

THE WOOL BARONS



By Dr. Izak Labuschagne

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Perspective

For a detailed study of the Wool Farmers of the Transvaal one would need to read the book “ *Transvaalse Wolboere. ‘n Historiese Oorsig van die ontwikkeling van die wolskaapbedryf in Trasvaaaal*”, ISBN 0-620-15256-7 by my cousin Len Joubert.

This book is written more specifically from the standpoint of the Labuschagne and Kolbe families. It also deals with a few other more controversial issues and leading onto the Land Reform program of South Africa in 2005.

A bit about the author.

Controversy suits the author of course, as he has never been afraid of controversy. He has never been a conformist or the turner of a blind eye. He stands alone, needing no one to prop up his sense of integrity or righteousness, no matter what the cost. For that the truth is too valuable. It cannot and must not be hidden. It must be revealed. For it sets free. Not the contemporary attributes like money or life, that is. The eternal attributes instead. Like accountability and conscience.

Most of his background etc. can be gleaned from his web page at www.izak.co.za. The Commission of inquiry he heads up. The Projects he is involved in. The legal battles he fought and won. The humanitarian work he has done (including the kind of political, activism politicians never have the guts to come near to) and the accolades received for it. He has written several other books, pamphlets and reports. He lectures regularly and is busy with a new book on Land Reform in Southern Africa.

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For the purposes of this book, it is important to note that he grew up as the last in three sons to a superfine wool farmer who regularly and quietly took the world prize away from the Australians. He was subjected to the most sordid of family feuds over the estate of his late father. As a result of the feud his university studies were curtailed and he ended up having to make his own way in the world. His highly independent nature won him no friends from the power cabals when he refused to be part of their collusions. It won him other friends. Few, less powerful but richer in integrity by far. This booklet then, is a lighthearted prelude that will suite the humour of those of like disposition. So then...

The Transvaal

On the Transvaal highveld, to this day, those farmers who rise to outstanding achievements in wool farming are referred to, sometimes more in jest than anything else, as 'Wool Barons'. This term was perhaps never so deeply entrenched as in a certain dynasty of wool farmers with the surname *Labuschagne* who resided on farms around the town of Wakkerstroom in the Transvaal Province of South Africa.

Labuschagne, - the Surname of "Red Lennard"

When Leonardus Johannes Labuschagne alias '*Rooi Lennard*' (Red Lennard) was born on the 17th of May 1826, the country was still wild. Wild enough for Rooi Lennard to one day find himself up a tree watching a lion devour his favorite horse, which was aptly named Bonaparte. Well one might ask, why the name Bonaparte, which obviously refers to the French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, was apt. The answer to that question in all probability lies in Rooi Lennard's surname: -

The more conventional or local layman's dissertation of the Labuschagne routes are set out on the yahoo groups web site for the Labuschagne's, which can be found at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Labuschagne-pos>. In it they say:

*The year was 1710 when a young man by the name of Pierre **Labuscaigne** stepped onto the African continent for the first time in his life. The scene that dominated everything in view was one of the most recognized landmarks in the world--the majestic rock of Table Mountain.*

Behind him lay France and years of bitter religious persecution. In front of him lay a continent which was scarcely chartered and only slightly understood.

It was a wild and untamed country which promised much hardship. A beautiful, yet sinister land where death and disaster would be a companion as close as a shadow, for years to come. Yet, the land

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before him also promised freedom and generous reward to hardworking men with free spirits.

In Southern Africa Pierre found all of these things. He was destined to become the founder of a great family which would produce pioneers, heroes, scholars, villains and hundreds of ordinary people of old-fashioned character. Together, they became the co-builders of a wonderful new nation with a new culture and an entirely new language.

*The descendants of Pierre **Labuscaigne** today number in their thousands. Together, we owe a great deal to our brave ancestors who sacrificed so much for freedom. We must always try to honour those who made it possible by trying to keep the knowledge of our identity and the honour of our heritage alive. (Note emphasis added)*

Apart from the fact that there are two towns in France called *Le Bouchagne*, the surname Labuschagne, I was once told by a Frenchman who claimed to be an expert in these things, is actually derived from the words La Buchagne which means '*The Buccaneers*' when translated from French. However, these were '*Royal*' Buccaneers as the word 'La' in this instance denotes royalty or a position under royalty. Their job was to be the King's personal bodyguard, especially as the Cardinal of France at the time, had designs to overthrow the King. The Labuschagne crest certainly sports all the elements of this heritage in that it features a knight's helmet, crossed swords and the royal Fleur de Lys.



The 's' which was eventually inserted before the 'c' of Buchagne, was apparently added by the Germans in jest because to them these Buccaneers spent most of their time sidetracked into the surrounding forests by the Cardinal's men, thus leaving their king exposed. In the 1600's when their King was beheaded these 'La Buschagne's' fled to the Cape of Storms with the Huguenots. It seems that around that time the 'La' was apparently joined to the rest of the surname making Labuschagne. By the time intermarriage with the Dutch of the Cape resulted in the total neglect of French being spoken in these families, the surname was being mispronounced (once again, it seems, in jest) in the most bizarre ways. Today a Labuschagne will answer to '*Labberskagnie*' in the city of Bloemfontein in the predominantly Afrikaans province of the Orange Free State, '*Labushane*' in the city of Durban in the predominantly English Province of Natal and '*Laberskaaing*' in certain parts of the Cape Province. In France he would have to learn to answer to 'Messeur Labukanyee' or simply 'Busha' or '*Busshanyee*' uttered by some socialist Frenchman who still religiously refuses to pronounce the royal 'La'.

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There are other stories too such as the one claiming Jewish origin. Jewish cattle farmers nicknamed *Le Beoffagne* and who lived in, founded or moved to the town of *Le Bouchagne* when persecuted by the protestants took the surname La Buschagne (or one of its many variants) as newly converted Mesianic Jews. When they fled yet another persecution, this time by the all-powerful European Catholics they arrived as Huguenots with the name *Labuscaigne* in the Cape. Later rectifying the disguise to La Buschagne and ultimately Labuschagne.

Izak Labuschagne the first

Rooi Lennard, originally from Somerset East had his son Izak Hermanus Labuschagne (born on the 22nd of June 1856) baptized in the Potchefstroom 'Voortrekker' Church. So it was then, that Izak Labuschagne was more Dutch than French, at least when he spoke, for he spoke a mixture of high Dutch and Afrikaans. When Izak Labuschagne worshipped in the Dutch Reformed Church it was solely in High Dutch as were his evening devotions with his family.



Izak came to live in the Wakkerstroom district on a farm called *Boschbank* which when translated from Dutch to English means 'Bush Bank'. It certainly seems that by then the only thing apart from the surname, which Izak had in common with the original La Buschagne's, was the bush - and at that a very fertile and beautiful part of it, as Boschbank is well known for having some of the best sheep grazing in those parts.

Many years later Izak's great grand son Also named Izak Hermanus, was quite coincidentally nicknamed '*Bush*' by a community of coloured people in the far Northern Cape, after a Television personality called Bush Low who was featured in a film wherein he was also exposing police corruption as Izak was at the time. The full story of that intrigue is featured in the author's autobiography. However, for those interested, there is a glimpse into the story at ..Web Page Izak\MI3AMSWa.htm

Interesting too are the Hebrew roots of the name Isaac (in this case rendered as the more Dutch or is it French or Hebrew Izak). The Stong's Concordance¹ of the Bible renders the root as **Yitschaq** or **Yits-schaq**. Notice the *scha* in the name, same as that in Labuschagne, the *g* substituted with a *q* in the first name. The nicknames, "Schaqi" or the Afrikaans version "Sakkie" begin to take on a fuller meaning.

Izak Labuschagne then, was a sheep farmer and an extraordinarily talented one at that. He was a man that simply put, had a natural instinct and acute sense in classing wool and selecting stock for breeding super fine wool sheep. For many years bales of his wool stood in '*South Africa House*' in London, in

¹ (Ref.3327)

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proud display of the *utmost excellence and finesse that the British Empire had aspired to in the production of superfine wool*. Izak Labuschagne then, became one of the founding fathers of an entire family of 'Wool Barons', which made up quite a dynasty in the area.

Wakkerstroom

Wakkerstroom, to this day still a small little town, is the second oldest town in the Transvaal after Potchefstroom, followed by the Capital Pretoria.

The treks from the great trek arrived there soon after their tempestuous trek through Natal only to

find the '*highveld*' uninhabited due to the expansionist military exploits of two famous Zulu Kings, namely the legendary Kings Chaka and Dingaan. It is therefore not surprising that at its founding in 1859 it was first called Martinus Wessel Stroom after the famous Voortrekker of the same name.



Len Labuschagne and George Kolbe

On the 17th of December 1912 Izak's son, Leonardus Johannes Labuschagne (Len), born on the 17th of May 1880, thus having the same birthday as his grandfather Rooi Lennard, married Elizabeth (Bessie) Johanna Kolbe, daughter of George Augustus Kolbe (29/7/1863 - 28/9/1954), another wool baron. George's grandfather and namesake came to South



Africa as a missionary in 1820 with the British settlers. His father Frederick Fortunus Kolbe however, became a well-known and respected sheep farmer, who is remembered for being the winner of a medal at the 1889 International Wool Show in Paris. In 1914 George Kolbe became a member of the '*Volksraad*' for the Wakkerstroom constituency. In 1918 he became the first Chairman of the '**Transvaalse Skaap en Bokboere Vereniging**' (TSV) and as such, the first chairman of a provincial wool producers organization in South Africa. With that marriage then, two leading families of wool barons merged. In 1927 George and his son in law Len were both instrumental in setting up the '**Kooperatiewe Wolmaatskappy Beperk**' (Cooperative Wool Mart) (KWB), which effectively superseded the TSV. George became their first Chairman with Len on the board of directors.

KWB - Surety during the depression years



During the depression years of the 1930's George and Len together with two others (E P Hoogenhout and H P Hancke), staked their entire fortunes by standing surety for the KWB in their personal capacities. Despite ridicule by wool brokers and the like, these men acted selflessly and in the interest of all wool farmers. Moreover, they succeeded, as an article in the 'Natal Advertiser' of the 22nd of May 1928 bears evidence. It states the following: -

"The rapid growth of the co-operative movements among wool farmer and of the popularity of Durban as a center of trade is exemplified by the decision of the Co-operative Wool Mart (Kooperatieve Wolmaatskappy Beperk) to increase the capacity of their existing premises at the corner of Kitchener Street and the Esplanade, by construction of additional capacious warehouses and bond stores, to cost Lb 25,000. The council committee approved the Plans for this building this morning. The firm in question established its headquarters in Queen Street two years ago (The Natal Land and Colonization Co. Ltd, "se gebou is gehuur met opsie om te koop"), but it was stated this morning, business increased so rapidly that after one season the firm acquired the Kitchener Street site and built premises to the value of Lb 30,000. Further inflow of business necessitated the extension now contemplated, which will comprise a three-storied structure adjacent to the existing warehouse and offices."

Boer War and politics



Len Labuschagne was a remarkable man. After matriculating at Maritzburg College in 1897, he left The Victoria College (today Stellenbosch University) where he was studying law, to fight in the Second Boer war (1899 - 1901). Many years later he would still relate the details of the *'Battle of Majuba'* near Newcastle with a sense of wonderment at the persistence and ultimate folly of that British onslaught. After the war he worked as an article clerk for a while but then received a bursary to continue studying, in Pretoria. After his studies he taught whilst building up his own sheep stud.

Len was chairman of various local political organizations in the Wakkerstroom area such as the *'Het Volk'* Party, *'Die Suid Afrikaanse Party'* and later the *'United South African Nationalist Party'* right up to 1947. He was a personal friend of General Jan Smuts. Issues such as those in Smut's book *'A League of Nations'* were among the topics of discussion between them.

After becoming a legendary sheep farmer and leader in that industry, he then also became one of the biggest cattle farmers in Natal and Swaziland. The following article sees him mentioned in the media of the day as one of the leading farming personalities of the time

The clipping on the following page says even more as it speaks of all the reasons why he received the most prestigious SILVER RAM AWARD.

Farming Personalities

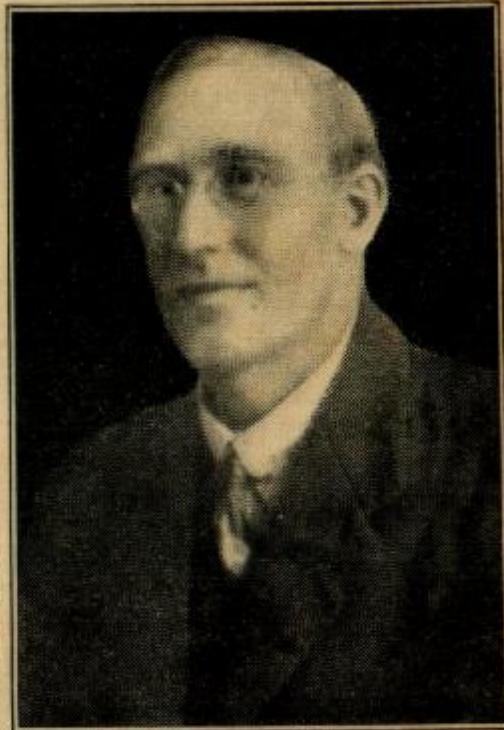
Mr L. J. LABUSCHAGNE

Elected as the additional member to represent the Transvaal on the South African Wool Council, when it is reconstituted, Mr Leonardus Johannes Labuschagne farms principally with Merino sheep in the Wakkerstroom and Piet Retief districts of the Transvaal and in Swaziland. He also runs close on 1,000 head of cattle, mostly Afrikaners, on these farms and on a farm in the Natal bushveld. Until the Australian sheep embargo was imposed he imported rams from Tasmania. He is a strong advocate of the better preparation of wool clips for marketing. All the grain produced on his farms is fed to his stock. Oats for winter feed are extensively sown on dry lands and under irrigation.

Born on May 17, 1880, in the Heidelberg district of the Transvaal, Mr Labuschagne matriculated from the Maritzburg College and passed the Intermediate B.A. at Victoria College, now the University of Stellenbosch. He left College to join the Republican forces in 1899. After the war he qualified as a teacher and taught until the end of 1912, meanwhile investing in sheep. The year 1913 saw him a farmer.

He was a foundation member of the old Transvaal Sheep Farmers' Association and served on its executive until it was transferred into the *Ko-operatiewe Wolmaatskappy Beperk*, of which he has been a director since its establishment. He has served on the executive of the Transvaal branch of the National Wool Growers Association since its foundation and has continuously represented the Transvaal on the central executive. He is also a director of the Wakkerstroom Co-operative Stores and serves on the sheep and wool committee of the Transvaal Agricultural Union.

Mr Labuschagne is married to Miss Bessie Kolbe, daughter of a former M.P. for Wakkerstroom, and has two children, a son, who is farming, and a daughter who is at college.



„Het diep spore getrap“

SILWERPENNING VIR MNR. LABUSCHAGNE

DIE Mooipoortse sub-tak van die N.W.K.V. het op 26 Junie besoek ontvang van die Transvaalse president, mnr. Louis Bührmann; die onderpresident mnr. Rudolph Bührmann; 'n bestuurslid mnr. M. J. U. Badenhorst en hul eggenotes.

Mnr. Bührmann het gesê dat hulle die tak besoek om hulde te bring aan mnr. Len Labuschagne, ere-onderpresident van die N.W.-K.V. (Transvaal-tak), asook 'n stigterslid van die vereniging.

Aangesien mnr. Labuschagne nie teenwoordig kon wees met die oorhandiging van die silwerpenning in Pretoria nie, het die hoofbestuurder mnr. Bührmann en Badenhorst versoek om dit persoonlik op sy plaas aan hom te oorhandig. Mnr. Lolie Moolman, Mooipoort-tak se voorsitter, was vir die reëlings verantwoordelik.

Diep spore

Mnr. Badenhorst het gesê mnr. Labuschagne het diep spore getrap. „Hy is 'n man van min woorde, maar almal het geluister wanneer hy praat.”

Mnr. Rudolph Bührmann het gepraat oor mnr. Labuschagne se prestasies op die gebied van georganiseerde wolboerdery en sy rol in die ontstaan van die ou Skaap- en Bokhaarvereniging van Transvaal. Uit dié vereniging is die N.W.K.V. gestig. Mnr. Labuschagne was sedert die ontstaan 'n bestuurslid en later onderpresident tot sy uittrede in 1948. Saam met dr. Jan Moolman, die destydse nasionale president, het hy op die ná-oorlogse Wolafsetorganisasie gedien.

Mnr. Bührmann het ook verwys na die rol wat mev. Labuschagne gespeel het. Hy het die silwerpenning ('n ram van silwer) aan mnr. Labuschagne oorhandig. Mev. Labuschagne het 'n ruiker van mev. Bührmann ontvang.

In sy bedanking het mnr. Labuschagne o.m. gesê hy is bly om te sien dat die wolorganisasie nog in goeie hande is. Hy het gepraat van die N.W.K.V. se prestasies in sy betreklike kort bestaan. „Dit is prys-

enswaardig dat die wolboere gewillig is om hul self te belas deur 'n betreklike hoë heffing te betaal, ten einde die toekoms van wol te beveilig.” het hy gesê.

Hy het hulde gebring aan sy makkers —mense soos mnr. Claude Orpen, eerste president van die N.W.K.V. van S.A., en sy opvolgers mnr. Jan Moolman en mnr. A. van Heerden vir hul groot prestasies, asook mnr. Gerhard Bekker vir sy jarelange diens en dr. George van der Watth vir diens hier en oorsee.

Cotton in Swaziland

Len and his only son, Herman Labuschagne, (named Izak Hermanus Labuschagne after his grandfather), started the cotton industry in Swaziland. Years later the British Government indicated that they wanted to bestow knighthoods on them for this, but the South African politics at the time was such that the acceptance of such an honour was all but out of the question.

At his sixtieth wedding Anniversary on Friday the 12th of December 1972 at Wakkerstroom, his vow to his wife at their marriage was revealed. *'I shall pay for each farm I buy in cash'* he had said. He did not believe in borrowing money, neither did he believe in giving it to the bank. At his death at the age of 99, just two weeks before his one hundredth birthday, this man, who read each and every night from his High-Dutch Bible, and prayed for his *'kinderen en de kleinen'* (the children and the small) after the evening meal, left them, his daughter Matie and only son Herman, equal shares in an estate comprising some 60 farms, teeming with livestock. Each farm had been paid for in cash...



Herman Labuschagne and Matie Joubert



The wool dynasty was now in the hands of Herman and Matie each of whom had three sons. Matie's husband Theo Joubert, who was also involved in politics and was on the Executive Committee of ***"The National Wool Growers Association"***, had died of a heart attack some years previously and the farming was therefore in her hands. With the help of her sons and the advice of her brother she soldiered on in the tradition set by her forefathers. Herman had married Johanna Magdalena Labuschagne, the daughter of Carl

Stephanus Vermaak, another sheep farmer from the Dullstroom / Middleburg Region of the Transvaal who was also involved in the Boer war with Len Labuschagne. Interestingly enough, Johanna's family tree actually extends into the family of Napoleon Bonaparte in France, in particular to his second wife, Princess Louise through a Cornelia Minaar who at one time was being sought by French officialdom with regards to an inheritance from the Princess. In this marriage then, there was a curious union between the offspring of Kings and Emperors, evidence of which could only vaguely be detected in the surnames of people and a horse named 'Bonaparte'.



Herman was very bright indeed. He came first in the whole of the Transvaal in his matric year and was an avid sportsman. Like his father, he was a big Game hunter and extraordinarily good shot and frequently accompanied his

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father on hunting trips to Mozambique, which was first called 'Portuguese East Africa'. He was also an extraordinarily good, fast saloon car driver and became a member of the "*Jaguar Drivers Club*" as well as a veteran member of the "Road Safety Association". During the Second World War he was Captain in the '*Tuis Commando*' (Home Commando's) of Wakkerstroom and toward the end of the war he was to become a Colonel, but as the war drew to close so did that prospect.

Herman and Johanna raised three sons, Leon (named after Len) Carl (named after Johanna's father) and an unexpected '*late lamb*' youngest, named Izak Hermanus Labuschagne after his great grandfather, in 1959. This one came to the year, a hundred years after the founding of Wakkerstroom. In support of this wool-based tradition, Herman's eldest son Leonardus (Leon) Johannes Labuschagne (named after his grandfather) was sent to Australia (Gouldburn and Triangie areas) to complete his studies in the Wool industry in 1966. The latest son's name however, created a problem; - his father was called '*Herman*' and his parents were not enamored with the name Izak, fearing that he might be nicknamed '*Izzie* or '*Sakkie*'. So they gave him an alias - *Harry*. However, there is far, far more to be said on the real reason for the adoption of the said alias in the bibliography that sequels hereto. The alias lasted until the 1990'2 when his name finally reverted to Izak following some legal battles that made history in South Africa.

World records

Herman however, had in the mean time quietly and indisputably carved his own mark on the industry, right in the record books of the K.W.B. Which his father was instrumental in founding. He went further than that, and carved it into the world record books.

This was by no means surprising as he inherited his grandfather Izak's talents. Deft, sensitive classing fingers and a razor sharp eye assured exacting quality

and excellent breeding as the cuttings on the next page illustrate. He was an avid opposer of the 'pool system' under the then new Wool Board and he predicted that it would contribute to the destruction of the industry. Several years later the figures told their own story as thousands of farmers had switched from wool to other products.

Herman was a profuse reader and used to enjoy working till the early hours of the morning. He was intensely interested in World affairs, so much so that he always owned the best of radio equipment with which he could pick up almost any radio station in the world. Accordingly he was a member of '*The South African Foundation*', and various other informative organizations.



Masonry

It was his interest in World affairs and the Illuminati that contributed, to a great extent, to his entry into Freemasonry. His '*mother*' lodge was the *Mkonto Lodge* (No.3624) in Piet Retief. It was in this organization that he truly excelled. He became a Master Mason, entered the Scottish rite and by the time he was District Grand Master he was completely besotted with Freemasonry. He became an Officer of the District Grand Lodge of the Transvaal, and then he became a member of the Grand Lodge of England, Scotland, and Teloffs. He became a Knight of the White Pelican, a Knight of the Rose Croix. Eventually he was invited to the 33rd degree council of the Scottish rite and became the Sovereign Grand Inspector General of the Grand Lodge of South Africa. From there it is unknown whether he entered the esoteric degrees or the Palladium via the '*Triangle Lodges*' and through these, ultimately 'The Illuminati', although he was often away for long periods from home on 'Lodge business to Johannesburg'. All was secrecy.

The author has done quite a bit of research on this organization. He headed up a Commission of Inquiry that investigated the influence of Freemasonry on the courts and has given many lectures, written a pamphlet and book on the topic. See www.izak.co.za then click on the tab marked *PUBLICATIONS* and select the appropriate article therein.

One and a half years after his son Harry (at that stage) left his Theological studies in Grahams town in favour of military service, just 5 months after his father, Len Labuschagne's death in February of 1979, Herman Labuschagne died of a fast acting brain tumor, in July of the same year, ironically, some three months after a car crash at a mere 70 Kmh. Herman and Johanna were on their way home from the town of Ermelo when one night, they plowed into the back of a tractor that had no reflectors or rear lights, whilst supposedly trying to avoid an oncoming car. From the diagnosis given by doctors of the Eugene Marais Hospital in Pretoria the accident was a result of the tumor interfering with his concentration. Harry was given leave from Military Service to attend the funeral and together with his two brothers and a nephew he carried his father's coffin to its last resting place in the cemetery of his forefathers in Wakkerstroom.

Estate Feud

The Dynasty of the wool barons of Wakkerstroom was now in the hands of Matie and Johanna and their respective children. Little did Harry know that day what was brewing up in the future. He did not have to wait long as almost immediately a ten year long feud brewed up and blazed forth between the three brothers and Johanna. This feud can only be described as a Saga that could rival any soap opera hands down. One could be entirely forgiven for thinking that the players took their cues from the TV soap opera 'Dallas', that had just spewed forth on the relatively new South African Television at the time. Attorneys, intrigues, threats, manipulation, underhanded deals and family drama of incredible intensity earmarked each and every day ad nauseam. As the feud blazed forth so the money poured into the pockets of

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The Masonic lawyers. The Labuschagne family fragmented and split apart viciously. Contact between the families of Matie and Johanna was superficial and had virtually nothing to do with sheep farming.

Today, Leon, who largely concentrated on maize after his studies in Australia, has moved to a farm near Pretoria. In 2003 he sold the family farm. It



went for very little. The once magnificent house and sheds were in such a state that if

Herman's 89 year old widow (in 2005) were to be granted her wish to see her old home just once again before she died, it would almost surely be the very cause of her death.



Carl turned two adjoining farms from the estate into a successful game farm in the Piet-Retief area. In the late 1990's he sold them for an undisclosed sum. It was substantial. He moved to Hoedspruit near the Kruger Game reserve where he operated a Safari Hunting outfit. Cancer has now driven him from there to the city of Johannesburg to be near the doctors treating him.

Harry, who was at that stage excelling at his studies for a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Natal in Durban, had left the country at the height of the feud and because of it in 1981. Today he is described as *a well-known strategic researcher in the land reform sector* as well as being described as *a well-known legal and political activist* in international media reports. For the most part of the 1990's he was embroiled in some of the most historic legal disputes of the country. Ironically his opponents were mostly members of the Masonic "brotherhood" in which his father so excelled. It was at that stage that the alias was dropped, after the particularly calumniating comments of one of the opposing advocates who sought to make much of the existence of the alias as a sign of lacking integrity. The wealth of the Wool Lords that went to him mostly ended up in the pockets of the Masonically control legal fraternity of Durban, poured out onto the streets of Durban, the very town that attested to his grandfathers success, a success, against all odds, against the predictions of the brokers of the worlds markets, some 60 years before. But more of that in the bibliography, much more indeed.

At the moment his cousin Phil and Izak, (both the youngest of three sons) are the only two out of Len's six grandsons that still own property from the 60 odd farms that made up the holdings of the Labuschagne, Kolbe, Joubert, Vermaak Wool Barons. Phil and Izak both have land in Swaziland. Phil also lives on one of his grandfather's cattle farms that he has converted into a game lodge in Kwa Zulu Natal. The Swaziland farms are also for sale (see [..Web Page Izak\SWad1.htm](#)). Phil's mother can do with the proceeds and Izak's clash with the King of Swaziland over witchcraft was never resolved. See ([..Web Page Izak\Letter to King2.htm](#)). Witchcraft is a destroyer of much in Africa and it is bound to destroy a lot more yet.

Len Joubert

On Matie's side of the family, Desbie, Matie's eldest son continued farming in the Piet Retief area as he had always done. Her youngest son, Phil Joubert, took to farming cattle in Natal on some of his famous grandfather's cattle farms. Len Joubert, Matie's middle son however, after pursuing a successful career as a diplomat in Europe returned to settle on his grandfather Len's headquarters in the Wakkerstroom area as a sheep farmer. By 1990 he was vice chairman of the Transvaal branch of the ***National Woolworkers Association (N.W.K.V.)*** as well as the ***Highveld Marino Club*** amongst serving on various other public bodies and further bodies in organized agriculture. In Len Joubert who is named after his grandfather Len, seemed to lie vested the only remnant of these wool barons in a time where conditions for farming wool are tough and wool barons few.

However, by 2005 Len had found himself in the unfortunate position where he had to sell the family farm. Surprisingly he did not forewarn the rest of the family about it and before they knew or could do something about it, it was gone. The family heritage was now in foreign hands. Len then entered politics as a member of parliament at the national assembly for the Inkhatha Freedom Party of the Zulu's. He had hardly commenced his career when he was used as the spokesman when the IFP derided the policies of neighbouring Zimbabwe. As a lawyer that has also served in Europe and South America in prominent diplomatic capacities, he is perfectly suited to the portfolio of Justice and International affairs. In essence the IFP want the Zulu's to be self-governing and want the land transferred to their chiefs in order that they can get along with independent projects on those lands. Projects that will be sensitive to their particular culture of land usage and not be subjected to centralistic government ownership, control and political manipulation. Let us hope that Len will instrumental in bringing enough international pressure to bear so that the legal regime governing land reform does not become utterly corrupted as in neighbouring Zimbabwe, as such from the forum ascended to by his great grandfather George Kolbe in 1914 when he became a member of the '*Volksraad*' for the Wakkerstroom constituency.

Izak Labuschagne III

As explained earlier Harry had dropped the alias after the particularly calumniating comments of one of the opposing advocates who sought to make much of the existence of the alias as a sign of lacking integrity during the court cases he handled in the 1990's. For those wanting some preliminary details until the bibliography is completed see the link ..Web Page Izak\RSAPO.htm

Whilst he spent most of his time at distant boarding schools and not being too interested in the actual farming activities he spent his weekends and holidays on the farm taking a keen interest in the historic background and social issues surrounding the world he found himself in. His deep religious convictions and his brushes with African witchcraft served only to heighten this interest. How the original pioneers into this land tamed it interested him. How the mainly

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Dutch members of the Great trek that escaped the oppressive regime of the Cape Colony turned unoccupied land into highly profitable farmland and how they bought land from the chiefs in other areas, how they had to fight hostile chiefs in other area, much like today's first world states had to do in their respective histories. How his grandfathers fought to liberate the country from colonial oppression.

His grandfather and father, members of the more moderate United party until its disbandment under the apartheid regime had seen to it that their farm workers had access to schools. Schools that served as churches for the Swedish missionaries they helped finance. Church services were held in the massive shearing sheds on the main farms. It is impossible to ever forget the earth moving spontaneous chorale of such a mass of Zulu voices. At his grandfathers funeral the family and friends of his farmer workers came from far and wide. It was a huge host that dwarfed the already very substantial attendance by the many white people who had come to pay their respects. The deeply mournful and tremulous sound of this host bore testimony to the deep respect and love that they all had for that man. It moved you. It moved the earth. Its deep vibration caused a trickle of sand to fall from the mound onto the coffin below as a testimony of the profoundness of the relationship that existed between farmer and his workers.

Izak had spent 7 years in Australia as a Dealer's Representative on the Sydney Stock Exchange and was widely traveled as a result. When the Land Tenure Reform legislation ensued to penalize a system that first world farm workers would have given their back teeth to be part of, Izak was amazed.

When fires miraculously broke out in all of the deeds offices, destroying the records of transactions between the pioneering farmers and the chiefs, he was concerned. When the Land Claims Court started twisting the law on tenure reform and restitution to the point that it gained an international reputation for incompetence and bias he became deeply concerned.

In 1998 when he met the Goodhouse community he unearthed evidence of brainwashing of previously disadvantaged farmers by the government.

Then in the year 200 he found himself acting in the public interest in a case where the government were refusing to transfer land to the non-white coloured farming community of Goodhouse, not only in terms of the new laws but also in terms of laws from the apartheid era.

Yes indeed! Few people today realize that the previous regime engaged in a massive land reform program in the 1980's that overshadows anything hitherto done. They bought some 40 mil hectares of some of the best land in the country from white farmers and put it into the name of the Minister of Agriculture to be held in trust until the various tribes in those areas became self-governing.

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That land, that legacy was inherited by the current government and in 10 years of government they are still holding on to most of it in order to manipulate the rural vote.

Today we see that the IFP want to the Zulu's to be self-governing and want the land transferred to their chiefs in order that they can get along with projects on those lands. Projects that are sensitive to their particular culture of land usage.

The ANC however, are content to let the SACP push them into acquiescing to what they refer to as the "popular demand, the democratic will of the masses" to have all agricultural land vest in the state for all its citizens.

When Izak brought that application in 2000 the prominent private sector entity in the Land Reform Program that had sought to get involved at Goodhouse engaged him as a strategic planner for their projects. He took them from R 250 mil to R 2.5 mil in a little over a year.

Little did he know when he came up with strategies to speed up the willing buyer willing seller program that the government did not want such a solution. The government were doing all they can to make the program fail so as to justify expropriation of land from white farmers.

Little did Izak know that the government were also deliberately making projects on state land fail so as to delay transfer to the non-white occupants, especially if they did not support the ruling party. When he confronted these issues, he was poisoned and the rug was ruthlessly pulled out from under him.

Today, he is busy with a campaign that has escalated to presidential level and is so serious that his cousin Len Joubert will in all likelihood risk his political career if he came anywhere near the heat. See [..Web Page Izak\LandReformWebPage.htm](#)

Epilogue of an era.

Today the 'Wool Barons' are but a distant memory. What remains, can be described as a group of embattled farmers, oppressed by intermittent drought and the political and economic state of a country undergoing profound change in a world where wool prices are as unpredictable as the climate, whether that climate be physical, economical or political. The politics of African land reform will undoubtedly be the final nail in the coffin. As a result, the main competition of the South African Wool Barons, the Australians, ultimately prevailed in the end. As a son of the Wool barons and now a naturalized Australian Izak can only say, *what a waste!*

By Dr. Izak Labuschagne

