

The History of the Repatriation of the
Afrikaners in Argentina

By F.D. Couradie

Repatriation

What is the meaning of the word Repatriation? That a wrong meaning is attached to it by some people became clear to me since this much discussed subject came into being in about 1928 or 1929, when the Afrikaners wanted to leave here at all costs, back to South Africa, but were prevented from doing so by certain persons or organizations, of which the Reformed Church was the most important, as I will indicate here-in-later, as the legal experts put it.

Repatriation does not happen by a person or persons moving back to their homeland, but a person is repatriated by someone else- either a person or a body (organization or the government). The allegation made by the Rev. Van Huysteen, that the repatriation movement had a gradual development, is faulty.

In his Brochure the minister said, "The whole matter started over there and did not blossom like a mushroom." (p. 71) "The birth of the repatriation movement did not appear like lightning from the sky upon receipt of encouraging letters from the homeland." (p. 76)

That there were always people who desired to return to South Africa was proven by the fact that several families and other persons left here to move back to Africa, but these who returned were not repatriated, because if this too was repatriation, then words have no meaning. As I have been living here in the Colony for 27 years, and also know what happened here in regards to returning to South Africa it will speak for itself that I know a little more about Repatriation than the Rev. Van Huysteen, the more so because correspondence in this regard for the most part went through my hands, and even the letters quoted by the Reverend were partly composed by me, especially the letter of March 4, 1930, quoted on p. 74, was composed by me and a copy in my Memorandum book is here in front of me. The first sentence of the letter contradicts the Rev. Van Huysteen's statement, "The Petition to the Most Honorable Government of the Union of South Africa and the thenceforth derived hope of repatriation have thus far...etc., etc." (my italics, F.D.C.) But I will return to this point- I only brought it up here for clarification.

The fact is that there are many of our people still here today who are pining to get away but do not have sufficient funds (the author has been one of those since 1908, just months after his arrival here!) The

word "Repatriation" was never heard or used here prior to the first letter from Minister Grobler to M.C. Eloff received here and shown to everyone who wanted to read it! Unfortunately Van Huysteen had never seen this letter, it was in my possession.

Before I go further with this work I refer to the . . . Addendum A. which is of utmost importance and which will show that even as far back as 1910 the Afrikaners here were dealing with financial troubles and that they, by way of a Petition, turned to the Argentine Government without the least results, and furthermore that the results, which became the fate of the Afrikaners here, were predicted to the Government even then, but to no avail. (literally: fell on deaf ears)

To save time I will now include the contents of an article that I sent in 1931 to "Die Kerkbode" in regards to Repatriation.

The Article

This subject is even today of the utmost importance amongst our Afrikaners. The expectation, the hope, yes the prayers of many are that by intercession of the Motherchurch in South Africa, with the help of the Government the Repatriation will be realized.

Now, since it is like that, and since there appeared in "The Church Messenger" of November 5, 1930, p. 853 a report from the **A.A.**

Die Kerkbode

Commission acting and requesting information about certain aspects, census lists are being compiled here with complete details and will soon be sent to the A.A. Commission , and then there will be an unpleasant surprise regarding the Afrikaans expatriates here in regards financial matters. About this I will be completely mum- the Census forms will speak. However, in the Transvaal Section of Die Kerkbode of 12 December 1930, pg. 1109, the subject of Repatriation is raised again, and it is especially its content that I will address.

No one will deny that it is a very important subject and that the execution will cause great expense and sacrifice, thus I want to place some facts under the control of the Dutch Churches and the Government of South Africa. Facts that I hope will open wide the eyes of our Church and especially of our countrymen in general! I deal with personal knowledge and reliable first hand information, and as I see it, known to every one here.

The Transvaal correspondent touches on the following points:

1. "Forty families applied to our Government for their repatriation to South Africa."
2. "Evidently the report of the Angola Boers.....gave them courage to

hope for repatriation of themselves."

3. "The Church would like to know....what the situation of the Petitioners is."

4. "Would they be able to be happy in the Union after an absence of thirty years?"

My answer is as short as possible:

1. Here is misunderstanding. The Petition contained 110 signatures of which 76 were heads of families (2 widows) and the rest single persons. The signatures represented 482 souls.

2. The help that was given the Angola Boers was the strongest support we had and still depend on. Why make the distinction?

3. This point I did not deal with, because according to my opinion the Church ought to know the situation seeing that there have constantly been ministers here since 1925, and especially the Rev. Wasserfall who was completely informed, but apparently not trusted by the Church- not on this point- therefore other ministers were sent later to ALSO INVESTIGATE, while they could have learned from Rev. Wasserfall what the situation of the Petitioners was.

4. Will we be happy in South Africa? Now why not? The Angola Boers were in Portugese country for more than 50 years and we have been here but a

little more than 27 years. Except the children that were born here, most of the older people who arrived here married cannot speak Spanish. Here is no intermingling- I speak of the great majority. That the changed circumstances will be strange to us speak for itself. But the Faith, Traditions, Language and Patriotism is surely stronger amongst us here than in Africa. The change between one farm or region to another is always difficult, even under the best of circumstances. For the children and the young people the change will be strange, but an Afrikaner can always adapt and adjust where necessary. The younger generation is still Afrikaner (even though they were born in the Argentine region and are thus international Argentine persons. F.D.C.) Whether the adults will be 100% successful always remains an open question- in all countries, amongst all nations. (I just notice that I did answer point 3 and the answer follows) Will we be happy? Are the English, Scotch and other Europeans, or European immigrants happy? WE ARE STILL ALL BOERS! We will manage! Most of us still have relatives there in the Homeland.

3. What is our situation here? The present situation will be clear as daylight from the Census papers! But why are the Afrikaners in this situation? What caused it? Whose fault is it?

Allow me now to return to 1902 when Louis Baumann of Bloemfontein landed here and let the readers, and especially our Church leaders, read carefully and make their own conclusions.

What follows is no critique; I don't blame anyone; I state facts and mention concrete cases and from the facts the Church in South Africa has to form its own opinions and decisions. PLEASE NOTE!

THE SETTLEMENT

A. The Baumann Concession. Louis Baumann from Bloemfontein was already here in 1902 and received the concession for 64 farms of 2500 hectares each for immigrants from South Africa.

1. The conditions of the Concession were: one peso (paper) per hectare, payable in five years; personal occupation and an oath of faithfulness.
2. Free allotment of 1/4 (one quarter) of the farm (1/4 being 625 hectares) and the occupant has to cultivate 10 hectares and plant a certain number of trees. These farms were mostly occupied by emigrants brought out by C.J.N. Visser in 1903 with the S.S. Cornwall. The total of 96 souls were all Dutch Reformers.

B. The Visser Concession. In 1904/5 this Concession was produced for Afrikaans Immigrants but the conditions under A.2. above were changed and every farm would cost one peso per hectare for the whole farm and, as was

told to me, the oath of faithfulness was dropped. The most important condition of the Concession was a FREE PORT with no import taxes. In 1904/5 the Visser-Venter Trek of plus-minus 347 souls landed here.

C. About 2 or 3 years later the purchase price was changed to four pesos per hectare.

D. In 1907/8 this condition was replaced by Government Ordinance that in Chubut no fiscal land would be sold, but that hire-contracts would be given- that was a promise that has yet to be kept in 1931.

E. In 1916 Hipolito Irigoyeu was elected President. Shortly afterwards (in 1917 or 1918) a decree was issued in which all free ports, for the ^{Welsh} ~~Wales~~ colony and for the ~~Boer~~ colony, on the southern coast would be closed and import taxes imposed, like he said, according the country's newspapers, he figured that in doing so TEN MILLION (10,000,000) pesos would be earned for the national treasury. The Decree is still in force for import and export! But where were the Concessions of Baumann and Visser (1902 and 1904) now in 1918?

F. In 1928 under the same Radical Party a Commission was here to collect "Pastaje", literally "grazing rights." The farmers (of all races) of Pategonia, the worst and the poorest part of Argentina, were the only ones

to pay, even years of back pay, because of a threat that if they didn't, they would have to leave the farms. According to a Decree 50% could be paid in cash and the remaining in 5 yearly installments with Promises. Many of the farmer occupants still have to pay the yearly Promises, while in the meantime the rent or grazing rights accumulate, to be claimed suddenly and without warning.

The Receipt contains a condition that the Government reserves the right, without supplying any reasons, of 90 (ninety) days' notice to vacate the farm-without reimbursement of any improvements, of whichever nature, which have to remain. This commission had promised that in 1929 the hire-contracts would be issued for 10 years, with the right of renewal for another 10 years. February 1931 still waits on the fulfillment of the promise. According to reliable sources of information, more than three-quarters of a million pesos was collected, and the great majority of our Afrikaners had to borrow money, so not to be evicted.

G. The system to determine the grazing right is to evaluate farms according to carrying capacity, and then the occupant pays for so many sheep per head. First it was 10 centavos per head, later under the Irigoyeu Regime it was 50 c. per head, and now it is decreased again. The farm is still evaluated according to the carrying capacity, and then the

Government determines the rent taking the distance from the railway line or town into account. The rent is high, it figures around thirty centavos per sheep. Chubut is classified with much better northern territories like Rio Negro, Neuqueu and the Pampa Central.

Now the Titles or Transports of the Farms

H. Today here are about thirty Afrikaners who have transports for their land, and this figure includes those persons who had purchased from private owners. The Government tried all impediments to issue the ^{title} ~~transports~~ ^{titles} to the occupants. The costs for agents and lawyers escalated to \$1500.00 m/n for a transport that the Government was morally and legally obligated to issue to the occupants. Some who occupied under the one-peso system had to pay four pesos, others have to this day not received the transport they are entitled to under the concession. Others were put off so shopowners in Com. Rivadavia would receive preference.

1. P.H. occupied his farm since his arrival here, but he had also taken the Oath of Faithfulness, and even so he was evicted and his land given to the firm Lahusen & Co. No reason was given!

2. L.d.K. was evicted and the land given to a storeowner, Menendez.

Again no reason was given! In both cases there were no reasons.

3. B.I.K. paid his purchase fee in 1907. A few years later he received a notice from the government that if he did not pay, he would be evicted. He went to Buenos Aires and proved his point, everything was in order. The man died later and today his son is paying rent! The transport is still being materialized. This information I received from one of the family members. These are all facts!

4. M.V. occupied in 1904 under the one peso system and had ownership for about 30 years.

He also had to pay four pesos per hectare on demand of the Government-all together about \$13,000.00 m/n and obtained an unconditional receipt of purchase and also took the oath. (After the struggle to get the transport had cost him more than thirty thousand pesos in lawyers fees, he lost the land with all the money which the Government had received and today in 1935 he only has the Oath of Faithfulness as consolation!!!)

5. C. had applied for a farm in 1908; the Director of Land & Colonies had given C. written permission to occupy ^{and it} what was done. Three months later C. was evicted and mister Director denied that he knew anything. C. has all the documents and letters to this day.

This is the Government-side of the picture....Everything

we had received with thanksgiving from the Argentine Government! Let us now look at the Other side of the Picture to see what the Afrikaners who came here, meant to the Argentine Republic.

Patagonia, described in Africa as a Paradise by the leader of the two Treks of nearly 500 Afrikaners, was called by Darwin "The Crying Desert" and is also known as "The Desert". (See ^{p. 56} addendum B attached for a complete description. F.D.C.). The climate is unfavorable, with varying droughts and ravaging snowstorms (blizzards.) Water is scarce, and mostly containing saltpetre, salt and other mineral content. Patagonia is unsuitable for agriculture because of the continuous west winds that destroy everything.

For sheep it is healthy, but grazing in 90% of the farms of the Boer Colony is weak. The average carrying capacity of all the farms is barely 750 sheep. The exceptionally good farms are few, and can carry 1500 to 2000 sheep year in and year out; the bad farms are not worth building a shack on.

For almost a century no Argentine had the courage or spirit of enterprise to start farming or living here.

When Louis Baumann and later the other Afrikaners landed here, the

surroundings were desolate, untamed and uninhabited.

It was the Voortrekker Afrikaners who made this desert habitable. It was through them that the Argentine Government today owns a colossal share in oil mining. Through the Afrikaner the "Crying Desert" is today inhabited by weaker races. And all this the Afrikaners achieved without the least help, encouragement, advice, financial or any other support from the State.

It is important to keep it in the memory! If men, women and children could here, under these distressed, unfavorable and disappointing circumstances, keep their heads above water for a quarter of a century, why would they not be good citizens in their own fatherland with their advice, technical assistance and a friendly Government? Every Boer is his own servant, every woman her own maid! Service in the broad sense does not exist here- it is not available!

Recently still I discovered a case where the farmers' sheep were shorn by a brother-in-law, a neighbor and a boy 13 years old, and this young boy could shear his thirty sheep per day. The woman had to cook, keep house and help direct the sheep into the shear corral! It is no exception, it is common. Does the Union of South Africa also have many such cases? I could cite a whole list more, but it is not necessary.

That there are a few weaklings, even bad ones amongst the about 700 Afrikaners here, is natural.

What had brought the Afrikaner here, except his enterprising spirit, courage and (literally: military) strength against adverse conditions?

Let us see!

Capital (investment). In 1903 the Visser Trek landed here. How much cash was brought in by them, cannot be certain. It is generally accepted though that of all the immigrants only two owned more than £20,000 stg.

In 1905/6 the Visser Trek landed here. One of the immigrants told me that a certain Col, Richardi, who had fought with the Boers against England in the Second War of Independence, helped the immigrants to exchange their money. When everything was added, the total came to £40,000 stg, and this excluded that of Mr. M.M. Venter, ^{formerly a} ~~prior~~ member of the Cape Parliament.

(It is ^egenerally said here that he owned £30,000 stg. Whether it really was that much, I do not know, but he certainly brought the largest sum of all here. The figures are generally accepted as accurate, so that the immigrants definitely brought in capital worth far more than one million pesos into the country!!!

Patagonia. The immigrants here were disembarked on the wild, uninhabited

caught; murderers are seldom punished. Mr. C.J.N. Visser advertized a few years ago an award of \$1000.00 m/n for any information about 600 sheep that were stolen at one time- he is still waiting for the results. Our people do not complain any more, it is a waste of time. Protection of your person or possessions is a mere illusion! During my stay here I don't know of a single case where an Afrikaner was successful in any case against one of the so-called Latin race! All the cases which I personally know of would fill a volume. But let us now leave the farming, thievery and murder, because the history of all those is too sad for the suffering party.

Church and Education.

Religion is free in Argentina, and so is elementary education which is compulsory through Grade VI and meant for children 6 to 14 years. Neither the Dutch Reformed nor the Reformed Church had been successful in gaining one inch of land in Com Rivadavia from the Government for church or school. It is a sad and disgraceful history, and the least said about it the better. The worth of both sides, the Government and the immigrants, what the one did or meant for the other, could now have been weighed against each other. Taking all in consideration, it is to the honor of the Afrikaners that so little inbreeding or fraternization took

place with the Latin race. However, the danger for the children is great-
VERY GREAT, and the faithful heart of a parent shrinks from worry and fear
of what would happen to their children or grandchildren if they have to
stay here. (I refer to Addendum)

I will conclude with a few quotations from a recently published book,
"Twenty-five years in South America" by Bishop E.F. Every, D.D. of the
Anglican Church. It is a most recommended book, without bitterness,
impartial and worthy of reading. In the chapter dealing with "Moral and
Religious Problems". He says on p. 58, "To sum up a low sexual morality,
dishonesty, lawlessness, cruelty to arrivals, gambling, all are
contributory elements in the debased atmosphere which is unhappily a
feature of Latin America." He ends the chapter with the following
paragraph on pg. 61, "Enough, however, has been said to show that the
religious outlook and is strange and difficult indeed, and that most of
the religious and moral problems arise from the debased moral atmosphere
which is both the cause and result of so much that is characteristic of
South American Republics." And the writer of this now adds:- "and the
small Dutch Protestant minority in Chubut is in deadly peril of total
disintegration and ultimate extinctions."

Bishop Every. I want to mention that Bishop Every represented his church in the whole of South America, and for the last 17 years in all the western Latin Republics. He is thus well-informed, his opinion is valued and he speaks with authority; he is a man highly respected by all he comes in contact with- also our Dutch Reformed Church representatives.

FOR GOD, FOR FATHERLAND. FOR CHURCH

Com. Rivadavia, Februarie 1931.

I think that the contents of this section include about everything necessary to explain the situation of the Afrikaners here, except as regards to Church and Education. The Church I will leave out now, since we are ministered to, but about the Education Question with which we have now landed in a "cul de sac". I refer to the Reports to the Inspector of Schools for Chubut and the imploring letter to South Africa, and the following letters all clearly explained in ^{p 62 + p 79} addendums C & D.

Seeing what was explained thus far, I have to note here that it is always alleged that the land's laws are good and I accept that immediately, but that they are not executed is equally true! The situation here in the Colony comes down to a sort of a military system- the person or persons handled according to personal wishes and urges- regulated by monetary influence.

As regards to the fiscal land, the devastating factor is found in the custom to issue one Decree upon another before the stipulations of the last were put into action, with the inevitable result that there always is UNCERTAINTY that hangs over the heads of the Boers, who live on the fiscal grounds, like the "sword of Damocles."

The whole position simply comes down to the fact that there is absolutely no certainty and when you officially come into contact with unmovable property, the situation becomes hopeless. The old Romans had to deal in their times with such problems, whence the saying, "Ubi jus incertum, ibi jus nullum" and that is applicable here in Patagonia. (End of the letter to "Die Kerkbode").

The Repatriation Movement

On folio hereof I mentioned the Rev. Van Huysteen's allegation that the Repatriation Movement in 1929 was an old issue that long ago had grown in the thoughts of the Boers here, grew and came to maturity in 1929 when the petition was drawn up and signed. What were the facts? First there was

A Trek to Canada

Towards the end of 1926, when Rev. Wasserfall paid us his first visit, here ~~was~~ ^{were} a number of young men, headed by Mr. M.L. Eloff, making plans to move to Canada. The plan was to give Eloff full power to "scout things out" first, and the report back, and for this purpose Eloff asked me to write out a Procuration that would authorize him to act on behalf of the others. He also addressed a letter to Min. Piet Grobler, a relative of his, and asked for a letter of recommendation from Grobler and General Hertzog. On March 7, 1927 Min. Grobler replied from Cape Town and sent detail about the immigration stipulations and other information. The first two pages are

Addendum E. ^{P-93} I do not know when Eloff received that letter here, but upon receipt thereof he drew up a Petition to the Union Government (Min. Grobler) and declared that the undersigned were satisfied with the Immigration Regulations of the Union, and then sent it around for signatures. The receipt

of Min. Grobler's letter here caused a whole disruption in the trek plans and the Canada trek spirit died out. In September 1929 P. Henning and Biggs received this Petition of M. Eloff from one of our Boers, Crous, and in Sierra Cuadrada, with 17 signatures on it!

A Trek to Pampa Central

As far as I am concerned, Henning and Biggs had nothing to do with the Canada trek- I never heard them talk about it as participants. But in the meantime the trek spirit was still smoldering- the people wanted a way out- yet there was no possibility that the Union Government would repatriate our people, and Biggs personally declared to me that trek to South Africa was totally beyond their thoughts because amongst them there was not one that could have paid the travel costs from here to the Union and that is why they tried to "stay on land" so that the journey could proceed by trucks (camions) and this was the reason that Henning and Biggs had the idea to relocate to Pampa Central. It was to the Pampa Central that 27 families wanted to move and not to Canada as alleged by Rev. Van Huysteen. (c.f. his brochure p 75).

During this interim time period and October 26, 1929 (remember this date) there was continuous private and semi-official correspondence from here with people in South Africa, as was alleged here, although I don't deem it very important. This semi-official correspondence with Min. Grobler started with a

letter from P. Henning to Min. Grobler dated October 22, 1929 and the reply from there dated December 7, 1929, and also a letter by D. Biggs dated Nov. 15, 1929 and a reply from the Minister dated January 22, 1930. These letters from Hennings & Biggs I did not see, but the replies are here in front of me.

Read the copies included here Addendum F & G. ^{p. 96 p. 97}

The Pampa Central trek smothered during 1928 and part of 1929 and then demised-why I don't know! But then came reports of

The Anglo Boer Repatriation!

It was in 1929, and the people here simply "went crazy". When they read the reports and especially when they saw the pictures of the long convoy of trucks in which the Union Government fetched the Angola Boers in Portuguese territory and dropped them off in German West. That clinched it, and it was generally asked by the Afrikaners here: "If the Union Government fetched the Afrikaners from Portuguese territory, why would not the same Government help us to get away from here?" The Angola Boer Repatriation was absolutely the.

Origin of the Repatriation Movement here.

and since then action has been taken to receive HELP from the Union Government, in other words to be REPATRIATED BY THE UNION GOVERNMENT! Rev.

Van Huysteen denies this in his Brochure but he was totally confused in the Repatriation-Facts-Leads! And he was so ^{im}unpolite as to make me out a liar- about which I will respond later. The result was that Henning and Biggs called a meeting on "October 26, 1929" to draft a Petition at Sleutelspoort, and asked me to be there, to do that. Unfortunately I was sick and could not go, and I heard that Mr. Loubser, one of our teachers here, did the writing at that meeting. Since that day all other plans to move elsewhere were dead- the one and only watchword-Repatriation and I firmly believe that there are many people today that have not given up hope and who now expect more help from the Church and the general public than from the rich and endowed Union Government. Let us summarize:

1. The Canada trek in 1926/27 by a small number of young men and M.C. Eloff.
2. The letter from Min. P.G.W. Grobler on about April 1927 to M. Eloff.
3. The Petition by M. Eloff that was found in 1929 in Sierra Cuadrada.
4. The Pampa Central Trek by Henning and Biggs during 1928-1929 (as far as I know).
5. The Repatriation of the Angola Boers, with the photos seen here in 1929.
6. The Draft of the Petition to the Union Government on October 26, 1929

at the farm Sleutelspoort. These facts are ^{ir}unrefutable and give the chronological order of the whole movement since 1926 to October 26, 1929.

Forwarding of Petition to Rev. J.A. Hurter of George

On December 2, 1929 I drafted a letter to Rev. Hurter that was signed by P. Henning and D.G. Biggs on behalf of the Petitioners. I quote here a few extractions from the letter.

"Respected and esteemed Rev. Hurter,

Circumstances prevent us from sending a Deputation to South Africa regarding the contents of the accompanying Petition, and because we know you, and fully trust you, we request you politely and urgently, despite ~~of~~ all your manifold responsibilities and obligations, to also yet assume this case with Mr. Piet Grobler, Minister of Lands, and represent us at the Most Hon. Government. All the relevant items are included herein. Dear Rev. Hurter, the case is now dead earnest; our people here face poverty and misery, and if we do not receive help, and if we have to stay here, only a miracle can save the Afrikaners here of a total disaster- spiritually, economically and socially...the children! What is to become of our children in the future, under such dire circumstances?!...We figure that the Repatriation has to take place gradually-continuing over at least two years, so that people, who have

something to sell, can do that without force or hurry that will profit speculators." (The other parts are not of importance here. F.C.)

While the Petition was on its way to South Africa to be dealt with there, Henning and Biggs wrote more letters, amongst which one of four typewritten pages to Min. Grobler. It is of utmost importance to include part of it here because it deals with a subject unknown in South Africa and that flows directly from the Repatriation and also leads to a complaint made by the Argentine Consul, Dr. Linares, in Cape Town, to his government here, followed by an investigation that I personally came in contact with. Read part of the letter, ^{p. 99} Addendum H. As far as I know, no reply to this letter dated January 24, 1930 was received from Grobler- maybe Henning or Biggs has it.

Not yet satisfied with this letter, Henning and Biggs asked me again on March 4, 1930 to write another letter to Grobler, and it was this letter that drew the churches in South Africa into the Repatriation Movement. On p. 74 of Rev. Van Huysteen's brochure a portion of the letter, in quotes was published, ^{but} ~~unchanged~~. See ^{p. 101} addendum J. Neither the letters nor the Petition did any good, because His Highness P.G.W. Grobler, Minister of Lands, already on January 22, 1930, made his "papal edict"- no concessions- in his unofficial letter to Biggs, and that

concluded the case. (c.f. add. G.)

Even in his letter dated July 7, 1930, in reply to the letter of March 4, 1930, he repeated the decision he had made on 1/22/30...

Addendum ^{P.105} K. It was Grobler, Grobler and Grobler again- the Alpha and Omega!!! Up to here we showed the unsuccessful attempts of the movement by the Afrikaners to get away from here and to be repatriated to the Fatherland- either by the Dutch ~~Glunders~~ ^{Churches} or by the Union Government of South Africa! When we now proceed to look at the reasons of the failure, we will soon find an inexplicable, bitter, vicious and unfounded

ANTI-REPATRIATION CAMPAIGN

set in motion from here over to South Africa by private persons and the Reformed Church supported by Scoundrels and Vagrants of the likes of Calitz and Wilmers and even the Argentine Government- indirectly! Let us deal with the Person first.

C.A. Wilmers

He was in the Colony, between Purto Visser and Com. Rivadavia for about six (6) months during 1926. The Vice British Consul here, D.B. Roche, a captain in the World War, repatriated Wilmers to South Africa at the expense of the English Government-because Wilmers was a soldier in the

World War, according to Roche's personal communication to me. It was either at the end of 1926 or the beginning of 1927, so that Wilmers was in S. Africa when the Repatriation movement was activated here, because according to his own letter, he left there in April 1931 on his way here where he did not arrive till June. He was in contact and negotiating with Dr. Bioy in ^{Buenos Aires} Bs. As. (c.f. his letter Add. N.) He had already started in the Cape with the Argentine Consul, and the result was a Consular Minute by the Consul, Dr. Linares, to his Government here, and upon that followed the investigation here in the colony by the Com. of the Police. (c.f. ^{p. 106} add. L) We know that officially the people here are not in a hurry, and it was not until 1932 that inquiries were made here about the "Wilmers Stories" and by that time the man had suddenly vanished from the oil mines.

To understand fully the horrible lies of Wilmers & Calitz it is necessary to compare two publications by them - one lies against the other. To put it shorty - Wilmers, ^{as} ~~like~~ we got to know him here, is an insignificant Vagrant and Liar!

E.G. Calitz

He appeared here with the story that he was shipwrecked and that his money, as well as papers in regards to an inheritance he was supposed to

get, were lost. But he was a "wool-expert" and came to gain experience with that- and at that it remained. The guy is really not worth ^{spending} a minute ~~to spend~~ on. I just want to note here that he left here, leaving a lot of debts behind. He is also the enviable (?) exception in being the only Afrikaners to be booked here in the streets of Com Rivadavia for creating a disturbance, and was put in jail. It was caused by the fact that he did not pay his board. Rev. Wasserfall and Deacon P. Vorster paid his fine, and are even today waiting for repayment, as far as the report goes. He disappeared from here and later Rev. Wasserfall wrote to us that the "wool expert" re-appeared in the Cape Colony and that he was still "wool-crazy" and whether the expert had landed was not mentioned. However, the "wool expert" was able to impoverish a certain Preacher of our Church with a loan of £7 st (?) near Villiersdorp on grounds of the "wool qualifications" acquired in the Boer Colony and other parts of S. America. And, alas! Die Burger, the dear pure Burger, went and published that horrible & godless slander against our people here, based on the word of that miserable creature - it is nauseating! Read now the Addenda L, M. and ^{p. 115} N. But ^{as} ~~like~~ I wrote in my notes to Inspector Roberts: "It is simply a verification of the universal Rule of Life as so clearly stated by Christ

in the Gospel of Matthew, Ch.18 verse 7. We cannot always avoid it, much less prevent it, because it is an evil seed in some human characters." But in this case of repatriation, the action of many people was a gross and godless injustice to many of the Afrikaners here!

Regarding the previous details about Wilmers a few facts slipped my mind. In his letter to Dr. Bioy, Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs, dated Aug. 29, 1931, he gave a detailed report of how ^J J.F. Behr, in the early days of the settlement here, had sent his children to the Catholic School in Rio Negro (I think it was in Viedma) where all Behr's children were educated, and where one of them, de Wet, also became a priest. Everything was spelled out in detail, and Wilmers got all the detail from no other than old Joe Behr, and I think I was completely justified in saying that the family Behr was the inciter of Wilmers. There is more regarding this point. The Minutes of Investigation regarding the Education question which Mr . Roberts brought here only in 1933 were in the first place sent to Viedma, where Behr's children were attending school. From there they were sent to Formosa, where Roberts was at the time; then back to Buenos Aires and then to Rawson, Chubut, where it lay for a year. It shows immediately why the Minutes of Dec. 17, 1931 (Add. L) ~~were then~~ ^{not} dealt with here before June 1933.

Furthermore, how can one understand the stupidity of the Department of Education, investigating the education of the Afrikaner children in Rio Negro?! It shows immediately that this department did not even know where the Boers were! The first meeting that the chairman of the Christian National Education Board (M.G.G. Visser) and I had with the inspector was on June 6, 1933. The report to Roberts (Add. C) is dated Aug. 31, 1933, and the last letter from Wilmers to the English newspaper in Johannesburg, March 18, 1933, reached us here (through intervention of the Behr family) before June 30, 1933. When we put all these facts together and arrange them, the whole intrigue can be better understood, and the origin of the "Wilmers Mess" won't be hidden any more! **T**o put it bluntly, it seems to be a resistance of the Roman Catholic church here against the Dutch Reformed Church; that is why Wilmers states in his letter to Bioy that it is the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa that wants to repatriate the people from here and because there can be no reason given to the Union Government, the Church attacks the Argentine Government. Q.E.D. The two mentioned persons were not inhabitants of this Colony and thus spoke without authority or experience, but we will see now who the opponents in our own midst were - there were three persons

who were very vicious and bitter against the repatriation movement, namely J.A. Stegmann, elder in the Dutch Reformed Church here; M.D.J. Venter, elder in the Reformed Church and ^{Jacobus (Koot) Eloff, Reformed Church and a} close relative of P.G.W. Grobler - we will meet these three gentlemen more closely in the "Repatriation Drama."

J.A. Stegmann

According to Pieter Henning, Stegmann was not against the Repatriation since the beginning, but as far as I can remember, he turned when the petition was drafted in Steutelspoort, and since then that man saw nothing as too terrible or too mean to foil the movement. His accusations were that the people here had deteriorated because: "easy credit, drunkenness and motor cars" drove them into poverty. According to Rev. van Huysteen, Stegmann had also told him that. But I would rather talk about what Stegmann had told me and he had also given me those reasons. His actions were extremely bitter and there were even threats against him because of his hostile campaign. He and Koot Eloff were later the biggest trouble-makers, and did everything possible to undermine the movement, even with letters to Eloff's cousin, P.G.W. Grobler, ^{for which witnesses} ~~and~~ were willing to take an oath ~~of witness~~, because they were present when the one letter was drafted and Stegmann & Eloff had said: "We will see whether anything comes of ^{it when} this letter ~~when it~~ arrives in South Africa." The

embitterment was sad, to the extent that friends of yesterday & the day before did not greet one another.

I was lucky to have a reasonably cordial exchange of words with Stegmann one evening in Eloff's boarding house. There were six men present, and I asked him: "But John, if I ~~have~~ want to go back to Africa, what right do you have to counteract me?" His reply was: "I have no right." "Well then, why are you so against the supporters of the movement?" After a little hesitation he replied: "If all the Boers go away from here, what will become of me?" So that was the reason that he gave so much resistance, but it was selfish and I told him that directly. Later he turned again and even attended a meeting of the supporters. But the attitude of Koot Eloff - that was a different ^{horse of a different color} ~~story~~ - let us see.

After Biggs & Henning had received the letters from Minister Grobler, Koot Eloff returned from Africa, I'm not sure whether it was in 1928 or 1929; however on Oct. 25, 1929 I'm positive that he was here. Before this date he told me in my home how the foremen had spoken to him to encourage our people here to return to South Africa. I quote now from notes that I made: "Before my departure I had a conversation with Piet Grobler and General Kemp. The one sat on my left and the other on my right, and said,

"Tell our people they must return, we want them back here and will ^{help} ~~keep~~ them as far as possible." It was almost simultaneous with the Angola Boers ~~Repatriation~~, and all that involuntarily set these people's hope on the Union Government of South Africa. Eloff was ready at the end of 1929 to return shortly ~~back~~ to Africa, and in a conversation with me he told me one day, when we spoke about the desirability to send a Deputy to the Union Government, that he would undertake to be the deputy to deal with Grobler, Minister of Lands, on behalf of our people here, but then we have to pay his travel costs back, and he added that I knew that he would have influence with Grobler. I immediately agreed to the latter, as I knew of the close family ties between the Eloffs and the Groblers of the Transvaal. As regards the travel expenses, I brought it to his attention that if he is going back in any case & had most of his plans completed, that I doubt that the people here, under these circumstances, would pay his travel expenses, and told him that I had nothing to do with it, but would advise him to speak to Henning and Biggs first. What ^{happened} then, I do not know, just this: 1) Henning told me that many of the subscribers refused to have anything to do with Eloff; if he was to be the Deputy they wanted their names removed; no reasons were given. 2) The accusations against Eloff that he now turned & was writing letters with Stegmann & others to

Africa against the Repatriation. That Eloff was corresponding with Grobler, I do not in the least doubt, because even in May 1930, shortly before his departure, I know that Eloff had received a letter from Grobler with unfavorable content. We must not forget that these things appeared before there was a reply from the Union Government. It was a real conglomeration of instigation, hard words and threats, and involved in this were

M. David J. Venter

In a letter to Die Kerkbode dated Feb. 1932, which appeared May 18, 1932 in Die Kerkbode, I stirred up some people - one was Rev. van Huysteen and the other was ^{Oom} ~~Uncle~~ ⁿ Dannie Venter. I accused the latter of writing letters to Africa against the Repatriation. ~~That caused trouble! (not literal trans.)~~ ^{Then the fat was in the fire} I acted on information from Mr. P. Henn ^{members of} who to this day insists that he received this information from the church council of their church, and he gave me permission to tell it to Rev. Sonneveldt, because Rev. S. David Venter had helped to contradict me. Just a few days ago a friend told me (I believe him as though I personally heard it) that David Venter had said in his presence, that he was going to write to Africa to say the the people, who want ^{to leave} ~~away from~~ here, were "lazy bums,

drunkards who wasted ^{their} money by purchasing motorcars." The letter was allegedly signed by M.D.J. Venter and a few other persons to Rev. Postma. This matter is even today not cleared up, and the opinion here is still that M.D.J. Venter certainly had something to do with it - but this accusation exists exclusively with members of the Reformed Church. There is another phase in which the Reformed Church here, and in South Africa acted in the Anti-Repatriation Campaign. The man who could have shed light on this point, the late Prof. J.A. du Plessis of P.C. Stroom, lies dead and buried in mother earth. One fact remains ^{ir}unrefutable, namely that ~~these~~ ^{from here} letters were sent to Die Kerkbode, ^{to} or Prof. du Plessis, where it was mentioned, "That it was the Dutch Reformed Church ^{which} ~~to~~ wanted to take the people away from here because Rev. Wasserfalls ministry was a failure" and the "things were going well with the Afrikaners here." Compare Die Kerkbode of June 17, 1931, page 130, where full particulars can be ^{found} ~~formed~~, which will make it impossible to deny ^y anything, and which were replied by **N. and B. c.f. Add. 0.** ^{P-120}

In answer to ^{the} above mentioned accusations I responded in my letter of May 18, 1932 (supra) and amongst many others I gave the following reasons: "Unworthier or ^{more} false statements could never have been made. The Dutch Reformed Church wants to take people away from here? Let us now assume

the task that has been forced upon our shoulders by untruths and false accusations. It would ^{be 50% less expensive if} ~~benefit~~ the D.R. Church ~~by about 50% by~~ helping ^{ed} only its own members away from here ... Move all sentiments aside - get our own house in order! Save our own people! We have been forced to this by the Reformed Churchmen, let them give account of their members. We alone cannot bear all the cost; the numbers are almost even, and the Reformed Church thus has about equal interest & responsibility as the Dutch Reformed Church. Why would our church alone bear all the expenses? It is the duty of the Dutch Reformed Church to at least respect the feelings of the Reformed Churchmen, and leave their people alone here where they are satisfied and happy! It is a geometrical Q.E.D."

As said before, I let loose upon myself these two Domine's and Mister David Veiter- ^{and yet} ~~even so~~ the facts remained unchanged.

In the same letter ^{18.5} (5.18.32) I tried to show the three stages that the Repatriation movement went through, namely the

First Stage

in which the movement was exclusively political- between the Afrikaners here, who wanted away, and the Union Government of S. Africa; then came the

Second Stage

in which the Dutch Churches in S. Africa were drawn in by the circular letter of March 4, 1930 (Henning and Biggs) by Min. Grobler. Note that the Churches in South Africa were drawn into the dispute, but not the churches here in Chubut. Through false accusations of Die Kerk ^{blad} ~~boede~~ then came the

Third Stage

when the Reformed Church here and in South Africa merely stepped aside with the allegation that their members here were satisfied and well-to-do and didn't want to move- AND with the Reformed Church Min. P.G.W. Grobler also stepped aside and was ^{unwilling to compromise} ~~against any willingness to oblige~~, outside of the privileges determined by the Immigration Law!

When I now go ^{so} ~~as~~ far as ^{to} ~~openly~~ accusing ^e ~~ing~~ the Reformed Church that it is the main reason for the failed Repatriation, and that P.G.W. Grobler (also Reformed) had aligned himself wholeheartedly with his Church, then I have at least good ground and reasons for it. The files of Die Kerk ^{blad} ~~boede~~ (P.C. Stroom) containing these letters will be very interesting - if a person could get a hold of them. Time does not allow me to add other correspondence in my control, but that will come later when the time is ripe for it. When the Churches were involved in the Repatriation movement, Rev. Wasserfall made up **Statistics** ^{this was about January 1931} **Forms**; and these forms were not ~~delivered~~

submitted

^ before Rev. Wasserfall's arrival in the Cape on the same day that the Deputy of the Dutch Reformed Church had the interview with General Hertzog and "our friend" P.G.W. Grobler who joined Rev. Postma, the only representative of the ~~Dutch~~ Reformed Church. As far as Grobler was involved, it was an unnecessary consultation because he had ^{already} made up his mind more than a year ago- his semi-official letter of Jan.22, 1930 to D.J. Biggs.

sard. 2.
The same decision is referred to in his letter of July 7, 1930, and it is IMPOSSIBLE to determine from that that the Cabinet of the Union Government ever deliberated about the Petition- the application to be repatriated was merely delegated to the merciful attitudes and whims of Mr. Piet Grobler and ^{opposed} ~~worked against~~ by the Dopper Church! Let this fact for once sink in with our people and then they will know who determined their destiny.

But the Anti-Campaign still continues in South Africa, and to show what ^{is being} ~~was~~ said in February 1935, I add Add. P in which I respond to a report which appeared in "Die Vaderland" of February 19, 1935. This will show that even on political gatherings to combat Dr. Malan and his Party, the poor Boers in Argentina were not free of being maligned. And ^{that is} ~~these are~~

now the Government and class of Afrikaners who proclaim a WHITE SOUTH AFRICA, AFRIKANERDOM, NATIONAL PRIDE, BUT WHEN THEY HAVE THE CHANCE TO STRENGTHEN White South Africa and protect the Afrikanerdom, and by that build up national pride, we read their "méné, méné, tékel" and the future will ~~not~~ have to inform next generation whether instead of a Darius it will be the Bantu and Coloureds who must replenish the "Uphars".

This brings me to the treatment of

Rev. Van Huysteen's Brochure

and I will be brief in my defence against this Domine's sneering remark with which he just about called me a liar. I am really sorry that I have to do this, but I owe it to myself.

1. What this Domine says on P. 75 under "the decisive factor" I already had proven him to be totally confused with the numbers, namely that 27 families wanted to move to Canada.
2. On P. 76 he says: "It is thus a wrong presentation which a certain writer from Chubut had made in Die Kerkbode of May 18, 1932..." and then he mentions Grobler's letters and adds, "The cart is put in front of the horses here, etc." He says he personally knows of the letters, and now I ask the Domine, "Where did you see the letter dated ⁷ March 1927 by Grobler to Eloff, seeing that I had the letter in my possession?" It is untrue that the representations had come from here in the first place! I am

forced to deny the allegation from the Domine, and I am supported by the FACTS which are explained in this work.

3. What the Domine says on P. 78 about the Angola Repatriation (not the Angola Trek- that had happened more than 50 years ago!) is not exactly the truth- he does not know the facts.

4. On pages 90 and 91 he attacks me again and says, "And we should also not act on the day of despair as suggested by a writer from Argentine in Die Kerkbode of March 18, 1932..." and then on P. 91: "Our sympathies have to go to all or none (cursive is that of the Domine's).

Now, both the letters ^{quoted} ~~wrote~~ by the Domine were written and signed by me, but Rev. Van Huysteen pretends I am a kind of "Indian Untouchable" and he could not go any further than "a certain writer from Chubut and "a writer from Argentina." He writes from a high level where he did not want to degrade himself by even mentioning my name! It is an utter disgraceful way in which he acted- to publicize in Die Kerkbode and in his Brochure that what I had written was not the truth, and I despise it- the sneering and superior tone of his- it did more harm than good. But he says "all or none". Well, Rev. Van Huysteen was extremely successful and reached both a negative and a positive result- he did not get anyone away from here, and

he has everyone still here!

What about the general allegations of the Domine?

5. On page 20 he says, "The petroleum fever ^{of course} had attacked our people exactly like the gold and diamond fever" and then he alleges that some of our people for that reason had speculated with their land. It was not true, because the fact that there was oil on a farm meant no privileges for the owner or occupant- it was the property of the Government. Even more. When Piet Visser, Rooi Tom Vorster and those people sold their farms, "oil" had nothing to do with it, and thus far no oil mines have been discovered on those farms.

(And let me say here briefly that the speculation spirit with properties here was started by none other than C.J.N. Visser, the commander of two Treks, and he was morally obligated, by action and example, to protect the interests of the Immigrants instead of damaging them. Most of the disasters which befell the Boers here could have been eased or prevented by Mr. Visser-but he only cared for the "Ego.")

6. On page 22 he says that oil was discovered in 1909. He is late by two years. On p. 32, that Rev. Jacobs was the spiritual minister here from 1906 to 1910. The dates are February 14, 1907 to October 15, 1910.

7. Education. Here the Domine is even more confused with data and

numbers.

a. On p. 64 et. seq. He only mentions Van der Walt and Verwey. What are the facts? Mr. Melville was for many years the teacher for the children of the Boer families.

For almost two years Mrs. Couradie and I had a fairly large school at Mr. du Plessis' and also at Mr. v.d. Walt's, where there were never fewer than 15 children, and attendance was even better than the C.N.O. Schools. This school was closed because of a complaint by an Afrikaner that it was too close to a Government school at Voorspoed. Closed by the police, by an order from Rawson!!!!

b. Page 65: "In the whole Boer colony there has never been a single school founded by the government." No wonder that the Argentine government has a bone to pick with us and the Dutch Reformed Church because a prominent minister of our church publishes something like that. The Argentine government in 1906 or 1907 (the exact date is unknown to me, but it was before February 1908) bought C.J.N. Visser's old house with a few hectare for \$6000.00 m/n (?) and placed a qualified teacher there. The school was later closed for reasons other than stated in this work. When Rev. Sonneveld founded a school in Salamanca on the farm of Ben

Myburgh, there was a Spanish teacher- I do not know on what conditions- this effort was a failure. Rev. Van Huyssteen held sermons in the building as far as I know. Comment, C. ~~The~~ figures and data with regards to Mrs. Wasserfall and Miss Visser are also hopeless. What are the facts? ~~What~~ ~~are the facts?~~ Mrs. Wasserfall. From September 1928 to May 1930. That is 1 year, 9 months. Miss Visser. From October 1929 to May 1933. That is 3 years, 8 months. The average attendance per month was: Com. Rivadavia, from 1928 to 1933, 14.32, Brakpan, from May 1929 to February 1932, 16.3. The only one of the schools that paid and covered their expenses with a surplus was the Com. Rivadavia School. Brakpan could never pay the expenses, and the Sierra Victoria school was in any case a total failure for the Dutch Reformed Church- especially financially.

Now then. I think that Rev. Van Huyssteen and I need mutual forgiveness. He has mine, unconditionally, with the friendly advice not to act so overbearingly and autocratically towards others, it is not nice and just causes resentment- nothing else.

Angola Boers and the Argentine Boers

As far as I could control letters, documents and archives, I tried to show what caused the Repatriation movement's failure, but something else can be added. We know that Min. Grobler is Reformed and a Transvaler. In

regards to this the facts are that almost all the Angola Boers belonged to the Reformed Church and almost all were Transvalers. The conclusion is thus fair that both these factors influenced him, and besides that it would be interesting to know how many family members Mr. Piet Grobler had amongst the Angola Boers! Many of those people can't read or write; they, or at least some of them, could not fill in or sign the forms of naturalization. in "Die Vaderland" of 3/16/34 there appeared a report that some of them refused to sign the naturalization papers because they still think about returning to Angola. These are the people that Grobler gave preferential treatment, and refused to help us- we have much to thank P.G.W. Grobler for, much!

^{leaders}
The socalled foremen of the Argentine Boers.

The three persons who have to be regarded as the ^{leaders} ~~foremen~~ here are undoubtedly Louis Baumann, of Bloemfontein, C.J.N. Visser, the main leader of the two treks and M.M. Venter- co-worker of Visser. Not one of these three men served any advantage for the immigrants. Mr. Venter could not, because he died not long after his arrival in Buenos Aires. More than one told me that was a pity since he was concerned with the interests of the Boers. Louis Baumann was a good and dear man, but unqualified as a leader.

And yet I believe that he had helped the Afrikaners here more than Mr. Visser. Shortly before Baumann left here, I asked him his reasons for leaving, and his answer was, "this Colony is played out, if you stay here long enough you will find I am right." That was about 15 to 17 years ago (maybe longer.)

Mr. Visser was the downfall economically here for many Afrikaners- it is unnecessary to point out specific cases here. He cared exclusively about himself, and about nobody else in the whole world, where money was concerned. If C.J.N. Visser conducted his duties as ^{leader} foreman, this history of this settlement would have had a totally different color or tone!!!

But how are these three men and their families today? Louis ~~B~~ Baumann, when I last heard from him, physician amongst the Chaco Indians. What his circumstances are today, I don't know.

M.M. Venter's large business here went bankrupt and his widow and one child live in poverty. C.J.N. Visser- what shall I say about him? With all ^{my} ~~his~~ poverty I don't want to exchange ^{places} with him, including his ^{worldly} ~~worldly~~ possessions. God's mill grinds slowly...? Now to conclude. For long I contemplated the circumstances of the poor tempted and mislead Boers who were lured here for pure exploitation- they were more deceived than any one before on this earth, and the people here who were and are so opposed to

the Repatriation -they were but a few-are people who have something to say in this semi-civilized environs -how much or however little it may be- however they are "something" here, even if it is only amongst their own clan, while in South Africa they won't amount to much, they will go about their way unnoticed and unsung- and it is these facts that stick in their guts. (Hic lepus jacet.) It comes down to nothing more than what was written by one of the most famous poets more than two and a half centuries ago:

"Here at least
We shall be free.....
Here we may reign secure, and in my choice,
To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell:
Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.
.....So Satan spoke."

Milton's "Paradise Lost" Book I line 258 et/seg.

FINIS.

Comodoro Rivadavia

July 2, 1935 A.D.

pages 22, 23

Note! The decision referred to above, and underlined by me, was taken by Min. Grobler (and not in his official capacity!) on January 22, 1930, in reply to the private letter by Biggs sent on Movember 15, 1929. Compare Add G. What happened after January was merely a waste of time and camouflage. It was unncecessary because Grobler had already drawn the line! That is all!

Addendum L

Certified Copy

What follows next is a copy of the cover page of the file from the office of the vice-secretary of Foreign Affairs in Buenos Aires, with a translation added. The cause of this were the complaints by the scoundrel C.A. Wilmers, a good friend here of the Behr family.