, *Rural Impoverishment and Rural Exodus* (1932), 12.

26. Visscher, *Ondergang Van Een Wereld*, 33.

27. Grosskopf, *Rural Impoverishment*, 156.

28. See W.B.22, *Climate of South Africa, Part 4, Rainfall Maps* (1957) R.S.A. Government.

29. C.C. Eloff, *Oos-Vrystaatse Grensgordel* (1981).

30. S.C.1-1915, *Select Committee on the Rebellion*, 247.

31. U.G.56-1920, *Census of the European or White Races of the Union of South Africa*, 19.

32. Cd.1551, *Papers on Progress of Administration*, 92.

33. S.C.9-1913, *Select Committee on European Employment and Labour Conditions*, 636.

34. Grosskopf, *Rural Impoverishment*, 65-67.

35. U.G. 44-1913, *Annual Report of the Justice Department for Calendar Year 1912*, 143. As the magistrate of Lichtenburg, one of these dry areas noted in 1912: 'The cry "northwards" was manifesting itself. Cape farmers were selling out from £7 to £10 per morgen and buying in the Free State at from £3 to £5 per morgen. Whilst Free Staters were trekking into the Transvaal and buying at from £1 to £2 10s per morgen and Transvaal farmers were trekking northwards to Enkeldoorn, Melsetter and Victoria districts of Rhodesia and Barotseland where they could buy land on easy terms at about 7s 6d per morgen. Land in Lichtenburg had risen during the last year from about 2s 6d to 10s per morgen according to its situation.'

36. Grosskopf, *Rural Impoverishment*, 66.

37. U.G. 42-1916, *Rebellion Commission*, 201.

38. Cd.1551, *Papers on Progress of Administration*.

39. This trend and its cause were noted by the magistrate of Winburg in the census of 1918:'With regard to the district of Winburg it is very noticeable that in the rich and fertile parts of the district the number of people to the square mile is half and even two-thirds less than on the western side of the district where land is cheap. Farmers paying £6 per morgen in better parts of the district cannot afford to keep *bijwoners* and these latter with their families have consequently migrated elsewhere. The abnormal rise in the price of farmland with the consequential cutting up of farms has left no room for the *bijwoner* with his usually large family. It is interesting to note that in the year 1902 there were 1,365 farms in the Winburg district which then included the district of Senekal. With a combined area of 1,651 miles less than in 1902 there were 1,555 farms and an additional 50 awaiting registration.' U.G.56-1920, *Census*, 20.

40. The census of 1921 noted the same trend in the district of Kroonstad: 'The number of farms owing to subdivision has increased by about 300. This had a tendency to eliminate the *bywoners* who with their usually large

families generally move to urban areas. U.G.37-1924, *Third Census of the European or White Races of the Union of South Africa*, 41.

41. Stanley Trapido, 'Landlord and Tenant in a Colonial Economy: The Transvaal 1880-1910, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 5, 2(1979).

42. Keegan, 'Restructuring of Agrarian Class Relations', 236.

43. Ibid, 245.

44. Recently Richard Bouch noted: 'Thus J.G. Keyter, one of the South African M.L.A.'s from the O.F.S. who was returned as a Nationalist in 1915, said when the 1913 Act was introduced that he "was not going to support it because he thought it was a perfect law - far from it - but because he thought it was a step in the right direction".' 'Farming and Politics in the Karroo and Eastern Cape, 1910-1924', *South African Historical Journal*, 12(1980), 49.

45. Jus. 186, File 5/262/13, Secretary of Native Affairs to Secretary for Justice, 2 August 1913.

46. Ibid.

47. U.G.42-1916, *Rebellion Commission*, 298.

48. S.C.1-1915, *Rebellion Committee*, 295.

49. Gutsche, *There was a Man*, 261-262.

50. Jus. 55, *Secretary for Justice Administrative Report for the Year Ending 31 December 1910*, 2.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid, 26.

53. Ibid, 9-13.

54. Ibid, 9.

55. U.G. 44-1913, *Land and Agricultural Bank of South Africa Report for the period 1 October 1912 to 31 December 1912*, 1. See also Act No. 18 of 1912 establishing the Land Bank and its provisions.

56. U.G.12-1916, *Land and Agricultural Bank of South Africa Report for the Year Ending 31st December 1912*, 12.

57. T. Dunbar Moodie, 'Class Struggle in the Development of Agrarian Capitalism in South Africa: Reflections on the

Relevance to the Natives Land Act 1913', University of the Witwatersrand History Workshop 1981, unpublished paper.

58. Macmillan, *Complex South Africa*, 89.

59. Jus. 55, *Administrative Report*, 12.

60. Ibid, 13.

61. Macmillan, *Complex South Africa*, 98, points out that bondholders were charged up to 12% compound interest by bondholders.

62. U.G.44-1913, *Land and Agricultural Bank Report*, 224.

63. Ibid, 226.

64. S.C.3-1916, *Report of the Select Committee on Drought Relief*, 111.

65. Ibid, 113.

66. Ibid, 114-116.

67. Ibid, 130.

68. D. Tictin, 'The War Issue and the Collapse of the South African Labour Party 1914-15', *South African Historical Journal*, 1, (1969), 60.

69. South African Army Education Handbook (1943), 98.

70. Tictin, *The War Issue*, 68-69.

71. Ibid.

72. Jus.100, *Secretary for Justice: Administrative Report for Year Ending 31 December 1911*, comments of magistrate for Lindley.

73. U.G.20-1915, *Land and Agricultural Bank of South Africa Report for the Year Ending 31 December 1914.*

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid.

76. U.G.12-1916, *Land and Agricultural Bank Report*, 11.

77. Ibid.

78. Jus. 199, File 3/848/141, J.C. Juta, Magistrate of Lichtenburg to Secretary of Justice, 25 August 1914.

79. Jus. 199, File 3/844/14, J. de V. Roos, Secretary of Justice, to J.C. Juta, 29 August 1914.

80. U.G.20-1915, *Land and Agricultural Bank Report*, 170.

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid.

83. Ibid, 173.

84. Ibid, 177.

85. Gutsche, *There was a Man*, 281.

86. U.G. 20-1915, *Land and Agricultural Bank Report*, 172.

87. Ibid. 'Farmers' losses both in crops and stock, during previous drought-stricken years and the general shortage of ready money had a considerable effect on the quality of business done and purchases and sales were largely made on a credit basis. The outbreak of the war in August had an adverse effect on the sale of wool, mohair, hides and feathers for which there was practically no demand.'

88. Ibid, 184.

89. Ibid, 186.

90. Jus. 250, File 3/20/17, J.M.L. Fulford, Inspector S.A.P. to Deputy Commissioner Police, 30 January 1917.

91. Ibid.

92. Ibid.

93. Ibid.

94. U.G.20-1915, *Land and Agricultural Bank Report*, 42.

95. 'Whilst I was there Captain Boshoff (a rebel) paid for certain loaves of bread which he received from Mr Nel; upon which I remarked that at that time money was very scarce and on which Boshoff replied that they had money enough, as Maritz had £1200 government money when he left Keimoes and that Maritz had borrowed £20,000 from the Germans to carry on the war.' S.A.P. 1/7/14 Rex vs Lt. Col. Maritz, statement by Edward James Shawe.

96. S.C.1-1915, *Rebellion Committee*, 186-187.

97. Garson, 'The Boer Rebellion', 136.

98. U.G.42-1916, *Rebellion Commission*, 132.

99. Ibid.