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COLONIALISM, GERMAN EXPERIENCE AND REFLECTIONS ON HISTORY- SOUTH AFRICA AS A CASE STUDY*

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Abstract: *This article investigates the South African colonial experience in the early 20th century, comparing it with the extermination policies during the Wilhelmine and Nazi eras in South West Africa (SWA). Key questions addressed include the conditions under which colonial projects resort to extermination policies and the dominant factors influencing such decisions. The South African case offers a comprehensive examination of the impact of national prestige on the actions of European settlers, particularly the British. By utilizing Meinig's framework for chronological and methodological analysis, this study explores the British colonial presence in South Africa, detailing the transition of control from Dutch to British hands and the resultant socio-political dynamics. The historical context provided sheds light on the broader implications of colonial policies and their lasting effects on the indigenous and settler populations.*

* The views expressed in this study solely represent the author's opinion and assessments./

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SÖMÜRGEÇİLİK, ALMAN DENEYİMİ VE GÜNEY AFRIKA ÖRNEĞİ ÜZERİNDEN DİĞER SÖMÜRGEÇİLİK DENEYİMLERİ İLE KARŞILAŞTIRILMASI

Öz: Bu makale, 20. yüzyılın başlarındaki Güney Afrika sömürge deneyimini, Güney Batı Afrika'daki (SWA) Wilhelmine ve Nazi dönemlerindeki imha politikaları ile karşılaştırarak incelemektedir. Ele alınan temel sorular arasında sömürgeci projelerin hangi koşullarda imha politikalarına başvurduğu ve bu tür kararları etkileyen baskın faktörler yer almaktadır. Güney Afrika örneği, özellikle Britanyalıların eylemlerinde ulusal prestijin etkisini kapsamlı bir şekilde incelemektedir. Kronolojik ve metodolojik analiz için Meinig'in çerçevesinden yararlanarak, bu çalışma Güney Afrika'daki Britanya sömürge varlığını araştırmakta, kontrolün Hollandalılardan Britanyalılara geçişini ve bunun sonucunda ortaya çıkan sosyo-politik dinamikleri detaylandırmaktadır. Sağlanan tarihsel bağlam, sömürge politikalarının daha geniş etkilerini ve yerli ile yerleşimci nüfuslar üzerindeki kalıcı etkilerini aydınlatmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelime: *Sömürgecilik, İmha Politikaları, Güney Afrika, Britanya Sömürgeciliği, Ulusal Prestij*

In a study that has been published in this journal a decade ago, continuity/discontinuity issues between the Wilhelmine era extermination policies and the Nazi era policies in South West Africa (SWA) have been shared by this author.¹ In this article, South African experience in the beginning of 20th century will be examined and compared against SWA. While doing so, answer to the following questions will be sought after as well:

-When does the imperialistic/colonialist project resort to extermination policies?

-Which factors are dominant when it comes to adopting a policy of extermination?

South African case has provided not only a solid test of how events will unfold once national prestige is tempered with by the white Christian people of European descent but—provide insight to the dominant determinants of the extermination policies. Thus, in the following pages, details of the South African colonial experiences will be examined. Meinig's framework will once again be utilized for chronological and methodological purposes as in the previous article.²

i. Reconnaissance of the unknown terrain and ii. Gathering of coastal resource

The British are not the original colonizers of South Africa. They arrived in an already colonized terrain; colonized by the other European powers, namely the Portuguese and the Dutch. Therefore, the first two stages of Meinig's framework can be skipped since earlier colonizers (Dutch) had already completed the reconnaissance of the terrain and gathered the coastal resources. The following paragraphs describe the background to

1 Yekta Kamil Noyan, "Colonialism, German Experience and the Reflections on History," *International Crimes and History*, 14 (2013) :105-137.

2 D.W. Meinig, *Atlantic America, 1492-1800 Vol. I of The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986). In summary, what is referred to as the Meinig framework is the eight stages he asserts take place during a colonial power's entry into and expansion over in the colonized lands. These stages are reconnaissance of the unknown terrain, gathering of coastal resource, barter with the local population, plunder and initial military actions in the interior, securing of outposts, imperial imposition, implantation of a first group of non-military immigrants and initiation of a self-sustaining colony and development of a complete colonial ruling apparatus.

the British Empire’s acquisition of the Cape Colony and, subsequently, the rest of the lands that we call Republic of South Africa today. Below map indicates the geographical extent of the Dutch colony between 17th and early 19th century.



MAP 1 Cape Colony 1652-1806³

The French Revolution affected the Dutch Republic⁴ (1579-1795), as it did most European countries. As Giliomee et. al. state, “in January 1795, French cavalry entered Amsterdam and Dutch revolutionaries proclaimed the Batavian Republic”⁵ The Republic was now under French control and former ruler Prince of Orange William V fled, took refuge in British Empire, and requested the British to safe keep its colonies, including Cape Colony.⁶

Prince of Orange William V’s above-mentioned requests were conveyed through a series of letters addressed to the Dutch colonial officials. Letters were soon to be referred to as “Kew Letters”⁷ since they were written in William V’s new residence in Kew, England. As Gert Oostindie describes,

3 Eric A., Walker, Historical Atlas of South Africa, (Cape Town: Humphrey Milford Oxford University Press, 1922) <https://archive.org/details/historical>, 41.

4 Today’s Netherlands originated from this entity eventually.

5 Hermann Giliomee, Bernard Mbenga, Bill Nasson, New History of South Africa, (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2022), 113.

6 Giliomee et. al., 113 and Fransjohan Pretorius ed., A History of South Africa from Distant Past to the Present Day, (Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2022), 65.

7 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kew_Letters

Upon taking up exile in England, Stadtholder Willem V, in the so-called “Kew Letters,” had instructed the overseas officers to admit the troops and ships that would be sent by the British King... During the wars, the British indeed took “protective possession” of all Dutch colonies, albeit at different intervals.⁸

The following is the original letter addressed to J.G. van Angelbeek:

Noble and Most Honoured Confidant, Our Trusty and Well Beloved,

We have deemed it necessary to address you this communication and to require you to admit into Trincomalee and elsewhere in the Colony under your rule the troops of His Majesty the King of Great Britain which will proceed there, and also to admit into the harbours or such other places where ships might safely anchor the warships, frigates and armed vessels which will be despatched there on behalf of His Majesty of Great Britain; and you are also to consider them as troops and ships belonging to a power that is in friendship and alliance with their High Mightinesses, and who come to prevent the Colony from being invaded by the French.

Wherefore, Noble, etc. we commit you to God’s holy protection and remain,

Your well-wishing friend,

W.PR.V. ORANGE.

Kew, 7th February, 1795⁹

8 Gert Oostindie, “Dutch Atlantic Decline during the “the Age of Revolutions,” Dutch Atlantic Connections, 1680-1800: Linking Empires, Bridging Borders, ed. Gert Oostindie and Jessica V. Reitman, (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), 309-335, 320.

9 Percy Colin-Thomé, “Governor Van Angelbeek & The Capitulation Of The Dutch Settlements In Ceylon To The British (1796),” Journal of the Sri Lanka Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society 24 (1978–79): 29.

This letter, with a cover-page, was conveyed to other Governors as well.¹⁰

Shortly after, with a similar letter in hand, an extensive British fleet and troops arrived in Simon's Bay.¹¹ The fleet was under the command of Admiral George Keith Elphinstone and the army troops (when on the ground) were under the command of Major General James Craig.¹² A larger force headed by Army Commander, Major-General Alured Clarke and his troops departed from San Salvador (de Bahia in Brazil) on 15 May 1795 and arrived at Simon's Town on 11 June 1795 afternoon.¹³ Thus, in the aftermath of the French Revolution, British forces reached the Cape Colony at the invitation of the Prince of Orange in 1795,¹⁴ whose letter was presented to the Dutch colonial side on 14 June 1795.¹⁵ However, the local Dutch authorities were doubtful of British intentions and negotiations initially broke down.¹⁶ In fact, British intentions were to secure all maritime posts pertinent to India one way or other.¹⁷

Despite the local Assembly's prudent stand against transferring the public authority to the British side, the local administrators and the Dutch military commanders as well as the local militia could not form a unified and capable defense against the British who were able, not only to present an inter-operable army-navy operation, but also to base many military action decisions on reliable intelligence.¹⁸ Consequently, British forces took effective military action, eventually leading to the surrender treaty of the Cape Colony on 16 September 1795.¹⁹ For the next seven years, the British authority tried to maintain the status quo without any drastic changes in the societal order.²⁰ In terms of armed conflicts between the burghers and the indigenous population in the Eastern Cape, namely the Xhosa, British intervention became

10 Colin-Thomé, 31.

11 Pretorius, 65.

12 Ibid.

13 Thean Potgieter and Albert Grundlingh, "Admiral Elphinstone and the Conquest and Defence of the Cape of Good Hope, 1795-96," *Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies*, 35 (2007): 44-46.

14 Giliomee et. al., loc. cit.

15 Potgieter and Grundlingh, 46.

16 Pretorius, 65.

17 Potgieter and Grundlingh, loc. cit.

18 Potgieter and Grundlingh, loc. cit.

19 Pretorius, 65.

20 Ibid., 66.

necessary. British General T. P. Vandeleur suppressed a Xhosa uprising as early as 1799.²¹

In 1802, the British Empire recognized the new French regime and hostilities halted briefly, thanks to the Treaty of the Amiens. Article 6 of the said Treaty that concerned the Cape Colony is conveyed below:

Article VI.

The port of the Cape of Good Hope remains to the Batavian republic in full sovereignty, in the same manner as it did previous to the war.

The ships of every kind belonging to the other contracting parties, shall be allowed to enter the said ports, and there to purchase what provisions they may stand in need of heretofore, without being liable to pay any other imposts than such as the Batavian republic compels the ships of its own nation to pay.

Article 6.

Le port du Cap de Bonne-Espérance reste à la République batave en toute souveraineté, comme cela avait lieu avant la guerre.

Les bâtiments de toute espèce appartenans aux autres parties contractantes, auront la faculté d'y relâcher et d'y acheter les approvisionnements nécessaires comme auparavant, sans payer d'autres droits que ceux auxquels la République batave assujettit les bâtiments de sa nation.²²

Thus, the Cape Colony was returned to the Dutch; to the Batavian Republic de jure in 1802 and de facto in the first quarter of 1803. Subsequently, Commissioner General J.A. de Mist and Governor Jan Willem Jansens took steps to revitalize the Cape Colony.²³ Alleviations

21 "Eastern Cape Wars of Dispossession," South African History Online, 29 June 2018 < <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/eastern-cape-wars-dispossession-1779-1878> > (7 April 2024).

22 <https://www.napoleon-empire.net/texte-officiel/traite-amiens.php>

23 Pretorius, 66.

Giliomee et.al. also point out that “the Cape’s status as a proper British colony was only formalized in 1814.”³¹ Thus, following the Meinig’s framework, the first two chronological elements (reconnaissance of the unknown terrain, gathering of coastal resource), have been summarized above. In the following sections, the remainder of the said framework; beginning from section 3 (barter with the local population) will be discussed.

iii. Barter with the local population

When the British forces took over the Cape region [de facto in 1806 and de jure in 1814], what they met in terms of population was not just the indigenous population but also anti-revolutionary, pro-Britain, local leading Dutch administrators as well pro-revolutionary and anti-Britain burghers [Dutch speaking colonist farmer citizens].³² As Giliomee points out, “the British ruled the Cape but there was not initially very much that was British about it.”³³ The local population was reported to be consisting of “25.754 slaves, appx. 20.000 colonists, 15.000 Khoe-san and appx 1.700 freed black slaves.”³⁴ The number of indigenous African populations was not documented until the 1820s and others not until the end of the century, however it would be fair to mention that the Khoikhoi and Bastards were in thousands and the Xhosa and San populations was in tens of thousands.³⁵

Shell supplies a profound understanding of society. He states:

Almost from the start, the Cape was a slave society. Bereft of freedom and status, slaves defined the liberties and status of others. They were the colony’s most important source of labour. In Cape Town, the men worked in the market gardens and provided artisan skills; on the farms they worked in the fields and vineyards. The women served as cooks, nannies and wet nurses in the houses. The children were the playmates of their masters’ children. The incorporation of domestic slaves into the colonists’

31 Gillomee et.al., 122 (Anglo-Dutch Treaty signed at London on 13 August 1814 is the formal instrument to this end).

32 Ibid., 113.

33 Ibid., 122.

34 Ibid., 114.

35 Ibid.

“family” laid the basis for the kind of society that developed in the colony.”³⁶

The societal order was found in comparison to the existence of slavery and was further shaped by race status. De Villiers posits that “at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Cape society was characterized by a strictly demarcated class division.”³⁷ According to him, there were mainly six categories within the society

- The autocratic ruling class,
- Wealthy property owners,
- Business associates,
- Free workers (those who were not slaves),
- Contracted labourers and
- Slaves³⁸

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He, therefore, asserts that, “... race and class influenced the status of individuals and groups” of the period.³⁹ However, it is necessary to include Christian missionaries in the above-mentioned categories as well; especially for the countryside. Moravian Missionaries, RMS (Rhenish Missionary Society from Germany, and the London Missionary Society (LMS) also deserve attention as further elements of the societal order.

Hence, stage three of the Meinig’s framework also requires modification. Instead of bartering extensively with the local population as described in Meinig, what the British did was to keep the social structure intact, allow slavery until 1833, integrate the Cape economy with the British global trading network, and tolerate the local burghers.⁴⁰ The British ban on slave trade ships in 1807 did not affect the presence of slavery, it only

36 Robert Shell, “People of Bondage” in *A History of South Africa from the Distant Past to the Present Day* ed. Pretorius, 68.

37 Johan de Villiers, “Cape Colonial Society under British rule, 1806-1834, *A History of South Africa from the Distant Past to the Present Day* ed. Pretorius”, 79.

38 DeVilliers, 79.

39 Ibid.

40 Giliomee et. al.,115-116.

prevented new incoming slaves into the colony.⁴¹ According to de Villiers, it seems what the British did was more than tolerating the Burghers but rather appeasing them: The appointment of the “pro-British supporters from the burgher population” to key local positions, the facilitation of the postal services, decrease on certain custom duties as well as the initiation of “a travelling circuit court for the outlying districts” were a few examples of such policies.⁴² Bartering, however, did take place mostly in the Frontier lands.

iv. Plunder and initial military actions in the interior

This stage is also different from Meinig’s framework. Despite early reluctance, yet due to the chronic conflicts at the frontier lands between the Xhosa and the Boers, British forces ended up intervening in various clashes ranging from slave insurrections to rebellions.⁴³ Chronologically speaking, below is a list the of the events in which the British forces were deployed to suppress the various dissatisfied groups or push the indigenous population out of the colony.

-1808 Slave uprising

-1811-1813 Fourth Frontier War

-1813 Slagtersnek Rebellion

1814 (Formal annexation of the Cape Colony)

-1818-1819 Fifth Frontier War

The 1808 Slave Uprising:

Slave insurrections were few due to a mix of factors for, as Robert Ross points out,⁴⁴ slaves lacked a common language, religion and culture and they were few in numbers and were dispersed across the country.⁴⁵ Due

41 De Villiers, 88-89.

42 Ibid., 81-83.

43 Giliomee et. al., 116-121.

44 Robert Ross, *Cape of Torments: Slavery and Resistance in South Africa*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983).

45 Robert McCormack, review of *Cape of Torments. Slavery and Resistance in South Africa*, by Robert Ross, *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines* 18 (1984): 490.

to these factors and lack of cohesion among them, only two uprisings in two centuries took place, namely in 1808 and 1825.⁴⁶ Robert McCormack further asserts that, while the resistance of the slaves was enduring, “it threatened lone masters, but never the state itself.”⁴⁷ It seems there were not any fear factors compared to the German experience in South West Africa. The British State was not alarmed. The 1808 slave uprising, despite its symbolic significant importance, was crushed decisively in less than two days by the British forces.⁴⁸

The 1813 Slagtersnek Rebellion:

What bothered the British administration more, compared to the said slave uprising, was the fact after the Slagtersnek rebellion, it was challenging to trust the Burghers ([Dutch speaking colonist farmer citizens]).⁴⁹ Burghers were resentful and felt that an indigenous group, namely, Khoekhoen (they were detribalized, serving under British regiments) were treated better by the British administration.⁵⁰ Rebellion was suppressed in less than a month, resulting in the subsequent hanging of five ring leaders on 9 March 1816.⁵¹

Fourth Frontier War (1811-1813) and Fifth Frontier War (1818-1819)

Frontier Wars lasted for decades. According to Giliomee, during this time “instead of concentrating on dislodging the Xhosa and making it impossible for a return, the commandos focused on capturing cattle”⁵² He further reports that:

It was the British military that would try a radical solution: total expulsion by an over-whelming force. To Colonel John Graham, the officer who would conduct the expulsion, the Xhosa were

46 McCormack, 490.

47 Ibid., 490.

48 “Louis van Mauritius and the Slave Revolt of 1808,” South African History Online (sahistory.org.za), 28 November 2017, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/louis-van-mauritius-and-slave-revolt-1808> (7 April 2024).

49 Giliomee et. al., 113.

50 De Villiers, 98-101 and Giliomee et. al. op. cit., 120-121.

51 De Villiers, 101 and Giliomee et. al.,121.

52 Giliomee et. al.,119.

simply ‘horrid savages. He ordered the pursuit of plundering parties of Xhosa to their settlements where ‘every man K[...]’ who could be found was to be slain. If possible, the chief has to be ‘destroyed.’ All was designed to inspire the Xhosa with ‘a proper degree of terror and respect’ to prevent their return.⁵³

In the last quarter of 1811, a large force of 1.321, consisting of British troops, Khoekhoen soldiers and 450 burgher commandos, was formed, and this force pushed 8.000 Xhosa from their lands in the Zuurveld,⁵⁴ burned the Xhosa’s crops, and destroyed their sustenance farming habitat.⁵⁵

British administrations’ treatment of the Xhosas resembles some of the brutality the German military administration showed in South West Africa (SWA), yet there are significant differences as well. Neither the German administration nor the British colonial apparatus wished to co-habitat with the indigenous population who were engaged in armed conflict. Despite the crushing defeat of such African groups, both colonial administrations wanted to expel their “natives,” respectively. However, when compared to SWA, the Cape Colony had a better labor supply and eventually treated its slaves and some of its indigenous groups better. The German administration in SWA, however, despite its need for labour, seems to have opted for a sustained policy of extermination and transformation of many of its African groups, namely the Herero and the Nama, into slave-labor. Meanwhile, indigenous groups in both South Africa and SWA spent significant energy fighting each other over cattle and yearning for the colonial administration’s favor against each other.⁵⁶

It was not just the projection of extreme might that the British used. British authority took advantage of the rivalry between the African groups which German authority also resorted to in SWA. For the Xhosas, rivalry and the arch enmity between Chief Ngqika and Chief Ndlambe paved the way for British intervention.

53 Ibid.

54 According to the Dictionary of South African English (<https://dsae.co.za/entry/zuurveld/e08047>), “The Zuurveld: A name given to the Albany area of the Eastern Cape.” Zuurveld lays in today’s Albany. At the time of the Frontier Wars, it functioned as the buffer zone between the Xhosa lands and the Cape Colony. British authority took measures to populate Zuurveld with British immigrants as part of its war strategy against the Xhosas.

55 Giliomee et. al.,119.

56 Ibid., 116

After fierce fighting at Debe Nek (located in today's Eastern Cape region of Republic of South Africa), resulting in Ngqika's defeat in June 1818, he asked for British military assistance.⁵⁷ For, then, British Governor Somerset, this request could be utilized to stabilize the frontier.⁵⁸ Thus, Lt. Colonel Thomas Brereton was assigned to enter Ndlambe's territory "with a mixed force of regular infantry and mounted volunteers" and the Fifth Frontier War began.⁵⁹

Despite British forces' ability to retrieve thousands of cattle from Chief Ndlambe, he stood his ground.⁶⁰ Furthermore, Ndlambe continued his attacks. Eventually, the attack led by Makhanda Nxele, war-doctor⁶¹ (Chief Ndlambe had patronage over him⁶²), on Grahamstown on 22 April 1819 met with heavy resistance and Nxele's forces ended up retreating, yet 1.000 Xhosa warriors either died or were injured.⁶³ Following the successful defense of Grahamstown, the British counter-offensive began in about two months, resulting in the flight of Ndlambe towards the Kei River and Nxele's surrender on 15 August 1819.⁶⁴ As Ndlambe's fighting capability diminished, the Fifth Frontier War ended.⁶⁵ The following year would be defined by the arrival of new British settlers, as will be shown later. In the next page, a few maps presenting the eastward extension of the colonizers as well as the geographical break down of the 1820 resettlement movement are conveyed. Relevant maps are provided below to display the eastern extension of the colonialist project and the movements of 1820s settlers.

57 De Villiers, 95

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid., 96.

61 <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/makhanda-nxele>

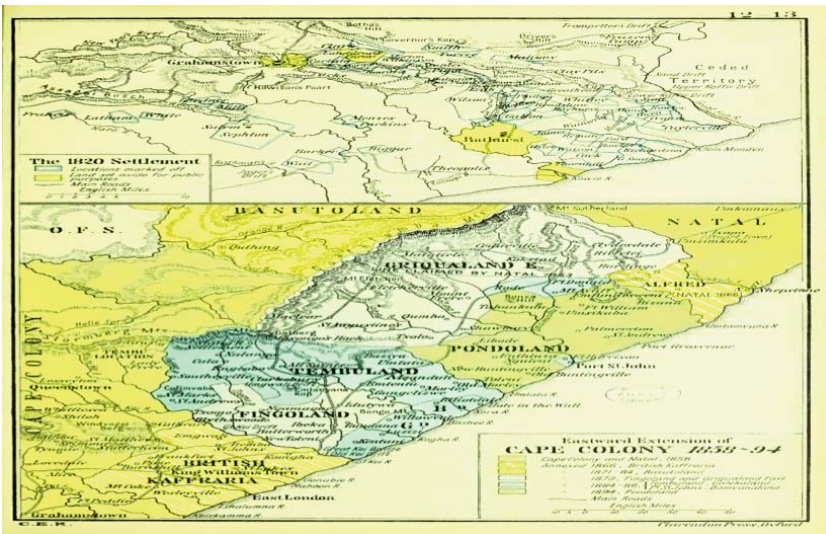
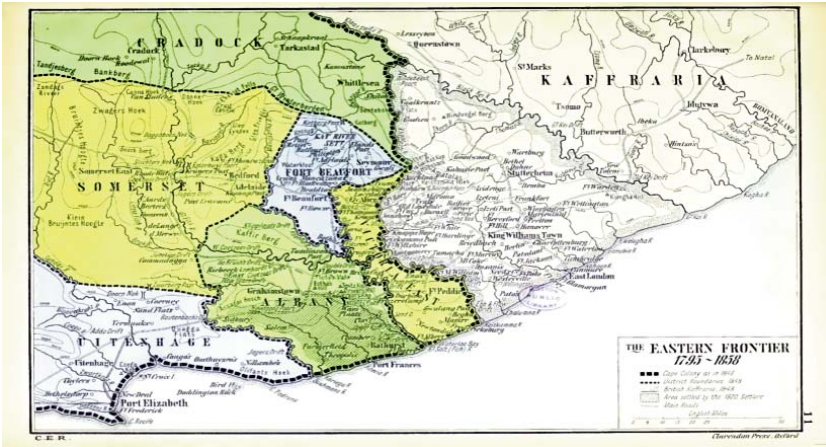
62 Gilliomme et. al., 146.

63 De Villiers, 96.

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid.

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MAP 2&MAP 366

Eastern Frontier 1795-1858& Eastward Extension of Cape Colony 1858-94

66 Walker, 49 and 51.

v. Securing of outposts

The securing of outposts also differs from the Meinig model. British occupation began in 1795 temporarily and was not formalized until the Congress of Vienna of 1814 which ended the Napoleonic Wars. East of the Cape Colony was the battle ground between the colonists (Dutch and the British) and the Xhosas for about a century. The fighting began long before the British entry into Cape Colony. The British were able to catch up with the fighting at the end of the Third Frontier War. Eventually, the British built more than 22 guard posts in the Eastern Frontier region along with a permanent military and administrative Centre in Grahamstown.⁶⁷ (Grahamstown was founded in 1812 and name after Lieutenant-Colonel John Graham.⁶⁸) The merchants in Grahamstown, benefitting from illegal arms sales and speculative land sales soon became an additional party in the conflicts between white and indigenous farmers in need of “land, labor and cattle” as Giliomee et. al. asserts along with their mouth piece local gazette, “Grahamstown Journal.”⁶⁹

vi. Imperial imposition

According to Giliomee et. al. “for much of the period between 1795 and 1814 governing the Cape was a frustrating affair... There was no clarity about the respective powers of the civilian governor and the chief military officer. Financially, the Cape was in a mess.”⁷⁰

As shown in the previous paragraphs, symbiotic class and race factors had shaped the Cape Colony. By 1808, however, the British imperial control began to reshape the Colony’s future. In 1807 the British Parliament passed the Slave Trade Act and made the slave trade illegal but not the notion of slavery and in 1811 it passed the Slave Trade Felony Act.⁷¹ Slavery was abolished in Britain and the entry of ships carrying slaves were banned in the Colony. Eventually, slavery was abolished in the Colony and Britain decreed a four-year grace period between 1834-

67 De Villiers, 94-95.

68 “Makhanda, South Africa,” Wikipedia, 2017
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Makhanda,_South_Africa> (7 April 2024)

69 Giliomee et. al., 149.

70 Ibid., 122.

71 The Abolition of Slavery In Britain - Historic UK (historic-uk.com) <https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/Abolition-Of-Slavery/>

1838. During that time, soon to be freed slaves would be assigned as apprentices to soon- to- be-former masters.⁷² Eventually, on 1 December 1838, all slaves were emancipated.⁷³ Moreover, the Ordinance 50 of 1828 had also tried to create equal conditions for the people of color in various areas ranging from labor contracts to discriminatory laws and allowed for free people of color to buy and keep land and property ownership.⁷⁴ However, such progress led to the resentment of the white colonialists, especially of Dutch origin. This resentment may have played a significant role in migration of the white population to the South African interior. This population shift not only affected the indigenous peoples, but also sowed the seeds of future conflict between the British authority and the white colonialists. However, contrary to the widespread belief among the white colonialists, emancipation did not result in a long-term decrease in agricultural output. By mid-1840s, production levels had bounced back.⁷⁵

English nationalism and claims of cultural supremacy also contributed to resentment and reactionary nationalism among the white colonialists of mainly Dutch origin.⁷⁶ Changes in the judicial system which made the English the primary language of the courts, led to further resentment.⁷⁷ Dutch colonialists strove to establish their identity and the term “Afrikaner” as a self-definition began to appear in the public sphere and media.⁷⁸ The editor of the main “Afrikaner” newspaper Christoffer Brand criticized the British authority on the grounds that they [British] have taken away Afrikaner land, legislation, slaves and even their mother-tongue.⁷⁹ He further pointed out that despite Afrikaner efforts to integrate with the British society, the British authority insisted on reminding them their Dutch origin.⁸⁰

72 Gilliomée et. al.,130.

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid., 126.

75 Ibid., 132.

76 Ibid., 136.

77 Ibid.

78 Ibid., 137.

79 Ibid., 139.

80 Ibid.

vii. Implantation of a first group of non-military immigrants and initiation of a self-sustaining colony

Year 1820 marked the arrival of the first group of non-military immigrants in South Africa. Push and pull factors played roles in this population shift. At the time, British popular opinion was pre-occupied with the surge in urban population and regarded immigration into the colonies as a vital remedy.⁸¹ For the local authority in Cape Colony under Governor Sommerset, incoming British settlers would provide the chance to populate the Zuurveld with an English speaking population and support the frontier line.⁸² Thus, the first British settlers began to move into the said lands (which are known as Albany presently) in 1820, populating Grahamstown, Bathurst, Port Alfred as well as Port Elizabeth, East London and Natal.⁸³

As explained above, British settlers were initially assigned to the frontier zones, to act as a buffer between the Xhosa and the burghers, later on many of the settlers managed to return to the urban areas, to which most of them were more accustomed and applied their trade and craftsmanship skills to their new surroundings.⁸⁴ This type of transaction, in return, culminated in “a new dynamic of colonial expansionism hitherto unknown to the colonial Afrikaners, who sought land for subsistence purposes only.”⁸⁵ These settlers also engaged in bartering with the indigenous population.⁸⁶ Despite lower-than-expected numbers, various settlers remained in frontier lands and contributed to the agricultural progress of the land.⁸⁷

81 Ibid., 123.

82 1820 History - 1820 Settlers South Africa - Correspondence (eggssa.org) <https://www.eggssa.org/1820-settlers/index.php/articles-2/1820-history>

83 <https://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/first-1820-british-settlers-arrive-south-africa#:~:text=This%20period%20saw%20one%20of,and%20food%20against%20their%20deposits> and <https://www.eggssa.org/1820-settlers/index.php/articles-2/1820-history>

The arrival of British settlers 200 years ago continues to cast a shadow over South Africa (theconversation.com) <https://theconversation.com/the-arrival-of-british-settlers-200-years-ago-continues-to-cast-a-shadow-over-south-africa-137319>

84 Gilliomee et. al., 122-124.

85 Gilliomee et. al., 124.

86 Ibid.

87 The first 1820 British Settlers arrive in South Africa | South African History Online (sahistory.org.za) <https://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/first-1820-british-settlers-arrive-south-africa#:~:text=This%20period%20saw%20one%20of,and%20food%20against%20their%20deposits>

Frontier Wars, however continued. In the 6th Frontier War of 1834-1835, after a hefty loss of lives (almost 600 hundred) among whites and their allies, colonial forces finally pushed the Xhosas eastwards.⁸⁸ Despite initial favours to the white colonists, such as the establishment of the Province of Queen Adelaide by the local authority, Lord Glenelg, the Colonial Secretary in London, reversed the decision and decided that upon display of good behaviour, Xhosas Chiefs could borrow their former lands from the British authority.⁸⁹ Such a decision, however, upset the white frontier farms and prompted their mass migration to the interior of the country, which will be explained in the next section.⁹⁰

viii. Development of a complete colonial ruling apparatus.

It would take mass migrations and armed conflicts, many frontier wars,⁹¹ as well as the South African War of 1898-1902 before the British could finally complete their colonial ruling apparatus. Mass migrations will be unfolded in two categories in the following paragraphs: first movement of the white colonialists will be discussed, and terms like the *trek* and *voortrekker* will be introduced. Subsequently, indigenous population movements and related warfare will be introduced under the heading of the *Mfecane*.

Two types of migrations took place in the Cape Colony between the 1820s and 1830s among the white colonialists.⁹² Subsistence farmers/herders (trekboers) moved in search of better grazing land and, presumably, wealthier members of the white Cape Town colonialists (Voortrekkers) migrated in the face of various political and cultural resentments that the British local authority induced upon them over the years.⁹³ Giliomee et.al. further point out that Voortrekkers mingled with the trekboers and many of them took part in this new exodus (the Great Trek) -towards the regions of Transvaal, Free State and Natal.⁹⁴

Giliomee et. al. summarize the reasons for the Voortrekkers' movement as a result of the "lack of land, labour, and security" as well as lack of

88 Giliomee et. al., 150.

89 Ibid., 152.

90 Ibid., 151-152.

91 War of dispossession website Eastern Cape Wars of Dispossession 1779-1878, loc. cit..

92 Giliomee et. al., 154.

93 Ibid., 154-162.

94 Ibid., 159.

political representation, Lack of political representation also gave rise to a profound sense of marginalisation.”⁹⁵ Visagie also asserts that “in most cases it was a combination of grievances which made the Voortrekkers decide to leave.”⁹⁶ He further lists the reasons behind the movement under the groupings of economic factors (lack of land, material losses due to the Frontier Wars, abolition of slavery and changes in labour legislations such as the afore-mentioned Ordinance 50, security issues related to vagrant indigenous peoples) and social factors (erosion of the white peoples’ supremacy in the aftermath of the abolition of slavery and changes in labour legislations, as mentioned above, the arrogant behaviour of British army members towards the Afrikaners, as well as new legislation that envisaged military draft from the Afrikaner population, lack of or limited government services in the eastern frontier zones as well as rest of the colony.⁹⁷

As Giliomee et.al. indicate, “in the first wave of the emigration of the Voortrekkers, which ended in 1840, some 6.000 people trekked... (10% colony’s whites). By 1845, some 2.300 families...-accompanied by an estimated 5.000 servants- had left the colony.”⁹⁸ Visagie further asserts that by 1845, it was “...more than 2500 heads of white families [that] took part in the emigration of the Afrikaners from the Cape Colony to the northern and north-eastern parts of South Africa” and he raises the number of participants in the Great Trek at a higher level of 17.000, “... about one fifth of the white population and one third of the Afrikaners in the Cape Colony.”⁹⁹ With the inclusion of an estimated number of African employees of the Afrikaners (presumably ex-slaves), it is estimated that participants in the said exodus reached “at least 23.000.”¹⁰⁰ A map (MAP 4) regarding the Voortrekker routes will be shared in the next page for informative purposes

The nationalistic character of the Voortrekker movement was also discussed in the academic literature. Some historians asserted the movement’s nationalistic character. They asserted that British nationalistic and culturally imposing authority led to the various

95 Ibid., 155.

96 Jan Visagie, “The emigration of the Voortrekkers into the interior,” in A History of South Africa from the Distant Past to the Present Day ed. Fransjohan Pretorius ed, A History of South Africa from Distant Past to the Present Day, (Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2022), 125.

97 Ibid., 126-135.

98 Gilliomee et. al., 159.

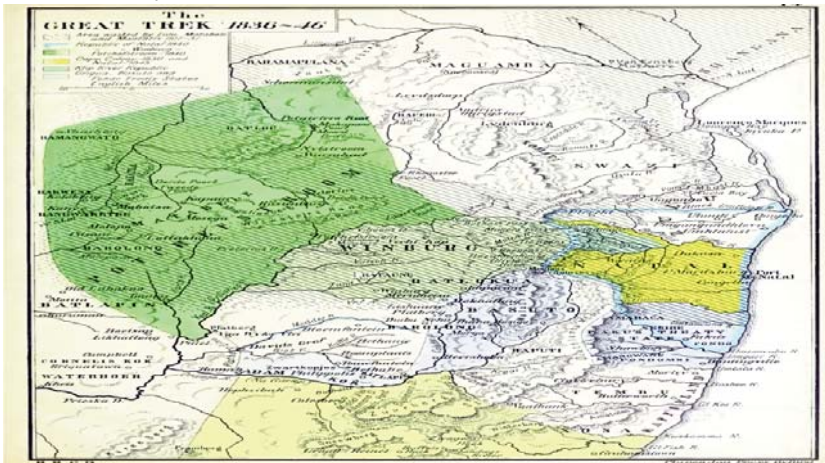
99 Visagie, 125.

100 Ibid.

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resentments of the white colonialists.¹⁰¹ Others claimed that the need for new land and labour induced the movement and, thus, argued that it was a materialistic drive, rather than a nationalistic urge.¹⁰² Visagie, on the other hand, asserts that despite the latent national feeling and a desire for freedom among Voortrekkers, “[...] nationalism was in fact a result of the Trek rather than one of its causes”.¹⁰³ The truth, perhaps, lies in between the two positions.

There were naturally opponents to the above-mentioned mass migration. The Dutch reformed church was not pleased and did not assign clergymen to the Voortrekkers.¹⁰⁴ Many among the Cape Colony’s urbanites were content with their lives, professions, and the way they were treated by the British authority. More among the members of the Cape Colony’s rural community perceived that they were enduring the most of alienation and eventually decided to become Voortrekkers. Voortrekkers, however, were determined to announce that they were not simply lawless wanderers. One of the leaders of the movement Pieter Retief in a manifesto shared their intentions and how the Voortrekkers were compelled to migrate in local newspaper (Grahamstown Journal) on 2 February 1837.¹⁰⁵



MAP 4 The Great Trek¹⁰⁶

101 Gilliomee et. al., 158.

102 Ibid.

103 Visagie, 135.

104 Gilliomee et. al., 159.

105 Ibid., 162.

106 Walker, 53.

The lands Voortrekkers eventually moved to were not empty spaces and friction with the local population was inevitable. In various locations, they met Indigenous peoples, such as the Zulus and the Ndebeles. Land ownership had different meanings for the Zulus and Voortrekkers. For the Zulus, the land belonged to the community and the Zulu Chief could only distribute lands to the individuals during his tenure.¹⁰⁷ For the Voortrekkers, however, any land agreement meant an ownership modality with no strings attached and it was possible to transfer the land to the next generations. Retief's lack of tactfulness in land negotiations triggered the then Zulu King's fears of elimination by the Voortrekkers and their advanced weapons.¹⁰⁸ These elements, combined with a degree of superstition (King Dingane viewed Retief as a wizard¹⁰⁹), culminated in the massacring of Retief and his men on 6 February 1838.¹¹⁰ Another massacre followed on 17 February 1838.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, a land grant document signed between Retief and King Dingane was recovered from the remains of the former.¹¹²

1838 initially turned out to be a difficult year for the Voortrekkers. Three of their leaders, including Retief as explained above, died and another one decided to opt for a less dangerous location and stopped looking for potentially beneficial areas.¹¹³ Towards the end of the year, however, Voortrekkers under Andries Pretorius' command were able to win a battle against the Zulus at the Battle of Blood River on 16 December 1838.¹¹⁴ However, it would take another nine years before he could establish a governing body north of Vaal River.¹¹⁵

In the aftermath of the developments in 1838, Voortrekkers began to establish their independent authorities. As Visage describes; "after talks

107 Visagie, 145.

108 Giliomee et. al., 163-170.

109 Jan Visagie indicates that Voortrekker's easy victory over indigenous peoples, Voortrekkers' horsemanship and marksmanship ability and their smart ways to overcome indigenous groups induced Dingane to view Retief as a wizard. Retief had beaten chief Sekonyela whom Dingane considered a wizard. Accordingly, in line with the Zulu traditional, any one beating a wizard, must be an even more powerful wizard narrates, Visagie.

110 Visagie, 142-144.

111 Ibid., 144.

112 Ibid., 147 According to Visagie, in the aftermath of the Blood River Battle, Pretorius and his forces found the remains of Retief and his men 60 km south-east of the battle field including the leather bag of Retief which contained the said Retief-Dingane grant document.

113 Ibid., 146.

114 Ibid., 146.

115 Giliomee et. al., 209.

in 1839 and 1840, the Voortrekkers were eventually united into one republic on 2 February 1841.”¹¹⁶ However, due to the beginning of the British annexation (British authority was worried that this Republic’s aggression towards indigenous communities might have triggered animosity among the indigenous population in the Eastern Frontier) as early as May 1842, the newly founded Republic of Natalia of 2 February 1841 turned out to be very short-lived and ceased to exist by becoming a British Crown Colony as of 9 August 1843.¹¹⁷ Yet, as Visage asserts, despite its short life, the establishment of the Republic of Natalia, “... was a learning exercise in democracy and a process in which their national realisation developed further.”¹¹⁸

Land assignments in Natal continued under the British authority. Governor Sir Harry Smith, who assumed this position in 1847, distributed two million acres to 360 white speculators.¹¹⁹ In 1859, the Natal Land and Colonisation Company was established and it held rights to 250.000 acres of land and land rights began to be exchanged in London Stock Exchange.¹²⁰ According to Giliomee, “thus was Natal colonised on paper before it was colonised on the ground.”¹²¹ During the 1847-1851 period, 5.000 settlers arrived in Natal from England and Ireland.¹²²

Meanwhile another mass migration and armed conflict took place among the Indigenous people in South Africa, known as the *Mfecane*. (Zulu language) mainly between the 1810s and the 1840s. According to Giliomee et. al., “for most African societies in South Africa, the hallmarks of the nineteenth century were difficulty, dislocation, reorganization and finally subjugation.”¹²³ The history of SWA in Chapter 4 also is in line with such an assertion. The historiography of the *Mfecane* varies according to the period pieces. Whereas pre-1970s studies point out to the Zulu Kingdom’s expansion as the main reason behind the death of large numbers of indigenous peoples and dislocation;

116 Visage, 148.

117 Visage, 149 and Giliomee et. al., 203.

118 Visage, 149.

119 Giliomee et. al., 203.

120 Ibid.

121 Ibid.

122 Ibid., 204-205.

123 Ibid., 174.

post-1990s works include modifications to this theory.¹²⁴ Giliomee et. al. point out that “ it is now accepted that the Zulu were by no means the only ones responsible for the warfare that spread through the southeast African coastal and the inland regions.”¹²⁵ Moreover, thanks to the studies of anthropologists, it was proved that indigenous African peoples had begun to inhabit the interior lands of South Africa long before, (roughly around 350 AD-600 AD) the Voortrekkers set foot on the land.¹²⁶

By the late 1840s, under Andries Pretorius, a proto state began to emerge. In 1849, a people’s assembly (Volksraad) was formed under his leadership “for the entire Transvaal region” and he was, thus, given a mandate to negotiate with the British colonial authority.¹²⁷ At the time, the British colonial authority was in a position to outsource the settlement of border disputes with the indigenous peoples of the region, their (indigenous population) subjugation “into a labour force” and establishment of “commercial relations with the British colonies”¹²⁸ Consequently, the British authority allowed this entity to govern itself in due course. Thus, the Sand River Convention of 17 January 1852 led to the creation of the *Zuid-Afrikanansche Republiek (ZAR)*,¹²⁹ the South-African Republic. Eventually, the Bloemfontein Convention of 23 February 1854 further led to the creation Orange Free State (OFS). As Giliomee et.al. explain, 35.000 people, excluding Indigenous population, were then present in the ZAR and OFS, between the Vaal and the Orange Rivers.¹³⁰

The discovery of mineral wealth, namely diamonds¹³¹, cursed the newly founded local Republics as well as the fate of Indigenous peoples. Until such a discovery, financially problematic and land-locked local Republics did not concern the British authority.¹³² As Giliomee et.al. indicate, “imperial intervention in the diamond fields marked a decisive

124 Ibid., 174.

125 Ibid., 174-5.

126 Ibid., 178.

127 Ibid., 209.

128 Ibid., 209.

129 Ibid., 211.

130 Ibid., 210.

131 As early as 1867, diamond was discovered in Orange River, later on thousands of people looked for diamonds by the Vaal River and subsequently in De Beers brothers’ farms. This farm land eventually constituted the basis of the extensive diamond mines in Orange Free State, (Kimberly) in 1871.

132 Giliomee, 210.

shift in the balance of power between British colonies, trekker republics and independent African kingdoms”¹³³ The discovery of diamonds in 1867 not only led to a rush of an unprecedented number of people, regardless of race, ranging from the white miners to indigenous peoples of various lands, into Kimberly but also enticed or induced (depending on the historical interpretation) British intervention. According Giliomee et.al., “it also raised levels of direct military conflict to an unprecedented level, caused the destruction of independent African states and set the Boers and the British on a collision course.”¹³⁴ The diamond discoveries led to an uncontrollable population movement which British authority found risky.¹³⁵ Moreover, the ZAR and the Portuguese authority in Mozambique were perceived as threats to the British economic potential in the region.¹³⁶

Moreover, the British colonial authority regarded “independent Afrikaner republics and independent African kingdoms as political anachronisms retarding economic development.¹³⁷ For instance, the Zulus were training their children as warriors rather than a labour force as the British authority and the ZAR were adopting legislation or unilateral measures to limit movement of labour and were grabbing land, which triggered armed clashes with the indigenous peoples, such as the Pedi Kingdom.¹³⁸ As witnessed in SWA at the hands of the German colonial forces against the indigenous peoples of the Herero and the Nama, the fate of various indigenous peoples in South Africa was determined in this case by the British colonial authority. In the last 30 years of the 19th century, for instance, the Zulu Kingdom and the Pedi Kingdom, as well as the Hlubi and Venda Chiefdoms, were destroyed.¹³⁹ The indigenous people were induced, for instance, by a “hut tax” to become labourers for the emerging new economic landscape.¹⁴⁰ Consequently, British “native ordinances” (for instance Zulu Kingdom was divided into 13 districts under puppet local chiefs. The British authority on the other hand began to divide the Zulus and rule the them

133 Ibid., 172.

134 Ibid., 172-173.

135 Ibid., 229.

136 Ibid., 229.

137 Ibid., 230.

138 Ibid., 230.

139 Ibid., 231-258.

140 Ibid., 238, British colonial authority demanded tax for every hut Zulus had, regardless of habitation and thus taxed every wife a Zulu man may have.

indirectly, furthermore a hut tax was imposed as explained below)¹⁴¹ were being solidified, enabling the breaking of the old socio-economic conditions and paving the way for the indigenous peoples to work in the diamond and soon to be discovered gold mines.¹⁴² Such a subjugation policy eventually comprised of banning or registration of guns, extermination of cattle, taxation, restrictions on freedom of movement and habitat, including ‘native reserves’. This trajectory, despite slight differences in sectors, is quite similar to the German colonial experience in SWA narrated in Chapter 4. The above-mentioned destruction by the British colonial authority, however, also received varying degrees of unintentional facilitation of the Boers.¹⁴³ For instance, after the London Convention of 1884 (peace treaty between the Great Britain and the ZAR following the military success of the ZAR forces. The treaty allowed limited but a strong self-rule for the ZAR and a nominal authority to the Great Britain over the ZAR), the ZAR was given authority to implement the “native policy.”¹⁴⁴

At the outset, in 1874 the new British Colonial Secretary Lord Camarvon tried to create a confederation among the Cape Colony, the ZAR and OFS following his previous success in the creation of the confederation between the French and English districts in Canada in 1867.¹⁴⁵ He hoped such an endeavour would overcome the political and economic anachronisms described in the previous paragraph. His offer was declined by the ZAR, however the unwillingness of the white settlers did not stop him from scheming (based upon a false report on indigenous people’s impending attack on the white settlers) annexation of the ZAR in April 1877.¹⁴⁶ Meanwhile, the diamond fields had already been annexed by Governor Sir Henry Barkly in October 1871.¹⁴⁷ The ZAR was politically divided and its finances were not even allow it to pay the salaries of its civil servants: under such circumstances the ZAR could not resist the annexation by the British at the time.¹⁴⁸ It would take three years for the local white population to favour regaining its

141 Ibid., 232.

142 Ibid., 232-236.

143 Ibid., 236-238. For their support during Zulu internal rivalry, Transvaal Boers were promised vast tracks of land. Pedi-Boer clashes assisted, in terms of providing context for the British annexation of the ZAR.

144 Ibid., 245.

145 Ibid., 230.

146 Ibid.

147 Ibid., 222.

148 Ibid., 278.

independence. Following the rejection of their initial pleas from the British Crown to regain independence,¹⁴⁹ a declaration of independence was announced on 11 December 1880 and former ZAR's proto nation finally took up arms in the late 1880 and early 1881.¹⁵⁰

Despite its limited duration, a mere 10 weeks, and participation of a limited number of troops from both sides, the clashes came to be named the First Boer War/First War of Independence.¹⁵¹ With the first shots fired on 16 December 1880 in Potchefstroom, the war began and the British forces could not suppress the ZAR forces.¹⁵² The ZAR began to inflict decisive assaults and victories upon the British forces starting from 20 December 1880 in Bronkhorstspuit (east of Pretoria) and continuing on with the Battle of Laingsneck on 28 January 1881, as well as the Battle of Schuinshoogte on 8 February 1881 and, finally, Victory of Majaba of 27 February 1881.¹⁵³ Following an armistice on 6 March 1881, an initial peace treaty was signed on 23 March and later that year, the Pretoria Convention, as a final document, was then signed on 3 August 1881 and eventually ratified by the ZAR Parliament on 25 October 1881. The final arrangement was that in exchange for recognizing the nominal authority of the British Empire, ZAR was granted self-rule except in the areas of foreign affairs and the issues related to the indigenous people.¹⁵⁴ The arrangement had seemed to stop the hostilities and achieved peace. The British Government under William Edward Gladstone had avoided a costly war, and the Empire was able to save face by keeping a nominal authority over the ZAR; the ZAR, on the other hand, was still self-governing and continued its endeavours to gain full independence. However, as Pakenham indicates, "the Queen was pleased. The Tories were suspicious. But there was nothing that either could do for the moment to stop Gladstone making a humiliating peace ('peace under defeat') under with the Boer rebels."¹⁵⁵ Soon enough; full independence and self-government with limited authority on foreign relations were to be reached by the signing of the London Convention on 27 February 1884.¹⁵⁶

149 Jackie Grobler, *State Formation and Strife: 1850-1900* in Giliomee et. al., 176.

150 Giliomee et. al., 278.

151 Grobler, 176.

152 Ibid., 177.

153 Ibid., 177-178.

154 Giliomee et. al., 279.

155 Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble For Africa*, (London: Abacus, 1991), 101.

156 Giliomee et. al., 278.

However, once again, the discovery of other mineral sources sealed the fate of the country. Gold was discovered in a nearby (almost 50 kilometres away) location of the ZAR capital Pretoria in 1886, namely, the Witwatersrand. On one hand, the new economy created enhanced the ZAR finances tremendously. Once a bankrupt proto State, ZAR was finally becoming a wealthy entity that could build up military arsenal (7 mm Mauser rifles, 155 mm Creusot guns (Long Toms), automatic machine guns (pom-poms)¹⁵⁷ and impressive government buildings.¹⁵⁸ On the other hand, the influx of foreigners (Uitlanders, mostly English speakers) destined to benefit from the gold mining one way or another began to shift the demography of the ZAR and created a political headache for the ZAR President Paul Kruger.¹⁵⁹ Meanwhile, the British Empire had been showing great interest in the wealth opportunities due to the discovery of the gold fields in Witwatersrand, which made the ZAR side even more suspicious.

President Kruger regarded Uitlanders “as money-grabbing materialists” as Grobler described and denied them political rights such as voting.¹⁶⁰ By 1894, the Uitlander population reached 75.000 and alarmed President Kruger.¹⁶¹ Kruger thought, once Uitlanders were given the right to vote, they would overthrow the government and hand the ZAR to the British Empire.¹⁶²

A decade later, Cecil Rhodes, Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, who was also one of the richest man in the country, thanks to his mines in Witwatersrand, tried to overthrow the ZAR Government.¹⁶³ Rhodes was a staunch believer in a British take-over of the gold fields in the Witwatersrand, however, President Kruger and his government would not give up easily and voluntarily, on this newly acquired path of wealth and perhaps the trail towards a totally sovereign nation.¹⁶⁴ Rhodes, on the other hand, along with tacit support from British Secretary of State for the Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain, was adamant regarding his desire to replace Kruger even by force and place the gold fields under the British

157 Grobler, 186.

158 Ibid.,184-185.

159 Ibid.,185.

160 Ibid.

161 Ibid.

162 Ibid.

163 Ibid.

164 Ibid.

rule.¹⁶⁵ He hoped that, in the event of a coup d'état, Uitlanders would join the revolt.¹⁶⁶ However, the coup attempt organized by a close friend of Rhodes, namely Leander Starr Jameson, failed.¹⁶⁷ The attempt was later coined as the Jameson Raid, after its organiser. Jameson's premature raid on 29 December 1895 with his 500-600 men-strong force was checked and Jameson and his men surrendered on 2 January 1896.¹⁶⁸

The fate of the Jameson Raid had also humiliated the British Empire.¹⁶⁹ German Kaiser Wilhelm II sent a congratulatory message to the ZAR President Kruger, which made Queen Elizabeth furious.¹⁷⁰ How could his grandson, the German Kaiser interfere with British lands under her suzerainty, asked the Queen to her Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury.¹⁷¹ Lord Salisbury explained the German interference as an act of overt support by the German Reich and a deliberate act to induce the British Empire to join the Triple Alliance (forged by the German Reich with Austria and Italy against the Russia Empire) against Russia at the time.¹⁷² Such an act could have harmed the 'perfect isolation', the foreign policy towards maintenance of European balance of power (meaning no one nation becomes too strong in the continental Europe and that Britain could play continental states to sustain such a status quo) that has been in practice for such a long time Salisbury had thought.¹⁷³

In the aftermath of the Jameson Raid, almost a year and half later, a new Governor of the Cape Colony and the High Commissioner for Southern Africa was appointed by the British, namely, Sir Alfred Milner.¹⁷⁴ Milner, assumed his duties in May 1907 and began utilizing the Uitlander issue. Consequently, Milner escalated the said issue to further pressure the ZAR and, as Grobler indicated, "made it his mission to end ZAR's independence."¹⁷⁵

165 Ibid.

166 Tinus Le Roux, *The Boer War in Colour Vol. 1: Conventional War, 1899-1900*, (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2022), 13.

167 Grobler, 185.

168 Grobler, 186 and Le Roux, 25.

169 Grobler, 186.

170 Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, (London: Abacus, 1991), 504.

171 Ibid., 504-505.

172 Ibid., 505.

173 Ibid., 504-505.

174 Grobler, 186-7.

175 Ibid., 186.

In 1897 the ZAR and OFS forged an alliance. The OFS' population mostly consisted of wealthy farmers, and it had been administered financially more prudently and differed from the ZAR in many aspects. However, it seemed at the time that British intervention was imminent. President Kruger, as described by Pretorius, "... was fully aware of Millner's plans [and ...] for this reason, he signed an offensive and defensive agreement with President M.T. Steyn of Orange Free State in 1897..."¹⁷⁶ Consequently, the ZAR and the OFS "would support each other if the survival of either states was under threat", points out Pretorius.¹⁷⁷ Meanwhile as touched upon above, the ZAR began to arm itself with weapons from Germany and France.¹⁷⁸ President Kruger further started the construction of forts in Pretoria and Johannesburg in defence against an impending British assault.¹⁷⁹

Against the backdrop of the Jameson Raid, demographic changes due to the Uitlanders as well as the British overt interest in the region which was also displayed by troop build-up in the region drew British Empire and the ZAR and the OFS closer to war day by day. Kruger, however, tried to negotiate with Milner on 11 May 1899.¹⁸⁰ Despite Kruger's willingness to comply with some of the Milner's demands, Milner was adamant to secure Uitlanders voting rights (after five years of residence).¹⁸¹ Milner, ultimately, believed that Uitlanders were destined to overthrow the ZAR Government this time by elections.¹⁸² Kruger, at some point during the negotiations, is known to have said "You don't want the franchise [voting rights for the Uitlanders]; you want my country."¹⁸³

Compliances the ZAR side provided during the negotiations were not sufficient enough for Milner; consequently, the transfer of more imperial troops to South Africa begun.¹⁸⁴ In 1899, the British Empire was finally given an ultimatum to stay away from the ZAR. Rejection by the British ignited the South African War (Second Boer War). The war lasted for three years.

176 Pretorius, 186.

177 Ibid.

178 Ibid.

179 Ibid.

180 Ibid., 187.

181 Ibid., 187.

182 Ibid.

183 Ibid.

184 Ibid.

Despite the legend, when David meets Goliath, historically it is usually the underdog who loses the war. The South African War was not so different either. The British Empire eventually amassed a military force 10 times larger than the combined forces of the ZAR, OFS and a few thousand international volunteers. By the end of the war, it was estimated that one fifth of the Boer elements had also defected to the British side.¹⁸⁵ Boer military strategy depended on attacking the British garrisons first and capturing vital locations, railways and then maintaining a defensive war until the end with the anticipation of a decisive victory or the intervention of other European powers.¹⁸⁶

In the first phase of the war up to 1900, this strategy was successful. The state of the art weapons that have been acquired from the French and Germans for a few years such as 7 mm Mauser rifles, 155 mm Creusot guns (Long Toms), automatic machine guns (pom-poms were helpful. However, eventually, the British had a come-back and proved their military superiority.¹⁸⁷ British forces entered Johannesburg and Pretoria on 31 May 1900 and 5 June 1900 respectively and. The fall of the ZAR capital Pretoria induced the British side to assume war was about to be finalized, however, they were mistaken. Boer forces resorted heavily to guerilla tactics.¹⁸⁸ They knew the land, they were excellent horse-riders and marksmen and armed with machine guns and explosives, they proved to be formidable against the might British army. Furthermore, Boer lives depended on hitting the British and running. The Boer side, much like the Namas a few years later in SWA, was able to main its guerilla force until the end of the war and pose a threat to the regular army units.

As the Boer army,¹⁸⁹ consisting of mounted citizen soldiers, known as commandos, were able put up a resilient fight against the British forces,

185 Giliomee et. al., 307.

186 Giliomee et. al., 301-302 and Le Roux, 14-19.

187 Le Roux, 16-18.

188 Ibid.,18-19.

189 A force of more 50.000 consisting of 20.000 men for OFS and 30.000 from ZUR along with 100 Northern European Boer sympathiser is mentioned in BeverlyRoos-Muller, *Bullet in the Heart: Four Brothers ride to war 1899-1902*, (Johannesburg-Cape Town: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2023), 8 and 231. Furthermore, Pakenham presents a higher number of Boers culminating in 87.365 in which 2.120 foreign volunteers and 13.300 Afrikaners from the Cape and Natal are included. Over 7.000 Boers presumably died in fighting. Another 7.000 to 12.000 + indigenous supporters of the Boers perished as well. Number of indigenous casualties among the British are unknown. Several million animals (cattle, horses and sheep) are believed to perish as well. Refer Thomas Pakenham, *The Illustrated Boer War: Abridged Edition* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2014), 287.

the colonial administration adopted an infamous way of burning the Boer farms, destroying their earthly belongings, and interning them in the so-called camps. As Grobler indicates, “by September 1900, Field Marshall Lord Roberts issued proclamations as British Commander-in-chief stating that inhabitants of the Republics were henceforth British citizens.”¹⁹⁰ He further asked the Boers to lay down arms and if his request to be denied, he threatened to destruct their and slaughter livestock.¹⁹¹ ZAR and OFS were determined to stand by their cause and declined the British demand which consequently gave excuse for the British military administration under Lord Roberts and his Chief of Staff, Baron Kitchener (later he would become his successor as well after November 1900) at a more strict format to carry out its “scorched earth policy.”¹⁹²

Despite the earlier British stipulations that the civilian population would not be impacted, events unfolded differently. After the above-mentioned British proclamations by Field Marshall Lord Roberts, the families whose men refused to lay down arms were subjected to deportation in cattle trucks, however, their destination would be to join their men.¹⁹³ Following decisive victories and the occupation of the strategic Boer cities, a hand-over of military command took place. Roberts left for London for good and Kitchener became the new head of the military campaign in November 1900. Newly promoted General Kitchener would even take more forceful measures on the ground.¹⁹⁴ For Kitchener burning of the farms and tormenting Boer families at their farms or their forced relocation to concentration camps were seen as other war instruments to break the fighting will of the Boer armies, shorten the war and decrease related expenses.¹⁹⁵ The camps were initially called protection camps for those men and their families who laid their arms and stopped fighting;¹⁹⁶ however, the British local administration made sure that this would not be the case. General Kitchener and his predecessor Lord Roberts considered these camps as an instrument to torment the indigenous population so that the fighting will of the Boer army would be broken.

190 Gobler, 218.

191 Ibid.

192 Ibid.

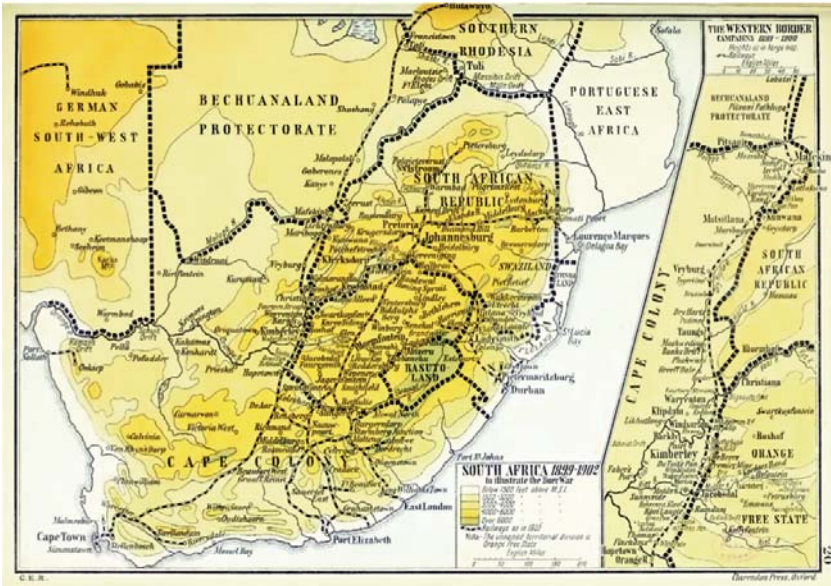
193 Thomas, Pakenham The Illustrated Boer War: Abridged Edition, (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2014), 229.

194 Pakenham, 229.

195 Ibid., 250.

196 Beverly Roos-Muller, Bullet in the Heart: Four Brothers ride to war 1899-1902, (Johannesburg-Cape Town: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2023), 102.

Colonialism, German Experience and Reflections on History- South Africa as a Case Study



MAP 5 1899-1902¹⁹⁷

However, some Boer civilians escaped, and British army could not force them off to the concentration camps. The conditions of these camps will be narrated in the following pages. However, the conditions for the fleeing civilians were not easier either. As Grobler indicates, “some Boer women avoided being sent to the concentration camps by hiding in caves and mountains”¹⁹⁸ A cave in today’s Meiringskloof Nature Reserve had offered natural shelter to the desperate Boer women as well as caves in the Barnardskoppe, Mpumalanga. At the end of the war, it was estimated that 10.000 women and children were hiding in the open terrain (veld), the casualties in the terrain, however, never made it to the war casualty list.¹⁹⁹ Others, such as General De La Rey’s family, escaped from one location to other in the western regions of Transvaal for more than a year and half.²⁰⁰ During such dangerous travels, women ran into fighting areas as well. At least one such incident has been recorded. In this incident, a fleeing Boer woman, Miss Anna Susanna Sonnekus, died due

¹⁹⁷ Walker, 63.

¹⁹⁸ Jackie Grobler, *Anglo-Boer War (South African War) 1899-1902: Historical Guide to Memorials and Sites in South Africa*, (Pinetown, KwaZulu-Natal: Pinetown Printers, 2018), 24.

¹⁹⁹ Roos-Muller, 13

²⁰⁰ Gobler, 240.

to the enemy fire²⁰¹ Her memory is eternally cherished with a memorial in old town cemetery in Amalia, Northwest.²⁰²

Roos-Muller narrates below the story of such a fleeing woman along with her two children and sister from OFS:

For a while after her husband rode to war, Nelie stayed on their farm in the Ladybrand district, with no security... She, and many of the eastern Free State women moved around a great deal during the war to avoid the kakies²⁰³ [British forces] ...

But far worse than losing her possessions was the fear that she and her children would be captured and forcibly taken to the dreaded camps... To be ordered out of your own home and to see it destroyed in front of your eyes is one thing; to be hauled off with your children to imprisonment under the heavy hand of a foreign enemy, without access to loved ones, proper food, or sanitation, was entirely another.²⁰⁴

Later, Roos-Muller allows the diary of the hapless woman, Nelie to speak for itself:

After the English took all our livestock, I had to work out how to manage, as long as we didn't end up in the camps. We were hounded from one place to another...

Then we were on the run again and there were many days when we did not eat, and just cried...²⁰⁵

Eventually, after finding shelter under the protection of local chiefs in Basutoland, Nelie and her immediate family were able to survive the war; however, some of her younger relatives (age 5 and 10) perished at the infamous Bethulie Concentration camp in 1901.²⁰⁶

201 Ibid.

202 Ibid.

203 In the previous Anglo-Boer War, the official uniform colours of the British forces made easier targets for the able Boer marksmen. Having received a dreadful lesson, British forces adopted more neutral coloured uniform in khaki which inspired the Boers to call with the same name/ Refer to Gobler, 11

204 Roos-Muller, 102-103.

205 Ibid., 104.

206 Ibid., 104.

There was also various prisoner of war (POW) camps for Boer soldiers in South Africa. These POW would eventually be sent to destinations such as India and Ceylon (today's Sri Lanka. News of their family members being captured and their eventual detainment in the concentration camps had various effect on POWs: Some doubled their efforts for the production of craftwork, which would be sold in the Netherlands to raise funds for the civilians in the concentration camps, others however displayed their anger overtly.²⁰⁷ When the surviving POWs eventually returned home; however, they were shocked at the scene of burnt down farm-houses decimated fields and more importantly at no sight of their families. The poet Jan FE Celiers described that traumatic feeling in Afrikaans superbly and the English translation of the last stanzas are conveyed below:

An exile came home from over the sea.

A grave in the grass, a tear breaking free.

That is all!²⁰⁸

As Grobler summarizes, “by 1901, about 120.000 Boers, mostly women and children had been taken to concentration camps. By the end of the war, a total of 50 concentration camps for whites had been established.”²⁰⁹ The concentration camps had dire conditions. The European press had labelled the camps as “death camps.”²¹⁰ Roos-Muller points out that the conditions were “especially so [appalling] for the families of the Boers who continued to fight. No meat, and only half-rations, were given to families in concentration camps if their men, were still commando.”²¹¹ Concentration camps housing the black civilians had even more difficult conditions; rations were less and medical assistance was minimal.²¹² There were, at least, 64 (or 65) black civilian camps with a population of more than 110.000 (According to the source the number fluctuates between 115.000 and 140.514).²¹³ The death rate

207 Ibid., 169-170.

208 Ibid., 217.

209 Grobler, 221.

210 Ibid.

211 Roos-Muller, 103

212 Ibid.

213 Roos-Muller, 103, Grobler, 217 and <http://dac.gov.za/content/women-and-children-who-perished-concentration-camps-south-african-war-honoured>

in these camps were higher than the Boer camps; “380 per thousand” and in the OFS regions “436 per thousand” death rates were recorded.²¹⁴ According to the Department of Arts and Culture, figures as of 2014, “approximately 24.000 of the 140.000 Black women and children” perished in these infamous camps,²¹⁵ 27.000 white civilians were recorded dead in the British records.²¹⁶

The women in the concentration camps were resolute to support the Boer independence cause despite all perils. As Roos-Muller claims, “one defiant woman announced: I can get another husband, but not another Free State.”²¹⁷ However, the death rate among the infants was extremely high and premature death of the children had devastating effects on the surviving parents. Roos-Muller explains that “The vast of majority of the fatalities in the camps were the very young-at least 20.000 Boer children perished in them. To be captured [as a] Boer infant was an effect a death sentence- very few under the age of a year survived.”²¹⁸ According to a secret letter prepared by the “Chief of Special Services of the South African Republic in the Veld”, addressed to “the State President”, the conditions that the Boer women were in was described as “...pitiful and wretched...”. The addressee was being informed of the “numerous deaths” as well as the sad news on ... farms, houses, and veld [being] torched and demolished.²¹⁹ However, the letter continued and pointed to the will to resist the British authority; “even though our numbers have dwindled, we are still fighting gallantly for our cause and costing England [Britain] lives for their unjust and unholy cause.”²²⁰

When it comes finding data regarding concentration camps, this study has certain advantages and disadvantages. There were sufficient and available data such as official declarations indicating the intent to exterminate the indigenous population in Southwest Africa under German colonial regime, as well as diaries and photos of the German troops depicting the cruelty inflicted upon the Hereros and the Namas by

214 Roos-Muller, 103.

215 <http://dac.gov.za/content/women-and-children-who-perished-concentration-camps-south-african-war-honoured>

216 Grobler, 221. Pakenham asserts that there is not an official number for the dead, but rather an estimate that fluctuates between 18.000-28.000.

217 Roos-Muller, 170.

218 Ibid., 103.

219 Johanna Brandt, *The War Diary of Johanna Brandt*, ed.by Jackie Grobler, (Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2007), 347.

220 Brandt, 347.

these troops. However, the loss of the military archival materials (which had been sent to Berlin from Windhoek) after loss of the colony during WWII presents a challenge for any study. In the next chapter, Italian colonial experience in Libya would be discussed, however this is the most challenging part for the students of history for two reasons: It seems Italy tried to hide the account of its genocidal activities in Libya and any attempts to collect samples of oral history from the indigenous population were met with suspicion and if not fear of from the Libyan autocrat Muammar al-Qaddafi regime until his demise in 2011. In terms of data, South African chapter was luckier. There was ample evidence such as, data of the concentration camps, diaries of both camp survivors and the POWs and photographs of all sorts depicting the war and the concentration camp life. In the following paragraphs, excerpts from diaries of South Africans would be provided.

The War Diary of Johanna Brandt provides great insight to the perils of living and for that matter dying in Irene Concentration Camp near Pretoria.²²¹ British occupation in Pretoria began on 5 June 1900; British forces occupied Klapperkop and Schanskop forts and the railway stations and raised their flag at the seat of ZAR Government in Church Street.²²² Six months later the Mayor of Pretoria, namely J.K. Loveday, seeking to decrease the British pressure on Pretoria suggested construction of a camp for those who had laid down their arms and ceased hostilities and their families.²²³ Meanwhile, the British colonial administration had begun its “scorched earth policy”, resulting in hauling off thousands of civilians to camps such as Irene.²²⁴

The Irene Camp (the remnants of which is close to the author’s current residence) was one of the better administered and gradually improved concentration camps. Whereas there was a British public push to ameliorate the conditions of the concentration camps in South Africa, German colonial authority would in a few years later choose to exterminate the Hereros and the Namas by neglect under harsh weather conditions and lack of food and hygienic conditions. Furthermore, Italian colonial administration between 1920 and 1930s in Libya would cover tracks of its 15 to 16 concentration camps. According to estimates, at its

221 Johanna Brandt, *The War Diary of Johanna Brandt*, ed. by Jackie Grobler, (Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2007).

222 P.J. Greyling, *Pretoria and the Anglo-Boer War*, (Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2000), 16.

223 Greyling, 104.

224 *Ibid.*

peak, Irene camp hosted somewhere between 5452 to 5641 people. Despite being one of the better camps, still there was a loss of 1.149 people due to diseases such as measles, pneumonia, bronchitis, enteric fever, diarrhoea, and malnutrition until its closure on 7 February 1903.²²⁵ Excerpts from Brandt's diary, testifying to the above-mentioned conditions, will be provided below:²²⁶

FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND DIRE SITUATION OF THE CAMPS

May 12th, 1901

...

The camp is enormous. There are about 5.000 people in it, and I believe quite 1.000 cases of sickness. On an average three deaths daily. Dr. Hamilton told us this evening that there have been 28 deaths since May 2nd.²²⁷

...

May 13th, 1901, The eventful first day is over and has been rather a success from one point of view- I can do more than good than I expected but that is sad, for it means that there is more need than I thought. Alas, things are a thousand times worse in the camp than I ever imagined.²²⁸

... The chemists will bless me. They are two second-class Hollanders, who snub the people and treat them badly and are all sweetness when we come there, so we have no chance of complaining, but I shall be even with them yet....²²⁹

... The tents are thin and draughty and very few people have bedsteads, and some have not even mattresses and sleep on the

225 Brandt, 106.

226 Texts are produced in full meaning along with the contributions of Jackie Grobler. Section heads are created by this author. Content of the bracketed sections are probable names found by Jackie Grobler and inserted as footnotes. Dates in the original dairy were not inserted in a uniform format which I followed suit in this section. Brandt sometimes wrote twice daily into her diary. To keep the authenticity intact, dates and times of her entries were kept in its original format.

227 Brandt, 198.

228 Ibid., 199.

229 Ibid., 200.

bare ground. Consequently, they suffer more from cold than from anything else and in every tent, there is croup or influenza or sore throat. There is an awful amount of diarrhoea and dysentery caused of course by the abominations they have to eat and drink in the shape of rotten meal, tough meat, black sugar, and the stuff called coffee-no one knows what it really is....²³⁰

May 14th, 1901, 4 p.m.

... When I think that Irene is the best camp, that there are others in Potchefstroom, Vereeniging, Volktrust, etc-cold districts- where no soul ever goes to relieve the misery; where there is no dispensary, no hospitals, no doctors, no nurses; where the people live on their rations, bad meat and flour sugar and coffee and nothing else- it is enough to drive me mad...²³¹

... In one of my tents there are six children bad with it [diarrhoea] and the poor mother is up all night without a scrap of candle- has to do every mortal thing for them in the dark and I could not give her a candle! The English do not supply them with soap either-two most necessary articles in sickness-and what they have been getting was through our nurses, who collected for them...²³²

Tuesday night.

... What is to become of all these people when they are sent back to desolate farms? Very few of them will have a roof over their heads- not a stick of furniture, no money...²³³

230 Ibid., 201.

231 Ibid., 202-203.

232 Ibid., 203.

233 Ibid., 204.

DEATHS/INFANT DEATHS

May 17th, 1901

...I am so sorry for a poor old woman here, a Coetzee. Her son died in camp yesterday and she did not even know he was here - only when she heard that a Coetzee was dead and made inquiries, she found it was her son...²³⁴

May 20th, 1901, Monday night

There has been a visitor in my camp tonight- the Angel of Death- the first time since my arrival. On my rounds this morning I found one of my patients- a boy of 12 looking very bad.... The worst of it is that the poor boy has not a single relative here. He was with his father in the field some weeks ago, looking after cattle, and there was a fight somewhere near them and they ran hard to get away, but they were captured, he and his father and grandfather. The two men were sent to Bombay, and he was brought here and was taken into an already over-crowded tent, by kind friends. His mother is in Pietersburg. His name is Gert Bezuidenhout.... My luck is turning now. I expect to hear tomorrow that little Susara is gone- she was all but gone when I was there late this afternoon.²³⁵

...My poor little Susara [M. Pretorius] was dead when I arrived there yesterday morning-she coughed her last little breath out at 8 o'clock the night before, just after Gert Bezuidenhout died...²³⁶

...

We then went for a walk to a little graveyard I noticed yesterday- a new one it seems. It is fenced in all rounds and the graves are in neat rows- over 100 of them, I counted. This day has been all death and the grave, and one needs a strong heart to sleep alone like this on such a dreary night.²³⁷

...

234 Ibid., 209-210.

235 Ibid., 217-218.

236 Ibid., 220.

237 Ibid., 218.

May 27th, 1901, Monday night

... There have been more deaths than usual in the camp-some very sad cases. A woman called Ruttenburg lost two children [Antonie B. Ruitenbergh, 7 years old and Albertus Ruitenbergh, 3 years old] this morning (measles) and one is dying. The first died a week ago and the fifth is also ill. Her husband is still fighting and knows nothing of the terrible news that is awaiting him. A Mrs. Snyman [Cornelia S. Snyman] died today, a young woman (25) leaving three little children, whose father is also still in the field. The sad part of the story is that her Mrs. Oosthuizen [Johanna Helena Fredrica Oosthuizen], a girl of twenty, died last week, leaving a six month old baby.²³⁸

Graves of the Ruitenbergs could be found in Irene Concentration Camp cemetery.



Photo 1: Grave Stones of the infant Ruitenbergs²³⁹

238 Ibid., 230-231.

239 Photo taken by the author at the Irene Concentration Camp Cemetery and National Monument on 4.11.2023. All copy rights reserved.



Photo 2 Entrance of the Irene Concentration Camp and Cemetery and National Monument²⁴⁰

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... We have had lovely weather the last two days, but the nights are terribly cold and consequently there is much sickness in the camp. Hessie found two children dead with measles in one of her tents yesterday and the third is dying Prinsloos form [Doorndraai, Waterberg] Just too fancy to lose three children [Anna Louisa Prinsloo (1 year old), Stephanus J. Prinsloo (5 years old) and Gertruida J. Prinsloo] in two days!²⁴¹

...

June 15th, 1901

...The first thing I heard was that one of my children [Barendina Fredrika Nel (2 years old) had died during the night quite suddenly. I went to the tent once and was terribly cut up to find that it was a little thing of two years, which has been suffering from fever and the worst of it is that the mother, Mrs. Nel has lost a girl of 16 [Alleta Nel] last week. Her husband and two sons have been captured and she does not even know where they are, and four of her children are down with measles, one very bad.²⁴²

...

²⁴⁰ Photo taken by the author at the Irene Concentration Camp Cemetery and National Monument on 4.11.2023. All copy rights reserved.

²⁴¹ Brandt, 236.

²⁴² Ibid., 255.

June 18th, 1901

... This morning, I went through about 70 tents. In one of them I found a baby just dying -there was a terrible scene. The poor mother lost all control over herself, and her wails brought all the neighbours flocking in.²⁴³

June 2th, 1901

... My poor little ones are dying off in dozens. There were no less than 10 deaths in the camp last night and tonight a great many are expected to take place.²⁴⁴

8 July 1901

When I started working this morning, I was told that our beloved Betsy had passed away last night. I immediately visited the poor, bereaved mother.²⁴⁵

...

9 July 1901

... This morning a lovely child of two months in my ward passed away. The little corpse seemed so clean and white that I felt nothing of the fear that usually fills me when I see a dead body.²⁴⁶

...

There were times of desperation for young Miss Brandt as well. She uttered, "...children can't understand why they should be made to suffer. It is cruel and it breaks my heart when I can do so little to relieve them" and continued later on "there are many trials in the camp life of ours and the worst is that with all our work we can do so little to relieve the distress around us. That is what I feel so much-my utter helplessness."

243 Ibid., 260.

244 Ibid., 271.

245 Ibid., 278.

246 Ibid., 278.

Suffering, however, did not cease due to the ongoing war and the perils of the infamous camp life. As she got more experienced in the camp, soothing her patients became a challenging part of the job as well. In her words, “it was a terrible work trying to soothe the broken-hearted woman [after the news of her husband and one son passing away in the war] and I sat there sobbing with her, by the bedside of her dying child. I have not felt so utterly unnerved for a long time.”²⁴⁷

There is ample evidence that the torment the Boer civilians and their supportive African staff suffered at the hands of the British colonial authority was done intentionally. The following remarks of the British Member of Parliament (future Prime Minister) Lloyd George testify to this end: “The remnants of the Boer army who are sacrificing everything for their idea of independence are to be tortured by the spectacle of their starving children into betraying their cause.”²⁴⁸ Another MP (future Primer Minister as well) quite contrary to the former, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannermann however, acknowledged the barbaric nature of such an interment and destruction policy by the British.²⁴⁹ Furthermore, in the Boer perception, the British “had been prepared to oversee the deaths of their [Boer] women and children [in order to win the war]”²⁵⁰ Roos-Muller further asserts that “in the years immediately after the war, empty classrooms testified to a whole generation that had been lost”²⁵¹ and consequently points out that the Boer Republics having “at least a sixth of their population died in the war”²⁵² came “to the edge of deliberate annihilation” due to the British atrocities.²⁵³ British Governor Milner’s letter of 20 April 1898 also displays his deliberate intent to exterminate the Boers, whose existence “was too great a curse” according to him.²⁵⁴ As Roos-Muller elucidates Milner believed in a total war including decimation of the Boer forces which would have ill-intended effects against the civilians as well.²⁵⁵

Moreover, the detention of civilians against their own will in their own country in the absence of a court trial was not in conformity with the

247 Ibid., 212, 237 and 242-243.

248 Roos-Muller, 103.

249 Ibid., 218.

250 Ibid., 217.

251 Ibid., 217.

252 Ibid., 219.

253 Ibid., 219.

254 Ibid., 234.

255 Ibid.

principles of universal law.²⁵⁶ However, the suffering of that era had not been vocalized to the extent it rightfully deserved. There might have been a tendency to allow the British historians to narrate the war history, who naturally could not necessarily know Afrikaans and lend an ear to the Boer side of the story.²⁵⁷ However, Roos-Muller further referred to Professor Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela (recorder of apartheid atrocities), who sought an answer to his following question “ without any attempt to compare the evil of the British concentration camps to the evil of the Nazi camps in Germany and Poland, I wonder why this atrocity on South African soil has not been addressed with equal force?”.

Cultural annihilation and emotional traumas might also have occurred as, for instance, British forces chopped off and burned the beloved pianos of the Boer households, so dear that only mothers are allowed to dust it.²⁵⁸ In the aftermath of the war, the British administration also forced English to be used in the schools. If the students reverted to their native language, as Roos-Muller described, “a ‘Dutch plank’ on string was hung around their [students’] their necks, which had to be worn along with a cap with long-donkey like ears as punishment.”²⁵⁹ Such regulations also scarred young people for life. The aftereffects of the war lasted permanently for many; resulting in “a deep mistrust of others, leading to both mental and emotional isolation” as well as economic perils due to loss of most, if not all, earthly possessions.²⁶⁰

Pakenham asserts that “in South Africa today, ‘the concentration camp’ is to Afrikaners, a symbol of deliberate genocide.”²⁶¹ Brandt witnessed effects of brutalism and grave atrocities essentially almost half a century before the term genocide was coined. She described in accordance with the available vocabulary then as such: “My feelings were almost too much for me, for this goes on day after day and it is terrible to think of the wholesale extermination of our race, not only on the battle-field, but in camps, where women and children die of neglect and exposure”²⁶² She further added that “[British authority] punish helpless women and children because they cannot get hold of the fighting men!”²⁶³ For her,

256 Ibid., 103.

257 Ibid., ix.

258 Ibid., 218-219.

259 Ibid., 222.

260 Ibid., 219.

261 Pakenham, 250.

262 Brandt, 257.

263 Ibid., 359.

all that was happening was “too cruel and inhuman” and “filled [her] whole soul with contempt and loathing unspeakable”.²⁶⁴ Hobhouse, on the other hand shared that “the ruin of most is now complete but let all who have friends or means left go. May they stay the order to bring in more and yet more” and posed the following question: Since Old Testament days was ever a whole nation carried captive?²⁶⁵

Pakenham further acknowledges that Kitchener “did not desire the death of women and children in camps” and further surmises that “what he [Kitchener] wanted passionately, was to win the war quickly”²⁶⁶ regardless of the human toll. Presumably, according to this logic, Kitchener saw the passing away of thousands of people at perilous condition as collateral damage. However, there were British acknowledgements, remarks, and speeches as well as the concrete military actions which testified to the torturous and barbaric nature of the British colonial authority. Essentially, there were also other factors that pushed the colonial authority to continue its wretched policies until the mineral riches of the ZAR and the OSF were under its and perhaps its cronies’ control.²⁶⁷

152 All the factors listed above are very much similar to the German colonial interests and instruments available to its colonial authority. However, whereas the British were contending with tormenting the indigenous population, regardless of race and colour until its demands were met, the German colonial authority in SWA, did not stop until a full-fledged extermination took place. The reasons behind such a policy will be investigated. However, perhaps it is essential to underline the British public support²⁶⁸ towards alleviation of the conditions in the camps and calls to close the camps as well as the scrutiny of the British Parliament over the whole situation in South Africa. For the Parliament, the policies adopted so far had created only a blunder at a cost of

264 Ibid.

265 Emily Hobhouse, Report of a Visit to the Camp of Women and Children in the Cape and Orange River Colonies, (London, The Friars Printing Association Limited, 1901), 14.

266 Pakenham, 250.

267 Ibid.

268 Emily Hobhouse prepared reports on the conditions of the camps. Also, a ladies-only commission under the name of the Fawcett Commission was established which verified Hobhouse’s points. The Fawcett Commission recommended sending of more nurses to the camps, improvement of the rail transport to the camps, rather than using other methods of transportation, increased support in terms of food and fuel, if needed wood and coal and remedies in the field of hygiene and nutrition. These developments eventually decreased the fatality rate from %6.9 to %2 Refer to Pakenham, 255.

financial ruin.²⁶⁹ The British parliament, as well as the government, after a while began to question the policy implantation on the ground as the camp visits by the relief organizations such as the South Africa Conciliation Committee and Committee of the Distress Fund for South African Women and Children provided relevant data. Emily Hobhouse's efforts are very valuable in this regard in addition to her relief work on the ground in South Africa at the time. Despite being unable to get all of her recommendations for the concentration camps compiled in her report prepared for the Committee of the Distress Fund for South African Women and Children approved²⁷⁰, the data compiled by her led to the establishment of the all-women, the investigative Fawcett Commission. Eventually, as Brandt's diary acknowledged at least improvements in the conditions of the Irene Camp did indeed take place.²⁷¹ Below are some significant excerpts from the said report:

I call this camp system a wholesale cruelty. It can never be wiped out of the memories of the people. It presses hardest on the children. They drop in the terrible heat, and with the insufficient, unsuitable food; whatever you do, whatever the authorities do, and they are, I believe, doing their best with very limited means, it is all only a miserable patch upon a great ill. Thousands, physically unfit, are placed in conditions of life which they have not strength to endure. In front of them is blank ruin. There are cases, too, in which whole families are severed and scattered, they don't know where.

Will you try, somehow, to make the British public understand the position, and force it to ask itself what is going to be done with these people? There must be full 15,000* [in the footnote she indicates that "Of course the numbers are now largely increased. over 20,000 in Orange River Colony alone; 25,000 in Transvaal camps, besides the Colony and Natal] of them; I should not wonder if there are not more. Some few have means, but more are ruined, and have not a present penny. In one of two ways must the British public support them, either by taxation through the authorities, or else by voluntary charity.

269 Pakenham, 253.

270 Emily Hobhouse, Report of a Visit to the Camp of Women and Children in the Cape and Orange River Colonies, (London, The Friars Printing Association Limited, 1901).

271 Brandt, 454.

If the people at home want to save their purses (you see, I appeal to low motives), why not allow those who can maintain themselves to go to friends and relatives in the Colony? Many wish ardently to do so. That would be some relief. If only the English people would try to exercise a little imagination-picture the whole miserable scene. Entire villages and districts rooted up and dumped in a strange, bare place.

To keep these Camps going is murder to the children. Still, of course, by more judicious management they could be improved; but do what you will, you can't undo the thing itself.²⁷²

A brief summary of death and despair tones in Hobhouse's report is conveyed below:²⁷³

If only the camp had remained the size, they were even six weeks ago, I saw some chance of getting them well in hand, organizing and dealing with the distress. But this sudden influx of hundreds and thousands has upset everything and reduced us all to a state bordering on despair.

More and more are coming in. A new sweeping movement has begun, resulting in hundreds and thousands of these unfortunate people either crowding into already crowded camps or else being dumped down to form a new one where nothing is at hand to shelter them.

...

No wonder sickness abounds. Since I left here six weeks ago there have been 62 deaths in camp, and the doctor himself is down with enteric: Two of the Boer girls who had been trained as nurses, and who were doing good work, are dead, too. One of them, Poppy Naude, was a universal favourite. She did not know where her mother was. Her father was in Norvals Pout, and there had been some talk of my taking her to join him; but in the end she thought she was doing useful work where she was, earning- 2s. a day, and she had better stay and nurse the people in Bloemfontein. I come back to find her dead. The doctor, the nurse, and all had said, "We can't spare Poppy."

...

²⁷² Hobhouse, 4.

²⁷³ Ibid., 12-13.

Hobhouse also acknowledged the existence of and the substantial extent of the camps for the black people in her report. She pointed out that “The Committee should notice the existence also of large Camps of natives, and in some at least of these sickness and death abound.”²⁷⁴ However, she seems to have inherent racial prejudices as she conveyed as a recommendation that Africans should not be hold any power.”²⁷⁵ For her, “considering the growing impertinence of the [black people]²⁷⁶, seeing the white women thus humiliated, every care shall be taken not to put them in places of authority.”²⁷⁷

Hobhouse pointed out in essence to a dozen of issues. The 12th and the last one, was indicated above and points more to the racial divisions in the country than the actual difficulties of the concentration camps in general. The rest of the issues, however, were meticulously compiled and presented as lack of fuel, lack of beds and mattresses, inadequate food, lack of water, lack of warm clothing, lack of regular clothing and shoes, lack of blankets, lack of sanitary accommodation and overcrowding.²⁷⁸ The report singled them out as the problematic elements²⁷⁹ that required immediate remedy and also touched upon limited progress regarding hospitals and education for the children.²⁸⁰

Yet, as presented in the earlier paragraphs, Hobhouse questioned the existence of the concentration camps in the first place. As a summary, she underlined that “there is no doubt that the general discomfort; could be vastly alleviated by attention to the points mentioned, but it should be clearly understood that they are suggested only by way of amelioration. The main thing is to let them go.”²⁸¹ She believed prudence of the British people would prevail and induce an end to the infamous concentration camp system as she asserted that “above all one would hope that the good sense, if not the mercy, of the English people will cry out against the further development of this cruel system which falls with such crushing effect upon the old, the weak, and the children.”²⁸² Below a

274 Ibid., 13.

275 Ibid., 15.

276 Derogatory term (K...) of the original text is omitted by this author.

277 Hobhouse, 15.

278 Ibid., 14-15.

279 Ibid., 14.

280 Ibid., 15.

281 Ibid., 14.

282 Ibid.

few sample photos of the concentration camps are provided to give an idea to the reader regarding the physical subject matter.²⁸³



Photo 3 Koonstad Concentration Camp²⁸⁴



Photo 4 Bloemfontein Concentration Camp²⁸⁵

283 It is also noteworthy that despite their status as captives at the concentration camps, when there was a photography shooting, these inmates would dress up to the occasion and unfortunately, the photographic data available for this study fall short of the horrors described in the diaries of the survivors.

284 Courtesy of Voortreeker Museum, 3.11.8.1.K, F 15/2588.

285 Courtesy of Voortreeker Museum, 3.11.7.1.K, F 15/2560.



Photo 5 Potchefstroom Concentration Camp²⁸⁶

286 Courtesy of Voortreker Museum, 3.11.10.2K Display of schooling for the Boer children.

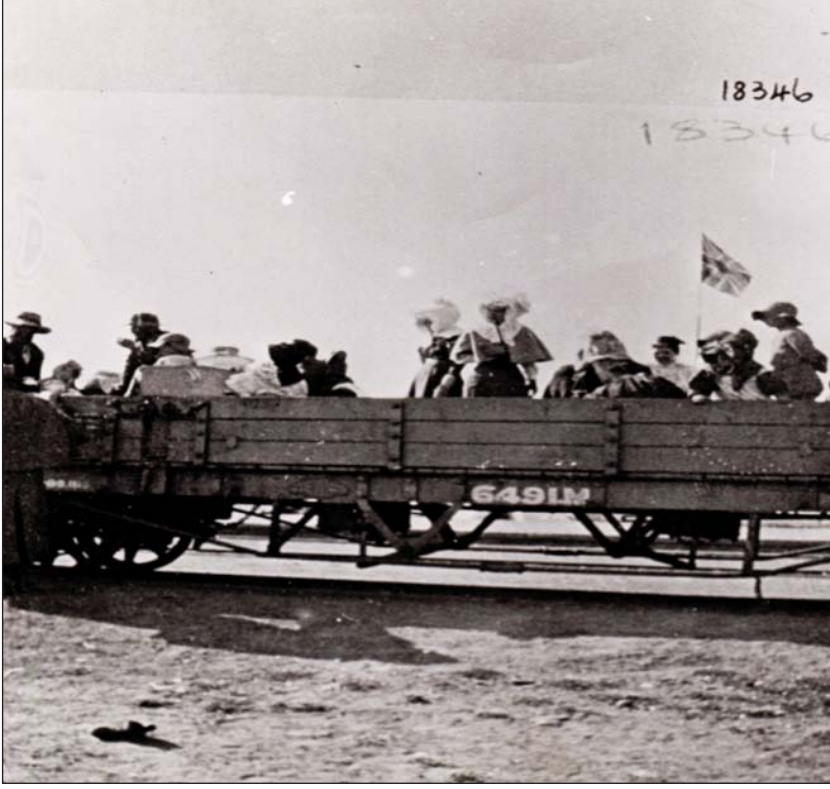


Photo 6 Unidentified Concentration Camp²⁸⁷

²⁸⁷ Courtesy of Voortreeker Museum, 3.11. 10.2.5 K. It displays a sample of mode of transportation.

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Photo 7 Unidentified Concentration Camp²⁸⁸



Photo 8 Irene Concentration Camp and Cemetery Displa²⁸⁹

Despite the limited insight photos provide, the sheer amount of the tents testifies to the vast number of inmates that had been held in these concentration camps.

²⁸⁸ Courtesy of Voortreeker Museum, 3.11.2.8 K

²⁸⁹ Photo taken by the author at Irene Concentration Camp and cemetery.

However, the fighting will of the Indigenous people could not be broken altogether despite the suffering of the civilians and dire situation their armed forces were facing. This was also the case in the later (1904-1908) executed German atrocities against the Hereros and the Namas in South West Africa. By the spring of 1902, “no more than around 17.000 commandos” were still ready to fight the British to ‘the bitter end’.²⁹⁰ However, the gruesome brutalities, perhaps genocidal acts towards the civilians, would eventually have forced the Boer forces and their leaders to reconsider their priorities.²⁹¹ Similar patterns were also present in the Herero and Nama decision making. While there were indigenous forces that would seek to continue fighting, others believed in the German propaganda campaign and opted for ending of armed conflict and ended up perishing in the German concentration camps instead. British authority on the other hand followed a slightly different trajectory as summarized below.

Whereas the British led a war with femicidal and infanticidal repercussions, victory was unwinnable and very much of a Pyric nature at best for the ultimate victor. Peace came with the Treaty of Vereeniging Treaty.²⁹² Treaty was signed on 31 May 1902.²⁹³ Self-governing status for the Boer Republics, recognition of the Dutch language at courts and in schools and a limited material compensation were secured for the Boer side. The new peace seems to have lasted until the dissolution of the British Empire after the WWII. Formers foes, the Boer men and their descendants fought for the British Empire in both World Wars. An alliance and finally a complete colonial ruling apparatus was, thus, completed.

The above-mentioned cruelties of the Second Anglo Boer War (the South African War), termination of food supplies as well as the destruction of the ability to produce them in addition to the forced civilian residence and eventual death (of the Boer women and children as well as the African population siding with them) in the concentration/internment camps run by the British authority present adequate comparative examples for the research areas of this study.

290 Giliomee et. al., 307.

291 Le Roux,19.

292 Ibid.

293 Ibid.

CONCLUSION

This study is part of an attempt to examine any continuity/discontinuity between the Wilhelmine era extermination policies and the Nazi era policies. It compares other imperialistic/colonialist enterprises against the German rule in South West Africa to this end. As stated at the beginning, this study also intended to investigate the following questions.

- When does the imperialistic/colonialist project resort to extermination policies?

- Which factors are dominant when it comes to adopting a policy of extermination?

When national prestige is threatened as in German state or masses need to be mobilized according to aspirations of the supreme leader as well as preserving the national image of the country as in the case of Italy (which would be discussed in a future article), states did not hesitate to resort brutal and at times genocidal acts. British Empire, too, and even before the German atrocities, took punitive measures against the innocent civilians. An answer to the first question, therefore, constitutes of the following: When national prestige was of concern and lack of it created international humiliation, colonial states did not hesitate to utilize atrocities and resort to genocidal acts.

European heritage of the 19th and early 20th century is inherently racist (and anti-Semitic). The racist attitudes were further amplified during armed conflicts in Africa. In German and Italian cases, development of the nation-building and the imperialistic/colonialist project seems to have intertwined at times. However, this does not mean that there is a direct link of causality between the Wilhelmine atrocities and the Nazi era Holocaust. It seems even fascist Italy had provided a more relevant example for the Nazi Germany to adopt when it comes to setting up concentration camps and annihilate the innocent civilians. Within this context, South African experience provide an important example to isolate the relative determinants in colonial extermination policies.

In terms of factors that are dominant when it comes to adopting a policy of extermination (the answer to the second question), the issue of race and religion emerges: It seems the shared race and to a limited degree religion with the British prevented the total annihilation of the Boer

civilians. Whereas the public opinion in Germany and Italy opted for brutal policies and condone genocidal acts against the indigenous peoples in their respective colonies, -thanks to the British public opinion, albeit after a hefty loss-, conditions at the South African concentration camps were improved. It might as well be asserted that British colonial/imperialistic approach was eventually transformed to a more lenient state when their own brethren (and fellow Christians) were concerned.

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