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"PIPPING A LITTLE GAME IN THE BUD"

Pixley Isaka ka Seme, Land Purchase and Rural Differentiation in the Eastern Transvaal

R MORRELL

I.

Three full years after the passage of the 1913 Natives' Land Act, the Magistrate of Middelburg, RF Aling wrote to the Secretary of Native Affairs. The subject of his letter was the farm Mooifontein, situated only 20 kilometres from the town. The farm at that time was not only occupied and cultivated by Africans but negotiations to sell the farm to Pixley Isaka ka Seme, a Johannesburg lawyer, had reached an advanced stage. Aling had firm views on the subject.

> "As it is imperative that the farm should not pass into Native hands, I take it that you will leave no stone unturned to pip O'Neil (the owner) and Seme's little game in the bud"[1]

The magistrate's concern had its legal origins in the 1913 Land Act which came into effect on 20 June 1913. In terms of the Act both independent African cultivation and land ownership in 'white' areas was prohibited. In the mind of the official the consideration that local white farmers were angry over the existence of a 'kaffer lokasie', was probably equally pressing.

Aling's earnest entreaty was successful. On 6 July 1916 the Registrar of Deeds refused to cede transfer of Mooifontein from O'Neil to Seme and the sale fell through. In August the African occupants of Mooifontein were expelled.[2]

Before turning to the wider significance of this episode, I shall narrate the Mooifontein happenings more fully and place them in their regional context. In this way it will become clear how it was possible for "natives to defy the Authorities for three years."[3]

II.

In 1913 settlement patterns within the district of Middelburg had not yet been fixed. In general terms, Africans occupied the northern bushveld area and whites occupied the district's southern highveld. There were however numerous exceptions. In the north white farmers, both poor and wealthy, were intruding into the bushveld. In the south, African squatting was widespread. Actual African landownership was limited. In the north there were ten African locations, granted at various stages by the ZAR and the Transvaal governments in recognition of dense African settlement in particular localities. In the south, African land ownership was more limited. Before 1905 Africans were technically prohibited from owning land although mission societies like the BMS held land on behalf of Africans.(4) In 1905 the Supreme Court judgement Tsewu v Registrar of Deeds reversed this position in the Transvaal.(5) Between 1905 and 1913 there was only one instance of African land purchase in the Middelburg district. This was the farm Doornkop, situated just north of the town.(6) The absence of further African land purchase is intriguing and suggests that Middelburg's highveld Africans were too poor to go in for such ventures. The progress of a South African 'peasantry' has been well-documented but there are also signs that, in some areas, poverty and servitude rather than wealth and independence dominated.(7) In Middelburg where the Ndebele had been crushed and distributed as labourers in 1883 there appear to have been few African cultivators capable of buying land.(8)

When the Land Act came into force, one last chance for aspirant African landowners remained. Land purchase became illegal unless such purchase was being negotiated before the Act came into force.

Mooifontein was a large farm of 3346 morgen. It was owned by R O'Neil of Belfast, a small village to the east of Middelburg. Although O'Neil owned a number of farms he did not consider himself wealthy. He lacked the capital to begin commercial farming and appears to have relied largely on African squatter farmers for his income. The 1913 Land bill threatened O'Neil's way of life almost as much as it did that of the squatters.

Mooifontein in 1913 was already occupied by nine 'farm labourers' who in February of that year had signed a contract with O'Neil to cultivate some land. O'Neil's terms were quite generous. The nine men were to work for three months (without pay). In return they were apparently allowed grazing and cultivation rights on the farm. In addition their extra labour could be procured by O'Neil at £1/10 a month.(9)

In April 1913 O'Neil responded to the impending passage of the bill by signing another contract, this time with 'Job Ngema' and 44 other Africans. He offered Ngema residence, cultivation and grazing rights for £400 p a and an option to purchase 1000m at £6/m. (The going rate at the time was between £2-£3/m.)(10) It was not easy to sell land because credit, even from the Land Bank, was tight. Sales to Africans were therefore attractive because a high price could be expected. It was not long before the neighbours of Mooifontein began to complain. A prominent member of the local Farmers Association gave his interpretation of O'Neil's plans. "The terms of the lease are:- to establish natives who own draught animals (trekdieren) and who are able to sow on their own for the landowner. The owner then gives half of the crops to the natives". As far as the member was concerned this was a way by which landowners "escape the Natives Land Act".(11) He was entirely correct. O'Neil was side-stepping the Act. Moreover he had more than one step to his repertoire. It came to light that O'Neil had apparently given Ngema permission to sub-let to other wandering Africans. One such African who set great store by Mooifontein was a church minister, HR Ngcayiya. He bewailed the fact that "our late Greatest Helper Mr Sauer's Act is being so unjustly construed". He asked if it would not be possible for the government to suggest Mooifontein as a home for homeless Africans. "It will be a kind of relief (to) 300 or 400 families with their stock (and they) would certainly live comfortable."(12)

Alarmed by the prospect of a densely settled African farm on the highveld, the Native Commissioner (NC) of Middelburg investigated and prevented Ngema from exercising the option of purchase on the grounds that he had not done so before the bill was passed. O'Neil

was thus temporarily stymied. In October therefore he produced an elaborate smokescreen by informing the NC that he was about to "carry on farming operations on a large scale" and required at least 50 native families as labourers. His real intention was to go in for a hybrid form of sharecropping described above.[13] O'Neil bluffed that he had sought the Prime Minister's view on the matter and had toyed with the option of selling, but had dropped the idea. The NC was unimpressed with this explanation and attached greater credence to the continuing allegations of white farmers that their labour was being enticed to Mooifontein.

Offical action against O'Neil was not however launched. The Under Secretary for Native Affairs, E Barrett pointed out in May 1914 that "while the arrangements may be suspicious it is quite a different matter to prove such suspicion by legal evidence."[14] The failure of government to take action against him pushed O'Neil to more precocious defiance of the 1913 Act. In September he agreed to sell Mooifontein to Pixley Isaka ka Seme.[15] It is not clear what the connection between Ngema (who had the option of purchase) and Seme was, but as early as the first week of April 1914 Ngema had contacted Saul Msane, a colleague of Seme's in the SANNC in connection with the sale. Once contact had been made, it seems as though Seme took over Ngema's right to purchase.

Seme was involved in this transaction not for some altruistic end, but for profit. (A colleague of Seme's, RV Selope Thema, describes Seme's land buying exploits in heroic terms, as part of an overall plan to free the African from being 'a beast of burden'.[16]) Seme had formed the Native Farmers Association as a company to buy land for Africans. This company bought Daggakraal, Driefontein and Driepan in the Wakkerstroom district. Later on these farms became well-known as blackspots, immortalized in their resistance to resettlement and by the death, at the hands of policemen, of one of their leaders, Saul Mkhize, in 1983.[17] In a rather peculiar way, Seme has shared in the reflected glory of this resistance to the state. This has blinded observers to the true nature of Seme's land purchases.

Even before he got confirmation of his purchase of Mooifontein, Seme was hard at work restructuring property relations on the farm. All those who could not or would not accept his ownership or pay the high rents he demanded were given just eight days to leave the farm.[18] Despite this harsh action, Seme's presence was welcomed by many of the richer African cultivators. They respected his legal knowledge and felt secure under his protection. Seme's organisational powers, they believed, would succeed in gathering together many wealthy Africans, in collecting their money and in buying the farm once and for all. The difficulty in securing tenure was vast and it was a comfort to know that no lesser person than Seme, Treasurer of the SANNC and a lawyer from Egoli, was in charge.

By March 1916 African cultivators from as far afield as Standerton had settled on the farm. They paid Seme on average £62 each in the belief that they had thus purchased 10m.[19]

In June 1916 as the prospects of Mooifontein becoming an African cultivator base became more and more likely, charges in terms of the 1913 Natives' Land Act were brought against Seme and O'Neil. Aling, the magistrate concluded mournfully that "he could not see his way to convict under the charge as framed by the Public Prosecutor, and the accused were therefore found not guilty and discharged."[20] In an effort hastily to confirm his legal triumph Seme applied to have the farm registered in his name. In July 1916 the Registrar of Deeds refused to do this and the saga of Mooifontein came to an end. The inhabitants were evicted and it is at least possible that they lost the investments they had paid to Seme.

The case of Mooifontein throws light on three issues of importance in agrarian studies: rural differentiation, land ownership and patterns of resistance. I shall examine these by looking at the Middelburg district as a whole.

III.

The Middelburg district is divided broadly into two zones: a northern bush and low veld occupied mainly by Africans and the southern highveld owned by whites. Agricultural prospects in the north were

for the most part poor. The area contained "light, sandy soil, interspersed with rocky koppies".[21] Although the Olifants and Blood rivers skirted the area of African occupation, water was generally in short supply. Disease was widespread. The Africans of the area "suffered from some disease or other, like syphilis, scurvy etc, and their animals had sickness also."[22] Part of the explanation for the sorry state of affairs which existed before 1913 is to be found in the history of the area. The north had been under continuous African occupation for a long time. Gradually hemmed in by white settlement, Africans were no longer able to practice sensible ecological policies.[23] The area became over-populated and competition for land between the area's occupants occurred.[24] By the second decade of the twentieth century, and probably before this, the area was exhausted - observers stated that it contained only "old land".[25]

The south, by contrast, was well-watered and fertile. In the late 19th century it had largely been cleared of African cultivators. Since the district's white farmers only went in for agriculture in a half-hearted way, much of the area was allowed to lie fallow. In the twentieth century therefore prospects of making a living by agriculture were immeasurably better than in the north.

It should come as no surprise that the African cultivator living in the south on a white farm was described as living the life of "a little king".[26] In 1913 most such Africans farmed quite large plots which they either rented for cash from white farmers or paid for with their labour for three months of the year. Their prosperity was measured in the purchase of 'western clothes' and 'household furniture'.[27] Not all Africans on the southern highveld enjoyed this progress. The Ndebele, who had been defeated and distributed as labourers in 1883 were "as poor as mice".[28] Many Ndebele worked all year round. Most received only small plots and limited grazing rights. A measure of their poverty was that they wore skins and could not afford consumer goods.[29]

In the north, African cultivators were better off than the Ndebele farm labourers. For one thing many of them lived in locations set

aside for their occupation. Here they were free from the labour demands of farmers. Superficially, life in the north appears to have been easy. In recent studies on the 'peasantry' in South Africa[30], it is often suggested that Africans in locations (and in areas which later became reserves) were sheltered from state and capitalist forces and were thus able to become relatively prosperous. This is far from being the case in the eastern Transvaal. The Sub NC (SNC) of the area commented in 1914 that Africans "merely grow sufficient for their own use and for trading away for cotton goods and small requirements".[31] Many Africans in the area did not have location land on which to cultivate and increasingly were forced to rent adjacent land for agricultural purposes.[32] Such an exercise rarely gave the cultivator a chance to become market-oriented. Manure was in short supply and fertilizer too expensive. Perhaps most critically however, the major market, Middelburg town, was 130 kilometres away. There was no railway or even a road motor service linking the north to the south, and few Africans in Nebo therefore were ever able to make a living by agriculture alone.[33]

Rising population added to the problems of Nebo cultivators. Natural increase and the eviction of labour tenants before the 1913 Act led to a heavy demand being placed on the locations and neighbouring farms.[34] Locations became severely overcrowded. In 1908 it was calculated that Africans had access from 0.9m/person to 2.1m/person in these locations.[35] The inadequacy of this land can be ascertained by looking at the conservative estimates of African land requirement by Stubbs, later the chairperson of the Committee established to recommend reserves for African in the eastern Transvaal. Stubbs estimated that each African family required 4m of agricultural land and 14½m of pastoral land. Africans soon spilled on to white-owned land. Here they faced land company rents and many were evicted for their failure to pay. In addition white farmers entering the area reduced the available land to which Africans could move. By the mid 1920s Nebo's economy was in tatters.

> The cash returns accruing to natives from the cultivation of the soil are negligible .... with a few exceptions (they) do not cultivate for a definite market ... in the European areas (on the other hand) the natives tend to cultivate European crops to a somewhat greater extent than on the

> purely native areas. In most cases the yield from the lands has tobe supplemented by the purchase of food. Manual labour is almost invariably the source of the earnings required for the payment of taxes and the purchase of necessaries.[36]

Beinart has argued for Pondoland that the abilit, to avoid migrant labour was a crucial element in rural differentiation.[37] If this is applied to Nebo it will be seen that most of the area's population was far from prosperous, mostly below the subsistence leve. Whereas in 1905 the SNC of Pokwani (Nebo) commented that "natives are beginning to go out freely in search of employment", by 1910 a combination of factors, including East Coast Fever had "compelled young native labourers to go out to work to earn money to purchase food."[38] In 1909 the trend to migrancy was consolidated by the establishment of a permanent labour recruiting officer in Nebo itself. In the same period traders began complaining that the "circulation of coin has diminished very considerably".[39]

From the above it should be clear that the Nebo locations and the surrounding area (which was to become first a reserve and then the Lebowa homeland) did not harbour a large or prosperous cultivator class. This is consistent with Lewis's finding and those of Beinart who argues that no 'peasantry' existed in Pondoland.[40]

Yet there were isolated examples of rich and successful Africans in Nebo. Scattered references refer to "a native who grows 800 bags of corn", another to somebody who grows "1000 bags of wheat pa" and yet another to"a person who earns £600 a year." But, as Percy Greathead of the Transvaal Consolidated Land and Exploration Company observed, "these are exceptions."[41]

One of the rare exceptions was a man called Jan Mochadi. In 1913 Mochadi began to buy land on the farm Uitkyk. By 1923 he had secured 24m. His holdings might have been greater had he not lost money through the destruction of his crops (locusts) and the unforseen expense of transferring land, employing lawyers etc.[42] In 1923 his stock was valued at £300. Mochadi was regarded as a case of exceptional success in Nebo, yet his achievements in absolute terms were modest. He was little more than a small landowner and though

he went in for agriculture on his own account and employed African labour, he made most of his money by renting to fellow Africans. His land holdings nevertheless proved a secure base for accumulation. By 1930 Mochadi and others had nearly finished paying for a large farm. Mochadi's share was 700m.[43] This was an impressive achievement yet once again it needs to be seen in perspective. A 700m farm was, by white standards, not unduly large. More importantly though, in 1930 Mochadi was one of only 16 or 17 Africans owning land individually in the district. In the north therefore wealthy landed Africans constituted a numerically insignificant class.

The numbers of the wealthy and powerful were swelled to some extent by chiefs and headmen. As Beinart has shown for Pondoland, chiefs did not automatically transform themselves into commercial farmers, yet "pre-colonial forms of rank and authority, which had implications for wealth in terms of income and productive capacity, were to some extent translated into the new (colonial) context."[44]

There is little hard evidence of chiefly wealth or agricultural activity in Nebo. Rather, there is evidence about the decline in their authority. It is difficult to generalize about chiefs and their relationships with the state and their subjects. In 1905 for example, a frustrated SNC reported that "the chiefs here, are of very little support to us". On the other hand, it was reported in 1906 that "the chiefs and natives were very respectful".[45] There were many responses available to chiefs and to understand these one would have to have an indepth knowledge of each chieftaincy in the area. Notwithstanding my ignorance of chieftaincy politics and the great range in chiefly behaviour, it would be true to say that chiefs could, and did, protect their 'followers' from land encroachment. Africans in rural areas were aware of this: as a Mpondo tribesman put it, "without chiefs we shall be like squatters."[46] The loyalty of 'followers' for their chiefs was not automatic. From quite early on, for many Nebo Africans the land question became subordinated to concerns about geographical mobility and an ability to find jobs in the cities. In other words as their reliance on the land waned in inverse proportion to their growing dependence on wage labour, so Africans became less willing to respect the authority of the chief and

to invest in the land. This trend was noticed as early as 1910 when, as has been noted, the locations were already showing signs of strain and an inability to support their populations. "Many chiefs who in the past were in receipt of substantial incomes from their followers this year (were) left with hardly sufficient to meet their liabilities."[47] Resistance from migrants to chiefs grew when they began demanding levies for land purchase. In 1922, "young men at work at labour centres (have) refused to pay the levy."[48]

Chiefs as a group did not accept their loss of authority without a fight. As a Native Affairs department report put it, they "zealously fostered (tribal organisation as) their only means of control over their followers."[49] Since a large part of the chiefs' power rested on the control and distribution of land, it was in their interests to begin purchasing land. In this way they hoped to secure the loyalty of their 'followers'. In this process they could legitimately claim to be protecting the land of 'followers' from white encroachment. The people who were most likely to respond to the initiative of chiefs were those who were not yet dependent on migrant labour and who still saw a future for themselves in the countryside as cultivators.[50] Support for the chiefs from this class was not always forthcoming and there were numerous points where friction could result in a detachment of support from a chief. The unfair distribution of land or the demand for labour (either for the mines or for the chief's fields) could result in erstwhile supporters of a chief trekking away from his authority.[51]

The chief's relationship with private African landowners is equally complex. In some cases these landowners bought land in order to remove themselves from the orbit not only of chiefly authority but of the tribal system altogether - which seems to have been the case with Mooifontein.[52] In other cases tribal leadership disputes resulted in one of the rivals setting himself up with a following on private land. This was the case with Johannes Dinkwanyane in the mid 19th century. With Hans Merensky of the BMS, Dinkwanyane bought a farm near Middelburg and established the Botshabelo settlement. Despite the question of authority, there was enough common ground between African landowners and chiefs for animosity to be dissipated. Chiefs and landowners both had an interest in stabilizing property relations

and both functioned as rentier landlords - distributing land to tenants in return for cash. It is not the intention to overdraw the similarities. Obviously tribal structures were very different from those that existed on farms owned by African individuals. Nevertheless, as Meintjes comments, "the ownership of land became the means for a declining middling class to cling on to their class position within a political economy where economic options were closing down."[53] This was also true for chiefs.[53a]

IV.

The question of African land purchase has not enjoyed much scholarly attention. This is not really surprising since relatively little land was purchased by Africans. In the Transvaal between 1910-1912 for example, only 78 farms (144 416m) costing £94 907 were registered by African owners.[54] Nevertheless the failure to research the topic has meant that a rather vague understanding of African land purchase exists. The impression one gains is that almost any African 'peasant' could buy land and that it was only the 1913 Land Act and other laws (especially in the OFS) that prevented this from occurring. Alternatively, it may be implied that the very success of squatter-farming on white farms obviated the need for land purchase. This section of the paper argues that only a very few Africans had the capital to buy land. This is important because it throws the prosperity of the peasantry into question.

In order to understand land purchase it is necessary to grasp the significance of the difference between individual and communal tenure. In the first category Africans are trying to establish an independent base in land, usually with the intention of making money. Individual tenure could be secured in two ways; by buying together with others as a syndicate, or in buying on one's own. Communal tenure can be confused with syndicate purchase in that a number of people club together to make the purchase. In the case of communal purchase however, the purchase is engineered by chiefs in order to shore up their authority by bringing their 'followers' into a zone that is free of rent demands and many of the government taxes. The land is controlled by the chief and headmen and held in trust by the Native

Trust. So although an African might eventually pay quite a lot towards the purchase of a farm, he would never have control over the land, nor even unfettered access thereto. Where syndicates bought land, each member had a legally sustainable claim to a portion of the land and could do with that land what he chose. Since individual tenure was a feature of the southern highveld and communal tenure was characteristic of the north, we shall for convenience sake, discuss land purchase by focussing on the two geographical areas of the district separately.

The South

As has already been noted, very few Africans on the highveld purchased land. This is perplexing because, as the SNC of Nebo noted in 1917, "the great desire of the native to-day is some fixity of tenure."(55) Why was purchase so rare? There are a number of explanations: Some Africans who wanted to buy were unaware that after 1905 they were allowed to.(56) Another reason was that in some rich farming areas, land was not available for purchase. But the most important reason was the narrow limit of African cultivator capital resources. In 1914 SNC Edwards described these limitations;

> "Unless they are helped by the Government it would take a long time before natives could buy land. In some instances it would be necessary for them to buy land as soon as the law came into force on account of the rent charged by the owners of the farms. It would pay the natives to club together and buy in some cases. The trouble is that the Natives cannot collect the money all at once .... they are not rich individually, but collectively they are fairly wealthy. Individually, it is out of the question for them to buy a farm." (57)

There are a number of other possibilities to explain the scarcity of African land purchase. Peter Delius has argued that, in Pediland, Africans believed that "the land belongs to us" and therefore saw no reason to purchase. This explanation is unlikely to hold for the southern highveld where there was no history of undisturbed African occupation or successful resistance to white encroachment. A possible explanation would be that squatters renting land did well enough to see no reason to change.(58) Like the poor whites, African cultivators may have been only partly aware of the capitalist forces that were

building up and that these would eventually bring their lifestyle to an end.[59] Yet even this explanation is only convincing for those who were satisfied with a lifestyle that necessitated periodic trekking. These people, it would seem, were as much concerned to avoid wage labour as to transform themselves into prosperous farmers. As Cooper says, "the defence of subsistence cultivation remained an essential part of cultivators' efforts to limit the power of old oppressors and new ones over them."[60] Yet even for those engaged in a conservative defence of subsistence cultivation, security of tenure offered great advantage. Squatters were frequently criticised that they made no use of irrigation or manure. While many white farmers put this down to the backwardness of the African, Stubbs conceded that, "even the advanced native who has had opportunities of studying the methods of the European makes little or no use of artificial aids of cultivation. This is not always due to lack of opportunities. It may to some extent be due to uncertainty of tenure."[61] If therefore we are to grapple with 'the peasant question' in a way that Frederick Cooper has suggested - to identify blockages that prevented cultivators from becoming successful commercial farmers - we must place insecurity of tenure high on the list of explanatory factors. As I have argued the insecurity of tenure was predicated largely on the inability of cultivators to mobilize capital resources. This does not necessarily mean that cultivators were all poor (though this paper has argued that this was true for the majority of the lowveld Africans). Many had cattle, but these were not easily transformed into capital because the meat market was oversupplied and the buyer therefore determined the price. In addition market prices fluctuated wildly. Similar problems beset the sale of crops. Traders were able to fix the price of grain to the disadvantage of the seller cultivator. For cultivators near markets, there was a better chance of getting a good price: a deal could be struck with a range of buyers including the local co-operative. Nevertheless, agricultural conditions at this time did not allow for great prosperity. White farmers in particular battled throughout the 1910s and 1920s to make headway against low prices, high costs of land and fertilizer and a range of natural enemies (eg. drought, locusts, East Coast Fever). African farmers were not immune to these problems and it is not surprising therefore that they found capital accumulation so difficult. In some, if not many, cases successful agricultural production was only made possible by investments derived from wage labour.[62]

In conclusion, many advantages pertained to individual land tenure. The land could serve as security for credit, improvements (eg. irrigation) could be made. In addition, since the individual farms I am talking about were on the highveld near Middelburg, access to markets and job opportunities were facilitated. When a crop failed it was always comforting to know that wage labour was available close by. The residents of Doornkop for example, quite rapidly built up a dependence on wage labour in Middelburg and forsook commercial agriculture. The reason why these advantages were not exploited lies in the poorly developed state of the district's 'peasantry' and in the wider difficulties of capital accumulation in agriculture.

In the North

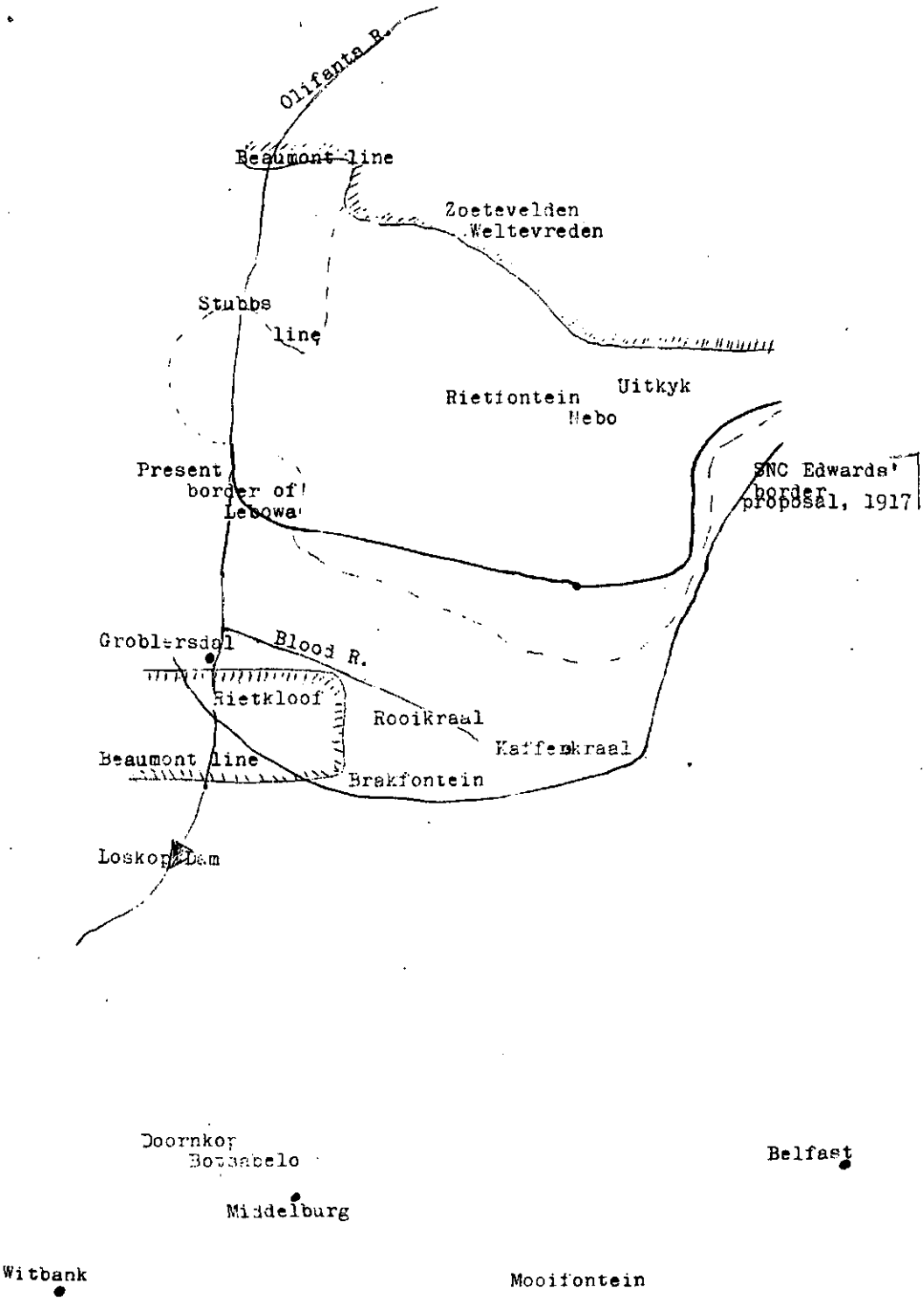
In 1913 ten locations existed in northern Middelburg. These were densely populated and many Africans resided on white-owned farms in the area. Up until this time there had been no attempt by Nebo's Africans to buy land despite frequent complaints about land shortage.(63) Even during the period 1905-1913 little interest was shown, indicating, amongst other things, a level of poverty already described.

There were two responses to the 1913 Act: Widespread condemnation (particularly by squatters and OFS share-croppers and would-be African land buyers like Seme) and cautious acceptance. As Beinart has shown(64) Africans in reserves believed the Act would protect them from white encroachment and supported the Act for this reason. In the proposed Middelburg reserve a very different situation existed. Not all locations had been included in the reserve and chiefs were virtually unanimous in demanding that the reserve area be extended. Chief Lekoko of Mooifontein location (which fell outside the proposed reserve) for example said, "I don't want the law of 1913 which gives us no rights at all to stand. That law has troubled us for many years. We want a law which will give us the right to buy ground."(64a) For the African cultivator in the proposed reserve the 1913 Act offered little hope of improvement. She/he probably paid rent to a land company. The land company would continue to demand rent until the farm was bought by the tribe. To buy the land a levy would have to be raised from the cultivators.

African representations to the NAD on the 1913 Land Act were primarily aimed at getting the Reserve ('scheduled area') extended and to get the government to buy the land for African occupation. These representations were partially responsible for the Stubbs Commission being set up in 1917.[65] Stubbs was concerned that the quantity of land set aside by the Beaumont Commission for Africans was inadequate, and that the quality of land was unsatisfactory. Stubbs' major concern was for the 'Highveld' African and the Ndebele. In the case of the former, Stubbs observed that "as a class, they are richer and more prosperous than their compatriots of the lowveld. They are Christians and have reached a higher stage of civilisation, and they have, to a large extent, freed themselves from the restraints of tribal rule"[66] Stubbs believed that the group should be provided with highveld land. Stubbs urged in addition that a highveld reserve be set aside for the Ndebele since they had no reserve at all. Although it is not specifically stated Stubbs appears to have believed that individual tenure for 'civilised natives' was acceptable.[67] As far as the lowveld Africans were concerned, Stubbs believed that their reserve should be extended.

In the end, Stubbs was unable to find a suitable highveld reserve for the Ndebele (see map). White farmer opposition was strident. Given my earlier remarks of the relative failure of African cultivators, this opposition might be perplexing. It is quite often suggested, for example, that African competition with white farmers was an important element generating pressure amongst white farmers for the 1913 Act. There is little evidence for this in the Eastern Transvaal. In 1911, Colonel Airey, a farmer in eastern Middelburg, complained that "I am competing with Kafirs on very unfair grounds."[68] This was however a minority opinion. Farmers were anxious about two things: labour and the long term implications of African land purchase on the highveld. As Stubbs put it, white farmers had "an almost sentimental attachment" to the highveld.[69]

Despite farmer opposition, Stubbs recommended an extension of the African reserve southward, though his recommendation fell far short of the suggestion of the SNC for Pokwani who wanted all of the locations to fall within the proposed reserve (see map). Stubb's report was not


Olifants R.
Beaumont line
Zoetevelden
Weltevreden
Stubbs
line
Rietfontein
Uitkyk
Nebo
Present
border of
Lebowa
SNC Edwards'
border
proposal, 1917
Groblersdal
Blood R.
Rietkloof
Rooikraal
Kaffenkraal
Beaumont line
Brakfontein
Loskop Dam
Doornkop
Belfast
Middelburg
Witbank
Mooifontein

adopted in full and the 'land question' remained unanswered until the 1936 Natives' Trust and Land Act. Many grey areas existed. Stubbs for example, wanted 'neutral' areas declared which were earmarked for future African occupation but which had sufficiently large white populations to prevent their rapid or immediate consolidation as reserves. What this meant was that space existed for both Africans and whites to contest the racial zoning of land. A struggle, on the land as opposed to in Parliament, thus took place over the exact dimensions of the reserves.(70)

The migration of whites into the Blood river - an area hitherto occupied almost exclusively by Africans - began after the SA war. In 1904 there were 25 families in the Blood river area. In 1917 there were 120 families.(71) Many of these were poor tenant farmers trying to escape onerous rent conditions on the highveld. An increasing number however were farmers who stamped their authority on their farms by evicting Africans or demanding their labour. The two Greek farmers, Darras and Patrojohn, are the best examples of this. They settled on the Blood river in 1916 and farmed wheat on a large scale.

African cultivators in the reserves watched the incoming tide of white settlement with alarm. They could not do much about white settlement outside the reserve, but within the reserve they had the right to buy land and in this way secure themselves against white encroachment. An additional incentive to buy was land company ownership of many farms within the reserve. Land companies ran their farms as businesses. Occupants who could not afford the rents they charged were evicted.(72) Cultivators therefore wanted to remove land company influence and to avoid their rising rent demands. Another threat was posed by individual white landowners. Many of these contemplated farming their farms in the reserve. Once again the only way to prevent this was to buy these farmers out.

I have already argued that few Africans in Nebo had the capital to buy land, thus the most common form of land purchase by Africans was communal tenure. Between 1917 and 1930 there were 19 cases of African tribal purchase.(73) These purchases frequently did not have the support of the chief's 'followers' and numerous cases of levy evasion

occurred. So serious did this evasion become that in 1925 the Native Taxation and Development Act was passed which made it a criminal offence for an African to refuse to pay a levy.

The major stumbling block to consolidating the reserve in the hands of Africans was the state's refusal to assist. The state refused either to provide credit or to buy the land for Africans outright. So despite the fact that the NAD continued to urge Africans to buy land, much of the reserve remained in white hands throughout the 1920s and 1930s.(74) In 1921 two farmers, the Rousseau brothers, bought the farms Weltevreden and Zoetevelden from land companies (see map). These farmers were in the heart of the reserve but since the land problem had not been solved and the areas of African occupation had not yet finally been decided, the purchase went through. Africans who had paid rent were suddenly evicted, or forced to pay £20 pa (as opposed to £1 pa plus grazing fees charged by land companies). Alternatively, they were forced to become labour tenants.(75) The worst fears of African cultivators were thus realized. The NAD appeared to be powerless and so the local Africans took matters into their own hands. In 1923 the first signs of resistance occurred. Large amounts of wheat were stolen. The Rousseaus responded first by impounding and then shooting 'stray' animals. In a fiery climax, the wheat crops of four white farmers, including the Rousseaus were torched in December 1924. The Rousseaus were not prepared for this level of attrition and just over a year later, sold out to Chief Lekoko who had been interested in buying the land all along.(76)

The incendiarism of 1924 marked the high point of African resistance and signalled the start of a white farmer retreat out of the reserve. The defence of the reserves is a neglected aspect of SA rural history. Marian Lacey has shown that the reserves got steadily smaller as the Mines and farmers hammered out an agreement over a national native policy, but her work does not reveal the actual struggle by Africans themselves, for land.

V.

I have thus far suggested that land purchase was a class response to

the spread of capitalism in South Africa. (This argument parallels that of Mike Morris which suggested that townward migration was an alternative form of class response to that of resistance.[77]) The response took different forms: individual tenure for the wealthy cultivators and communal tenure for chiefs and reserve cultivators. There were obviously other responses to capitalism. In this final section I shall investigate class differentiation, organisations and resistance.

The SA war gave the chiefs of the north a 'taste of freedom'.[78] White-owned land was occupied and cattle seized. In the southern highveld too, African cultivators revelled in conditions where farms were abandoned. After the war the Milner administration assisted Boer farmers to take back their farms and thereafter facilitated the spread of capitalist relations in the countryside.[79] The 'taste of freedom' was followed by a bitter aftertaste. On the highveld African cultivators who were being squeezed off the land were in 1909 reported to display a "very disrespectful, independent and disobedient demeanour."[80] In the north, on the contrary, despite the breakdown of Nebo's economy and increases in rent by some landlords, there was still a large measure of respect for authority. In the following year, 1910, the first signs of rural strain and accompanying defiance were reported from Nebo. Demands for labour by white landowners provoked a "semblance of passive resistance".[81] In the south too, efforts to disturb Doornkop's residents led to defiance. By 1910 therefore, cultivators both on the highveld and in the bushveld were responding to the extension of white control in agriculture with a scattered and unorganised stand against authority. Some chiefs too were fractious. In 1909 Chief Hlakudi refused to comply with an NAD command concerning marriage practices in his tribe. He was alleged to have obstructed the police in their duties and to have been "insolent". Hlakudi objected to NAD interference in his tribe's affairs and to police action: "I am inquaring by thee it is lawful to send your Police boys to rush into my kraal and arresting my people without saying anything to me." But the underlying friction emanated from the mass evictions of Africans from a nearby farm.[82]

During the 1910s the undisturbed cultivators (especially on the highveld) and the wealthy, prospective landowners and most of the chiefs were

relatively contented. The 1913 Act changed this, but evidence of class differentiation can nevertheless be observed in the different responses to the Act. Jacob Masuto, a Middelburg labour tenant, expressed his disgust before the Stubbs Commission. "I have heard that you have come to speak only of the ground. I know that we are all sick of the word. We see that there is no chance for us."(83) Chief Lekoko's unhappy reception of the 1913 Act has already been noted (see p. 14 above). The rather truculent attitudes of labour tenants and chiefs can be contrasted with that of the African landowner, Jan Mochadi. "We would be thankful if the government would put us where we want."(84)

The major focus of resistance to the Act came from the SANNC. This body managed to combine the polite objections of aspirant landowners like Mochadi with the more raucous dissent of ejected sharecroppers, squeezed labour tenants and aggrieved chiefs. It is nevertheless necessary to make the point that different class concerns were only briefly meshed and that before long the class alliance resisting the 1913 Act would fall apart.(84a)

Mochadi and Seme represented a stifled class of landowners. They resented an act that, to use the words of another leading SANNC figure, Selby Msimang, "debarred (natives) from purchasing land wherever they choose."(85) The Land Act killed off the chance of a viable 'peasantry' and an African rentier landlord class. For those who wanted to climb the social ladder this was a very serious blow. For most other Africans however, land ownership was nothing but an unrealizable dream. For them, the Land Act did not block their progress, so much as hasten their decline. Squatters like 'Masuto' were by 1913 already harried by white landowners. What the 1913 Act did was to tilt the balance decisively in favour of the white landowners.

This distinction is important because it shows that the African alliance against the Act was tenuous. One has only to see the harsh way in which Seme evicted African cultivators from Mooifontein to realize that his rhetoric was not matched by a material commitment to the liberation of the 'black man'.(86) What really worried Seme was any attempt to limit <u>individual</u> land ownership.(86a) There were clearly many SANNC

members who thought along similar lines to Seme. In 1911 they decided to send a deputation to the Minister of NA to protest the Native Settlement and Squatters Registration Bill "which amongst other things debarred African syndicates from buying land."[87]

Recent studies of ideology, resistance and leadership have stressed complex linkages with political economy and have called for an end to the crude collaborator - non-collaborator dichotomy.[88] This paper is cognisant of the advances made in this field of scholarship and attempts to locate the various forms of African 'resistance' within the matrix of class relations. Whereas Bradford argues that the ICU leaders in the 1920s were less bourgeois than they have been made out to be, this paper argues that Seme, still a somewhat shadowly figure in SA history but with a reputation of being the most conservative leader the ANC ever had, can best be understood by looking at his dealings as landlord. This is a factor often observed but the significance of which is rarely commented upon or explained.[89]

In 1913 the SANNC made little attempt to capitalize on the 'insolent' demeanour of African cultivators. Its well-known tactic of polite politics - deputations, letters and interviews - had little need of the growing dissatisfaction welling up amongst those Middelburg cultivators under threat of being converted into labourers. The SANNC put little energy into rural organisation[89a] and, as far as Middelburg was concerned, satisfied itself with sending Saul Msane on a membership and finance drive in 1913. Details are sketchy but if Msane's role in the Mooifontein episode is anything to go by, the aim was to garner support from the wealthier cultivators rather than to create a prototype for the later ICU.

For five years after 1913 the SANNC appears to have done nothing in Middelburg. A possible by-product was that, in contrast to the period just before 1910, NAD officials reported that Middelburg's Africans exhibited "unfailing loyalty and good behaviour".[90] The submissiveness of Middelburg's Africans was not a measure of improvements in the rural economy. Migrancy continued to escalate. Chiefs may have been partly mollified by their ability to buy land but their 'followers' suffered from the weight of a further £1 for the levy. An indication that all

was not well during the First World War and in the immediate post-war years is to be found in the refusal of Africans to testify before the Stubbs Commission.[91] As Phil Bonner has convincingly explained, the years 1917-20 saw the radicalization of the TNC. The organisation's conservative petty bourgeois leadership was nudged into supporting strikes and open defiance of the state. This development pushed the TNC leadership to reassess its rural policy.

> "Both Maghatho (TNC President) and Ramailane were increasingly preoccupied with rural problems, and in the process striking a closer alliance with chiefs. What this heralded, in part, was the growth of a rural populist movement, which would reach fruition after the decline of urban agitation in late 1920."[92]

In line with this shift TNC organisers began planning a strike in Middelburg in July 1919.[93] There is no record of such a strike having occurred in 1919 or 1920. In 1924 however, came the incendiary attack in Nebo. The Rousseau brothers suspected that their enemies in the locations were being organised.

> "Lately they have gone on strike, and not even the police have been able to induce them or compel them to turn out to work ... (they are) attending meetings at the kraals of the chiefs, conducted mostly by two natives who recently arrived here from an unknown place."[94]

The Rousseau brothers were at least partially correct. According to NAD reports the burning of crops and the attacks on stock (which were relatively isolated) were prompted by harsh living and working conditions on the farms concerned and were not part of an organised campaign. Yet, at the same time, NAD officials freely admitted that there were active TNC members in the area and that these people had recently inspired a number of strikes.[95a]

Farmers in the adjacent area of Pediland were quite sure about the organisation of Africans. "Recently local natives had had ideas put into their heads which did not exist before... (by) educated natives (who) have been making collections for the Native National Congress, or whatever it is called."[95b]

Another suspected source of these 'ideas' were members of the Pedi royal family. These people, it was alleged, were preaching a "Doctrine of Equality" which was translated into the message that Africans should not "work for the white people and not pay tax to the Government, as this part of the country belongs to the Natives." Significantly this interpretation was badly dented when a Sub Inspector discovered that the sullen mood resulting from contact between members of the Royal family and commoners was caused by demands for tribal levies which were felt to be excessive, rather than the "Doctrine of Equality".(95c) Without knowing a lot more about African politics in the area it is impossible to come to firm conclusions about the level or type of organisation.

But for our purposes there are two points to note in the events of 1924. Firstly despite advanced differentiation, a chief and his followers ranging possibly from a migrant recently returned from the mines to cultivators who had yet to be fully subordinated to a wage labour system were brought together in defence of their land. This alliance in concert with TNC organisers showed the potential for resistance in the reserves. Secondly there is no evidence that landholders like Mochadi either led or joined such movements.(96)

The possibility of further alliances between chiefs and cultivators was temporarily ended by three factors:

1) the decline of the TNC as a radical organisation and the end of its rural organising;
2) the change in state policy around 1925 to "delegate power to tribal chiefs" and thereby bolster their waning power.(97) (This can be seen in the 1925 Natives Trust and Development Act);
3) the downward spiral of cultivator fortunes which made the levy demands of chiefs burdensome and increased the barriers between themselves and the chiefs. The political direction taken by chiefs appears to have been to close the distance with African landowners and the viable cultivators. The activities of the ICU in this period seem not to have disturbed this development.

In 1925 the ICU organiser, Thomas Mbeki arrived in Middelburg. His energies seem to have been concentrated on the area in and around Middelburg town. He set himself up in the Middelburg urban location, much to the consternatnion of the supervisor. "Thomas Embike", he reported, "has for the last 4 months been poisoning the minds of the location with telling the natives they are on the same footing as Europeans."(98) ICU meetings were held at Botshabelo and probably at other highveld venues.

Bradford suggests that in the Transvaal, "labour tenants, 'squatters', sharecroppers, chiefs and their tribal followers" supported the ICU.(99) The evidence available in Middelburg however suggests that labour tenants, threatened 'squatters' and urban location dewllers were the mainstay of ICU support. The inhabitants of the reserve from migrant-cultivators through to rich landowners appear not to have been reached by the ICU.(100)

ICU supporters withheld their labour, held meetings of protest and developed a defiant attitude towards employers. What the attitude of the local chiefs was towards the ICU is difficult to ascertain. In Nelspruit, Swazi chiefs had led their 'followers' into the ICU, whereas in the western Transvaal the ICU had been seen as "a kind of substitute for their chiefs".(101) The fact that pitsos were held regularly between Middelburg's NAD officials and Nebo's chiefs in this period and that there is no mention of the ICU at these meetings suggests that the ICU made little impact in the north.

What of the inhabitants in the northern reserve? There was at least one possible avenue of action open to reserve dwellers other than supporting the ICU. They may have consolidated their victory at Zoetevelden and Welgevonden with a conservative response - sought to stabilize their position rather than revolutionize it. Alternatively they might have embraced the ICU message of change. The latter seems less likely because by 1926, the tide of white encroachment had turned. The ICU's message was geared to people under the control of or in the employ of whites. This no longer applied in Nebo.

In 1930 Chief Lèkoko testified to the undisturbed development of an alliance between chiefs and landowners by asking for privileges on behalf of and

for both chiefs and landowners.[102] He asked, for example, that "native chiefs and native landowners" be supplied with free dog badges. Although the chiefs appeared to accept the landowners to the same station as themselves, they were vigilant lest 'pretenders' exploit NAD regulations to have themselves declared chiefs. In protection of their status chiefs frequently sought assurance that only those with "royal blood" be appointed as chiefs.[103] The chiefs did want to avoid alienating their beleaguered 'followers' and continued to be active in asking for concessions on their behalf.

In 1930 the man on whom Middelburg's aspirant African landowners had pinned their hopes resurfaced, this time as President of the ANC. All the hallmarks of his involvement in the Mooifontein land purchase were still visible - commitment to 'free enterprise', loyalty to chiefs, deference for authority and a thorough dislike of radicals. He formed African Congress Clubs, one of the benefits of which was to enable "chiefs to get their motor cars more cheaply".[104] He urged "educated young men and women not to lose contact with your own tribes" and he expressed the belief that "the duty of the Congress (is) to satisfy the Minister of Native Affairs of our good intentions".[105] His policy of "economic self-help" and reintegrating chiefs plunged the ANC to the nadir of its fortunes. Seme's 'little game' at Mooifontein in 1915 had failed to ignite African cultivators to resist the 1913 Land Act. And this had not been its purpose. In 1930 Seme's ANC failed once again to appeal meaningfully to rural subsistence cultivators and migrants. The 'little game' at Mooifontein provides some clues to explain this failure.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to differentiate Middelburg's cultivators. It suggests that in the first decade of the 20th century most cultivators were poor and dependent on wage labour.[106] This challenges the findings of Bundy and Keegan which suggest that African cultivators were relatively prosperous and viable, even after the 1913 Act.[107] My findings tend rather to provide empirical support for Mike Morris's contention that African cultivators outside the reserves had lost their independence and were effectively wage labourers by "at least the second decade of the twentieth century."[108]

Widespread poverty among most African cultivators prevented a solid challenge being launched against white ownership of, and therefore control over, the land. There were a few wealthy Africans, often with urban capital, who were able to buy land and secure an African foothold in 'white areas'. It was this 'little game' that the wealthy white farmers and the state sought to 'pip in the bud'. The 1913 Natives' Land Act was the tool they used. Keegan has pertinently pointed out that "legislative edict and administrative fiat have little force in shaping the substance and context of class struggle unless the material conditions are also propitious".(109) But Keegan was talking of OFS sharecropping. In the case of Transvaal land purchase, where the Registrar of Deeds was the final arbiter, legislative edict was a powerful and indeed final decider against a permanent presence of African commercial farmers near markets. For periodisation purposes, therefore, the importance of the 1913 Act must be stressed.

In the northern lowveld there was legislative confusion arising out of the conflicting recommendations about the borders of the reserve. This confusion was exploited by white farmers. Capitalist forces personified by wealthy white farmers pushed into areas hitherto exclusively occupied and cultivated by Africans. These farmers did not 'stop' at the borders of the reserve. White encroachment threatened subsistence cultivation, the authority of the chiefs and the chance for the more prosperous cultivators to succeed on the land. It was the opposition generated by white intrusion that secured the reserve for exclusive African occupation. Too often the reserves have been regarded as places where Africans were forced to migrate and live. This is true, particularly for the modern period. But we need also to remember the struggle of Africans to hang on to the miserly 13% of land they had been allocated by the state. A struggle it should be added, that is still being waged by threatened black spot communities today.

Finally, this paper suggests that rural differentiation is important in explaining the varieties of class response. Land purchase was one of these class responses albeit a poorly developed one. I have suggested that the reason for this lies in the relative poverty of the 'peasantry'. Outright resistance was another response, and ironically, an equally rare one. In this case the limited instances of resistance can be explained

with reference to the limited success of organisations, such as the TNC, and class differences between reserve dwellers - chiefs, landowners, viable cultivators, migrant-cultivators.[110] The final class response that this paper attempts to shed light on is that of Pixley isaka ka Seme. His dealings at Mooifontein betrayed his class origins, so did his leadership of the ANC 1930-4.[111]

NOTES

I would like to thank Paul Maylam for his comments on this paper.

1. NTS 299/308, Aling to SNA, 5 June 1916.
2. NTS 299/308, SNA to Magistrate, Middelburg, 14 August 1916.
3. NTS 299/308, NC Middelburg to SNA, 18 August 1916
4. For the conflict between the BMS and the African inhabitants, see P Delius, "From Refuge to Resistance" in DC Hindson (ed), Working Papers in Southern African Studies, Vol. 3, Johannesburg, 1983.
5. African landownership has received relatively little attention despite many scholarly studies on peasant farming. Beinart and Keegan's studies deal with areas (Pondoland and OFS) where land purchase was not a factor, while Trapido's work on the Transvaal focusses on relations of production and the transformation of the status of African cultivators. Bundy's path-breaking work centred on market responses rather than relations of production or question of land tenure.
6. For an account of Doornkop's history, see D James, The Road from Doornkop, Johannesburg, 1983 and R Morrell, "Rural Transformations in the Transvaal, the Middelburg District 1919-1930", MA, University of the Witwatersrand, 1983, p. 141-2.
7. cf. C Bundy, The Rise and Fall of the SA Peasantry, London, 1979. I have avoided the word peasant because, to use Beinart's words, it is too blunt an instrument and conceals, rather than exposes class cleavages. W Beinart, The Political Economy of Pondoland, 1860-1930, Johannesburg, 1982, p. 5.
8. Doornkop, the exception, was purchased jointly by a large group of Christian Pedi. The purchase was facilitated by Boer war compensation of £698 received in 1907. SNA Vol. 374, 2414/07, Monthly Report, June 1907; SNA Vol. 368, 1298/07, SNC Sekukuniland Monthly Report, March 1907.
9. NTS 299/308, Copy, Contract of Service, n/d.
10. Farmers in the western Transvaal also found renting to Africans very lucrative. See M Nkadimeng and G Relly, "Kas Maine, The story of a Black SA Agriculturist" in B Bozzoli (ed), Town and Countryside in the Transvaal, Johannesburg, 1983, p. 98.
11. NTS 299/308, JJ Williams to Louis Botha, 30 September 1913.
12. NTS 299/308, Extract from letter from Ngcayiya, 22 September 1913.
13. NTS 299/308, NC Middelburg to SNA, 11 December 1913.
14. NTS 299/308, U/sec NA to Magistrate, Middelburg, 8 May 1914.
15. NTS 299/308, Rooth and Wessels to SNA, 29 October 1915.
16. RV Selope Thema, "How Congress Began" in M Mutloatse (ed), Reconstruction, Johannesburg, 1981, p. 109. Thema was totally blind to Seme's concern with profit. So was Sol Plaatje who wrote that Seme's farms offered an 'asylum' to expelled OFS squatters. (S Plaatje, Native Life in South Africa, Johannesburg, 1982, p. 95.) Even Colin Bundy obscures the class character of African landowners by suggesting that they provided a 'refuge' for evicted peasants. (Rise and Fall, p. 190).
17. See L Platzky and C Walker, The Surplus People. Forced Removals in SA, Johannesburg, 1985, p. 74, 293 .
18. eg. NTS 299/308, Seme to Pass Officer, Wonderfontein, 4 December 1915.
19. NTS 299/308, Various statements, 23 March 1916.
20. NTS 299/308, Aling to SNA, 5 June 1916.
21. UG 22-1914, evidence of DR Hunt, p. 386.

22. UG 22-1914, evidence of GJW du Toit, p. 261.
23. See J Guy, "Ecological Factors in the rise of Shaka and the Zulu Kingdom", in S Marks and A Atmore (eds), Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa, London, 1980.
24. See P Delius, The Land Belongs To Us, Johannesburg, 1983, p. 102 and R Morrell, "Rural Transformations", p. 138-9.
25. UG 32-1918, Evidence of PJ van der Merwe and BP Dodd, p. 12, 17.
26. UG 22-1914, evidence of Gen T Smuts, p. 260.
27. TG 16-1910, p. 36.
28. UG 22-1914, evidence of SNC Edwards, p. 411; and R Morrell, "Rural Transformations", p. 124.
29. African Studies Institute, Wits University, Oral History Transcripts Testimony of E Sibanyoni, p. 47; Testimony of J Jiyane, p. 18; UG 22-1914, p. 274.
30. Three recent works have made important contributions to an understanding of this question. This paper is informed by these studies, especially insofar as rural differentiation is concerned. W Beinart, The Political Economy; F Cooper, "Peasants, Capitalists and Historians: A Review Article", Journal of Southern African Studies (JSAS), 7,2,1981; J Lewis, "The Rise and Fall of the SA Peasantry: A Critique and Re-assessment", JSAS, 11, 1, 1984.
31. UG 22-1914, evidence of T Edwards, p. 411.
32. UG 22-1914, evidence of Edwards, p. 410.
33. UG 32-1918, evidence of Dodd, p. 17.
34. It is difficult to measure this, but the high level of migrancy in the district suggests that Africans were searching for seasonal labour and were also being forced to look for alternate accommodation. Of those displaced, some at least must have gone north (to the reserves). (Annual Report of the Transvaal NAD for year ended 30 June 1906, p. 105. 7638 passes were issued for travel outside the district, 5325 for travel within the district.)
35. TG 8-1909, p. 46.
36. UG 14-1927, p. 18.
37. Beinart, Political Economy, p. 131-3.
38. SNA Vol. 294, 3252/05, SNC Pokwani to Resident Magistrate, 27 October 1905; SNA Vol. 455, 125/10, Pokwani Monthly Report for June, 6 July 1910. Emphasis added.
39. Native Affairs Department Annual Report for 1910; NTS 237/323.
40. Beinart, Political Economy, p. 131.
41. UG 22-1914, evidence of DR Hunt, p. 386; UG 32-1918, p. 146.
42. See NTS 25/308.
43. Evidence of JC Yates to the Native Economic Commission, 1932, p. 830. Like white farmers, Mochadi used his land to secure credit. URU 1079, 2766, 15 August 1929.
44. Beinart, Political Economy, p. 131, 133.
45. SNA Vol. 301, 3835/05; SNA Vol. 333, 2550/06, SNC Pokwani to SNA, 25 July 1906.
46. Beinart, Political Economy, p. 126.
47. TG 16-1910, p. 37.
48. NTS 110/308, A/SNC Pokwani to SNA 8 December 1922.
49. Transvaal Native Affairs Department Report for 1909, (TG 16-10), p. 36.
50. UG 22-1916, p. 48; UG 32-18; ASI transcripts, Interview with S Skhosana, p. 61.
51. ASI transcripts, interview with E Sibanyoni, p. 12-3, p. 19-20.
52. See C Bundy, Rise and Fall, p. 210, P Rich, "The Origins of Apartheid Ideology: The case of Ernest Stubbs and the Transvaal Native Affairs Department, c 1902-32, African Affairs, 79, 315, 1980, p. 189.
53. S Meintjes, "Property Relations amongst the Edendale Kholwa 1850-1900", Journal of Natal and Zulu History, 7, 1984, p. 27.

53a. The close links between chiefs and the wealthy or upwardly mobile is well illustrated with reference to Natal by Shula Marks, The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa, Ravan, Johannesburg, 1986.
54. Sol Plaatje, Native Life, p. 33.
55. UG 32-1918, p. 19.
56. UG 22-1914, evidence of WG van E Schuurman (Bethal farmer), p. 323.
57. UG 22-1914, p. 411.
58. White control over land was at times transparent and there were many opportunities to rent. (See Keegan and Matsetela chapters in Marks and Atmore (eds), Economy and Society). The history of Kas Maine documented by Nkadimeng and Relly provides a few clues about this. Maine moved around all his life and the question of purchase seem not to have been considered.
59. UG 31-1918, p. 9.
60. UG 31-1918, p. 14. Stubbs was not convinced that individual tenure was entirely to blame and also suggested that the 'temperament' of Africans was to blame.
61. ASI transcripts, p. 39.
62. ASI transcripts, p. 39.
63. SNA Vol. 283, 2443/05, Report on Pitso, 11 August and 16 August 1905.
64. Beinart, Political Economy, p. 123.
64a. UG 32-1918, p. 16. The quotation goes on, "We want a law which will give us the right to buy ground." Lekoko was objecting to the fact that his location fell outside the Beaumont area and thus he was unable to buy neighbouring farms.
65. See P Rich, "The Origins".
66. UG 31-1918, p. 5.
67. UG 22-1914, p. 413, UG 32-1918, evidence of Dodd, p. 19.
68. LDE 1520/39, Airey to Minister of Lands, 29 July 1911.
69. UG 31-1918, p. 13.
70. Marian Lacey's study has documented the struggle between mining and farming over reserve policy. Working for Boroko, Johannesburg, 1980.
71. UG 32-1918, evidence of Dodd and CE Schutte, p. 11, 19.
72. Stanley Trapido has argued the opposite - that land companies in the period before Union at least, actively aided and encouraged a 'peasantry'. "Landlord and Tenant in a colonial economy : The Transvaal 1880-1910", JSAS, 5, 1, 1978, p. 37.
73. Morrell, "Rural Transformations", p. 300.
74. NTS 15/318, Pitso, 21 October 1930. Capt JC Collins, NC Middelburg, addresses the pitso and urges land purchase, p. 7.
75. NTS 156/323.
76. NTS 429/308.
77. M Morris, "The Development of Capitalism in SA Agriculture : Class Struggle in the Countryside", Economy and Society, 5, 3, 1976.
78. H Bradford, "'A Taste of Freedom'.....", in B Bozzoli (ed), Town and Countryside in the Transvaal, Johannesburg, 1983.
79. S Marks and S Trapido, "Lord Milner and the SA State", History Workshop Journal, 8, 1, 1979.
80. SNA Vol. 283, 2443/05, Report on Pitso, 11 August and 16 August 1905, p. 5; Transvaal Native Affairs Annual Report for 1910, UG 15-11, p. 2.
81. Helen Bradford says that insolence was a feature of the mid 1920s, but this attitude was also widespread before 1910.

82. SNA 3265/09, SNC Pokwani to NC Middelburg, 22 September 1909, Hlakudi to Officers in Charge of the SAC(?), 29 September 1909; statement by Jeremiah Mkiza, native constable, Transvaal Police, Tautesberg, n/d.
83. UG 32-1918, p. 8.
84. UG 32-1918, p. 16.
84a. Marks makes the same point. Ambiguities, 65.
85. Beinart, Political Economy, p. 123.
86. Seme's bona fides in regard to African liberation are not questioned by either, P Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism, London, 1970, or T Karis and G Carter, From Protest to Challenge, Vol. 1, Stanford, 1972.
86a. In Natal the limitation placed on individual land purchase by the 1913 Act was described by the Kholwa as "a mortal wound". Marks, Ambiguities, 63-4.
87. A Odendaal, Vukani Bantu the Beginnings of Black Protest Politics in SA to 1912, Cape Town/Johannesburg, 1984, p. 276.
88. See the sensitive studies by: N Hogan, "The Posthumous Vindication of Zachariah Gqishela : Reflections on the politics of dependence at the Cape in the 19th century", in Marks and Atmore, Economy and Society; B Willan, "An African in Kimberley: Sol T Plaatje 1894-8", in S Marks and R Rathbone, Industrialization and Social Change in Southern Africa, London, 1984 and "Sol Plaatje, De. Beers and an Old Tram Shed : Class Relations and Social Control in a SA Town, 1918-9", JSAS, 4, 2, 1977; S Marks, "Natal, the Zulu Royal Family and the Ideology of Segregation", JSAS, 4, 2, 1977; H Bradford, "Mass movements and the petty bourgeoisie; The social origins of ICU leadership, 1924-9", Journal of African History, 25, 1984.
89. Walshe notes Seme's land company involvement in a footnote (p. 43) and Gerhart and Karis merely speculate that Seme's ownership of the Wakkerstroom farms may have triggered off the Land Act. (From Protest to Challenge, Vol. 4, p. 138).
89a. One might have expected the SANNC to use the courts to resist white encroachment into the reserve but there is no evidence that it tried even this orthodox channel.
90. UG 7-1919, p. 34.
91. UG 31-1918, p. 5-6.
92. P Bonner, "The TNC 1917-20. The Radicalization of the black petty bourgeoisie on the Rand", in Marks and Rathbone, Industrialization, p. 304.
93. Bonner, "TNC", p. 304.
94. NTS 23/332, FJ Rousseau to Minister of Defence, 5 November 1924.
95a Additional evidence showing that the TNC was organising meetings in Middelburg in 1923 suggests that it was more active than has previously been suspected. (Bradford, "Taste", 133.) The Middelburg Observer, 7 December 1923; JUS 387, 3/1208/24.
95b. JUS 386, 3/84/24. JED Travers to SAP, n/d.
95c. JUS 386, 3/84/24, SAP reports, 30 July 1924, 12 September 1924, 29 September 1924.
96. Much more needs to be known about rural class formation to begin to make accurate statements about rural class responses. Jothan Momba has done some interesting work in Zambia to show the impact of differentiation on rural politics. A similar study is awaited in SA. "Peasant Differentiation and Rural Party Politics in Colonial Zambia", JSAS, 11, 2, April 1985.
97. P Rich, "Origins", p. 190.

98. MMG 4/1/20, File 103. Location Supervisor to Stadsklerk, 6 July 1925.
99. Bradford, "Taste", p. 139.
100. My research failed to bring to light any evidence of ICU activity in Nebo.
101. Bradford, "Taste", 136, 144. Bundy writes that "in the Transvaal a number of chiefs joined the ICU bringing their followers with them." Review of African Economy, 29, 1984, p. 16. Whether this was a particularly widespread response has yet to be established, though Baruch Hirson suggests that for the 1930s, chiefs were either neutral or antagonistic towards their labour tenant 'followers', but rarely behind them. "Rural Revolt in SA, 1937-1951", ICS papers, 8, 22, 1977, p. 120.
102. NTS 15/318 Middelburg Pitso, 21 October 1930, p. 4.
103. NTS 15/318, Middelburg Pitso, 20 March 1929, p. 4.
104. Karis and Carter, From Protest, Vol. 1, p. 316.
105. Karis and Carter, From Protest, Vol. 1, p. 317.
106. Lewis argues that poverty came earlier to the eastern Cape. For a better understanding of the Transvaal further research into the earlier period along the lines suggested by Terence Ranger is required. "Growing From the Roots", JSAS, 5, 1, 1978.
107. It seems possible that Africanist influences may have pushed both Bundy and Keegan into exaggerating 'peasant' success. Writing at a time when it was politically important to free Africans from their entrapment in white conservative and liberal literature in which a sense of their being agents was missing, Bundy in particular may have highlighted cases of 'peasant' success without giving due recognition to the more numerous cases of failure. Barrington Moore has some sensible things to say about apparent prosperity and concealed poverty, but without accurate statistics it will be difficult to resolve this question. Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, Penguin, 1966, p. 514-20.
108. Morris, "The Development of Capitalism", p. 307. My findings also suggest that basic change in production relations occurred inside the reserve. Shula Marks shows that in Natal an African land-owning class was much better developed and protected its class interests vigorously, first by using a nationalist discourse in the Natal Native Congress and the SANNC and then, after 1917 when John Dube was ousted as SANNC President, via the channel of Zulu nationalism and Inkatha. Ambiguities.
109. Keegan, "The Sharecropping economy", p. 207.
110. Bradford makes little allowance for rural differentiation as a case of ICU failure in the eastern Transvaal.
111. A fascinating contemporary attempt by Inkatha to portray Seme as a heroic Zulu who fought for justice occurred in 1984 when a tombstone was unveiled in Johannesburg. Obviously seeing close parallels between Seme and himself, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi (Seme's nephew) emphasised Seme's positive contributions to African liberation while hammering critics who accused Seme of 'conservatism' which hampered the progress of the ANC. City Press, 23 September 1984.