

# Rhodesian Sunset

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Factional Politics, War, and the Demise of an Imperial Order  
in British South Africa

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## Abstract

The pursuit of an unorthodox and revolutionary grand vision of empire by idealistic imperialists such as Cecil Rhodes, Alfred Milner, and Percy FitzPatrick led to the creation of a pro-conflict imperial coalition in South Africa, one that inadvertently caused the South African War. This thesis examines the causes behind the South African War (also known as the Second Anglo-Boer War), sheds light on those culpable for its occurrence, and analyzes its effects on South Africa's subsequent failure to fulfill the imperial vision for it held by contemporary British imperialists.

This thesis addresses the previous historiographical debates on the relative importance of the factions that formed a coalition to promote their interests in South Africa. Some of these interests focused on political and economic matters of concern to the British Empire, while others pertained to Johannesburg settlers, primarily of British extraction, who had their own reasons for joining the pro-imperial coalition. Moreover, this thesis emphasizes the importance of the pro-imperial coalition's unity in provoking the South African War while also explaining the coalition's post-war decline and directly correlating this to the decline of British influence in South Africa.

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## Introduction

In the ongoing drama of human history, few scenes are as enthralling and cinematic as the South African War of 1899–1902. The war itself is of course the climax, but the most intriguing and instructive aspects occur in the preceding and succeeding years. Colloquially referred to as the “Boer War,” or more accurately as the “Second Anglo-Boer War,” this conflict pitted the hegemonic British Empire against a comparatively small force of South Africa’s agrarian Dutch-descended settlers, the “Boers.” What should have been a brief and inexpensive struggle to unite South Africa under British rule nearly turned into a “David and Goliath” moment, mushrooming into a long and agonizing campaign, which marked both a highpoint of British imperialism and a sign of its eventual decay. Like a good narrative, the dramatic arc of the war and its aftermath contains suspense, uncertainty, larger-than-life characters, and an ending that may be hard to understand and not altogether happy or satisfying.

The war, which broke out in 1899, pitted a fiercely independent, conservative, and oligarchical republic of Transvaal Boers, known as the South African Republic, against a British Empire desperate to preserve its global supremacy through consolidation of its vast colonial holdings into “federations.” British imperial statesmen regarded South Africa as a key element of this plan, viewing the colony as more than a supply of natural resources but rather a territory where the British Empire could settle its own people. Like New Zealand, Australia, and Canada, Britain sought to establish and grow a loyal British white population in South Africa, then rely upon the colony as a structural pillar that could provide the Empire with natural resources, revenue, manpower, and diplomatic support.<sup>1</sup> Tensions between Britain and Transvaal ran high

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard Porter, *The Lion’s Share: A Short History of British Imperialism, 1850-2004* (London: Pearson, 2004), 123-132, 186-193. It is important to understand that, at the time, Britain became increasingly cognizant of the

after the failure of a capitalist-sponsored coup against the Boer government in 1895/96, known as the “Jameson Raid,” and continually escalated until 1899. Most historians, however, recognize that the South African War never reached a point of inevitability until 1899, with certain deliberate maneuvers at the end pushing the British and Boers to the brink of war.

Over the past 120 years, many have attempted to understand the conflict and to conclusively determine why diplomacy failed to prevent it. This legion of historians can be divided into three large and distinct successive groups. The first group attributed the war to a conspiracy of moneyed interests; the second almost wholly faulted the British government; and the third and most recent group has tried to strike a balance by placing pro-conflict imperial statesmen at the forefront while taking into consideration the actions of leading South African capitalists as well as Johannesburg-based British settlers and political activists.

The first group formed during the fires of the war itself, when J.A. Hobson, a noted journalist and economist, wrote one of the earliest historical accounts during and shortly after his time as a newspaper correspondent in South Africa during 1899. Propagating a fairly melodramatic view, Hobson and his immediate successors put the blame squarely on an international “conspiracy” of self-interested capitalists and bankers based in London, Johannesburg, and Germany.<sup>2</sup> According to Hobson, these mining magnates and international financiers used their personal connections with public officials and ownership of media outlets (the so-called kept press) in order to whip the British population into a jingoistic frenzy and

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narrowing economic and military edge it possessed over its rivals. As other empires expanded, particularly those of Germany, France, and Russia, many in Britain feared the destruction of Great Britain at the hands of one or more opponents through a trade war or military invasion. Thus, the protection and development of Britain’s colonial possessions as a means by which the Empire could acquire enough natural resources, manpower, and internal trade to avert defeat in an economic or military struggle became a national priority.

<sup>2</sup> J.A. Hobson, *The War in South Africa: Its Causes and Effects* (London: J. Nisbet, 1900), 161-242.

precipitate the war. Hobson would later use the example of the South African War to ground his broader theories on imperialism, particularly his belief that imperial expansion generally resulted from the efforts of a small group of powerful and self-interested individuals who enriched and empowered themselves to the detriment of the nation's best interests.<sup>3</sup>

To Hobson's credit, much of the evidence at the time seemed to support his theory. For example, he easily proved that a significant number of South African and British news sources were indeed owned by financiers directly involved in the South African gold and diamond mining industries, namely by Cecil Rhodes, Alfred Beit, J.B. Robinson, and Abe Bailey. Unsurprisingly, almost all were unequivocally pro-conflict. Even more damning was the implication of diamond magnate Cecil Rhodes as the leader of the Jameson Raid conspiracy to overthrow the Transvaal government via armed revolt only a few years before the South African War. Hobson's conclusions eventually informed his later works on the relation between finance and imperialism, including his signature 1902 work *Imperialism*, and even bore great influence on later prominent anti-imperialists such as Vladimir Lenin.<sup>4</sup> While several notable contemporaries, including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle<sup>5</sup> (author of *Sherlock Holmes*), defended the actions of the British government and attempted to dispel Hobson's theories, Hobson retained numerous supporters who echoed his beliefs and published pamphlets promulgating them.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Hobson, *The War in South Africa*, 197. Regarding the war, Hobson stated that Britain was "fighting in order to place small international oligarchy of mine-owners and speculators in power at Pretoria. Englishmen will surely do well to recognise that the economic and political destinies of South Africa are, and seem likely to remain, in the hands of men most of whom are foreigners by origin, whose trade is finance, and whose trade interests are not chiefly British."

<sup>4</sup> See V.I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (New York: International Publishers, 1939), 25, 30, 33, 83, 94, 101-110, 114-115. Lenin explicitly refers to Hobson numerous times throughout his work.

<sup>5</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, *The War in South Africa: its Cause and Conduct* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1902), 61-66.

<sup>6</sup> G.H. Perris, *Blood and Gold in South Africa: an Answer to Dr. Conan Doyle* (London: International Arbitration Association, 1902), 32-56.



Ultimately, history has not been kind to Hobson's theories. The death of South African High Commissioner Alfred Milner in 1925 and the subsequent publication of his personal and professional papers by his widow in 1931 revealed unsettling details regarding the imperial government's culpability in the war's origins. Milner's papers, as well as those of Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain, Lord Selborne, and many others all pointed to a new conclusion: that agents of the imperial government in Westminster and in South Africa feverishly labored to bring about conflict with Transvaal. Ronald Robinson, John Gallagher, J.S. Marais, Andrew Porter, and nearly every other historian up until 1990 subscribed to this new notion that government officials determined to force the Boers into a "fight or surrender" situation, coerced the South African mining magnates into assisting such efforts, and effectively manipulated the Uitlanders (English settlers living in and around Johannesburg), or even exaggerated or fabricated the existence of a politically active Uitlander faction altogether.<sup>7</sup>

Earlier historians within this second category attributed the motivations of these imperial statesmen to a medley of strategic concerns, including a desire to preserve South African trade with Britain, the strategic importance of possessing Transvaal's goldmines in order to guarantee Britain's gold reserves, the geographical importance of South Africa as a waypoint between Britain and India, and as a deliberate maneuver to counter Germany's expansion into Africa by depriving it of a potential ally, Transvaal. These theories existed in the immediate aftermath of the war but were largely overshadowed at the time by Hobson's capitalist conspiracy theory.<sup>8</sup>

However, after Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher's 1961 publication of *Africa and the*

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<sup>7</sup> J.S. Marais, *The Fall of Kruger's Republic*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 323-332; Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, with Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians; the Climax of Imperialism in the Dark Continent* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1961), 410-461; Andrew Porter, *The Origins of the South African War: Joseph Chamberlain and the Diplomacy of Imperialism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), 258-276.

<sup>8</sup> Conan Doyle, *The War in South Africa: its Cause and Conduct*, 61-66.

*Victorians*, emphasis shifted from these purely strategic concerns to the British government's ambition to protect its existing South African colonial holdings by entrenching Britain's economic, political, and military regional supremacy, referred to as "paramountcy."<sup>9</sup>

The third group of historians, the most recent and nuanced, is perhaps best epitomized by Iain Smith's *The Origins of the South African War* (1996) and Martin Meredith's *Diamonds, Gold, and War: The British, the Boers, and the Making of South Africa* (2007). Historians within this grouping take a far more comprehensive and balanced approach to the causes of the war and assessment of culpability. Reconciling their predecessors, these historians determined that the British government was indeed the primary instigator, but that the capitalists acted as more than just unwilling bedfellows.<sup>10</sup> In addition to placing the importance and effectiveness of the capitalists neatly between Hobson's over-exaggeration and Robinson's undervaluation, Smith, Meredith, and their contemporaries recognize the existence of the Uitlanders as a cohesive faction, but relegate them to the role of instruments or, at best, junior partners.<sup>11</sup>

In contrast to these competing theories, this thesis argues that the roots of the conflict lay in the concerted efforts of a coalition of three distinct yet *equal* factions with different interests working towards a common goal.<sup>12</sup> British statesmen such as Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain and High Commissioner Alfred Milner, financiers and mining magnates led by

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<sup>9</sup> A term used frequently throughout Robinson and Gallagher's *Africa and the Victorians* to denote the perceived ultimate British objective in South Africa, security of Britain's South African colonial possessions through the assertion of unquestionable regional hegemony and supremacy.

<sup>10</sup> Robinson and Gallagher, with Denny, *Africa and the Victorians*, 410-461.

<sup>11</sup> Iain R. Smith, *The Origins of the South African War, 1899-1902* (London: New York: Longman, 1996), 289-423; Martin Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold, and War: The British, the Boers, and the Making of South Africa* (New York: Perseus Books Group, 2008), 1-10.

<sup>12</sup> Jack L. Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1991), 1-65, 153-211. Snyder expounds this concept of a "log rolling" coalition of dissimilar factions with different interests cooperating with one another to accomplish a shared objective or overcome a common threat. As Snyder observes, the factions can become so interdependent on one another that they will use forces of coercion and persuasion in order to increase the involvement of one another and to prevent any particular faction from withdrawing from the coalition or refusing to cooperate further.

Cecil Rhodes and Alfred Beit, and British immigrants to Johannesburg from 1885 to 1899 known as “Uitlanders” all played extremely important roles in undermining Boer independence and, in doing so, triggering a devastating and otherwise avoidable conflict. Furthermore, previous studies largely neglect the significant factional dynamism, often preferring to view them as invariable and unwavering forces. Even more concerning, most historical analyses terminate at the start of the conflict itself: few examine in detail the evolving relationships between the factions after the war, and even fewer adequately attribute the eventual demise of British influence in South Africa to the breakdown of these inter-factional relationships.

By the summer of 1899, key members of the British imperial government, South African capitalists, and Johannesburg Uitlanders had all reached internal agreement that ending Transvaal’s quasi-independence was largely desirable and that the best way to do so was to engineer an ultimatum—one that would leave the Boers with the option of either surrendering or of confronting the British juggernaut in combat. This thesis examines how pro-imperial subgroups within each faction overcame significant internal anti-conflict opposition between 1890 and 1899, thus enabling concerted and collaborative pro-conflict efforts that made the ultimatum possible. The necessity of such cooperation is analyzed through the lens of the failure of the notorious 1895 “Jameson Raid,” an armed attempt by Rhodes and his Uitlander allies to overthrow the Transvaal government, as it illustrates the perils of conducting intrigue and conspiracy without the full involvement and “meeting of the minds” of involved parties. Moreover, the Jameson Raid served as a major turning point, as the true coalition-building began in its aftermath. In addition to highlighting the difficulties of constructing and maintaining a large, diverse, and dynamic coalition, this thesis reassesses the comparative importance of the

Uitlander faction and the pro-conflict coalition's eventual dissolution and subsequent failure to transform South Africa into a loyal and culturally British dominion within the Empire.

In order to provide a comprehensive investigation of how the three factions engineered an international crisis by producing internal agreement and then external cooperation with one another, this thesis follows a chronological format. Like a Victorian play, the dramatic and intricate narrative framing of this thesis can be divided into distinct acts that build on one another. The first chapter provides contextual information starting in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, but its analysis begins in earnest with the year 1890, the year when diamond magnate and prominent imperialist Cecil J. Rhodes became Premier of Cape Colony. This chapter explains the "new imperialist" vision that drove Rhodes's actions and then briefly details his rise to power. More importantly, the first chapter examines Rhodes's initial attempts between 1890 and 1895 at using his wealth and power to subvert the South African Republic's independence. The spotlight then shifts to Rhodes's attempts to overthrow Transvaal's Boer government by creating and consolidating small but determined "capitalist" and Uitlander factions. While Rhodes's pre-Jameson Raid coalition and plots failed to achieve regime change prior to and during the Jameson Raid, his efforts laid the foundations for the three significantly more organized and inclusive factions that formed in the Raid's aftermath. The chapter terminates with the preparations, failure, and immediate aftermath of the Jameson Raid.

The second chapter, spanning from immediately after Jameson's surrender in January 1896 to the declaration of war in October 1899, examines how three distinct but mutually reliant factions formed, overcame internal disagreement and doubts, and collaborated to precipitate a

crisis they believed would lead to a Boer climbdown but which unintentionally led to war.<sup>13</sup> Crucially, this chapter contends that (1) the Uitlander faction existed as both a highly important and autonomous faction, and (2) the leaders of the pro-imperial coalition worked diligently to establish agreement and cooperation within and between the factions, constantly battling the internal and external forces that threatened to dissolve the connections between the factions and even the factions themselves. These arguments sharply contrast commonly held notions that either the British imperial officials or capitalist leaders alone pulled the strings, that the Uitlander movement was largely fictitious or lacked its own autonomous leadership and objectives, and that the war was simply inevitable due to deeply entrenched British fears concerning British paramountcy in South Africa. Moreover, many historians falsely assume that factions in general are monolithic entities moving in lockstep and with little internal strife or disagreement. Nothing could be further from the truth, particularly in the case of the buildup to the South African War. Rather, the factions themselves underwent a drastic shift in outlook between 1895 and 1899 regarding a potential conflict, eventually achieving alignment within and between all three groups in pushing for the war by August 1899.

Even within these different factions a vast array of conflicting interests and views fought for dominance. Especially prior to the Jameson Raid, many Uitlanders opposed British rule and favored a reformed but independent Transvaal. The capitalist faction was practically split in half by “cosmopolitan” mine owners seeking to hijack influence in the republic for themselves, bring about profit-enhancing reforms through compromise and bankrolling progressive Boer politicians, and altogether avoid conflict because of fears pertaining to Boer reprisals and

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<sup>13</sup> Gordon Le Sueur, *Cecil Rhodes, the Man and His Work* (New York: McBride, Nast & company, 1914), 236. For example, Rhodes wrote to Beit saying “Remember Kruger will climb down. He will never fight.” Later, he cabled Beit “Nothing will make Kruger fire a shot.”

potential wartime damage to mines. Even the British government reached agreement only gradually, with many important Cabinet members and military figures actively attempting to avoid war up until it finally appeared inevitable. Thus, the second chapter analyzes how the pro-imperial faction leaders coopted their detractors and how the factions themselves acted in an increasingly belligerent manner toward the Boers.

The third and final chapter begins with the initial military operations following the declaration of war in October 1899. It then briefly covers the circumstances of the conflict itself, which ended in May 1902. Afterwards, the chapter discusses South Africa's remarkable post-war economic recovery, as well as its movement toward political federation and union. It concludes with an explanation and analysis of the post-war Boer electoral victories, which minimized English political influence in South African politics and eventually drove South Africa from the British sphere of influence and out of the Empire entirely. However, this final chapter focuses primarily on the pro-imperial coalition's rapid dissolution in the War's wake and on the impact its demise had on the failure to transform South Africa into a key British imperial dominion. As this chapter explains, the British Empire and the pro-imperial coalition achieved a military victory over the Boers but failed in their overarching objective to permanently raise South Africa's English settlers to political power in the region, an objective deemed crucial to increasing the stability and longevity of the British Empire.

This thesis grounds its arguments in primary and secondary sources from a wide variety of time periods, authors, and forms. Specifically, these arguments are informed by official and unofficial published and unpublished correspondence between key members of the British and South African colonial governments during the 1890s and early 1900s. This includes the personal papers, correspondence, and publications of leading figures such as Cecil Rhodes and

High Commissioner Alfred Milner; autobiographies and biographies (both contemporary and modern) of leading individuals from all factions; publications on relevant concepts such as imperialism; newspapers and periodicals from Britain and South Africa in the 1890s; secondary analyses by British and South African historians; and scholarly works on indirectly relevant topics such as South African gold mining. This compendium of primary and secondary sources conveys a comprehensive account of the events preceding and following the South African War and provides a degree of access into the minds of the actors involved in its cause and outcomes.

Due to the South African War's importance to the understanding of South African and British imperial history, the conflict has been covered in great detail over the past century. However, this thesis expands and modifies the historical dialogue with its assertions that (1) the Uitlanders, an oft-neglected and seemingly unimportant group, actually played an unexpectedly critical role in driving the pro-imperial coalition, and (2) the pro-imperial coalition, like many large and complicated organizations, was far from monolithic. Indeed, the pro-imperial coalition experienced significant internal dynamism and disagreement, was highly vulnerable and responsive to outside forces, and maintained unity largely through its appeal to commonly shared hopes and fears. Furthermore, the coalition's agreement on vision and strong leadership enabled it to accomplish its short-term objectives prior to the war, while the post-war absence of such fundamentals doomed the coalition afterwards. Fortunately for the coalition's originators, Boer governance proved a potent unifying factor prior to the war. However, the lack of such a unifying "glue" in the war's aftermath weakened the bonds between the factions and caused them to hastily withdraw from one another and come to terms with the Boers. As the coalition crumbled, so did the vainly glorious British imperial vision for South Africa held so dearly and fought for so hard by men such as the "Colossus" himself, Cecil J. Rhodes.

# Act I

## *The Hon. Cecil J. Rhodes*

The curtain lifts on mid-17<sup>th</sup> century South Africa, a rustic land just beginning to feel the effects of European settlement. Little did the early colonists know that their homes and farms far from Europe would come to witness a titanic struggle between new and old, industrial and rural, globalism and nationalism, British and Boer. While the conflict merely simmered for two and a half centuries, imperial idealists, epitomized by ambitious diamond magnate Cecil John Rhodes, threw fuel on the flames in order to catalyze their dream for a new type of British Empire, an empire which they hoped would achieve immortality.

In this chapter, many of the leading men on both sides whose actions set South Africa on the road to war are introduced, including Cecil Rhodes, Alfred Beit, Percy FitzPatrick, Joseph Chamberlain, and Paul Kruger. Notably, this first chapter highlights the importance of Rhodes and his vision of empire in defining the objective of the pro-conflict imperial coalition, which serves as the focal point of Act II. Moreover, this chapter examines how Rhodes's actions lit a slow-burning fuse on a series of diplomatic tensions, intricate political maneuvers, acts of espionage, and deliberate manipulations of public opinion and officials, which would explode into the South African War of 1899–1902.



i. **Prelude: The British and Boers in South Africa**

The seeds of conflict between Boer and Englishman were first sown over two and a half centuries prior to the South African War. In 1647, two employees of the Dutch East India Company were shipwrecked in South Africa, surviving for several months before their rescue.<sup>14</sup> This seemingly inconsequential action prompted Dutch interest in South Africa after the shipwrecked employees returned to the Netherlands and gave encouraging reports on the region and its potential. For the next century and a half, Dutch settlement increased along the South African coast as men and women emigrated from the Netherlands. Attracted by the inexpensive and plentiful land, warm climate, and fertile soil, many of these immigrants started lives as simple farmers.<sup>15</sup> However, from 1795 to 1803, Great Britain occupied the Dutch settlements in order to protect its colonial interests on the Indian subcontinent during the Napoleonic Wars. Recognizing South Africa's important geographical location along the sea route to India and China, the British formally acquired the territory after the Napoleonic Wars.

Unsurprisingly, disagreements soon arose between the conservative agrarian Dutch settlers known as "Boers"<sup>16</sup> and the largely cosmopolitan and commercially oriented British administrators and merchants. Instead of revolting or seeking civil reforms, many of the particularly anti-British Boers chose to migrate further inland in a mass migration known simply

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<sup>14</sup> John Noble, *Illustrated Official Handbook of the Cape and South Africa; a Résumé of the History, Conditions, Populations, Productions and Resources of the Several Colonies, States, and Territories*, (London: William Clowes and Sons, Limited, 1893), 141; *The Colonial Office List*, 35<sup>th</sup> Edition (1896) (London: Harrison, 1896), 78.

<sup>15</sup> *The Colonial Office List*, 35<sup>th</sup> Edition (1896), 79. "The climate of the Cape is very favourable to Europeans. The air is dry and bracing, the heat never oppressive, and the winter weather mild and delightful..."

<sup>16</sup> J.H. Moore, *The Story of South Africa: an Account of the Historical Transformation of the Dark Continent by the European Powers and the Culminating Contest between Great Britain and the South African Republic in the Transvaal War* (Philadelphia: J.H. Moore and Co., 1899), 562. "Boer" literally translates to "farmer" in Dutch.

as “the Great Trek.”<sup>17</sup> These “voortrekkers”<sup>18</sup> then founded three Boer republics far away from British rule and interference: the Natalia Republic (Natal) to the southeast, the Orange Free State to the east, and the South African Republic (also known as Transvaal) to the northeast. While increased British interest and immigration along the coast soon led to the contentious annexation of Natal in 1843, the other two republics continued to defy the British Empire.<sup>19</sup> Likewise, they shunned international trade, industrial development, and administrative reform.

Despite the best efforts of the Boers to escape the British, the discovery of the largest diamond deposits known to man near the border between Cape Colony and the two Boer republics in 1867 made complete Boer isolation from the British practically impossible. British prospectors and native African laborers soon flooded the small area and founded the city of Kimberly. Eager to secure the minerals for the Empire, Britain assented to a request from English diamond prospectors to annex the territory known as Griqualand West in 1871, and then integrated it with Cape Colony in 1880. Relying entirely on imperial strength and deliberately overlooking the Orange Free State’s preexisting territorial claims, the British annexation further antagonized the Boers. Moreover, the loss of Griqualand’s diamonds stripped the Orange Free State of the only natural resource which could have made it a regional economic powerhouse at the time, more or less permanently trapping it in the role of a minor political player fated to dwell in the shadows of Transvaal and Cape Colony.

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<sup>17</sup> Frank R. Cana, *Boers and British; Facts from the Transvaal* (London: Office of the St. James’s Gazette, 1899), 11. Boer motivations included opposition to Britain’s abolition of the slave trade in 1834 and opposition to “the handing back to the [native Africans] of land which had been annexed by Cape Colony.”

<sup>18</sup> Moore, *The Story of South Africa*, 562. “Trekker” translates to “journeyer.” “Voortrekker” loosely translates to “pioneers” or “pathfinders,” literally “fore-trekkers.”

<sup>19</sup> Frank Richardson Cana, “Natal,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11<sup>th</sup> ed. (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1911), 260. Natal’s formal annexation followed a small skirmish between its Boer inhabitants and a British expeditionary force. Most of Natal’s Boers went north to the remaining two Boers republics, with only 500 Boer families left in Natal by the end of 1843.

Now in possession of most of South Africa and looking to solidify its regional hegemony, Britain decided upon a further annexation in 1877 of Transvaal. Using the cover of protecting a “neighboring friendly state” from economic collapse and from invasion by nearby African tribes, a British garrison entered the capitol of Pretoria facing no military opposition. Unlike in Natal, the only official pushback came in the form of a public reading of a “counter-proclamation” by Transvaal’s president, Thomas Burgers, declaring that, in order to avoid violence, the Transvaal government had agreed under protest to acquiesce to British rule. Burgers told the Volksraad<sup>20</sup> that “We bow only to the superior power. We submit because we cannot successfully draw the sword against this superior power, because by doing so we could only plunge the country into deeper miseries and disasters.”<sup>21</sup> The British likely expected a similar response when they attempted to indirectly seize Transvaal again 20 years later. They would be seriously disappointed the second time around.

Unlike in Griqualand, Transvaal’s annexation did not follow or cause an influx of British immigrants. Nor did annexation lead to a sudden affection for the British among the Boers. Consequently, Transvaal’s population remained almost entirely Boer and still resentful of British rule. Indeed, much hostility existed on both sides between the British and their new Boer subjects in Transvaal, as serious cultural differences, mutual disrespect, and Boer opposition to taxation created significant antagonism. Generally, the British administrators and citizens in Transvaal tended to view technology, social progress, industrial and commercial development, and legal equality between the races with high regard. This contrasted greatly with common Boer attitudes on these elements of colonial policy. Boer opposition to technology and racial equality

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<sup>20</sup> Moore, *The Story of South Africa*, 562. “Volksraad” loosely translates to “Lower House of Congress” or “People’s Council.” The Volksraad served as the South African Republic’s legislative branch.

<sup>21</sup> J.W. Matthews, *Incwadi Yami, or, Twenty Years’ Personal Experience in South Africa* (New York: Rogers & Sherwood, 1887), 527.

in particular ran high, with the latter taking nearly another century and a half to ebb. Indeed, Paul Kruger, four-term president of the South African Republic, specifically faults the British abolition of slavery as the primary cause for his own family's participation in the Great Trek.<sup>22</sup> In addition to the British abolition of slavery's effect on motivating the original Great Trek from the Cape, the Transvaal Boers further demonstrated their contempt for non-whites in their 1858 constitution, which declared in its ninth of 232 sections that "The people desire to permit no equality between colored people and the white inhabitants, either in Church or State."<sup>23</sup> Regarding obligations to the state, the Boers had resisted paying taxes even while they themselves ruled Transvaal. Ironically, Burgers proved immensely unpopular in part due to his attempts to repair Transvaal's financial state by actually enforcing tax codes. The British encountered the same problem, though with the added difficulty of overcoming a Boer "taxation without representation" argument.

For their part, the British also viewed the Boers in an extremely negative light. One of the first descriptions of Kruger sent by a British official labelled Kruger as "an elderly man, decidedly ugly, with a countenance denoting extreme obstinacy, and also great cruelty."<sup>24</sup> On the matter of the Boers themselves, General Sir Garnet Wolseley, the new British proconsul for Transvaal, Natal, and Zululand, privately wrote in his diary on October 18, 1879, that:

A Boer's idea of life is, that he should pay no taxes of any sort or kind, that he should be amenable to no sort of law he disliked, that there should be no police to keep order, that he should be allowed to kill or punish the Natives as he thought fit, that no progress towards civilization should be attempted, that all foreigners should be kept out of the country & that he should be surrounded by a waste of land many miles of extent each

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<sup>22</sup> Paul Kruger, *The Memoirs of Paul Kruger, Four Times President of the South African Republic* (London: T.F. Unwin, 1902), 4. "But I know that my parents said they emigrated because the English first sold the slaves and, after they had got the money, set these slaves free again..."

<sup>23</sup> G.W. Eybers, *Select Constitutional Documents Illustrating South African History, 1795-1910* (London: George Routledge & Sons; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1918), 364.

<sup>24</sup> C.W. De Kiewiet, *The Imperial Factor in South Africa, a Study in Politics and Economics* (Cambridge, U.K.: The University Press, 1937), 120. Shepstone to Bulwer, Feb. 7, 1877.

way which he called his farm, in fact that he should have no neighbors as the smoke of another man's fire was an abomination to him. These Transvaal Boers are the only white race I know of that has steadily been going backwards towards barbarism. They seem to be influenced by some savage instinct which causes them to fly from civilization...I can really see no good in these Boers... Altogether I regard them as the lowest in the scale of white men & to be also the very most uninteresting people I have ever known or studied.<sup>25</sup>

Arrogantly, Wolseley publicly dismissed Boer attempts to regain independence via referendum by declaring to an audience in Standerton that "So long as the sun shines, the Transvaal will be British Territory; and the Vaal shall flow back to its sources before the Transvaal is again independent."<sup>26</sup> The British views of the Boers as a backwards people did not lessen with time, and indeed seemed to receive confirmation from numerous Boer policies and anecdotes concerning religion,<sup>27</sup> railroads,<sup>28</sup> and agriculture.<sup>29</sup> Even up until the late 1890s, Volksraad members were alleged to have discussed such topics as rejecting infrastructure projects because they did not have "Dutch names," opposing the creation of mailboxes because they were "effeminate," and considering locust swarms as divine punishments for sin.<sup>30</sup>

Chafing for three years and constantly attempting to regain independence by diplomacy and referendums, the Boers eventually found sound leadership under Paul Kruger, Piet Joubert, Nicolaas Smit, and others, and rebelled against their British overlords in 1880. Most of the Transvaal Boers had emigrated from the Cape at extremely young ages in order to live and farm

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<sup>25</sup> Adrian Preston, *The South African Journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley, 1879-1880* (Cape Town: A. A. Balkema, 1973), 139.

<sup>26</sup> Kruger, *The Memoirs of Paul Kruger*, 159.

<sup>27</sup> E.g. Kruger toasted with milk because he did not drink alcohol, almost always made his wife wear a bonnet, had only read the Bible, and frequently quoted scripture in public and during legislative debates. Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold, and War*, 168.

<sup>28</sup> E.g. In both Transvaal and the Cape, Boers opposed the running of trains on Sundays on Sabbatarian grounds. Robert I. Rotberg and Miles F. Shore, *The Founder: Cecil Rhodes and the Pursuit of Power* (New York: Oxford University Press New York), 218.

<sup>29</sup> Rotberg and Shore, *The Founder*, 220. Even in the Cape, Boer farmers opposed many efforts at modernizing agriculture, including insurmountable opposition in 1894 to a legislative bill calling for compulsory dipping of sheep to prevent scabs.

<sup>30</sup> Conan Doyle, *The War in South Africa: its Cause and Conduct*, 27-28.

free from foreign interference. Now, they fought to free themselves once more from the British yoke. Indeed, Kruger and Joubert would continue fighting to preserve Boer independence for the rest of their lives, both serving in key political positions in Transvaal right up until the end of the South African War. Styling the rebels as freedom fighters, Kruger wrote to the president and Volksraad of the Orange Free State, stating that “Whether we conquer or die, freedom will come to Africa as surely as the sun rises through tomorrow’s clouds—as freedom reigns in the United States. Then shall it be from the Zambesi to Simon’s Bay, Africa for the Afrikanders.”<sup>31</sup>

Despite all the impassioned rhetoric concerning life, death, and freedom, the conflict really only consisted of a handful of small skirmishes. However, on February 27, 1881, the Boers experienced great success at the Battle of Majuba Hill. Here, they brought the small guerilla war to a climax by decisively defeating the British garrison present. Eager to end the hostilities and relieve the imperial government of the financial and logistical burdens of supporting the impoverished and largely barren state, William Gladstone’s Liberal government back in Westminster opted to make peace.<sup>32</sup> Britain thus granted Transvaal quasi-independence as a “suzerain” state in the Pretoria Convention of 1881, which was superseded by the similar London Convention of 1884.

The London Convention modified the Pretoria Convention by granting Transvaal complete control over its internal affairs (including legislation affecting native affairs, something previously subject to imperial veto), reducing the powers of the British Resident in Pretoria to that of a consul-general, and reducing Transvaal’s prewar debt. In return, Transvaal agreed to refrain from imposing tariffs on any particular foreign state, grant full civil rights to Europeans,

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<sup>31</sup> Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold, and War*, 101.

<sup>32</sup> M. Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners: The Imperial Colossus and the Colonial Parish Pump* (Portland, Oregon: Frank Cass), 10. Gladstone and his liberal party were elected in 1880 amid a wave of anti-imperial feeling.

and not conclude treaties with any foreign power except the Orange Free State unless Britain granted its consent. Unfortunately, the vague terms of the conventions and the fact the London Convention omitted the Pretoria Convention's preamble explicitly detailing suzerainty would go on to create several legal quarrels that greatly increased tensions between Britain and Transvaal. One dispute in particular, over the civil rights clause (which guaranteed equal rights for all white settlers, including British subjects), would later prove critical to the imperial pro-conflict coalition's strategy for boxing the Empire into provoking a confrontation.

ii. **Diamonds are Forever: The Kimberly Origin Story**

Meanwhile, Cape Colony experienced major changes. First, British immigration and investment in the Kimberly diamond mines skyrocketed.<sup>33</sup> Before stabilizing as Veblen goods, diamonds experienced inconvenient surges and depressions in valuation in response to sudden changes in supply and demand.<sup>34</sup> Gradually, investors realized that limitations on output would be required to reduce costs and increase profits. Consolidation of the mines into one massive cartel that could limit output would also lower production costs and enable producers to keep prices, demand, and desirability artificially high. Many of Kimberly's leading mining magnates battled to lead the seemingly inevitable merger, but Cecil Rhodes and Alfred Beit ultimately bested their rivals.

Although Rhodes and Beit met and quickly became lifelong friends early in Kimberly's history, their backgrounds bore little resemblance. Rhodes grew up in a middle-class family in Hertfordshire, England (north of London). Hoping that the warmer and drier climate would

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<sup>33</sup> *The Colonial Office List*, 35<sup>th</sup> Edition (1896), 81. By 1890, the diamond mining industry represented over 10 million pounds out of the Cape's total industrial value of 13 million pounds.

<sup>34</sup> "Veblen Good," *Financial Times*. <http://lexicon.ft.com/Term?term=Veblen-good> "A Veblen good is a luxury item whose price does not follow the usual laws of supply and demand. Usually, the higher the price of a particular good the less people will want it. For luxury goods, such as very expensive wines, watches or cars, however, the item becomes more desirable as it grows more expensive and less desirable should it drop in price."

alleviate his sickly disposition, Rhodes's parents sent him to join his older brother, Frank Rhodes, in South Africa. Arriving at his brother's small cotton farm at the age of 17, Cecil Rhodes soon decided to leave the farm and try his luck in the recently discovered diamond fields. In Kimberly, Rhodes again worked with his brother, this time on a small plot of land digging for diamonds. Cecil eventually acquired capital for purchasing additional plots by saving his money and by successfully running numerous enterprises,<sup>35</sup> soon amassing a small fortune. While managing his growing business interests, Rhodes frequently returned to England to attend Oxford University, where he networked, intellectually cultivated his grandiose ideas on the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon race and on the necessity of the British Empire in furthering humanity,<sup>36</sup> and eventually earned a degree. For Rhodes, South Africa represented not only the opportunity to acquire great wealth, but also to build a legacy. Fashioning himself like the great men of the past, Rhodes was determined never to be relegated to the dustbin of history. In his own words, "I have not the slightest idea of quitting South Africa for any other country. Here I can do something; but were I to go to England as a politician, I should be lost in obscurity."<sup>37</sup>

Born in Hamburg, Germany, Alfred Beit was raised in an affluent family of Jewish-German citizens. At a young age, his father apprenticed him to Jules Porges & Co., a diamond firm based in Amsterdam. Beit soon mastered the inspection and appraisal of diamonds, which motivated Porges to send him to Kimberly as the firm's South African agent. Here, Beit

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<sup>35</sup> Rotberg and Shore, *The Founder*, 68, 71. Two notable early examples include Rhodes's profitable but short-lived ice cream enterprise and his fulfillment of a water pumping contract for the mines in Kimberley.

<sup>36</sup> W.T. Stead, *The Last Will and Testament of Cecil John Rhodes: With Elucidatory Notes to Which are Added Some Chapters Describing the Political and Religious Ideas of the Testator* (London: "Review of Reviews" Office, 1902), 59-62. In his first will, Rhodes allocated funds for the creation of a secret society "with members in every part of the British Empire working with one object and one idea..." which would work to "advocate the closer union of England and her colonies, to crush all disloyalty and every movement for the severance of our Empire." Though no evidence exists that Rhodes created such a society, the Rhodes Scholarships he endowed after his death targeted the very same sort of individuals that Rhodes had originally designated as perfect candidates for his society.

<sup>37</sup> Vindex, *Cecil Rhodes; His Political Life and Speeches, 1881-1900* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1900), 209.



performed marvelously in his duties, often purchasing extremely valuable rough diamonds for his firm at bargain prices. Additionally, he acquired a small fortune through property speculation and as a landlord. Like Rhodes, Beit soon realized that rising costs and falling prices would prevent the diamond industry from growing unless corporate consolidation occurred. The scene was set for a historically momentous meeting between the two young men.

As the story goes, Cecil Rhodes, after a long day of work, happened to pass by a tent that still had a light on inside. Curious, Rhodes peeked in and saw the young Alfred Beit working diligently. Rhodes asked Beit if he ever rested, and Beit replied, “Not often.” Rhodes continued to press Beit, asking “Well, what’s your game?” Beit responded that he intended to soon control Kimberley’s diamond output. Intrigued, Rhodes responded with “That’s funny. I have made up my own mind to do the same. We had better join hands.”<sup>38</sup> Thus, entrepreneurial visionary and brilliant financier united and began a friendship and partnership which would last to their deaths, shaping both men’s lives and the history of South Africa and the British Empire along the way. By 1888, Rhodes’s business shrewdness and negotiation skills, combined with Beit’s financial acumen and connections to major foreign banking houses, resulted in the amalgamation of Kimberley’s diamond mines into the largest diamond consortium in human history: De Beers Consolidated Mines.<sup>39</sup> In addition to providing the initial fortunes of many of the South African mining magnates and financiers, this industrial behemoth would serve as the money pot from which Rhodes would draw to finance his grand imperial schemes.

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<sup>38</sup> G.S. Fort, *Alfred Beit, a Study of the Man and his Work* (London: Nicholson & Watson, 1932), 54.

<sup>39</sup> Rotberg and Shore, *The Founder*, 56. The name *De Beers* came from the last name of the two brothers who originally owned the Kimberley farm which the De Beers Mine lay under.

### iii. The House the Randlords Built

With the first conflict between Britain and Transvaal resolved by the Pretoria and London Conventions and with South Africa's diamond deposits securely within the British Empire and undergoing amalgamation, few may have expected future hostilities between the British and Boers. Simply put, the sparsely populated and relatively barren lands of Transvaal and the Orange Free State made them extremely unattractive targets for imperial expansion. The discovery of gold radically altered this situation. Throughout the 1880s, rumors circulated that gold existed in large quantities in Transvaal. While some profitable veins existed in areas like Pilgrim's Rest and Barberton, the quick exhaustion of these goldfields ruined many investors and dampened South African gold rush sentiments and expectations. Only in 1885 did prospectors begin to explore a promising region southwest of Pretoria: the Witwatersrand, also known as "the Rand." In 1886, prospectors discovered gold, and a great deal of it. Unlike other historically prominent goldfields, the Rand did not have particularly rich ores. Rather, it whetted the appetites of miners because of how extensively its ores ran. Essentially, while the gold bearing ore did not contain a high percentage of gold, there was so much ore that the fields proved very lucrative and nearly inexhaustive. Almost immediately, prospectors rushed to the region and founded a tent city that came to be known as Johannesburg. Eventually, miners realized that the Rand's gold reserves would not suffer rapid exhaustion and would likely last at least 20 years.

Although the Rand and Kimberly both experienced mining rushes, their situations differed in most respects. First, gold mining on the Rand differed from diamond mining in Kimberly because the financial costs were far higher from the outset. Almost from the very beginning, Rand gold mining required expensive machinery to extract the ore from the ground, imported stamps to extract the gold from the ore, and a tremendous amount of costly labor and

provisions. Thus, mining was dominated practically from the beginning by moneyed interests. Ironically, nearly all the major players on the Rand started out small in Kimberly, including Cecil Rhodes, J.B. Robinson, Barney Barnato, George Albu, and partners Alfred Beit and Julius Wernher (founders of Wernher, Beit & Co.).<sup>40</sup> Moreover, practically every other important capitalist who did not start out at Kimberly succeeded due to prior connections with Kimberly magnates. In particular, Lionel Phillips, J.B. Taylor, Hermann Eckstein, and Percy FitzPatrick all largely owed their lucrative careers in Wernher, Beit & Co. to their friendships with either Cecil Rhodes or Alfred Beit.

Second, unlike in Kimberly, the Transvaal gold mines fell under the authority not of the British government but of the agrarian Boers who feared industry and resented British influence. Consequently, a natural antagonism soon emerged between the gold mining companies with their British owners,<sup>41</sup> investors, and workers and the Boer “burghers”<sup>42</sup> who had resided in Transvaal for years. Eager for the revenue that gold mining could bring<sup>43</sup> but fearful of the cultural and political changes created by the influx of immigrants, the Boer government soon created gold mining laws that proved relatively favorable to the companies but progressively increased residency requirements for citizenship and voting rights from one year to 14.<sup>44</sup> The Boers would

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<sup>40</sup> Geoffrey Wheatcroft, *The Randlords* (New York: Atheneum, 1985), 162. The fortunes of these magnates exploded during the gold boom. In late 1895, the *Mining World* estimated the value of Beit’s shares at £10 million, Wernher’s at £7 million, Robinson’s at £6 million, Rhodes’s at £5 million, and Barnato’s at £4 million.

<sup>41</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 108. In 1900, 81 percent of Transvaal mining companies were British. Regarding stake, non-British shareholding amounted to more than 23 percent only in two of the smaller companies, A. Goerz & Co., and G. & L. Albu.

<sup>42</sup> Fully enfranchised citizens of the Transvaal, almost always Boers.

<sup>43</sup> Alan Cartwright, *The Gold Miners* (Cape Town: Purnell, 1963), 18. Initially, the Boers encouraged goldmining as a way of pulling the Transvaal out of debt. A Raad resolution passed on December 21, 1870, declared that “The Raad resolves to empower the Government to grant a reasonable reward for the finding of precious stones and precious metals such as gold, silver, etc. This is to be acted on provisionally and to be made law at the next sitting.”

<sup>44</sup> John Marlowe, *Cecil Rhodes; the Anatomy of Empire* (London: Elek, 1972), 189. In 1882, the Volksraad raised the residency requirement from one year to five (likely the result of an influx of miners to Lydenberg). In 1890, the Volksraad raised the requirement to fourteen years and required children born in Transvaal to take their father’s nationality. Additionally, Uitlanders needed to surrender foreign citizenship.

not willingly lose their independence again, certainly not by allowing demographic changes to sway their elections.

At this point, a capitalist interest group specific to the gold mining industry began to take form. Led by Wernher, Beit & Co.,<sup>45</sup> the various mining companies united their lobbying efforts by forming an advocacy agency known as the Chamber of Mines. While this move represented the recognition of common interests among the mining companies, it did not indicate a move towards amalgamation. Unlike diamonds, gold had a fixed price, a result of international agreement created by the preeminent gold standard.<sup>46</sup> As a result, price-fixing and output controls could not increase profits as they had with diamonds. Instead, profits could only increase as a result of reduced production costs or increased output. Thus, Rand mine owners never really considered corporate amalgamation. However, their voluntary fusion of public communications and political lobbying represents the initial formation of a proto-capitalist faction, one which, when fully matured, would play an incredibly important role in the pro-conflict coalition of the mid-1890s.

Almost immediately, the Chamber identified numerous existing Boer policies that lowered output and raised costs. At the same time, the industry ran into a potentially dangerous situation involving zoning designations and claims known as *bewaarplaatsen*.<sup>47</sup> Essentially, when companies began “pegging” claims, they had to designate nearby land to dump waste. Most decided to designate these legally required dumping plots immediately south of their

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<sup>45</sup> Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, 162. While Wernher, Beit & Co. owned only 10 of the Rand’s 79 gold producing mines between 1887 and 1895, its mines produced 32 percent of all gold mined on the Rand and it paid 45 percent of all mining company dividends.

<sup>46</sup> Jade Davenport, *Digging Deep: A History of Mining in South Africa, 1852-2002* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2013), 286, 289. By 1890, Great Britain, the United States, Denmark, Holland, Norway, Sweden and the countries of the Latin Monetary Union all utilized the gold standard. As per international agreement, the price of gold remained pegged at about 77 shillings 9 pence per ounce from 1844 until after the end of World War I.

<sup>47</sup> Literally “storage places” or “repositories.”

claims. Unfortunately, as time went on, mining engineers realized that while the Rand goldfields descended to great depths, they did so at a southward angle. Essentially, dumping areas were obstructing future mining zones. Thus, for mining companies to continue extracting gold in the long term, they would need to clear and mine the *bewaarplaatsen*, something that the Transvaal's gold laws explicitly prohibited. Thus, the Boers gained a valuable tool for leverage while the mining companies persistently petitioned the government for compromise.<sup>48</sup>

Of more immediate concern, gold mining proved relatively expensive due to labor shortages and the high costs associated with industrial materials and living expenses. An incredibly labor-intensive process, gold mining required numerous skilled and unskilled workers. Imported white labor, usually experienced miners from England, Australia, or America, made up the skilled class and often resided in Johannesburg for their entire careers. However, unskilled labor was constantly in short supply. Bereft of a sufficiently large native population, companies heavily recruited Africans from neighboring states such as Portuguese East Africa (modern-day Mozambique). This labor shortage enabled workers to demand relatively high wages, and the distance of these laborers from their homes led to a constantly fluctuating workforce based on short-term contracts of only a year or two.<sup>49</sup> Rampant drunkenness, which incapacitated much of the already insufficient workforce, further worsened the situation. British mine owners faulted the Boers for both issues, as Boer policies hindered labor importation (particularly from India and China) and permitted a lucrative alcohol concession which, along with police corruption and black-market liquor distillation, resulted in widespread alcohol abuse.

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<sup>48</sup> Marais, *The Fall of Kruger's Republic*, 20. It appears that the Boers were very cognizant of their upper hand. Prominent politicians such as Christian Joubert demanded large bribes for their support or assistance in delaying the issue. For example, Lionel Phillips wrote to Beit in January 1894 that "The Bewaarplaatsen question will I think be settled in our favour, but at a cost of about £25,000 and then only because Christian Joubert has stuck to us like a leech."

<sup>49</sup> After a laborer's contract expired, he often simply took his savings and returned home.

The Transvaal government also drove up costs and thus harmed profits by imposing import duties on food and other necessities, by running an inefficient and corrupt bureaucracy and, most controversially, by promulgating a policy of government-sponsored private monopolies known as “concessions.” An early means of raising revenue for the once nearly bankrupt Boer states, the sale to investors and speculators of exclusive rights to provide certain goods and services created numerous state-sponsored monopolies.<sup>50</sup> While this policy encouraged capital investment in manufacturing and in utilities such as water supply, it also frequently raised prices and sometimes lowered the quality of goods and services. The railway concession granted to the Netherlands South African Railway Company,<sup>51</sup> the coal concession, and the dynamite concession<sup>52</sup> proved most costly to the mines and thus received the greatest scorn. These issues continued to threaten the bottom lines of mining companies, and the Transvaal government made few advances to ease them. Instead, the Boers chose to reproach the mining companies for their avarice and reminded them that they still reaped fabulous profits<sup>53</sup> despite the imposed costs.

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<sup>50</sup> J. Percy FitzPatrick, *The Transvaal from Within: A Private Record of Public Affairs* (Toronto: W. Briggs, 1899), 254. Concessions were granted on items including, but not limited to, dynamite, railways, spirits, iron, sugar, wool, bricks, earthenware, paper, candles, soap, calcium carbide, oil, matches, cocoa, bottles, and jam.

<sup>51</sup> Louis Creswicke, *South Africa and the Transvaal War* (Edinburgh: New York: T.C. & E.C. Jack; G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1901), 143-145. Freight charges in Transvaal were three times higher than in the Cape, leading to additional annual costs of £260,000. The rail monopoly was granted soon after the discovery of the Barberton fields, when heavy incentivization was needed to promote construction of rail lines which were not predicted to be nearly as heavily used as they were after the Rand boom. Allegedly, the concessionaire admitted that “had he foreseen to what proportions this monopoly would eventually grow, he would not have had the audacity to apply for it.”

<sup>52</sup> F.H. Hatch, *The Gold Mines of the Rand; Being a Description of the Mining Industry of Witwatersrand, South African Republic* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1895), 248-249. In 1895, the price of dynamite in the Transvaal stood at 85 shillings per case. However, of that amount, 37 shillings and 6 pennies were due to taxes.

<sup>53</sup> Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, 162-163. However, the Boers frequently overlooked the tremendous capital investment required for deep level mining. For example, the Geldenhuis Deep mine, a relatively shallow mine, cost £328,000 to complete in 1896. Two engineers, F.H. Hatch and J.A. Chalmers, pegged the price of opening a “deeper deep level” mine at £650,000. Largely due to such incredible initial costs, no deep-level mining company paid a dividend up till June 1895.

#### iv. **Forcing Federation**

While the diamond mines of Kimberly amalgamated and the gold mines of the Rand broke earth, Cecil Rhodes started work on another takeover. This time, he targeted Cape Colony's colonial government. Elected as a member to the Cape Parliament at the age of 27, Rhodes opted to run in a heavily agrarian Boer district near Kimberly named Barkly West. This unusual choice proved brilliant, as it was the first of many moves to curry favor with the Cape Boers, who wielded tremendous political power due to their highly organized and effective political party, the "Bond." In addition to appealing to the economic interests of Cape Boers, specifically regarding lightening customs duties between the Cape and Transvaal and offering financial support for Cape farmers, Rhodes also won over the friendship and support of Bond members of parliament by frequently visiting them at their farms and by supporting their campaigns and personal finances with contributions, monetary bribes, and allocations of shares.<sup>54</sup>

By 1890, Rhodes had solidified his reputation among the Cape Boers and Englishmen alike as a pro-Cape representative who could be relied on to support local interests, particularly those shared by the Cape Boers. To Rhodes, Cape Boer support was necessary from an electoral perspective and for continued colonization and development of South Africa. In his own words, "I mean to have the whole unmarked country north of the Colony for England, and I know I can only get it and develop it through the Cape Colony—that is, at present, through the Dutch majority."<sup>55</sup> At least publicly, Rhodes disparaged imperial interference in South African affairs.<sup>56</sup> Though this approach earned him the spite of some pro-imperial agents, including

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<sup>54</sup> Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners*, 88, 121-122.

<sup>55</sup> Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners*, 86.

<sup>56</sup> Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners*, 94 Rhodes first major disillusionment with imperial intervention occurred in 1885 when imperial troops under General Charles Warren discarded Rhodes's carefully negotiated peace agreement with two rogue incipient Boer republics, Stellaland and Goshen. Warren's unnecessary

Percy FitzPatrick and Joseph Chamberlain, it enabled him to portray himself as the strong South African leader needed for South African federation and, as a result, the pro-Boer “Bond” political coalition supported his successful bid for Cape Premier in 1890.<sup>57</sup> Around this time, Rhodes also used his wealth to purchase Cape newspapers—newspapers that he would use to his advantage for the rest of his political career. Indeed, Rhodes even funded new media outlets, such as the *Review of Reviews* in 1890, in order to assist in publicizing his views on imperialism and Cape expansion.<sup>58</sup> Many of these newspapers were directed at maintaining Cape Boer support, with five such papers being founded in 1891–92 alone.<sup>59</sup>

Back in Britain, Rhodes received great acclaim for his bold efforts to expand British influence and curb Transvaal, particularly from Lord Salisbury’s<sup>60</sup> Conservative government at Westminster. In February 1895, Salisbury, the Prime Minister, praised Rhodes’s actions in South Africa, where “even the Government of the Transvaal... is finding the pressure of English activity all round them so strong that they are slowly giving way... they will be compelled to fall into line and join the great unconscious federation that is growing up.”<sup>61</sup> With control of the Cape government, the backing of much of the imperial government and a tremendous private

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use of force led Rhodes to prefer Cape sub-imperialism to London-based imperialism, primarily because Westminster did not possess as much on-the-scene understanding and because he believed Britain would not uphold its commitment to South African territorial expansion; Marlowe, *Cecil Rhodes; the Anatomy of Empire*, 83-84. Rhodes’s opposition to the “imperial factor” being directly involved in South African affairs is directly evidenced by his opposition to Britain’s direct annexation of Bechuanaland instead of allowing its annexation to the Cape. Rhodes specifically stated that “First and foremost we should try to remove the Imperial factor from the situation.”

<sup>57</sup> Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners*, 123, 162. Rhodes’s overt support for several Bond legislative measures led even I.J. van der Walt, a noted Boer critic of Rhodes and the Kimberley diamond magnates, to publicly declare that he had reconsidered his position and decided that acting against Rhodes would be equivalent to acting against the interests of the Cape. Rhodes’s ability to win over the Cape Boers proved itself with his success in persuading the Bond to oppose taxation of the diamond industry.

<sup>58</sup> Marlowe, *Cecil Rhodes; the Anatomy of Empire*, 196, 210.

<sup>59</sup> Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners*, 163. Specifically, *Ons Land*, *De Paarl*, *Onze Curant*, *Philipstownsche Weekblad*, and *Oosten*.

<sup>60</sup> Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, 3rd Marquess of Salisbury.

<sup>61</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 70.



fortune from his various South African mining investments,<sup>62</sup> Rhodes was well situated to accomplish the objective that he hoped would immortalize his legacy: South African federation within the Empire.

Like many British imperialists in his day, Rhodes believed that the British Empire existed not merely as an extension of Great Britain's power, but as an essential component to its continued prosperity and security and even to the advancement of humanity. As Rhodes himself declared, the British were "the first race in the world...the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race."<sup>63</sup> Imperialists such as Rhodes feared a world in which a handful of global empires controlled world trade and locked out external parties, effectively creating exclusive trading blocs hostile to competing nations. In order to prepare the British Isles for such economic warfare, the Imperial government deemed it necessary to create its own extensive empire that could be relied upon for trade, natural resources (especially food), and military support. Rhodes and others added a new twist to this strategy, one that relied on colonial consolidation centered on indirect rule. Essentially, this new generation of imperialists believed that the best way to indefinitely maintain the benefits of possessing an extensive empire while minimizing administrative costs was to culturally assimilate and consolidate colonial regions into self-governing dominions. Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa were viewed as prime candidates for this reorganized British Empire, and Rhodes saw himself as responsible for federating<sup>64</sup> South Africa in preparation for its new role in the Empire.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Philip Jourdan, *Cecil Rhodes, his Private Life* (New York: John Lane Company, 1911), 55-56. Rhodes was Managing Director and Chairman of De Beers in Kimberly, Managing Director of the British South Africa Company in what would become Rhodesia, and Managing Director of Consolidated Gold Fields in Transvaal.

<sup>63</sup> Stead, *The Last Will and Testament of Cecil John Rhodes*, 58.

<sup>64</sup> *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, "Federation—an encompassing political or societal entity formed by uniting smaller or more localized entities."

<sup>65</sup> For more on the concept of federation within the British Empire, see Porter, *The Lion's Share*, 136-141.

Unfortunately, Transvaal's booming economy proved a serious threat to the plans of British imperialists and federationists in South Africa. Rhodes and others had assumed that Cape Colony would exist as the regional center of power and finance indefinitely. This certainly appeared true in 1885, when the Cape possessed a tremendous advantage in population, capital investment, and trade. The only two states that could thwart federation, the Boer republics, lacked foreign allies, large populations, industry, railroads, capital investment, and coastlines. This last feature was of the utmost importance, as the lack of a port for imports and exports essentially placed Transvaal and the Orange Free State at the economic mercy of Cape Colony's and Natal's ports, railroads, and the colonial governments that controlled them. Thus, Rhodes determined to deprive the Boer republics of an outlet to the sea, at least until they voluntarily agreed to federation. Even before his term as Cape Prime Minister, Rhodes deemed cutting Transvaal off from the seas as extremely important. In 1886, he stated that:

If the Delagoa Bay Railway is carried out, the real union of South Africa will be indefinitely deferred. Unless the Cape railway was soon pushed up to the Rand we shall be cut off from the Transvaal as far as our trade is concerned. That trade is bound to go either from Delagoa Bay or from Natal... Before we know what we are about we shall hear of a Customs union between Natal, the Orange Free State, Delagoa Bay, and Bechuanaland and the Cape may be shut out...<sup>66</sup>

Rhodes's strategy to strangle Transvaal on all sides experienced several early successes before eventually succumbing to factors largely outside of his control. Prior to Rhodes's election as Prime Minister of the Cape, Britain had succeeded in hemming in the Boer republics from the south (Cape Colony), west (Bechuanaland annexation), and southeast (Natal and Zululand annexations). However, two directions for expansion remained possible. The Boers recognized that they could go north to Matabeleland and Mashonaland or connect to a non-British port by

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<sup>66</sup> Vindex. *Cecil Rhodes; His Political Life and Speeches*, 133, 135.

building a railroad east to Delagoa Bay in Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique). The Boers attempted both avenues of expansion, with two very different degrees of success.

Recognizing the possibility of Boer northern expansion, Rhodes quickly yet quietly worked to gain and enforce a claim on the mineral rights of Matabeleland and Mashonaland, territories that would eventually bear the name “Rhodesia.”<sup>67</sup> Though a public figure, Rhodes next operated through private means to gain a royal charter for the purpose of founding and maintaining a company with the purpose of overseeing the territory’s development. Rhodes believed these lands contained mineral resources dwarfing even those of Transvaal, and successfully raised a significant amount of capital for his British South Africa Company.

Attempting to prevent the British from cutting off access to the north, the Boers prepared to beat the settlers to the territory and claim it themselves.<sup>68</sup> Fifty years before, the voortrekkers left their homes to travel inland. Now, some of their descendants desired to do so again, this time departing from Transvaal. Responding to this impending threat, High Commissioner Henry Loch pressured Transvaal president Paul Kruger to denounce these new trekkers and promised him a reexamination of Transvaal’s claims to Swaziland if he did so.<sup>69</sup> Consequently, the British South Africa Company established a presence, and the trekkers called off their journey. Rhodes had succeeded once more in tightening the British noose around the South African Republic.

However, Rhodes and his investors would be severely disappointed as they slowly realized that

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<sup>67</sup> See J.E.S. Green’s *Rhodes Goes North* (1936) for a comprehensive account of Rhodes’s use of diplomacy and trickery to subvert the Matabele and their king, Lobengula.

<sup>68</sup> Great Britain, Adam Matthew Digital (Firm), and National Archives (Great Britain), *Confidential Print: Africa, 1834-1966*. Archives Direct. [http://www.archivesdirect.amdigital.co.uk/CP\\_Africa](http://www.archivesdirect.amdigital.co.uk/CP_Africa) (2012), No 438, 16. C.O. Memo., ‘The Swazi Question,’ 19 Oct. 1892, C “...there will be a great danger of a renewal of the trek agitation, not only in the Transvaal, but in the Orange Free State and among the Afrikanders of the Cape, and, unless we are prepared to resist this by force, we shall have to abandon Mr. Rhodes and the British South Africa Company and the whole idea of British supremacy in the interior to a “New Republic,” which will be hostile to British capital and enterprise...”

<sup>69</sup> Great Britain, *Confidential Print: Africa*, No. 439, 94-95. C.O. Memo on the Origin and Operations of the British South Africa Chartered Company.

Rhodesia would not become “a second Rand.” As time and the Hays Hammond Report<sup>70</sup> of August 1894 proved, Rhodesia’s mineral wealth had been greatly exaggerated, and, consequently, so had the region’s potential for shifting the economic axis of power in South Africa away from Transvaal.

Unfortunately for Rhodes and the federationists, Kruger had a trump card up his sleeve: Delagoa Bay. A valuable harbor around which Portuguese settlers founded the city of Lourenço Marques in 1850, Delagoa Bay was the last non-British harbor reachable by the Boers. If the Boers could build a railway to Delagoa Bay, they could free themselves from reliance on British rail lines while simultaneously issuing a death blow Britain’s domination of the lucrative Rand freight traffic. Consequently, Kruger rushed to connect Delagoa Bay to Transvaal via railway, while Rhodes raced to stop him. Initially, Kruger had the upper hand. An American rail company had already started to build a line on the Portuguese side in January 1887,<sup>71</sup> and all that was needed was a concession from the Volksraad to incentivize continued construction, permission from the Portuguese government, and funding for the construction. The first two came quickly and easily, and funding came after the Boers essentially guaranteed investors against loss. However, construction halted shortly before reaching Transvaal’s border due to disputes between the American owners and the Transvaal government over various contractual obligations.

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<sup>70</sup> John Hays Hammond, *The Autobiography of John Hays Hammond* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1935), 277-278. Commissioned by Rhodes and generated by famous mining engineer Hays Hammond, the Report concluded that, despite widespread expectation to the contrary, Rhodesia lacked profitable gold deposits rivalling those of the Rand. “...I did not wish the investing public to be misled into believing that the reefs of Rhodesia resembled those of the Rand in the remarkable continuity of pay ore; the reefs of the Rand are unique among the ore deposits of the world in this respect... After hearing my report, Dr. Harris said, ‘Well, if we have to depend on Hammond's geological report to raise money for this country, I don't think the outlook is encouraging.’”

<sup>71</sup> Robinson and Gallagher, with Denny, *Africa and the Victorians*, 217-218.

Consequently, the Boers rescinded the concession, forcibly repossessed the American construction company's property, and finished construction on the line themselves.<sup>72</sup>

Meanwhile, Rhodes used every trick in the book to permanently isolate the republics.<sup>73</sup> First, he attempted to purchase the section of the line owned by the Netherlands South African Railway Company.<sup>74</sup> However, the Boers used state funds to bolster the company's faltering finances, then secured a loan of £2.5 million from the London Rothschilds in June 1894 for the line's construction.<sup>75</sup> Next, Rhodes worked to convince the Portuguese government to deny permission to finish the railroad's construction. This, too, failed. Finally, Rhodes attempted to purchase Portuguese East Africa outright. Despite the crushing debt facing Portugal's government, the deal never materialized.<sup>76</sup> As a result, the rail line connecting Transvaal to the sea via Delagoa Bay was finished on October 20, 1894.

The wisdom of creating the new rail line immediately became evident. From an economic perspective, Transvaal could now set freight rates at its choosing and gain unprecedented control over the country's imports and exports. More importantly, the rail line allowed the Boer government to collect freight duties and break the economic stranglehold once held by Cape and Natal rail companies. Politically, the Delagoa Bay line greatly strengthened Transvaal's independence by enabling it to circumvent British railways and ports. Consequently, it shattered

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<sup>72</sup> *The Fortnightly Review*, edited by W.L. Courtney, vol. 74, *New Series. July to December, 1900*. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1900), 410-429.

<sup>73</sup> Marlowe, *Cecil Rhodes; the Anatomy of Empire*, 79. Realizing the importance of controlling the railways, Rhodes stated that "I respect the Transvaal, but as politicians we have to look to our position as the future paramount state in South Africa."

<sup>74</sup> Robinson and Gallagher, with Denny, *Africa and the Victorians*, 218. Rhodes received significant backing from Boer and English interests in the Cape and Natal, as many viewed the purchase of the Delagoa Bay line as a way to mitigate the effects of the competing line.

<sup>75</sup> Marais, *The Fall of Kruger's Republic*, 36.

<sup>76</sup> Lewis Michell, *The Life of the Rt. Hon. Cecil John Rhodes, 1853-1902* (London: E. Arnold, 1910), 94.

Disappointed, Rhodes related that "I have for several years done my best to obtain for the Colony, by purchase, or otherwise, the Portuguese Province of Lourenco Marquez..."

the British dream for achieving South African federation under the British flag by using economic coercion to force the Boer republics into a union. The Delagoa Bay connection not only demolished this strategy, it also set into motion a rapid shift in the regional axis of power. No longer could the Cape remain the economic, political, or demographic center of South Africa. As capital and immigrants poured into Johannesburg, Transvaal rapidly overtook its peers.<sup>77</sup>

### Map of South Africa, 1899



Notice 1. how close Rhodes came to completely encircling the Boer republics, and 2. how the Delagoa Bay Railway Line thwarted Rhodes's strategy. Canadian War Museum online. Map of Southern Africa Showing the British Colonies and the Boer Republics. [https://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/boer/boerwarmap-lrg\\_e.html](https://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/boer/boerwarmap-lrg_e.html)

<sup>77</sup> Robinson and Gallagher, with Denny, *Africa and the Victorians*, 210-211. By 1896, investments in the Rand exceeded £57 million. Meanwhile, South Africa's railway mileage nearly doubled between 1885 and 1895, its overseas trade almost doubled during the same time, and its white population between 1880 and 1890 doubled.

With the Cape, Natal, and Orange Free State increasingly reliant on agricultural exports to Transvaal due to Johannesburg's population boom, it seemed ever more likely that Transvaal would achieve South African federation itself, though under a Boer flag. Just as the Cape had earlier attempted to start federation talks by proposing a customs union with rates favorable to itself, Transvaal now made its own self-favoring proposal for a customs union.<sup>78</sup> Rhodes had nearly succeeded in strangling Transvaal, but now the Boers had broken the noose and refastened it around the necks of Britain's South African colonies. Cecil Rhodes needed to act quickly to save his dream and his legacy.

v. **Jameson Plays the Hero, Jameson Plays the Fool**

From the British perspective, the South African situation grew increasingly grim by mid-1894. A harbinger of Transvaal's political and economic ascendancy in the region, the Delagoa Bay rail line continued to capture a higher percentage of South Africa's freight. Prior to the Delagoa Bay line's opening, the Cape received 85 percent of the Rand's rail traffic in 1895. Incredibly, by 1899, this had shrunk to just 28.4 percent. Within four years, the Delagoa Bay and Durban (Natal) rail lines swelled to 37.06 percent and 24.54 percent of the Rand's rail traffic, respectively.<sup>79</sup> No end appeared in sight, and nothing seemed capable of stopping Transvaal from capturing an even higher percentage in the future. The vision of a British-led South African federation rapidly slipped away, and the specter of a Boer "United States of South Africa" loomed larger each day. In response, Rhodes embarked on a conspiracy that would alter the futures of South Africa and the British Empire.

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<sup>78</sup> Marlowe, *Cecil Rhodes; the Anatomy of Empire*, 177. Transvaal refused to participate in the Customs Union Conference held in Cape Town in January 1888.

<sup>79</sup> Marais, *The Fall of Kruger's Republic*, 39.

Realizing that the South African Republic could no longer be hemmed in on all sides and economically conquered or forced into submission by anything short of an armed conflict, Rhodes chose to pursue an internal conquest. The booming Johannesburg gold mining industry had attracted tens of thousands of immigrants, immigrants who largely resented their Boer overlords and seemed increasingly unable to share in Transvaal's political system. The grievances of these foreign residents, known as "Uitlanders,"<sup>80</sup> extended to practically every area of life. Fearful of losing their country to foreigners and disgusted by Johannesburg's sinful places of gambling, drinking (650 licensed bars), racing, and prostitution (97 brothels),<sup>81</sup> the Boers attempted to protect themselves from a demographic and cultural takeover by making citizenship harder to obtain and mandating that schools and courts use only Dutch. In addition to these actions, the Boers further provoked the Uitlanders by imposing numerous import duties which increased the cost of living, choking free-market competition by issuing state sponsored concessions, policing the Uitlanders with a frequently corrupt and rough police force, ineffectively tackling alcohol abuse among native workers, and generally running a relatively corrupt<sup>82</sup> and inefficient bureaucracy better suited for a small agrarian state than for a modern industrial one. These grievances, worsened by the apathetic attitude of the Boer government, resulted in the birth of an Uitlander political movement, the Transvaal National Union.

Following a visit from British intelligence officer Ralph Williams, a meeting was called by Naph Cohen, a local attorney, and J.M. Buckland,<sup>83</sup> secretary of the Barberton Mining and

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<sup>80</sup> Moore, *The Story of South Africa*, 562. "Uitlander" translates to "newcomer" or "outsider."

<sup>81</sup> Davenport, *Digging Deep*, 226-227.

<sup>82</sup> E.g. Government officials personally purchased multiple licenses for commercial stands in Johannesburg without advertising them for sale in order to sell them for a profit at auction shortly after. Furthermore, an 1898 Volksraad investigatory committee revealed that almost £2.4 million had been improperly advanced and accounted for in the previous sixteen years. Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold, and War*, 300; E.g. The Volksraad rejected a proposal to introduce a civil service test, an attempt at reducing nepotism. Marais, *The Fall of Kruger's Republic*, 19.

<sup>83</sup> *African Review*, Volume 7, (London: African Review Publishing Company, 1896), 136.



Commercial Chamber, in the eastern Transvaal mining town of Barberton in August 1888. This meeting led to the election of 12 Barberton representatives to a new Uitlander political organization, the Transvaal Republican Union (soon renamed the Transvaal National Union).<sup>84</sup> As the Uitlander demographic and economic center shifted from the declining Barberton goldfields to the growing Witwatersrand ones, Johannesburg professionals such as Charles Leonard, a local lawyer who became president of the Union, began to fill its ranks.<sup>85</sup>

Immediately, the Transvaal National Union set out to convince the Volksraad to adopt reforms that would improve Uitlander life. Through public meetings and publications, the National Union sought to remedy Uitlander grievances, especially the challenging citizenship requirements. Importantly, this organization did not originally receive widespread support from the mining magnates<sup>86</sup> or recognition from the British government and never publicly called for an overthrow of the Boer government or annexation to the British Empire. On the contrary, this early group of Uitlander leaders preferred internal reform of the republic and an increase in the political share of the Uitlander community. Indeed, the National Union publicly proclaimed its dedication to “the maintenance of the independence of the South African Republic” and the attainment of equal rights for all Transvaal citizens through constitutional means.<sup>87</sup> The National

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<sup>84</sup> Andrew Duminy, *Interfering in Politics: A Biography of Sir Percy FitzPatrick*, ed. Bill Guest (Johannesburg: Lowry Publishers, 1987), 18.

<sup>85</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 18.

<sup>86</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 84. Leonard observed that the mining magnates had “stood aloof from the National Union and its works” and “were in fact abused roundly for leaving the professional and commercial classes and the working men to fight for liberty.” Apparently, the major capitalists did not deem the Uitlander movement worthy of support until they seemed useful in accomplishing mining and business reforms; Denys Rhoadie, *Conspirators in Conflict; a Study of the Johannesburg Reform Committee and its Role in the Conspiracy Against the South African Republic* (Cape Town: Tafelberg-uitgewers, 1967), 21. Wernher refused to be involved, Beit only reluctantly agreed, and no other mining magnates outside of George Farrar, Lionel Phillipps, Rhodes seem to have been directly involved at all.

<sup>87</sup> C. Webb, “The Uitlander Movement in the South African Republic before the Jameson Raid.” Undergraduate honors thesis, (University of the Witwatersrand, 1952). Appendix A, The Constitution of the Transvaal National Union, published in *The Star*, August 22, 1892. Article 2. Objects: The objects of the Union shall be: (a) the

Union also tried but failed to support the election of moderate “progressive” Boers opposing Kruger, such as Piet Joubert and Ewald Esselen.<sup>88</sup>

Achieving little, the National Union decided to collect signatures for a petition calling for Uitlander enfranchisement. In May 1894, the first petition garnered 13,000 Uitlander signatures. The National Union submitted this petition to the Volksraad, which rejected it “with laughter and scorn.”<sup>89</sup> In August 1895, a second petition acquired 32,000 signatures, but this was swiftly rejected and triggered constitutional amendments setting up further obstacles to Uitlander enfranchisement.<sup>90</sup> According to Percy FitzPatrick, the Volksraad’s insulting rejection of the second Uitlander petition requesting enfranchisement convinced Uitlander leaders that drastic non-peaceful measures were required to force change.<sup>91</sup>

Despite its failure to achieve reforms, the Transvaal National Union drew the attention of British officials in Cape Colony seeking new ways to subvert the Boers. The first high-ranking public official to perceive the potential use of the Uitlanders for political gain was Sir Henry Loch, the British High Commissioner of Cape Colony. In mid-1894, Loch met with Lionel Phillips, a prominent Uitlander leader, president of the Chamber of Mines and a partner of Wernher, Beit and Co.’s subsidiary branch in Johannesburg, Hermann Eckstein & Co. At this meeting, Loch asked Phillips about Johannesburg’s military resources and whether it could hold out for six days in case of a conflict between Britain and Transvaal. Shortly after, Phillips decided to set up a secret fund for the purchase of armaments in support of an armed revolt.<sup>92</sup> Likewise, Loch sent a confidential memo to the Colonial Office suggesting it support an

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maintenance of the independence of the South African Republic. (b) To obtain, by all constitutional means, equal rights for all citizens of this republic, and to obtain the redress of all grievances.

<sup>88</sup> Robinson and Gallagher, with Denny, *Africa and the Victorians*, 421-422.

<sup>89</sup> Fort, *Alfred Beit*, 129.

<sup>90</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 82; Fort, *Alfred Beit*, 129.

<sup>91</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 24.

<sup>92</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 25.

Uitlander uprising in Johannesburg. The Liberal Colonial Secretary, Lord Ripon, immediately rejected the suggestion, condemning Loch's idea to use espionage in order to internally overthrow the Boers as an "extremely dangerous proposal."<sup>93</sup> Thus, the plot seemed to die in its cradle. But Cecil Rhodes arrived on the scene to nurse it to maturity.

At his wit's end, Rhodes made one last attempt to reduce Transvaal into subservience. Perhaps with Loch's idea of sponsoring an Uitlander uprising in mind, Rhodes took a leading role in a nascent conspiracy against the Transvaal government. Meeting with Charles Leonard, Lionel Phillips, and other prominent Uitlander political leaders at his Cape estate of Groot Schuur in November 1895, Rhodes assured the collaborators that his two motivations for joining the conspiracy were to obtain "an amelioration of the conditions, such as he was entitled to claim as representing an enormous amount of capital invested in the Transvaal," and free trade within South Africa. Rhodes went on to add "That is all I want. That is all I ask of you. The rest will come in time. We must have a beginning and that will be the beginning. If you people get your rights, the Customs Union, the Railway Convention, and other things will all come in time."<sup>94</sup> Thus, while indirectly hinting at his desire for federation, Rhodes never explicitly stated it.

Soon after, Rhodes convinced Alfred Beit,<sup>95</sup> who originally firmly opposed political involvement,<sup>96</sup> and George Farrar of the East Rand Proprietary Mines gold mining company to

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<sup>93</sup> Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners*, 223; Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 78.

<sup>94</sup> Marlowe, *Cecil Rhodes; the Anatomy of Empire*, 224-225.

<sup>95</sup> Fort, *Alfred Beit*, 195. Beit's reasons for joining Rhodes's plot require much speculation. Some have suggested that Beit saw the Rand as a very long-term investment, one that would benefit immensely from regime change. Others, such as his friend Seymour Fort, believed that Beit simply was being a supportive friend. Abe Bailey agreed with this "friendship theory," giving a public tribute to Beit after Beit's death, one that emphasized how "[Beit] was consumed with admiration for Mr. Rhodes. He devoted his life to carrying out Mr. Rhodes's ideal."

<sup>96</sup> Fort, *Alfred Beit*, 132-133. In June 1894, Phillips wrote to Beit, I do not want, of course, to meddle in politics." In July 1894, he further acknowledged Beit's opposition to political involvement by writing "My dear Beit. Politics. Have just got your cable reading don't see Rhodes etc. of which I am very glad." Clearly, Rhodes had to do some convincing to get Beit to change his mind; Smith, 85. An example of Rhodes's efforts at persuading Beit include him telling Beit that "You might say Oh yes wait but, as you know, we will wait too long and, with its marvelous wealth, Johannesburg will make South Africa an independent Republic, which you and I do not want."

assist him in funding and planning the plot.<sup>97</sup> By late 1895, the plot and its logistics had been largely decided. Rhodes and Beit would pay for rifles and machine guns and use their companies to smuggle them into Johannesburg. Leonard would create a “Reform Committee”<sup>98</sup> of prominent local Uitlander business leaders and professionals to mobilize the Uitlanders and establish a provisional government. Rhodes would task his friend and British South Africa Company Matabeleland administrator, Dr. Leander Starr Jameson, to recruit a new force of 1,500 men to the Company’s police force. This enlarged force would cross into Transvaal to assist the uprising once it began. Then, the invasion force would link up with the Uitlanders in Johannesburg, march on the capitol of Pretoria, and seize the government arsenal. Finally, Sir Hercules Robinson, High Commissioner for Southern Africa and Cecil Rhodes’s friend, would enter Transvaal by train and “issue a Proclamation directing both parties to... submit to his arbitration.” At this point, Transvaal would either be directly annexed by Great Britain (as Chamberlain preferred) or the Uitlanders would be granted full voting rights, essentially giving them constitutional control of the country (as Rhodes preferred).<sup>99</sup> Rhodes then expected they would voluntarily join a federation with the other South African colonies.

Despite Rhodes’s best efforts, poor leadership,<sup>100</sup> logistical failures, bad luck, and a misalignment of goals doomed the scheme to failure. First, Rhodes and Beit miserably failed at

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<sup>97</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 86. It seems that, of the mining magnates, only Rhodes, Farrar, and Beit took part. The others do not even appear to have received an invitation.

<sup>98</sup> Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, 173. Interestingly, the Reformers were rather diverse. Of the committee members, there were 34 British members, 18 South African-born, 8 Americans, 2 Germans, an Australian, a Swiss, a Dutchman, and even one Turk. This may help explain why the committee was so averse to British annexation of Transvaal.

<sup>99</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 88; Davenport, *Digging Deep*, 238. As co-conspirator Hays Hammond later admitted, the general plan “was to get some thousands of guns into Johannesburg, and then, on some dark night, to take Pretoria, the Boer capital, seize the arsenal, carry Kruger off with us, and to negotiate at leisure for the redress of our grievances.”

<sup>100</sup> Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, 178-179. For example, Frank Rhodes once missed a meeting with Jameson due to recreational activities, excusing his absence with a note stating, “Dear Jimjams, sorry I can’t see you this afternoon, have an appointment to teach Mrs X the bike.”

adequately supplying the Uitlanders. Out of the promised 5,000 rifles and 1,000,000 rounds of ammunition, it appears that fewer than 2,500 rifles and a few boxes of ammunition were actually delivered.<sup>101</sup> Second, Jameson succeeded in recruiting only about 400 men, almost a quarter of his original projection.<sup>102</sup> More importantly, Rhodes and the Uitlanders never achieved a meeting of minds on the ultimate objective of the plot. Rhodes wanted the uprising to lead to a South African federation under the British flag. The Uitlanders, in contrast, sought to retain the South African Republic's independent government, albeit under their control. Rhodes tried to diminish the different objectives by simply ignoring the issue and emphasizing the common desire for reforms and closer economic union within South Africa.

Unfortunately for the plotters, the disagreement over Transvaal's independence found last-minute expression in a debate on which flag the uprising would take place under, the British flag or Transvaal's. Rhodes naturally preferred the British flag, but the Uitlanders were adamant about using Transvaal's flag and sought Rhodes's assurance on the matter.<sup>103</sup> Opposing their attempts to drop the British flag, Rhodes telegraphed back that "I of course would not risk everything as I am doing excepting for British flag."<sup>104</sup> Clearly, Rhodes's imperative was "to lay the foundations of a united South Africa." Rhodes fundamentally believed his legacy would depend on his successful establishment of a South African union. In his own words: "I want men to associate my name with it after I have gone, and I know that I haven't much time."<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Jean Van der Poel, *The Jameson Raid* (Cape Town: New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), 60, 143.

<sup>102</sup> Van der Poel, *The Jameson Raid*, 60, 97.

<sup>103</sup> Fort, *Alfred Beit*, 143.

<sup>104</sup> Cana, *Boers and British*, 24. Remarking afterwards on his paramount desire to bring Transvaal into a South African federation within the British Empire instead of creating an independent Transvaal run by the mining companies, Rhodes told the House of Commons Committee investigating the Jameson Raid that "I was not going to risk my position to change President Kruger for President J.B. Robinson."

<sup>105</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 85. Immediately prior to the Jameson Raid, Rhodes responded to an Uitlander conspirator asking him about his motives for supporting the uprising with "You may well ask. Here am I, with all the money a man could possibly want Prime Minister of the Cape, a Privy Councillor – why should I run

The disagreement over the flag greatly dampened Uitlander enthusiasm for the uprising, as many feared the British would take advantage of the situation and annex Transvaal.<sup>106</sup> Indeed, many Uitlander “volunteers” appear to have had very little interest at all, such as one who recalled being offered a pound a day, in addition to “hotel food, including liquor and cigars.”<sup>107</sup> As the leading Uitlander newspaper in Johannesburg, *The Star*, declared, most Uitlanders did not care whether they lived under British or Boer rule “so long as they have good laws, so long as these laws are justly administered, so long as they are allowed to pursue their vocations in peace, and so long as equality in the incidence of taxation and equality in the state is permitted to be enjoyed by all alike.”<sup>108</sup> Similarly, Captain Francis Younghusband, a correspondent for London’s *The Times*, commented that the overwhelming majority of Uitlanders stood aloof from political activity, were far more concerned with making money, and that, of those involved, “none of them want to see the British flag hoisted here, or the present Republic done away with.” Instead, he neatly surmised that they preferred “the present oligarchy” to be substituted with “a Republic in the true sense of the term,” one dominated by them.<sup>109</sup>

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all these risks? Well... I don't want to annex the Transvaal, but I want to see it a friendly member of a Community of South African States. I want equal rights for the English language, a Customs Union, a common Railway policy, a common native policy, a central South African Court of Appeal, British coast protection. I have tried to do a deal with old man Kruger and I have failed. I never shall bring him into line... What I want to do is to lay the foundations of a united South Africa. I want men to associate my name with it after I have gone, and I know that I haven't much time.” Rhodes’s response perfectly summarized his motives and aspirations but failed to mention that a “united South Africa” within the British Empire inherently necessitated an end to Transvaal’s independence.

<sup>106</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 28. According to FitzPatrick, Jameson had assured the Reform leaders that he would not invade Transvaal unless Johannesburg was actually attacked. Furthermore, FitzPatrick relates that the Reformers insisted that neither Britain nor Rhodes challenge the Transvaal independence, and argued that a declaration of loyalty to Britain would have “defeated the very objects they honestly had in view.”

<sup>107</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 29.

<sup>108</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 83.

<sup>109</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 81; Marais, *The Fall of Kruger’s Republic*, 101. Younghusband also wrote that “The great mass of the people were not at that time discontented...The ordinary miner, the business employee and the clerks were all getting very high wages...” Similarly, Dr. A.P. Hillier informed the governor of Natal after the Raid that “except as regards education, the ‘grievances’ had not really caused a very strong feeling in the mass of the population of Johannesburg. The capitalists, and such of the higher employees in the mines as had an interest in profits, were the real revolutionaries. The clerks and artizans, although they growled, received high wages and made a good living.”

In order to buy more time to sort out the situation, the Uitlanders postponed the uprising, ostensibly because it was set to take place on the same day as a popular local horse race. However, this postponement met resistance from Rhodes, whom Chamberlain cautioned would have to start it immediately or delay it indefinitely due to an increasingly fragile situation with foreign affairs, which threatened to stretch the Empire too thin.<sup>110</sup> Despite Chamberlain and the Colonial Office's knowledge and assistance of the plot, they remained extremely cautious and opportunistic in stance.<sup>111</sup> Chamberlain essentially chose to turn a blind eye to Jameson's military preparations on the Transvaal border, and seems to really have only endorsed the plan because he feared that its potential success without imperial involvement would lead to a stronger and more independent Transvaal.<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, Chamberlain preferred plausible deniability and distance between the Colonial Office and the Reform plot because he feared that close cooperation could result in war should the plot fail.<sup>113</sup>

As Rhodes re strategized, Jameson unilaterally decided to ignite the uprising himself by invading Transvaal with his troops. In response, the Uitlanders rose up and seized control of

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<sup>110</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 92. Referring to a dispute between U.S. President Cleveland over Venezuela which threatened war, Chamberlain advised Rhodes that, if there was to be an uprising, "either it should come *at once* or be postponed for a year or two at least."

<sup>111</sup> For further evidence of Chamberlain's knowledge and involvement in the plot, see J. L. Garvin, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, vol. 3 (London, Macmillan and Co., 1969), 110-111 ("Chamberlain and the 'Missing Telegrams'"). Damning text includes "We have stated positive that results Dr. Jameson's plan include British flag. Is this correct?", "Chamberlain will do anything to assist except hand over the administration protectorate provided he officially does not know of your plan.", and "You are aware Chamberlain states Dr. Jameson's plan must not be mentioned to him."

<sup>112</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 78. This fear existed as early as July 18, 1894, when Loch stated his belief that "the Uitlanders were bound to win in their struggle with the Boers, and that if they won without British help, they would probably maintain the independence of the Republic and pursue a policy hostile to federation."; Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 71-72. However, Salisbury preferred an internal revolution completely independent of British or capitalist interference, stating on December 30, 1895 that "...it would be better if the revolution which transfers the Transvaal to British rulers were entirely the result of the action of internal forces, and not of Cecil Rhodes's intervention or of ours."

<sup>113</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 119. Chamberlain concluded that "But for all that I am not at all anxious for war – and do not believe it will come."

Johannesburg. However, their forces were far smaller than anticipated, and the Boer response much swifter and more organized than expected. Consequently, Jameson was intercepted and defeated by the Boers prior to reaching Johannesburg, and Robinson and Chamberlain immediately condemned Jameson and his “raiders.” Making matters worse, the raiders failed to destroy important correspondence detailing the operation, and the captured documents were subsequently used to prosecute the Reformers.<sup>114</sup> Robinson immediately left for Transvaal, where he negotiated Johannesburg’s surrender.

vi. **Downfall**

The scandal caused an uproar in South Africa and in Britain. Naturally, the first casualties were the raiders and the Reform Committee members who supposedly called on their support. Locally, the Raid completely overturned Rhode’s Cape ministry, forcing his resignation and a complete break between the Bond and pro-imperial Englishmen who still followed Rhodes. Gordon Sprigg assumed the premiership after Rhodes, but William Schreiner and the Bond ultimately gained control of the Cape government and would pain the pro-conflict coalition with their attempts at mediation with the Boers. The Raid also realized the fears of many in the British government regarding the wavering loyalty of both the capitalists and the Uitlanders. Interestingly, Chamberlain wrote in June, 1896, “the substitution of an entirely independent Republic governed by, or for, the [cosmopolitan] capitalists of the Rand would be very much worse both for British interests in the Transvaal itself and for British influence in South Africa.”<sup>115</sup> Thus, the Raid’s outcome, though undesirable, was not the worst possible outcome, at least according to Chamberlain. Rather, had the plot succeeded in the way of the Uitlander Reformers, efforts at subverting Transvaal’s independence may have been permanently thwarted.

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<sup>114</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 26.

<sup>115</sup> Marais, *The Fall of Kruger’s Republic*, 251.



Due to the quick maneuvering of Chamberlain and Hercules Robinson, neither suffered serious career or reputational harm. Chamberlain in particular resoundingly denied his own involvement, telling Parliament's investigatory committee into the matter in 1897 that "I never had any knowledge...or the slightest suspicion of anything in the nature of a hostile or armed invasion of the Transvaal."<sup>116</sup> Likewise, Lord Selborne, Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, testified that "Sir Hercules Robinson had no suspicion of what was impending... At any rate the fact remains that from no quarter did the Colonial Office receive any warning."<sup>117</sup> Neither Chamberlain nor Robinson ever received formal censure for their acts, nor was either's tenure cut short. Indeed, despite his close acquaintance with many of the conspirators and Chamberlain's disdain for him, Robinson retained his position, resigning more than a year later in April 1897 due to ill health. His replacement, Alfred Milner, would prove far more proactive in furthering British imperial policy in South Africa. Meanwhile, Chamberlain feigned total ignorance and immediately tried to direct attention away from the Colonial Office's involvement by publicly drawing attention to the allegedly poor treatment of the Uitlanders, which he faulted for the uprising.<sup>118</sup> Brilliantly, Chamberlain had found a way to not only distance himself from the snafu, but also to directly involve the Colonial Office in the Uitlander struggle.

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<sup>116</sup> Conan Doyle, *The War in South Africa: its Cause and Conduct*, 35.

<sup>117</sup> Conan Doyle, *The War in South Africa: its Cause and Conduct*, 35.

<sup>118</sup> Porter, *The Origins of the South African War*, 90, 109-113.

## Act II

### *Building a Coalition, Starting a War*

With Rhodes's primary contribution to the conflagration finished, the "Transvaal question" became increasingly tense and complicated. Now attuned to the South African situation following the Jameson Raid's scandal, imperial officials in London began to closely watch the events unfolding in Cape Colony and Transvaal and dispatched officials who would proactively promote imperial interests while checking the Transvaal government's rapid drive for greater autonomy and independence. This newfound attention resulted in the appointment of a new high commissioner, Alfred Milner. Within four years, Milner finished what Rhodes started: Transvaal's incorporation into the British Empire.

While Britain looked on, pro-imperial actors and their factions collaborated in order to force a confrontation which they hoped would result in Transvaal's acquiescence. Milner covertly took the lead in constructing a powerful coalition consisting of the Rand capitalists chafing at the Boer government's profit-harming measures, the Johannesburg Uitlanders resentful of their second-class status, and Lord Salisbury's Westminster Conservatives fearful of Transvaal's growing threat to British supremacy in South Africa. While there were many moments of doubt and threats to group cohesion, the coalition successfully encouraged the Uitlanders to prepare the ground for an ultimatum by winning over the hearts of their fellow Englishmen back in Britain, the capitalists to bankroll the scheme and pressure the governments of Transvaal and Europe, and the Imperial government to pull the trigger on the whole operation.

## Chart Showing Different Factions and Their Leading Members, 1899

<u>Boers</u>	<u>Uitlanders</u>	<u>Imperial Government</u>	<u>Capitalists</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paul Kruger (S.A.R. <i>President, conservative Boer</i>)</li> <li>• Willem Leyds (S.A.R. <i>State Secretary</i>)</li> <li>• Francis William Reitz (S.A.R. <i>State Secretary after Leyds</i>)</li> <li>• Jan Smuts (<i>Attorney General of S.A.R., moderate Boer</i>)</li> <li>• Piet Joubert (<i>moderate Boer, S.A.R. presidential candidate</i>)</li> <li>• Schalk Burger (<i>moderate Boer, S.A.R. presidential candidate</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wilfred Wybergh (S.A.L. <i>President</i>)</li> <li>• Patrick Ogilvie (S.A.L. <i>Exec. Member</i>)</li> <li>• J.R. Dodd (S.A.L. <i>Exec. Member</i>)</li> <li>• C.P. Crewe (S.A.L. <i>Secretary</i>)</li> <li>• William Monypenny (<i>Johannesburg Star editor</i>)</li> <li>• R.J. Pakeman (<i>Transvaal Leader editor</i>)</li> <li>• Percy FitzPatrick (<i>Wernher, Beit &amp; Co.</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lord Salisbury (<i>British Prime Minister</i>)</li> <li>• Joseph Chamberlain (<i>British Secretary of State for the Colonies</i>)</li> <li>• Alfred Milner (<i>High Commissioner for Southern Africa</i>)</li> <li>• Lord Selborne (<i>British Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies</i>)</li> <li>• Conyngham Greene (<i>British Agent in Pretoria</i>)</li> <li>• J.E. Evans (<i>British Vice-Consul in Johannesburg</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cecil Rhodes (<i>De Beers, B.S.A.C., Consolidated Goldfields</i>)</li> <li>• Alfred Beit (<i>Wernher, Beit &amp; Co.</i>)</li> <li>• Julius Wernher (<i>Wernher, Beit &amp; Co.</i>)</li> <li>• Friedrich Eckstein (<i>Wernher, Beit &amp; Co.</i>)</li> <li>• George Farrar (<i>East Rand Proprietary Mines</i>)</li> <li>• Lionel Philips (<i>Wernher, Beit &amp; Co.</i>)</li> </ul>

\*Note: Percy FitzPatrick is arguably the most transient of all leading members due to his heavy involvement in Wernher, Beit & Co., close cooperation with Milner, and active role in the South African League (particularly after the expiration of the ban on political activity place don ex-Reformers such as himself). However, he is arguably best slotted in the Uitlander faction because of his importance to that faction and because of its importance to him.

i. **Doors Open, Doors Close (January 1896)**

The Jameson Raid's catastrophic failure forever altered the situation in South Africa. Experiencing rapid and drastic changes in leadership, method, and objective, the post-Raid factions bore little resemblance to their pre-Raid counterparts. Indeed, the three factions that drove the pro-confrontation coalition formed in earnest in the aftermath of the Raid. In contrast to the frequently made contention that the British government or the capitalists dominated the coalition, the Uitlanders in fact chained the other two factions to an aggressive anti-Boer outlook. While the capitalists and the pro-imperial statesmen deserve credit for nurturing the Uitlander movement in its infancy, it was the Uitlanders themselves who became the driving force for war by mid-1899. Thus, contrary to the assertions of Hobson and others, neither the capitalists nor the imperial officials in South Africa or London controlled the Uitlanders. In reality, it was the Uitlander faction's actions that brought on a war that many capitalists feared and that British imperial statesmen would have preferred to postpone in favor of increased pressure and more time to prepare. Consequently, Uitlander impulsiveness not only forced the war, it also forced it prematurely in the eyes of Imperial politicians and military men. A brief account of where the factions stood will provide a necessary context for the events that unfolded between 1895 and 1899, events that ultimately culminated in war.

The faction most immediately affected by the failure of the Jameson Raid was that of the Uitlanders. The pre-Raid Uitlander political bodies, the Transvaal National Union and the Reform Committee, completely disintegrated. Furthermore, the arrest of its leaders deprived the Uitlander community of its organization and direction. As Percy FitzPatrick himself noted, the Uitlanders were "helpless, hopeless, and divided" as late as early 1897. Out of the original

Reform committee's members, only FitzPatrick returned to Transvaal.<sup>1</sup> While the Boers did not execute any of the plotters, most either fled, were exiled, or were instructed to refrain from political activity for three years.

As for the capitalists, the upheaval and uncertainty drove a wedge between the “pro-imperial” faction and the relatively Boer-friendly and conflict-averse “cosmopolitans.”<sup>2</sup> Rhodes's actions had jeopardized the entire mining community. Consequently, Rhodes temporarily withdrew from further direct attempts to influence politics in Transvaal, causing Alfred Beit to replace him as de facto leader of the pro-conflict capitalists, with Percy FitzPatrick as his leading agent. Moreover, Rhodes's exclusion from his uprising plot of all mining companies apart from Consolidated Gold Fields,<sup>3</sup> Wernher, Beit & Co., and George Farrar's East Rand Proprietary Mines caused a split in the mining community, best exemplified when several large companies split off from the Chamber of Mines to form the Association of Mines.<sup>4</sup>

Britain's actions in facilitating the Raid could have served as a valid justification for a Boer declaration of war. However, Kruger's response fell far short of that. Rather than executing the rebels or invading British territory, Kruger chose to defuse the situation and instead focus on preparing for the future military conflict which increased exponentially in likelihood. As a result, Transvaal began a massive armament buildup, increasing its stockpiles of weapons, ammunition, and artillery while also fortifying Pretoria and Johannesburg with the construction of several

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<sup>1</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 41. Notably, Hammond, Frank Rhodes, Farrar, Leonard, and Phillips all left Transvaal.

<sup>2</sup> Robinson and Gallagher, with Denny, *Africa and the Victorians*, 422. The “pro-imperials” included Wernher, Beit, Rhodes, Farrar, and Abe Bailey while the “cosmopolitans” included Robinson, Barnato, Neumann, Albu, Goerz, Lewis, and Marks.

<sup>3</sup> Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold, and War*, 303. During the uprising, the Reform Committee selected the Consolidated Gold Fields headquarters in Johannesburg as its base of operations.

<sup>4</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 42. After the arrest of the Reformers, J.B. Robinson, George Albu, A. Goerz, and A. Wagner withdrew from the Chamber of Mines and formed their own organization, the Association of Mines.

forts.<sup>5</sup> Now in possession of the latest German firearms, the Boer forces the British would encounter three years later would prove a more than equal match technologically.

ii. **Enter Milner (May 1897 – December 1898)**

The end of Sir Hercules Robinson's term a year after the Jameson Raid left the high commissionership vacant. Determined to fill this vacancy with a man who would take strong action when necessary, Chamberlain appointed Alfred Milner on February 27, 1897, to fill the post starting May 5, 1897.<sup>6</sup> With his Oxford education and many past administrative successes in hand, Milner arrived in Cape Town intent on reasserting British paramountcy in South Africa. While his later actions may suggest that Milner desired a confrontation with the Transvaal government from the beginning, this desire in truth only came about once Milner resigned himself to that outcome. Initially, Milner, like Rhodes, sought to subvert Transvaal through indirect means.<sup>7</sup> After his efforts at doing so failed, Rhodes attempted to force an internal coup with external military and diplomatic support. With these two cards already drawn from the deck, Milner had to try another approach. This manifested itself in his overarching mission to achieve an internal coup by constitutional means.

According to Milner, once English voters surpassed Boer ones, "complete self-government in S. Africa" could be granted and "a federated S. Africa could be left to work out its

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<sup>5</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 43.

<sup>6</sup> *The Colonial Office List*, 38<sup>th</sup> Edition (1899) (London: Harrison, 1899), 21.

<sup>7</sup> As mentioned in Act I, Rhodes had attempted to do so by hemming in the Transvaal between Natal and Cape Colony to the South, a British controlled Matabeleland and Mashonaland to the North ("Rhodesia"), and a pro-British Portuguese controlled Mozambique (or, ideally, a British purchased one) and Delagoa Bay to the east.

own destiny.”<sup>8</sup> Such a plan relied on Uitlander population growth in Johannesburg,<sup>9</sup> a speedy enfranchisement of the Uitlanders, and a redistribution of Volksraad seats to enable an Uitlander legislative majority. Then, the Uitlanders could anglicize Transvaal and, along with Cape Colony and Natal, voluntarily join a pro-British South African federation within the Empire. Far from seeking out armed conflict, Milner early on declared to the Colonial Under-Secretary, Lord Selborne,<sup>10</sup> that “I desire peace—honestly—and I hope to maintain it.”<sup>11</sup> With some population estimates as late as 1898 gauging Transvaal’s white population at 65,000 Boers (24,000 male citizens over the age of 16) and nearly 180,000 Uitlanders (of which nearly 90,000 were adult males and 150,000 were English speakers), this strategy seemed promising.<sup>12</sup>

The Boer hostility to enfranchising tens of thousands of Uitlanders with foreign sympathies within a short period of time naturally represented the greatest obstacle to Milner’s scheme. Milner sought to overcome this opposition by combining financial pressure from the mining industry and European banking institutes, political protest within Transvaal, isolation from potential allies in Europe,<sup>13</sup> diplomatic pressure from Britain, and support for moderate

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<sup>8</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 463. Milner to Sir W. Hely Hutchinson, June 15, 1899. “I share Escombe’s dislike of war, but I cannot concur in his view that if Transvaal were given constitution, similar to that of other S. African States, there would not immediately or very soon be an Uitlander majority. The industrial population would increase with enormous rapidity and spread over many districts. I am quite as strongly in favour of complete self-government in S. Africa as he can be. Nothing stands in the way but the illiberal system of the Transvaal. If that could be put right, I believe British garrison would soon be totally unnecessary and a federated S. Africa would be left to work out its own destiny...”

<sup>9</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 200. FitzPatrick informed Milner that “immigration, properly regulated and effected, would in a couple of years settle the question of parties in South Africa.”

<sup>10</sup> William Palmer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Selborne.

<sup>11</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 38, 40–41. Milner to Selborne, March 20, 1897. “The Rhodesites are, as far as I can judge, itching to involve us in a quarrel.”

<sup>12</sup> James Bryce, *Impressions of South Africa* (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd, 1898), 525, 591. A footnote from Bryce on page 525 reads “There were some 700,000 [native Africans] in the Transvaal, but no one reckoned them as possible factors in a contest, any more than sheep or oxen.”

<sup>13</sup> Cecil Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1 (London: Cassell & Company, 1933), 88. “I think the Government of the South African Republic is inclined to greater moderation by reason of increasing internal troubles, of Leyds’ failure to get any explicit promises of political support from Europe, and by his discovery that even financial aid is not easy to procure.”

“progressive” Boers running for election against Kruger and his conservative allies in the Volksraad. When these efforts at attaining the franchise failed, Milner resorted to bringing about a confrontation he believed would lead to a Boer capitulation. Then, as capitulation seemed increasingly unlikely despite increasing pressure, he finally surrendered to an idea that received voice only in jest when he first encountered FitzPatrick in 1897—that “there is only one possible settlement—war! It has got to come.”<sup>14</sup>

Upon arriving in the Cape, Milner quickly developed connections with leading figures. His personal writings throughout his tenure in South Africa make note of dinners “with Jameson and others,” frequent meetings with Rhodes, “long and interesting” talks with Beit, meetings with Sprigg, and frequent correspondence with FitzPatrick.<sup>15</sup> Winning particular admiration from Rhodes and consulting him often, Milner even received the distinction of receiving an appointment as one of the six executors of Rhodes’s will.<sup>16</sup> Surprisingly, despite residing in Africa for only a year, Milner resolved to return to England. This would be no vacation though, as Milner meant business. Determined to meet with “*all* the leading politicians and pressmen...and to stamp on rose-coloured illusions about S. Africa...,”<sup>17</sup> Milner spent time with numerous political leaders and members of the press.<sup>18</sup> Attuned to the press’s power over the minds of the public and the minds of the public over government officials, Milner sought to

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<sup>14</sup> A.H. Duminy and W.R. Guest, *Fitzpatrick: South African Politician: Selected Papers, 1888-1906* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1976), 143-147. FitzPatrick to Beit, March 4, 1898. FitzPatrick’s account is as follows: “Once, after many questions as to the personnel of the Boer party, which led to discussions of their capacity to share in Government, etc., he laughed the subject off and said with a shrug of the shoulders: ‘After all, it’s absurd to discuss that. There is only one possible settlement-war! It has got to come.’” Secondary sources using this quote often omit FitzPatrick’s contextualization and thus incorrectly paint the moment as a spontaneous genuine utterance of a war-crazed Milner.

<sup>15</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 271, 298, 470.

<sup>16</sup> Jourdan, *Cecil Rhodes, his Private Life*, 78, 234.

<sup>17</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 299. Milner to Fiddes, Dec. 23, 1898.

<sup>18</sup> Porter, *Joseph Chamberlain and the Diplomacy of Imperialism*, 180; Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 301. These included E.T. Cook, Spencer Wilkinson, Flora Shaw, Donald Wallace, H.W. Massingham, Leo Maxse, James Knowles, and St. Loe Strachey.



influence leading newspapers by convincing them of the need to put pressure on the South African Republic. These efforts yielded fruit, as Milner returned to a South Africa the British press covered far more extensively. Consequently, public interest and sympathy for the Uitlanders grew steadily, reassuring Salisbury and his government of the political viability of Chamberlain's and Milner's plans. After his trip, Milner reflected that, if he could get things "forrarder" in South Africa, he would "have support when the time comes."<sup>19</sup>

Swayed by precarious assumptions and persuasive self-interested parties, Alfred Milner fell victim to several logical fallacies that resulted in his calamitous determination to push the Boers to the brink of war. Like many imperialists, Milner presumed that Britain's safety in a world of empires relied on the resources, prestige, and trade outlets furnished by its own imperial holdings. This abstract foundational fallacy birthed another—that the Empire's survival depended on colonial federation. From this point, Milner next overestimated South Africa's importance to Britain, believing that, should he succeed there, it would serve as a model for British colonial federation worldwide. This model, he believed, would serve as a blueprint for colonial reform that could preserve the Empire and British hegemony indefinitely.

Milner's strategy for preserving the British Empire practically morphed into an obsession, one that motivated him to develop a strategy for South African federation. In his mind, however, such a strategy required Transvaal's subjugation. Milner's realization that the Uitlanders could serve as the key to Transvaal's demise by internal political coup or by external coercion proved destructive, as such a method at subjugation ultimately required a war in order to succeed. Worsening the situation, Milner's reliance on this one particular strategy made him

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<sup>19</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 301-302. Milner to Selborne, January 31, 1899. "If I can advance matters by my own actions, as I still hope I may be able to do, I believe that I shall have support when the time comes. And if I can't get things 'forrarder' locally, I should not get support whatever I said."

overly reliant on the cooperation of the Uitlanders. Consequently, Milner eventually fell hostage to the Uitlanders, a group he sought to manipulate as his subservient tools of imperial expansion. Furthermore, the Uitlander hijacking of the pro-confrontation coalition and their forcing of the pace altered the timeline of events and led to an unprepared Britain suffering devastating costs and losses.

**iii. Rising Action: The South African League**

With the Uitlander leadership more or less purged following the Jameson Raid, one would expect the reform movement to have collapsed altogether or, at the very least, to become temporarily defunct. However, quite the opposite occurred. By the end of January 1896, an organization known as the South African League had formed. Within a year, it had established autonomous branches in Transvaal and in Natal, as well as an affiliated organization in Britain known as the Imperial South African Association (ISAA).<sup>20</sup> Instead of weakening, the Uitlander movement strengthened and expanded.

The South African League's leadership and composition, though similar to those of the Transvaal National Union and Reform Committee, differed in several notable ways. First, the League relied heavily on support from Cape Colony and from Natal and thus achieved far wider recognition and influence than its predecessors. Second, the newly formed League operated with far more autonomy than the National Union and Reform Committee. From start to finish, the Reform Committee essentially existed at the mercy of Rhodes, Beit, Farrar, and Jameson. These men funded the group, directed it, set the timeline, supplied the Reformers with weapons, determined the objectives and strategy, and received much of the blame for its failure. In

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<sup>20</sup> Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold, and War*, 378.

contrast, the South African League appears to have started independently of the mining magnates, initially relied solely on small donations and membership dues for funding,<sup>21</sup> and enjoyed a far more distant relationship with the capitalists for much of its existence. League officials J.R. Dodd and Patrick Ogilvie even complained to Rhodes in late September 1898 that:

We have observed a very clear tendency on the part of the ‘Big Houses’ here to stand aloof from any important step suggested to them by the local Branch of the S.A. League (with whom six months ago they were undoubtedly in sympathy). For instance: any funds we asked for the purpose of assisting our Cape Branches in the work of registration last year were forthcoming, but not a penny could be collected from the “big houses” during the election for any purpose... In the second place two at least of the big houses (Ecksteins and another) have—in our estimation—gone out of their way to prevent us two (presumably as foremen in the League movement) from making any money... We are assured of the big houses being convinced that any sort of misrule (by choice a “reformed” Boer Government directly under their own thumbs) is preferable to an Imperial control under which the familiar corruption which they find so profitable will be impossible.<sup>22</sup>

While the League experienced varying degrees of amicability with the mine owners, all signs point to heavy involvement by at least some magnates throughout the League’s history and especially in the early stages of its activities. Rhodes personally certainly provided financial assistance, with evidence suggesting that he covertly (though with Milner and Phillips’s knowledge) pledged at least nine to ten thousand pounds to the League over a three-year time span.<sup>23</sup> However, contrary to Paul Kruger’s assertion that Cecil Rhodes directly founded the League and its Transvaal branch, very little evidence exists to support such a contention.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, Rhodes’s private papers reveal that League officials such as Johannesburg attorney Joseph Walker needed to constantly badger Rhodes to fulfill even modest promises of financial

<sup>21</sup> Patrick Ogilvie, *Cecil John Rhodes Papers* (Rhodes House, Oxford: Yale University), Roll 23, Document 6.

<sup>22</sup> J.R. Dodd and Patrick Ogilvie, *Cecil John Rhodes Papers*, Roll 23, Document 17.

<sup>23</sup> Lionel Phillips, *Cecil John Rhodes Papers*, Index C, Documents 23-24.

<sup>24</sup> Kruger, *The Memoirs of Paul Kruger*, 266-267.

support.<sup>25</sup> It even seems that some of Rhodes's associates found the exaggerated fears of his involvement humorous, with one of them writing to Rhodes that "...on the other side they say your Agents are stirring up the people...which is all very amusing."<sup>26</sup>

While Rhodes did eventually assume an official leadership role with his election as president of the League's Cape branch on April 29, 1899, this occurred more than three years after the League's founding and only after constant requests for his leadership, including a message from C.P. Crewe, Secretary of the League, stating that "It is indeed absolutely necessary you should take the helm...I trust you will not object."<sup>27</sup> Importantly, this request came not at the behest of Rhodes himself, the capitalists, or even of the imperial government, as Chamberlain recognized that "Unfortunately Rhodes cannot unite the English without giving offence and cause of suspicion to the Dutch."<sup>28</sup> Likewise, Milner felt that Rhodes was too personally involved and thus could not be trusted to lead the efforts against the Boers as "His projected game is a good game but...he is desperately anxious to have another slap at old Kruger by 'peaceful means.'"<sup>29</sup> Instead, Rhodes's belated involvement in the South African League reinforces the contentions that (1) the League was founded organically and not by the capitalists or imperial government, and (2) while the League received support and direction from the capitalists and imperial government, it existed as its own autonomous faction from start to finish and worked to intensify the involvement of the other two factions in the pro-imperial coalition.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Joseph Walker, *Cecil John Rhodes Papers*, Index C, Document 139.

<sup>26</sup> A. Little, *Cecil John Rhodes Papers*, Roll 23, Document 7.

<sup>27</sup> C.P. Crewe, *Cecil John Rhodes Papers*, Index C, Document 208, Document 223.

<sup>28</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 70-72. Chamberlain to Milner.

<sup>29</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 107. Milner to Chamberlain. June 2, 1897.

<sup>30</sup> Cana, *Boers and British*, 26. On the point of allegations concerning the autonomy of the Uitlanders, Frank R. Cana conveyed his belief in 1899 that "With regard to the attempts to represent [the Uitlander movement] as artificial, the work of scheming capitalist or professional agitators, I regard it as a wilful perversion of the truth. The defenceless people who are clamouring for redress of grievances are doing so at a great personal risk. It is notorious that many capitalists regard political agitation with disfavour because of its effect on markets."

The Boer government's actions in the aftermath of the Jameson Raid gave the Uitlanders much to grumble about. Prompted by the publication of considerable provocative and borderline seditious anti-Boer content, including two "coarsely offensive" political cartoons,<sup>31</sup> the Volksraad passed a press law in September 1896 which granted the executive council the discretionary power to prohibit the distribution of printed materials if they were deemed "in conflict with public morals or dangerous to the order and peace of the Republic."<sup>32</sup> Not only did this enrage Uitlanders and the British government by infringing on liberties guaranteed under the London Convention, it also directly affected the many newspapers owned by the capitalists. The Boers followed this action up by passing a new immigration law designed to limit Indian immigration into Transvaal by requiring Indian immigrants to acquire a pass and demonstrate they had means of employment<sup>33</sup>—once again, a possible violation of the London Convention, which also worsened the already prevalent labor shortage. Finally, the Volksraad generated great controversy and a formal British response with its passing of the Aliens Expulsion Act. This act gave the president and executive council discretionary power to expel any alien (Uitlander) who they considered "a danger to the public peace and order."<sup>34</sup>

Reinvigorated by these retaliatory actions, the Uitlander movement, newly reconstituted under the auspices of the South African League, drastically changed its methods and objectives. Prior to the Raid, the Transvaal National Union and Reform Committee sought an independent but anglicized Republic under Uitlander control. Coupled with military and financial support from the imperial capitalists and diplomatic support from High Commissioner Robinson and the

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<sup>31</sup> Marais, *The Fall of Kruger's Republic*, 131. The first cartoon, *The Science of Swollen Heads*, depicted "Doctor" Chamberlain diagnosing Kruger with many "evil qualities." The second depicted Chamberlain asking Kruger to play the Transvaal national anthem. When Kruger instead plays *Rule Britannia*, Chamberlain comments that "That shows the Spirits are working"

<sup>32</sup> Marais, *The Fall of Kruger's Republic*, 129.

<sup>33</sup> Marais, *The Fall of Kruger's Republic*, 127.

<sup>34</sup> Marais, *The Fall of Kruger's Republic*, 124.

British government, armed revolt appeared to be the best method of accomplishing the desired regime change. The catastrophic failure of this method necessitated a change in strategy.

The question concerning the cause of the Uitlander shift in attitude from intensely favoring Transvaal's independence to actively seeking imperial stewardship requires an explanation. Perhaps the Uitlanders realized that an internal uprising would likely never succeed against the increasingly militarized, united, and resolute Boers, and that only imperial intervention from Britain could bring about reform. The League's actions from January 1896 onwards, as well as the leaders who emerged within its ranks, all point to the soundness of this approach. Indeed, the League publicly proclaimed its goal of "uniting the Transvaal in a federation of the States of South Africa under the British flag,"<sup>35</sup> a far cry from the Reform Committee's adamant refusal to carry out an uprising under the British flag.

However, this surrender of Transvaal's independence, something the Uitlanders treasured so dearly only a few months earlier, seemed to be necessary to solicit Britain's sympathies and assistance. Thus, heated opposition to the raising of the British flag in Pretoria gave way to near fanatical embrace of annexation to the Empire.<sup>36</sup> Additionally, the post-Raid political elimination of the pro-independence "Reformers" enabled pro-imperial jingoes such as Wilfred Wybergh to lead the Uitlander movement and accelerate this change in outlook. Thus, the Uitlander movement's new leadership likely realized the impossibility of unilaterally overthrowing the Boers and accordingly shifted its focus to provoking British intervention.

The formation of the Imperial South African Association in Britain added a whole new element to the Uitlander campaign. Largely a regional issue prior to the Jameson Raid, the

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<sup>35</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 130.

<sup>36</sup> Marais, *The Fall of Kruger's Republic*, 162-164. Ex. In May 1897, a League deputation informed Greene that they sought the franchise in order to eventually unite the Transvaal in a South African federation under the British flag.

Transvaal question arrived in Britain due to the ISAA's efforts to ensure that it entered the public mind of the London metropole. In 1896, the ISAA held 130 meetings attended by 50,000 people. At these meetings, 150,000 propaganda pamphlets were distributed. By 1899, these annual numbers increased to 406 meetings attended by 248,000 people, with 500,000 pamphlets distributed.<sup>37</sup> From April until October 1899, these meetings throughout England passed resolutions supporting the government and calling for intervention in South Africa. Many of these resolutions appeared in the press, and many were sent directly to the Colonial Office.<sup>38</sup>

Interestingly, reports to the Colonial Office claimed that attendance at ISAA meetings was roughly split equally between Conservatives and Liberals and that the organization's favorability among the public and the press, both provincially and within London itself, was extremely high.<sup>39</sup> Whether or not these claims were true, they carried weight in Westminster by suggesting a uniformity of public support at a time when public polling was not available. By affecting public opinion, the ISAA effectively influenced and reinforced Chamberlain and the rest of Salisbury's cabinet. In this way, the Uitlander faction, a small group existing on the fringe of Britain's imperial periphery, effectively influenced metropolitan opinion *en masse* and thus indirectly drove British imperial policy.

The South African League, like the Reform Committee, retained its independence while simultaneously relying on and collaborating with the capitalists and agents of the British government extensively. While the organization sought to strengthen the hand of the British government so that it could force a confrontation with the Boers, it should not be seen as merely a docile instrument of the British government. Indeed, the League actively pushed to bring about

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<sup>37</sup> Marais, *The Fall of Kruger's Republic*, 170.

<sup>38</sup> Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold, and War*, 243-244.

<sup>39</sup> Porter, *Joseph Chamberlain and the Diplomacy of Imperialism*, 162-163.

conflict, even at the risk of it occurring at an inopportune time. This may be challenging to discern at first, as the League's early actions mirror the requests of Milner and British Agent at Pretoria Conyngham Greene nearly perfectly.<sup>40</sup> Even up to May 1899, the British government played a significant role in advising and motivating the League. For example, Johannesburg *Star* editor William Monypenny reported to Milner that he was doing his best to keep the pot boiling so that the League could organize meetings, Milner ordered his subordinates to seek out influential signatures for a third petition, and Milner pushed for the creation of a Uitlander parliament after the Reform Committee's political activity ban expired on May 31. Indeed, J.E. Evans, the British vice-consul in Johannesburg, noted that the Uitlanders themselves did not seem to care much at times, reporting to Milner's secretary Ossy Walrond that "I have been at the people here in regard to forming a Committee such as you have proposed but no one seems to put much energy into the matter."<sup>41</sup>

However, after the expiry of the ban on ex-Reformers' political activity in May 1899, the Uitlanders entered a second and more important phase. The next five months saw a dramatic increase in political activity, uncompromising public demands, and threats from the Uitlanders against their collaborating factions. These actions not only were independent of Imperial authorities, they also undermined them. In doing so, the Uitlanders (now led openly by ex-Reformers) provided the final and most critical impetus for confrontation between Britain and

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<sup>40</sup> E.g. In March 1898, Greene, related to Milner that the League "of late largely extended the field of its labour, and is now opening branches all along the line of the Witwatersrand reef." He then went on to add that "It therefore, in a certain sense deserves sympathy, and looks to me for encouragement. On the other hand, its methods have not, as Your Excellency is aware, always been very discreet, and it requires careful and constant watching. Up till now I have managed to keep some sort of control over the Executive, notwithstanding that they are, of course, being constantly pressed by the mass of the League to resort to more vigorous action." Green also replied to a League deputation which asked whether a large public gathering would help that "it would...be more in harmony with the spirit of true patriotism not to force matters in this part of the world at the present time, but to place full confidence in Her Majesty's Government..." Great Britain, *Confidential Print: Africa*, No. 543, 332-333. Green to Milner, March 24, 1898.

<sup>41</sup> Porter, *Joseph Chamberlain and the Diplomacy of Imperialism*, 212.



Transvaal. By publicly announcing their loyalty to Britain, requesting assistance, and laying out clear demands, the Uitlanders created a situation in which Salisbury's government had to choose between intervening on their behalf and ignoring them. The former could (and would) lead to war, while the latter would shatter British prestige and political influence in South Africa while also making an imperial federation in South Africa highly unlikely. Privately, Uitlander expressions of impatience and wavering faith in the British government rushed the otherwise cautious Westminster authorities into acting, as the Uitlanders insisted that the ideal time to act was elapsing and that further delay would permanently shift the momentum to the Boers.

**iv. The Industrial Commission and the 'Kept Press' (May – July 1897)**

The mining community had much to be thankful for and much to complain about in early 1897. The state-sponsored dynamite monopoly proved among the most irksome and formidable of the grievances, costing the mines over £600,000 more annually than if they were allowed to purchase dynamite on the free market.<sup>42</sup> However, President Kruger adamantly refused to compromise, deeming the dynamite monopoly as the “corner-stone of the independence of the republic,” mainly because of its potential to produce ammunition and explosives for national defense.<sup>43</sup> Additionally, a serious labor shortage plagued the mines. This problem worsened due to the Boer police's corruption and inefficiency regarding policing illegal liquor distribution, which perpetually incapacitated between 25 and 30 percent of the African labor force.<sup>44</sup>

Despite these problems, the industry profited immensely, and few capitalists complained publicly. To the contrary, as late as 1898, many of the capitalists espoused favorable opinions of the Transvaal government. For example, George Albu believed that “this government, though we

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<sup>42</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 54.

<sup>43</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 54-55. This was despite the facts that the Transvaal imported most of its munitions and the ammunition factory itself required imported materials.

<sup>44</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 53.

are laboring under certain grievances, is not as black as it is painted” and that Transvaal’s gold law gave the companies “probably a higher percentage of the... extracted mineral than is done by the mining laws of any other country.”<sup>45</sup> In November 1898, Lord Harris of Consolidated Goldfields told Joseph Chamberlain “I may say that we are by no means ill-disposed towards Kruger... [we don’t think] that we are working under a crushing tyranny.”<sup>46</sup> This was a surprising shift from a company that tried to completely overthrow the government three years earlier. Clearly, gold production was quite lucrative. By 1898, Transvaal produced more gold than any other nation in the world, nearly 27 percent of total production globally. Incredibly, over £75 million had been invested in the Transvaal gold mines by 1899, between 60 and 80 percent from British sources.<sup>47</sup>

In May 1897, Kruger made an uncharacteristic move. In order to placate the mining community, and in response to a regional economic downturn, he authorized an inquiry into the state of the mining industry. This industrial commission, composed of members of both the Chamber of Mines and the nascent Association of Mines, fell under the purview of the progressive Boer politician Christiaan Joubert. Whatever Kruger’s hopes for the commission, its results backfired immensely. Released in July 1897, the results surprisingly supported nearly all the mining industry’s contentions. Additionally, the report commended the mining industry for its “honest administration” and noted its importance to Transvaal’s economy while also recommending closer cooperation between the government and the mines. Finally, the report

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<sup>45</sup> Great Britain, *Confidential Print: Africa*, No. 543, 648-650. Fraser to Milner, account of a speech by George Albu in Nov. 1898. Fraser describes Albu as “German enough in his ideas not to wish to see the British element seize too much of the power.” Consequently, Fraser goes on to lambast Albu’s speech as “a kind of feeble apology for the administration of the Transvaal Government, amounting in fact to a declaration ‘that it might well be worse.’”

<sup>46</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 52

<sup>47</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 44.

attacked the government's concessions (specifically the dynamite and railway concessions) and import duties.<sup>48</sup>

The Industrial Commission report and the Transvaal government's reaction to it undoubtedly gave the imperial capitalists a wonderful opportunity to close the ranks of the capitalist faction. While the report gave clear support for the mining industry's requested reforms, Kruger and the Volksraad quietly denied or ignored nearly all of them. Even more provocatively, the Volksraad voted to impose new direct and indirect burdens and expenses on the mines.<sup>49</sup> The failure of the Boers to address the newly reinforced concerns even remotely adequately led to a speedy reunification of the Chamber of Mines and Association of Mines under George Rouliot of Wernher, Beit & Co.<sup>50</sup> If that decision did not sufficiently demonstrate that capitalist consolidation around the idea of serious reform had begun, J. B. Robinson's announcement that he was "willing to take the lead in a movement for reform" should have tipped the Boers off that they were rapidly losing what little support they had among the capitalists.<sup>51</sup> Foolishly, Kruger determined it was more important to reward the concessionaries benefitting from his policies and maintain their support rather than conceding some ground to the mine owners in order to reinforce the split in their ranks and win allies among the cosmopolitan group. Thus, the Industrial Commission and its fallout served as the catalyst for renewed capitalist collaboration against the Transvaal government. Not only did the Boer response provide reason for capitalist pushback, it also directly sowed the seeds for complete capitalist

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<sup>48</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 166.

<sup>49</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 46.

<sup>50</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 47.

<sup>51</sup> Duminy and Guest, *FitzPatrick: South African Politician*, 125-129. FitzPatrick to Wernher, October 23, 1897. "Van Hulsteyn, who as you know, is Robinson's solicitor, came in a few days ago to pave the way for a sort of rapprochement with Robinson with a view of joint action. Robinson says that he is willing now to take the lead in a movement for reform but that he recognises that he cannot act alone and he wants first of all to be assured of the support of the others here."

unity, seeds that would be watered by the outcome of the 1898 Transvaal elections and would sprout after the Great Deal negotiations of 1899.

Angering the capitalists proved particularly detrimental because of the massive influence they had in shaping public opinion through their ownership of much of the regional press. In his theorizing on the cause of the war, J.A. Hobson argued that a “kept” press owned and controlled by pro-war capitalists served as a crucial tool for shaping public and government opinion and decision making. Hobson’s claim that South African capitalists exercised control over the press, particularly in South Africa, is easily supported. Wernher, Beit & Co.’s *Transvaal Leader* and Argus Printing and Publishing Company’s six regional newspapers, Abe Bailey’s *Gold Fields News*, and J.B. Robinson’s *Johannesburg Times* and *Pretoria Press* enjoyed extensive readership in South Africa and, perhaps more importantly, were sources for the press in Great Britain.<sup>52</sup> Long before the war broke out, the Boers disparaged this connection between capital and media. *The Standard and Digger News*, a paper that received subsidies from the Transvaal government and acted as its mouthpiece for official announcements, frequently lambasted the pro-Uitlander newspapers for this reason.<sup>53</sup>

However, Hobson missed two key players in his “kept press” hypothesis: Alfred Milner and Joseph Chamberlain. First, Milner and Chamberlain brought the press’s attention to South Africa and kept it there. Next, they biased the newspapers against Transvaal and in favor of the Uitlanders. This was done through sensational announcements and publications at a time when

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<sup>52</sup> Porter, *Joseph Chamberlain and the Diplomacy of Imperialism*, 180-181; L.V. Praagh, *The Transvaal and Its Mines: The Encyclopedic History of the Transvaal* (London: Praagh & Lloyd, 1906), 216; Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 74; Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 169.

<sup>53</sup> J.A. Hobson, *The War in South Africa: Its Causes and Effects* (London: J. Nisbet, 1900), 197, 229, 240.

“press releases” were not common in British politics,<sup>54</sup> active involvement in selecting leading pressmen in South Africa,<sup>55</sup> and “hints” communicated to newspapers both in Britain and in South Africa.<sup>56</sup>

v. **The Elections of 1898 (May – December 1898)**

Honoring J.B. Robinson’s desire to try achieving reform by supporting the election of “progressive” Boer candidates, the mine owners began to back Kruger’s opponents in the presidential election: Schalk Burger and Piet Joubert.<sup>57</sup> On paper, the “progressive” platform seemed rather strong.<sup>58</sup> Promising to curtail corruption, make economic reforms in line with the Industrial Commission’s findings, and lessen hostilities with Britain, either Joubert or Burger would have likely been a very viable candidate prior to the Jameson Raid. Joubert had even almost defeated Kruger once before in 1893, losing by a narrow margin.<sup>59</sup> The capitalists worked to augment Joubert’s campaign, providing significant funding and the support of their many newspapers.<sup>60</sup> However, the Raid was far from forgotten. It had provoked the Boers into uniting behind Kruger, their president who had labored to ensure the Republic’s safety and

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<sup>54</sup> E.g. Published by the Colonial Office, “Blue Books” included updates and information concerning the Transvaal situation and ongoing negotiations. Porter, *Joseph Chamberlain and the Diplomacy of Imperialism*, 133.

<sup>55</sup> E.g. Milner’s role in recruiting William Monypenny as a news editor for *The Star*. Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold, and War*, 399-400.

<sup>56</sup> E.g. Milner’s relationship with Phillip Gell, who wrote Milner “Let me know if you want any hint given to them [London press], for I can say thing informally [which] it might not be wise for you to write... I can get at any London paper & the *Manchester Guardian*.” Porter, *Joseph Chamberlain and the Diplomacy of Imperialism*, 213.

<sup>57</sup> Marais, *The Fall of Kruger’s Republic*, 200-201.

<sup>58</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 71. In addition to Robinson and the other “cosmopolitans,” even Lord Selborne believed that the progressive Boer candidates would likely prevail eventually. Before the election, he stated that “There must be rival candidates and rival sections competing for power among the Boers, and one day one of those candidates and one of those sections will seek for support among the Uitlanders. If this does not occur, it will be the only case in history in which it has not occurred.”

<sup>59</sup> Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold, and War*, 301. Kruger received 7,854 votes (~52.8 percent) while Joubert received 7,009 votes (~47.2 percent)

<sup>60</sup> Marais, *The Fall of Kruger’s Republic*, 200-201. “The *Volksstem*, which supported Kruger, declared that the magnates had put up £50,000 to secure Burger’s election.”

independence. Growing hostilities from Britain only served to enhance Kruger's popularity, and he crushed both Joubert and Burger at the polls.<sup>61</sup>

The resounding defeat for “progressive” moderates at the presidential level and in the Volksraad disappointed and effectively silenced Robinson and the other magnates who sought to reform Transvaal internally by supporting friendly anti-Kruger politicians. Among the League and the pro-imperial capitalists, few seem to have believed Kruger would lose, as evidenced by League official Patrick Ogilvie's messages to Rhodes that “It will be a miracle if [Burger] gets in” and that “Kruger will get in by fair means or foul.”<sup>62</sup> While Percy FitzPatrick also never believed the election would go Burger's way and that, even if it did, “You cannot trust one of them [the Boers],” he did recognize that “perhaps a few hundred pounds spent this way will not be wasted if the result should be a cemented fusion of the industry.”<sup>63</sup> Importantly, the election had a great effect on Milner, who told Selborne “The delusions, under which most of us, including myself, laboured on [reform through election of progressive Boers], has finally been dispelled by the election...”<sup>64</sup>

However, the results pleased many supporters of the South African League. As Greene reported, many members of the League “hope that Mr. Kruger, if re-elected and elated by

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<sup>61</sup> Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold, and War*, 372. Kruger received 12,764 votes (~69.3 percent), Burger received 3,716 votes (~20.2 percent), and Joubert received 1,943 votes (~10.5 percent).

<sup>62</sup> Patrick Ogilvie, *Cecil John Rhodes Papers*, Roll 23, Document 6.

<sup>63</sup> Marais, *The Fall of Kruger's Republic*, 200-201. It seems that the Wernher, Beit & Co.'s willingness to participate in Robinson's plan to fund progressive Boer candidates derived primarily from its desire to gain Robinson's support after the scheme's likely failure.

<sup>64</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 232-235. Milner to Selborne, May 9, 1898. “The delusion, under which most of us, including myself, laboured on that point, has been finally dispelled by the election... The Boers may quarrel bitterly among themselves, but it only needs the mention of any genuine reform, the suggestion that they should share their profitable monopoly of power with any others, to unite them against such a dangerous innovation... Two wholly antagonistic stems – a mediaeval race oligarchy, and a modern industrial state, recognizing no difference of status between various white races – cannot possibly live side by side in what is after all *one country*. The race-oligarchy has got to go, and I see no signs of its removing itself.”

success, will be encouraged to persevere in his present policy, and thus precipitate a crisis.”<sup>65</sup> FitzPatrick himself postulated whether “it would be better to let Kruger go on and ‘end it’” rather than try to assist Burger to “come in and ‘mend it.’”<sup>66</sup> Echoing this point, Patrick Ogilvie wrote to Rhodes that “Our ends are to be far more quickly attained by the election of Kruger as President”<sup>67</sup> and another League official informed Rhodes that “It will be better for us to get Kruger again elected, for then a crash will come; and if Burger or Joubert get in the position might be patched up, only to linger on for the change that must come, and if it comes with a crash the Uitlander will get a shot, for one party is bound to ask them for assistance.”<sup>68</sup> Contrary to Hobson’s assertions, the capitalists as a whole may actually have been the most moderate and anti-conflict forces, especially compared with the Uitlanders. Now, the only two options that remained for the capitalists were to make peace with Kruger’s government and accept that certain reforms would likely never occur or to fully back the confrontation-seeking imperialists.

vi. **Cue the Petitions (December 1898 – March 1899)**

In December 1898, the South African League in Johannesburg tried to force the issue of Uitlander grievances. As in 1894 and 1895, the Uitlanders drafted a petition seeking redress. Unlike the pre-Raid petitions, the Uitlanders did not present their new petition to the Volksraad. Instead, they published the signed petition and presented it to the British vice-consul in Johannesburg, J. E. Evans. Even more provocatively than appealing to a foreign power, the League leaders read the petition aloud from the British embassy’s balcony to a crowd of thousands, with Evans right by their side.<sup>69</sup> Evans was reprimanded for his conduct, and Greene

<sup>65</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 178. The quotation is from Greene to Milner, December 10, 1897, found in Marais’s *The Fall of Kruger’s Republic*.

<sup>66</sup> Duminy and Guest, *Fitzpatrick: South African Politician*, 138-139. FitzPatrick to Wernher, December 13, 1897.

<sup>67</sup> Patrick Ogilvie, *Cecil John Rhodes Papers*, Roll 23, Document 6.

<sup>68</sup> A. Little, *Cecil John Rhodes Papers*, Roll 23, Document 7.

<sup>69</sup> Marais, *The Fall of Kruger’s Republic*, 232.

refused the petition outright, citing the inappropriateness of its publication prior to presentation. Subsequently, British Acting Agent at Pretoria Edmund Fraser felt compelled to repudiate the claim that he was acting as “the wire-puller of the South African League.”<sup>70</sup> Thus, the first post-Raid Uitlander petition fizzled out nearly as spontaneously as it had appeared.

Ironically, the failure of the December 1898 petition paved the way for the success of the next one, presented in March 1899. After the failure of the first petition, Milner wrote to Greene instructing him to establish contact with League president Wilfred Wybergh and to advise the League as to how to properly present a future petition.<sup>71</sup> In addition to presenting the petition prior to publishing it, the League’s leaders were advised to ensure that all signatures were valid and to collect them quietly. Greene also reported that the League leaders would limit their agitation in favor of the petition to constitutional means, would have the petition include only demands on which there was general agreement among the Uitlanders, and had “bound themselves to be guided by me.”<sup>72</sup>

In addition to contacting Greene, the League’s representatives consulted Fraser on how to present the next petition. Fraser wisely recommended that the League avoid publicity prior to the presentation of any future petitions.<sup>73</sup> Milner also assisted by strongly recommending to

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<sup>70</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 226.

<sup>71</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 322. “My view, as you know, is to keep in the closest possible touch with the Uitlanders. If they ask our advice, we ought not to refuse to give it. The more they rely on us the better, as while they look to us, they will neither do anything rash, nor come to terms with the S.A.R. Government behind our backs, which, if we disinterest ourselves, is always a danger... I am all for the Uitlanders negotiating and coming to terms if they can. But I think they can afford to be stiff in the bargain, for it is evident that constant dripping wears away the rock, and the S.A.R. Government begins to find its position intolerable. It has now not only England but all the great financial interests on the Continent against it. The Uitlanders ought not to lay down their arms except for real and lasting reforms... It is quite certain that without agitation nothing whatever would ever have been conceded. It will be quite time enough to discourage further agitation when reforms are a fait accompli. And then, I believe, it will not even be necessary, for, if grievances are removed, agitation, especially in a busy community like Johannesburg which only wants to make money in peace, will cease of itself...”

<sup>72</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 257.

<sup>73</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 224.



Chamberlain that he recall William Butler, the British army's commander-in-chief in South Africa and the acting high commissioner during Milner's trip to England, as Butler's opposition to conflict and the Uitlanders in general proved a serious obstacle to "getting things forrarder." Consequently, on March 8, Greene had the pleasure of informing Milner that a new petition "would... be shortly presented to me [Greene] in whatever form I thought most desirable."<sup>74</sup>

With its official membership having grown from about 600 in October 1897<sup>75</sup> to between 1,000 and 2,000,<sup>76</sup> the League carried out a full-time operation to collect the signatures subtly yet quickly. Most notably, it did so independently of any prompting from the imperial government. In fact, the Transvaal government may have discovered the second petition's existence even before the British government did.<sup>77</sup> Likely receiving financial backing from at least some of the mining magnates, the League's executive paid canvassers "the wages of a superior working man" to collect signatures. Wybergh declared that, through this method, the petition garnered over 21,000 signatures from British subjects living in Transvaal.<sup>78</sup> This time, the petition was covertly delivered to Greene on March 24, who then forwarded it along to Milner. Milner received the petition in Cape Town on March 27, certified its authenticity, and passed it along to Chamberlain and the rest of Salisbury's Cabinet on March 28.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 340; Great Britain, *Confidential Print: Africa*, No. 572, 26-27. Greene to Milner, March 8, 1899. "Mr. Wybergh said that a new Petition to the Queen, to take the place of the Petition recently refused, had been drawn up, and had already been signed by no less than 15,000 persons. It would, Mr. Wybergh said, be shortly presented to me in whatever form I thought most desirable, the League being anxious to consult every requirement of official etiquette in the matter."

<sup>75</sup> Patrick Ogilvie, *Cecil John Rhodes Papers*, Roll 23, Document 7.

<sup>76</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 131.

<sup>77</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 340. Greene to Milner, March 8, 1899. "He [Wybergh] added that Government Agents were endeavouring to obtain a copy of the Petition..."

<sup>78</sup> Marais, *The Fall of Kruger's Republic*, 257-258.

<sup>79</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 341.

The petition attracted great press coverage in both Transvaal and Britain and comprehensively laid out the Uitlander grievances while also making a direct appeal to the Queen.<sup>80</sup> While the British accepted the petition, the Boers decried it as fraudulent and as an attempt to subvert their independence. In addition to creating its own counter-petition with over 23,000 Uitlander signatures,<sup>81</sup> the Transvaal government also tried to discredit the League's petition. According to Kruger, the Transvaal government "obtained many sworn declarations which stated that individuals had signed as many names as came into their heads. In the same way, the names of deceased and absent persons were placed on the lists." Kruger went on to elaborate that "This is easily understood, when one realizes that the persons who went round with the lists were paid according to the number of names which they obtained."<sup>82</sup>

On May 23, Chamberlain authorized Milner to publish an interim reply to the petitioners suggesting to the League that they publish the full petition in the Johannesburg press.<sup>83</sup> Milner also explained to Chamberlain that the petition was justified and necessary because, under the current reform proposals, "They would still only return two members in a [Volksraad] of twenty-eight."<sup>84</sup> Following up on this, Chamberlain asked Milner to compose a telegraph to include in a publicly published "Blue Book." Milner decided to thoroughly trash the Transvaal government and endorse the Uitlanders. In his famous "Helots" telegram of May 4, 1899, Milner abhorred

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<sup>80</sup> L.S. Amery, *The Times History of the War in South Africa, 1899-1902* (London: S. Low, Marston and Company, Ltd., 1909), 225-232. See Appendix A for the full text of the petition.

<sup>81</sup> Marais, *The Fall of Kruger's Republic*, 257-258.

<sup>82</sup> Kruger, *The Memoirs of Paul Kruger*, 271.

<sup>83</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 377.

<sup>84</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 333-335. Milner to Chamberlain, April 11, 1899. "In fact it is not a *right* at all which he gets by his naturalization and all that he sacrifices for it, but merely a *prospect* which the caprice of the old burghers or the Government may render for ever delusive. Add to this that a simple resolution of the First Raad, passed at 24 hours' notice, may at any time upset the proposed arrangement even should it become law, and the naturalized Uitlander, at the end of his nine years' probation, may wake up any morning to find that it has been prolonged for another nine – or ninety. Finally, let it be observed that if all the Uitlanders in Johannesburg were to be naturalized, and even if these new citizens should outnumber the old ones in the whole of the Transvaal, they would still only return two members in a Raad of twenty-eight."

“The spectacle of thousands of British subjects kept permanently in the position of helots [the slaves of ancient Sparta] ...calling vainly to Her Majesty’s Government for redress...”<sup>85</sup>

Unbeknownst to Milner and the South African League, the Transvaal government began to enact its own plan to defuse the coalition rapidly forming against it.

### **vii. The ‘Great Deal’ Negotiations (January – June 1899)**

Despite instances of direct collusion, the capitalists never yielded entirely to British governmental interests, particularly when their own interests were at stake. As FitzPatrick explained to Greene, “you [Greene] must not look to us [the capitalists] to take risks to suit the book of the British Government as we are not political agents but business people only anxious for decent conditions.” Emphasizing that this desire for “decent conditions” inherently constituted cooperation with the British government’s “book” against Transvaal, Greene laughed and replied “I see your distinction, but tell me, if things come right, who will make the millions? It seems to me you can regard it as very good business.”<sup>86</sup>

In a final attempt to entice the capitalists to break off from their Uitlander and Imperial allies, Kruger dispatched Eduard Lippert, one of the primary beneficiaries of the dynamite concession, to approach the Chamber of Mines and offer a settlement.<sup>87</sup> In what would become known as “The Great Deal,” the Transvaal government offered a comprehensive proposal to address many of the mining community’s concerns while also crushing the pro-confrontation plot working against it.<sup>88</sup> On its face, the deal made sense for the mining companies. Accepting

<sup>85</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 349-354.

<sup>86</sup> Duminy and Guest, *Fitzpatrick: South African Politician*, 143-147. FitzPatrick to Beit, March 4, 1898.

<sup>87</sup> Marais, *The Fall of Kruger’s Republic*, 248-249.

<sup>88</sup> Porter, *Joseph Chamberlain and the Diplomacy of Imperialism*, 188. The Transvaal government offered to resolve the *bewaarplaatsen* issue in favor of the mines, improve its financial policy bureaucracy, enfranchise the Uitlanders after a period of five years, and create two new Volksraad seats for Johannesburg. In return, the government asked that the capitalists cease all press agitation against the government, end any payments to and association with the South African League, aid the Boers in resolving the issues with Britain concerning treatment of Africans and Indians, and help the Republic obtain a loan in Europe.

Kruger's offer would greatly reduce the tension between the capitalists and the Boers, would certainly reduce costs, and would favorably resolve the *bewaarplaatsen* issue. However, acceding to Kruger's demands would also effectively remove the capitalists from the coalition to force a confrontation between Britain and Transvaal, likely crippling the coalition and the Uitlander movement. Thus, the capitalists had to choose between guaranteed short-term gains and an uncertain but potentially incredibly advantageous long-term solution. Needless to say, another rift opened between the cosmopolitan capitalists and the pro-imperial capitalists.

The Great Deal negotiations presented Percy FitzPatrick with his breakout role. While FitzPatrick achieved notoriety back in 1895 for his role as the Reform Committee's secretary, his impact had mostly been confined to the advice and information he passed along to Alfred Milner and to his employers at Wernher, Beit & Co. Now, his interference in politics reached new heights. After conversations with Milner and Beit, FitzPatrick resolved to sabotage the negotiations. Like the overarching coalition he was a member of, FitzPatrick employed persuasion, subterfuge, and public perception in order to bring the negotiations to a premature end, one that proved costly to the Transvaal government.

FitzPatrick's first major contribution was obtaining agreement among the capitalists based in London. After a meeting attended by Alfred Beit, J.B. Robinson, S. Neumann, Solly Joel, George Farrar, A.H. Marker, and three Consolidated Gold Fields representatives, a joint statement was issued welcoming a settlement of the dynamite issue but qualifying this acceptance with the requirement of a Uitlander franchise extension.<sup>89</sup> Next, FitzPatrick spoke to a meeting of leading capitalists at the Rand Club in Johannesburg.<sup>90</sup> At this meeting, FitzPatrick

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<sup>89</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 67.

<sup>90</sup> Marais, *The Fall of Kruger's Republic*, 253. These included the presidents of the chamber of mines and chamber of commerce and the president and secretary of the South African League.

spoke emphatically and persuasively against acceptance of Kruger's proposal. Part of his argument against a shortsighted compromise was his assertion of commonly accepted knowledge that further industrialization and immigration would inevitably give the Uitlanders a numerical superiority which, according to him, would mean "The absolute wiping out of these people [the Boers]." <sup>91</sup> FitzPatrick then brought about an impasse by insisting that the dynamite monopoly, an issue of key importance to both sides, not be discussed until after agreement was reached on the creation of an independent court and on the retrospective franchise issue. <sup>92</sup>

However, the critical action that brought down the negotiations was FitzPatrick's leak to the press of the interim capitalist reply to the Transvaal government, a reply that signaled a developing consensus among the capitalists not to forsake the Uitlanders. Specifically, the reply acknowledged the franchise as "a vital point upon which a permanent and favorable settlement must hang." <sup>93</sup> This leak functionally locked the capitalists into this position, while simultaneously embarrassing the Transvaal government. <sup>94</sup> The final nail FitzPatrick put in the coffin of the Great Deal was his advocacy for the release of the second Uitlander petition at a meeting of the South African League, regardless of the fact that the negotiations were still under way. <sup>95</sup> In doing this, FitzPatrick formally linked the Uitlanders and the capitalists, greatly

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<sup>91</sup> Duminy and Guest, *Fitzpatrick: South African Politician*, 189-202. Speech by FitzPatrick, March 13, 1899. "We have had a bit of a revival lately, a return of prosperity and some new Companies have been formed and a few more mines have begun work. It is nothing to what is to come. We have two rows of Companies at present working along the reef, or rather along a small part of it. As far as we can see, at least six rows of Companies will work here. You think two rows a lot, well, it will be six or more: and now you can take that home and think about it. It means the absolute wiping out of these people." The crowd responded to this last sentence with "Hear, Hear."

<sup>92</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 64-65.

<sup>93</sup> Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold, and War*, 193.

<sup>94</sup> Marais, *The Fall of Kruger's Republic*, 255.

<sup>95</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 68. Marais, *The Fall of Kruger's Republic*, 257. The following message from a capitalist negotiator to Milner shows the deliberate timing: "We consider it necessary to get our full reply in before the public get to know about the Petition to the Queen."

strengthening their connection and creating a unified voice that became very audible to the British public and Westminster policymakers.

After FitzPatrick's actions, relations broke down between the Transvaal government and the mining representatives. The pro-imperial capitalists won the battle and, in doing so, made great progress toward their goal of uniting the mining interests against the Boer government. From now on, the Boers attempted to apply increasing pressure on the mining industry in order to force acquiescence. In this situation, capitalist cooperation with pro-confrontation forces was put on a strict time limit: if the British government took too long, they would reach a deal with the Boers instead. Commenting on this reality, FitzPatrick declared "Mr. C. [Chamberlain] can push this line too far. He has now got an appeal from 22,000. If this isn't enough, he will never get another. We [the capitalists] can make our peace easily enough with the Govt., & we shall do it if this last effort isn't enough for Mr. C."<sup>96</sup>

The imperial officials recognized the time sensitivity, with George Fiddes, Imperial Secretary and Assistant to Milner, reporting to Milner on April 7<sup>th</sup> that the capitalists "also are skeptical though not bitter... Eckstein said twice, when I saw him yesterday, with great emphasis, 'I want a peaceful solution... I represent millions of capital, and I can't forget my fiduciary position.' In other words if they find in two months or so that ours is not the winning side they will make their peace with Kruger."<sup>97</sup> Fiddes also told Selborne that he and Greene were "absolutely convinced that you have now a good case for interference: that nothing more in the way of Uitlander action can now be looked for; and that if Her Majesty's Government do not

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<sup>96</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 244.

<sup>97</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 347.

see their way to act now, there will be no further opportunity—certainly not in the time of the present Government, or Sir Alfred, or Greene.”<sup>98</sup>

Kruger’s attempt to wean the capitalists away from the Uitlanders and British government greatly alarmed the Imperial government and the Uitlanders. On March 8, Milner informed Selborne that the negotiations were causing him “much anxiety”:

...for I feel that they have got no man on their side who is clever enough or strong enough to negotiate with the Government... and that they may give away their weapons for delusive reforms or mere promises of reform... The danger is that the big financial houses will think only of themselves and, if they can get the questions which specially affect their pockets settled satisfactorily, will give away the bulk of the Uitlander population and the Imperial Government to boot.<sup>99</sup>

On April 15, Sir W. Hely Hutchinson wrote to Milner “Kruger is now at the game of trying to divide the Uitlanders: and I should not wonder if he succeeded... The Englishry here do not seem to be quite so united as they were.”<sup>100</sup>

#### viii. **Bloemfontein: Interlude to War (June – September 1899)**

Aware that an unjustified war would be unpopular in the eyes of the British public, treasury, and parliamentary opposition, Kruger attempted to rope Milner and Chamberlain into a diplomatic conference. At best, it could defuse the situation while, at the worst, it could delay the conflict and thus simultaneously lessen British public interest and grant Transvaal more time to prepare. Thus, Kruger notified Milner that he wished to meet at a neutral location in order to discuss the diplomatic tension. From the outset, Milner strongly believed the conference would

<sup>98</sup> George D. Bryce, *The Crisis of British Power: The Imperial and Naval Papers of the Second Earl of Selborne, 1895-1910* (London: Historians' Press, 1990), 73-74. Fiddes to Selborne, April 3, 1899. Fiddes went on to say “The capitalists now friendly to us say frankly ‘We have got to live, and we are in charge of vast interests; we *can* make our peace with the Government, and we will do so as soon as we find that nothing is coming out of the present movement.’ You will then have a permanent estrangement between the two sections of the Uitlanders, instead of the present friendly feeling.”

<sup>99</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 324-325.

<sup>100</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 332.

fail and was merely a delaying tactic, one that had the immediate effect “of mollifying the British press a bit and relaxing for the moment, unfortunately as I think, the screw upon the enemy.”<sup>101</sup> Consequently, he attended the conference only begrudgingly and sought to use it in order to further his own case against the Boers.

Interestingly, the Bloemfontein Conference revealed a temporary but clear strategic divide between Milner and Chamberlain. By the time of the conference, Milner came to believe that immediate action was required in dealing with Transvaal. From this point on, he worked diligently to bring about an ultimatum that would ideally bring about an immediate and dramatic anglicization of Transvaal by constitutional means, namely the enfranchisement of the Uitlanders and proportional redistribution of Volksraad seats. On the other hand, Chamberlain favored a far more gradual and conservative approach. Like Milner, Chamberlain saw the demographic changes brought by English immigration into Transvaal as the agent by which anglicization would occur. Following the Raid, Chamberlain had been “Basing myself upon the expressed desire of President Kruger to grant municipal government to Johannesburg.”<sup>102</sup> Unlike Milner, Chamberlain believed that the granting of municipal rule in Johannesburg was a safer and more certain, albeit slower, method of bringing Transvaal into a friendly South African federation. If immediately given the reins to the country, the Uitlanders might resist annexation to the Empire, as they had back in 1895/6. This course of action would likely put Transvaal permanently beyond the grasp of the Empire. Rather, Chamberlain sought the creation of a Johannesburg

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<sup>101</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 378-379.

<sup>102</sup> Garvin, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, vol. 3, 129. “Basing myself upon the expressed desire of President Kruger to grant municipal government to Johannesburg, I suggest for his consideration, as one way of meeting difficulty, that the whole of the Rand district from end to end should be erected into something more than a municipality as that word is ordinarily understood; that in fact it should have a modified local autonomy, with powers of legislation on purely local questions, and subject to the veto of the President and Executive Council.”



municipality run by the Uitlanders.<sup>103</sup> This way, the Uitlanders would progressively increase their control over the country but would still require British diplomatic support while doing so to prevent an otherwise inevitable Boer counter response. Thus, Chamberlain saw the Bloemfontein Conference as an opportunity to accomplish this objective and urged Milner not to act hastily.<sup>104</sup> Deeming such a compromise and plan as detrimental to his own efforts at provoking confrontation, Milner decided to ignore Chamberlain's directives and to break off the conference after only a few days.

At this point, the Uitlander movement had morphed into an entirely independent and highly assertive organization. On June 10, the Uitlanders held a "great meeting" in Johannesburg, the first to include individuals now able to participate in politics after the expiry of the three-year ban on political activity issued following the Jameson Raid. At this meeting of over 5,000 people, the members passed a motion demanding "equal political power" and declaring Milner's Bloemfontein proposals as "the irreducible minimum that could be accepted." The meeting then went ahead and formed an Uitlander Council to push for Uitlander demands.<sup>105</sup> Immediately after the establishment of this Uitlander "parliament," the Uitlanders began to organize a large number of "working men's meetings" at mines throughout the Rand.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Garvin, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, vol. 3, 405. Milner's telegraphic summary to Chamberlain, May 31, 1899, "I do not want to swamp the old population but it is perfectly possible to give the new population an immediate voice... and yet to leave the old burghers in such a position that they cannot possible be swamped." Garvin, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, vol. 3, 402-403. Chamberlain to Milner, May 24, 1899, "You should not, however, lose sight of possible alternative in shape of full municipal rights for populous mining district and Johannesburg. This I still think a feasible solution, if President fears that independence will be endangered by concession of general franchise."

<sup>104</sup> Garvin, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, vol. 3, 408. June 5, 1899, "I hope you will not break off hastily... I am by no means convinced that the President of the South African Republic has made his last offer, and you should be very patient and admit a good deal of haggling before you finally abandon the game."

<sup>105</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 295.

<sup>106</sup> Marais, *The Fall of Kruger's Republic*, 263-264.

Following up on the implicit rejection of Milner's Bloemfontein proposals, a delegation arrived in Cape Town on June 12<sup>th</sup> and told Milner that his reform policy was inadequate and needed to include an independent judiciary, recognition of the English language, a substantial alteration in electoral districting, and a remodeling of the police force. In a shocking and somewhat humiliating power reversal, Milner requested patience and additional time, but was rebuffed with the publishing of a comprehensive "Uitlander programme" in the *Transvaal Leader* at the end of June.<sup>107</sup> After the London *Times* interviewed Chamberlain following these events, the Uitlander Council telegraphed Chamberlain asking that he not depart from the "five years compromise" proposed by Milner at Bloemfontein, a proposal the Uitlanders had "accepted with great reluctance."<sup>108</sup> With this action, the Uitlanders unilaterally broke the previously agreed policy of covertly communicating to Milner via Greene and FitzPatrick, now opting to directly to communicate to the pro-imperial faction's de facto head. Consequently, Milner urged them to moderate their tone, to avoid being portrayed as an irrational group of jingoes in support of "war at any price" rather than an oppressed class.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> FitzPatrick, *The Transvaal from Within*, 422-432. This "programme" appears to have been modelled on the Uitlander Manifesto of December 1895 and was likely written by many of the same individuals, now able to participate in politics once more. Notably, the 1899 "programme" completely omits the very first "plank" of the Manifesto of 1895, "The maintenance of the independence of the Republic."

<sup>108</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 469. Telegram from Uitlander Council to Chamberlain, July 19, 1899. "Council keenly disappointed Times announcement seven years' franchise acceptable Imperial Government. Fear few will accept franchise on this condition, so result not likely abate unrest, discontent, nor redress pressing grievances. Such settlement would not even approximate conditions obtaining O.F.S. and Colonies, and would failed secure recognition principle racial equality. Earnestly implore you not depart from High Commissioner's five years' compromise which Uitlanders accepted with great reluctance. Absolute necessity satisfactory settlement with Imperial guarantee emphasized by insincerity and bad faith persistently shown during Volksraad discussion franchise Law."

<sup>109</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 469. Telegram from Milner to Evans, July 21, 1899. "Please give following advice to our friends. British Government could not afford not to admit largeness of advance made by President without alienating reasonable public opinion in England. This does not mean that they are going to climb down. No need for discouragement but moderation of tone is desirable. There is danger of Uitlanders adopting a too uncompromising attitude and being thought to be for "War at any price."

Although Bloemfontein and its aftermath did not result in any sort of deal, it effectively convinced the British officials of the benefits of increasing pressure on the Boers. Pressure had been building since 1898 and had finally brought Kruger to the table with the British government, whereas he previously sought to resolve all matters internally. Thus, Milner and others thought that increased pressure would result in greater concessions. As early as April 1, 1899, Milner told Fiddes that “They [the Boers] won’t yield an inch except under the severest pressure...”<sup>110</sup> Now, he told Chamberlain on August 16 that “They will collapse if we don’t weaken, or rather if we go on steadily turning the screw.”<sup>111</sup>

While Chamberlain and Milner preferred that the Boers crumble under pressure, they also prepared the British Cabinet and public for the possibility of war. Thus, Bloemfontein was followed by few attempts at negotiation but many efforts to portray the British government as serious about the need for immediate reforms, with war as a possible alternative. Likely with this in mind, Chamberlain concluded a public speech at Birmingham on August 26 with a great deal of saber-rattling. He told the crowd that:

Mr. Kruger procrastinates in his replies. He dribbles out reforms like water from a squeezed sponge and either accompanies his offers with conditions which he knows to be impossible or he refuses to allow us to make a satisfactory investigation of the nature and the character of those reforms... We have tried waiting, patience and trusting to promises which were never kept. We can wait no more... I believe that we have reached a critical, and a turning, point in the history of the Empire.<sup>112</sup>

#### ix. **The Ultimatums (September – October 1899)**

Back in London, important members of Salisbury’s ministry opposed confrontation. Arthur Balfour and Michael Hicks Beach warned of the expense that war would bring, with

<sup>110</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 331.

<sup>111</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 516-517.

<sup>112</sup> Garvin, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, vol. 3, 438-439.

Hicks Beach writing “I hope Milner and the Uitlanders will not be allowed to drag us into war.”<sup>113</sup> Even more ominous were the warnings of the War Office, which predicted that the forces stationed in South Africa were inadequate to even defend against the Boers, never mind carry out an offensive against them.<sup>114</sup> Ultimately, these warning were ignored by all parties and contributed to the devastating initial losses suffered in December 1899.

Serious pushback also existed in the ranks of the Liberal opposition in Parliament. The Liberal leader, Henry Campbell-Bannerman, believed the franchise movement to be:

...the biggest hypocrisy in the whole fraud. It was designed in order that: a. Kruger, seeing the real drift of it, might refuse it, and supply a direct ground of quarrel; b. If he accepted it, it would mean that not being able to get in by the front door they would get the area gate opened and get possession in this way of the country; c. The innocent Briton would be gulled by the flavor of legality and of civilized progress in the word ‘franchise’... the Outlander does not care about it and would not use it if he might.<sup>115</sup>

Echoing these concerns, the National Administrative Council of the Independent Labour Party adopted a resolution on September 9, 1899 stating that “Even if the admitted grievances of the Uitlanders were the real reason of the threatened hostilities, war would be an extreme course quite uncalled for. We also protest against the action of the press and the bulk of the leading politicians in strengthening the criminal conduct of the Government by misleading the public and

<sup>113</sup> Robinson and Gallagher, with Denny, *Africa and the Victorians*, 453.

<sup>114</sup> Garvin, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, vol. 3, 458. Chamberlain to Milner Sept. 2, 1899. “The War Office is not an ideal institution. The other day they were ready ‘to the last button’ – now they talk of four months before they can put an Army Corps to the front.”; Garvin, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, vol. 3, 460. Chamberlain to Cabinet, Sept. 6, 1899. “I think that the time has fully come when the troops in South Africa should be largely reinforced, and I feel that the most serious responsibility will rest upon the Government if, owing to want of proper preparations, reverses should be suffered by the British forces, or British Colonies should be invaded and British troops have to fall back.”; Garvin, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, vol. 3, 461. Salisbury to Chamberlain, Sept. 18, 1899. “I am not at all confident of our power to hold the exposed points in Natal with our present force, especially if we have the Free State against us, as seems probably now. Therefore we should do nothing to precipitate an attack until our reinforcements arrive, which may be five weeks hence...”; Garvin, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, vol. 3, 461-462. Chamberlain to Salisbury, Sept. 18, 1899. “I recognise that, thanks to the imperfect information of the War Office, we may be in a position of some risk so far as outlying places are concerned, but I do not think we shall lessen this by waiting five weeks before announcing our decision.”

<sup>115</sup> J.A. Spender, *The Life of the Right Hon. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, G.C.B.* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1923), 246-247. Campbell-Bannerman to Sir William Harcourt, Oct. 10, 1899.

rousing the passion for war...”<sup>116</sup> Despite such vocal opponents, overall organized opposition remained relatively insignificant.

It seems that only after public pressure was portrayed as reaching a breaking point that Salisbury and his Cabinet finally relented and resigned themselves to confrontation. Surely, the prodding of Milner and Chamberlain, the press agitations, and the stunning commercial success and popularity of FitzPatrick’s recently published book demonizing the Boers, *The Transvaal from Within*,<sup>117</sup> pushed them in this direction. More importantly, Salisbury fell victim to the relentless lobbying of the ISAA and the intensifying Uitlander agitation, coupled with threats that such agitation would cease entirely if imperial intervention delayed much longer. Lamenting the situation, the Prime Minister commented to Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice,<sup>118</sup> the Secretary of State for War, that “What [Milner] has done cannot be effaced. We have to act upon a moral field prepared for us by him and his jingo supporters. And therefore I see before us the necessity for considerable military effort—and all for people whom we despise, and for territory which will bring no profit and no power to England.”<sup>119</sup> Reports from the Colonial Office and the capitalist-controlled press also likely contributed to Salisbury’s convictions that Boer malevolence was posing a serious threat to British supremacy in South Africa and that a firm stand needed to be taken. Right before the war, Salisbury revealed these beliefs to Leonard Courtenay when he wrote to him that Kruger “was using the oppression of the Outlanders as a

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<sup>116</sup> *The Anatomy of an Antiwar Movement: The Pro-Boers*, ed. and with an introduction by Stephen Koss (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 15.

<sup>117</sup> Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, 207. The book sold 10,000 copies within two months of its publication in September.

<sup>118</sup> Also known as the “5<sup>th</sup> Marquess of Lansdowne.”

<sup>119</sup> Marais, *The Fall of Kruger’s Republic*, 318.

lever to extract from England a renunciation of suzerainty.”<sup>120</sup> This belief explains Salisbury’s desire that “the real point to be made in South Africa is that we not the Dutch are Boss.”<sup>121</sup>

More surprising was the growing divergence in opinion on whether a war would actually break out. On one side, the Uitlander faction and the Transvaal government saw war as nearly at hand. Boer officials, including Kruger and Transvaal’s Attorney General, Jan Smuts, had largely resigned themselves to the inevitability of armed struggle, though they placed the blame of this inevitability squarely on the shoulders of imperial capitalists and statesmen such as Rhodes and Chamberlain.<sup>122</sup> Uitlander leaders, notably FitzPatrick, also held premonitions of war after their conversations with Boer leaders and through their observations on the ground. Most pointedly, one particular discussion between FitzPatrick and Smuts revealed the resolute intent of the Boers not to yield in the face of pressure. After FitzPatrick implied the insanity of the Boers engaging the British in war, Smuts replied that, in the event of war:

You may take the cities and the mines, for we would not meet you there, but for six or seven years we shall be able to hold out in the mountains... and long before that there will be a change of opinion in England. Other things will crop up, they will become tired and lose interest; there will be another general election and the Liberals will come into power... And *this time* we shall get all that we want.”<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 391.

<sup>121</sup> Bryce, *The Crisis of British Power*, 91-92. Selborne to Milner, July 27, 1899. However, it is important to note that Salisbury immediately followed this statement to Selborne with “I will go my own pace. I will not be hurried by anyone, not by all the English in South Africa.”

<sup>122</sup> W.K. Hancock and Jean van der Poel, *Selections from the Smuts Papers*, vol. I (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 623-624. “Memoirs of the Boer War”, unfinished manuscript written by Smuts between 1903 and 1906. “It was with the mine-owners not a desire to bring the Republic under the British flag; as was conclusively proved by the fact that the Rand financiers had decided in 1895 to have a Republic of their own in the Transvaal and not to submit to Rhodes’s desire to hoist the British flag in the country... But in 1895 there was a Colonial Secretary [Chamberlain] who did not know his South Africa, but who had an ambition of his own to achieve. His object was not the mine-owners’ object, as probably both parties knew. But each meant to use the other for the attainment of his own ends. It was a marriage of convenience; and of that unholy union and labour of the mountains the Jameson Raid was the still-born issue... The Jameson Raid was the real declaration of war in the great Anglo-Boer conflict...”

<sup>123</sup> G.H. Wilson, *South African Memories* (London: Cassell and Company, 1932), 168. FitzPatrick goes on to comment that Smuts’s statement “was to me a devastating end to my fine dreams.”

Among the Uitlanders themselves, most saw war as rapidly approaching and hastily fled Transvaal. Starting in September, 100,000 whites began to flee Transvaal, and tens of thousands of black workers returned home.<sup>124</sup> Undeterred by the threat of war, the Uitlanders continued pushing their demands. Now operating largely independently of Milner, the Uitlander Council published a manifesto five days after Chamberlain's Birmingham speech requesting the British government immediately obtain for them both the franchise and a proportional redistribution of Volksraad seats. Lambasting Milner's Bloemfontein franchise proposals as "conservative," the manifesto went on to make demands concerning the adoption of "A Five Years' Franchise," "Equal Language Rights," Freedom of Speech and Press," "An Independent High Court," "Dismantling of Forts," "Cancelling of Monopolies," "State Education" controlled by local boards, and "A Reorganised Civil Service."<sup>125</sup>

The capitalists were largely split on the debate of whether Transvaal would back down in the face of war. Pro-imperial capitalists, namely Rhodes, believed that Kruger and the Boers would stand down if presented with a strong ultimatum threatening war. Privately, Rhodes even placed bets with friends that Kruger would fold.<sup>126</sup> Publicly, Rhodes told the Cape Parliament "I am confident that... [the Transvaal question] will be settled—if the Imperial Government stands firm—and in two months and without firing a shot, assuming moderation on both sides."<sup>127</sup> On August 22, Rhodes doubled down by stating that "I am perfectly clear that, as I have said before, there is going to be no bloodshed. If Kruger is a sensible man, he will climb down in the end, and there will be a settlement... Many say the Transvaal must be an English-speaking community.

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<sup>124</sup> Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold, and War*, 420.

<sup>125</sup> Great Britain, *Confidential Print: Africa*, No. 600, 231-232. July 4, 1899 "Rand Manifesto" published in the "Cape Times." For a comprehensive list of the Uitlander demands, see Appendix B.

<sup>126</sup> Jourdan, *Cecil Rhodes, his Private Life*, 94-95.

<sup>127</sup> Michell, *The Life of the Rt. Hon. Cecil John Rhodes*, 264.

Once the settlement is over, we shall be better friends in South Africa.”<sup>128</sup> Soon after, he sent Beit a private telegram reiterating this view.<sup>129</sup>

Meanwhile, more perceptive and cautious mining leaders, namely Wernher and Beit, better understood Boer obstinacy and the fact that a war could cost Britain dearly. Back in May, Wernher had warned that “the present position cannot last and that disaster must follow, political or financial.”<sup>130</sup> As the situation did not change, and disaster did indeed follow, Wernher’s words proved accurate. By August, Samuel Evans, a partner in Wernher, Beit & Co., wrote to Friedrich Eckstein “I entirely share your view as to war being inevitable.”<sup>131</sup> Georges Rouliot, president of the Chamber of Mines and a senior partner in Wernher, Beit & Co., also believed that a war would have disastrous consequences. Not only would mining operations have to be suspended, but serious damage from flooding and sabotage could be inflicted on mines and machinery, which cost hundreds of thousands of pounds.<sup>132</sup> Aware of the fact that many Johannesburgers were transferring their balances and bank accounts to the Cape, Lewis Michell, general manager of the Standard Bank, reported that “the opinion is that war is almost inevitable.”<sup>133</sup>

The capitalist aversion to war seems to contradict the logic underlying participation in a pro-confrontation coalition. First, one must consider the argument that the capitalist faction, apart from a few imperial ideologues like Rhodes, did not favor war. Indeed, it appears that the capitalists, like the British government, initially saw the threat of confrontation itself as a useful tool for forcing reform in Transvaal but abhorred the notion of an actual war materializing. The many attempts by leading capitalists to forestall conflict by reaching agreement with the Boers,

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<sup>128</sup> Michell, *The Life of the Rt. Hon. Cecil John Rhodes*, 265.

<sup>129</sup> Le Sueur, *Cecil Rhodes, the Man and His Work*, 236. Rhodes wrote to Beit saying “Remember Kruger will climb down. He will never fight.” Later, he cabled Beit “Nothing will make Kruger fire a shot.”

<sup>130</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 327.

<sup>131</sup> Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, 201. Quoting S. Evans, 21 Sept. 1899, archives of H. Eckstein & Co., 22.

<sup>132</sup> Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold, and War*, 420.

<sup>133</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 326.



notably during the Industrial Commission and the Great Deal negotiations, demonstrate the predominance of this mindset. However, like the imperial statesmen, the capitalists became hostage to the Uitlander faction. Crucially, the Uitlanders forced the capitalists into the coalition by sabotaging the Great Deal negotiations, leaving no room for the capitalists to avert the conflict on their own. From that point on, the only thing the capitalists feared more than a war was ending up on the losing side of a military conflict. Thus, pressure from the Uitlanders and British government explains why the capitalists remained in the coalition.

The British government ultimately was the most far off. Relying on historical precedent, Milner and Chamberlain argued that Transvaal would buck under pressure, just as it had done during the Stellaland and Gashonaland situation, the “Great Trek” to Matabeleland, Drifts Crisis, Aliens Expulsion Act, Conscription issue, and Swazi question of 1899.<sup>134</sup> Milner specifically believed that “the probable result would be a complete climb-down on the part of the South African Republic,” though he also went on to add “and, if not that, a war which, however deplorable in itself, would at least enable us to put things on a sound basis for the future, better than even the best devised Convention can.”<sup>135</sup> Kruger’s attempts to reconcile the capitalist faction during the Great Deal negotiations and then the British government during the Bloemfontein Conference and even up to September seemed to confirm this belief. In the minds of these men, a credible and clear ultimatum would force immediate and comprehensive reform, enabling the Uitlanders to seize control of the Transvaal government in the next few election cycles. When in power, the Uitlanders, grateful for British support, would voluntarily join a customs union, railway union, and ultimately a pro-imperial South African federation.

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<sup>134</sup> Marais, *The Fall of Kruger’s Republic*, 223. The Swazi question concerned the matter of the Transvaal’s administration of Swaziland, specifically how criminal law was applied to the natives. The Transvaal yielded to British protests for a fairer justice system.

<sup>135</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 444.

Unfortunately, these individuals blundered in interpreting Transvaal's past actions and in their presumption of the Boer mindset. Throughout its short history, Transvaal made defending its independence its primary objective. Thus, its past concessions (such as during the Drifts Crisis) should have been viewed through this lens. However, on the very eve of the war, some officials began to come around to the conclusion that war was inevitable. Determined to maintain the peace back in 1894, Chamberlain now informed Salisbury "I can think of only three ways in which this [British security in South Africa] might be effected, viz., Occupation, Disarmament, or Federation, and neither could be secured except as a result of a successful war."<sup>136</sup>

The British dispatch of reinforcements to South Africa proved to be the breaking point, as it made the Boers aware that the British meant to resolve the conflict through force and that an ultimatum would likely arrive after British war arrangements were complete. Not intending to give their foes an opportunity to reinforce and prepare, the Boers preempted the expected British ultimatum with one of their own.<sup>137</sup> With only two days to respond, the British were caught off guard by this unexpected action. But Chamberlain gleefully welcomed the opportunity to go to war from a moral high ground, as the Empire would not now have to act as the aggressor.<sup>138</sup> Had he known the outcome of the Boers' preemptive strike, he may have changed his tune. Regardless, the Boers declared war and launched an offensive into Natal and Cape Colony. The war for the future of South Africa had begun.

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<sup>136</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 357; Garvin, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, vol. 3, 457-459. Chamberlain to Milner, September 2, 1899. "When I reflect on all these things I am really astonished at the progress we have made. It is a great thing to say that the majority of people here, as I believe, recognised that there is a greater issue than the franchise or the grievances of the Uitlanders at stake, and that our supremacy in S. Africa and our existence as a great Power in the world are involved in the result of our present controversy. Three months ago we could not – that is, we should not have been allowed to – go to war on this issue. Now – although still most unwillingly and with a large minority against us – we shall be sufficiently supported."

<sup>137</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 380.

<sup>138</sup> Garvin, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, vol. 3, 472. Chamberlain responded to the news of Kruger's ultimatum with "They have done it!" Shortly after, Lansdowne wrote to Chamberlain, "I don't think Kruger could have played your cards better than he has...My soldiers are in ecstasies."

## Act III

### *Winning the War, Losing the Peace*

The pro-conflict factions of the capitalists (led by Rhodes and Beit), the imperial government (led by Chamberlain and Milner), and the Uitlanders (represented by the South African League and FitzPatrick) successfully prompted the British government to issue an ultimatum which, much to the chagrin of the coalition leaders, resulted not in Boer acquiescence, but in war. Defying most pre-war estimates and expectations, the war proved disastrously expensive, long, and deadly. Additionally, the war's aftermath refuted pre-war hopes that a military conflict would bring harmony to South Africa. The British imperial government and its compatriots in Transvaal, the newly enfranchised Uitlanders who rebranded themselves as the Progressive Party, won the war but subsequently lost the peace. With its tangible purpose for coming together now eliminated, the pro-imperial coalition rapidly disintegrated as the absence of an imminent unifying threat (i.e., Kruger's government) allowed factional interests to prevail. This disunity doomed British efforts to anglicize post-war South Africa and made British control vulnerable to a fervent and incredibly disciplined Boer "Afrikaner" nationalist movement.

Owing largely to the collapse of the pro-imperial coalition's unity, the Afrikaners rebounded from their military defeat and won stunning electoral victories, victories that doomed the imperial vision of Rhodes, Milner, FitzPatrick, and others. As the Afrikaners seized power and grew increasingly nationalistic, South Africa gradually exited the British sphere of influence and ultimately turned its back on the British Empire. Instead of sustaining the Empire, as Rhodes and Milner imagined, South Africa and its eventual renunciation of Empire humiliated Britain and reminded the world of its decline from greatness.

i. **Winning the War...**

Fully aware that the British could mobilize hundreds of thousands of troops from across the Empire, the Boers understood that they would need to deal absolutely crushing blows with haste to achieve a victory. Thus, the armies of Transvaal and the Orange Free State immediately launched a multi-pronged attack on Natal and on Cape Colony after the expiration of Kruger's ultimatum to the British government. Within a month of the start of the war, the Boers managed to besiege the cities of Kimberley, Mafeking, and Ladysmith. Within two months, they had defeated and humiliated the British army in the field at Modder River, Stormberg, Magersfontein, and Colenso.<sup>1</sup> Much to the world's shock, the war turned sharply against the British imperial juggernaut.

However, Boer fears were realized in 1900 when more than 180,000 British reinforcements arrived under the leadership of Lord Roberts and his chief of staff, Lord Kitchener. By May 1900, British forces had successfully defeated the Boers in the field at major battles such as Paardeberg (February 18–27), relieved Kimberley (February 15), Ladysmith (February 28), and Mafeking (May 27), pushed the Boer invaders out of Cape Colony and Natal, and ultimately seized control of every major urban center in the Boer republics, including Johannesburg in May and Pretoria in June.<sup>2</sup> To cap off the resounding comeback, the British counterstrike effectively forced Kruger to flee to Europe in September.<sup>3</sup>

With the British controlling every militarily strategic point and significant population center, one would expect that the war would have ended by the end of 1900. By the summer of 1900, almost 14,000 Boer fighters had surrendered, representing nearly 40 percent of those

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<sup>1</sup> Shula Marks, "War and Union, 1899–1910," in Bill Nasson, Carolyn Hamilton, and Robert Ross (eds.), *Cambridge History of South Africa*, II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 158.

<sup>2</sup> Marks, "War and Union," 158.

<sup>3</sup> Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, 209-210.

initially mobilized and 26 percent of those liable for service. To make matters worse, many Boers defected and joined the British army, so many that one in four Boer combatants were fighting on the British side by the end of the war.<sup>4</sup> However, true to Smuts's words, the Boers fought on. Thus commenced the longest and costliest phase of the war, the guerilla campaign. Living off the land and operating within a vast country populated by friendly fellow burghers, the Boer guerillas conducted acts of sabotage and guerilla warfare against the occupiers.

Embarrassed by the Boer obstinacy and anxious about the mounting costs of the conflict, the British determined to quickly end the war by employing several brutal tactics which would presage twentieth century total war. In order to cut off support from hostile civilians, British forces forcibly moved nearly 120,000 Boer civilians into concentration camps, where 28,000 died from disease and malnutrition, most of them women and children under the age of 16.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the British burned civilian farms and killed livestock to deprive the guerillas of food. To counter sabotage (particularly of railroads and bridges), the British constructed a vast network of 8,000 fortified pillboxes across the republics. To further restrict guerilla movement and escape, the British erected 3,700 miles of barbed-wire fences across the countryside and sectioned off large tracts of land. Finally, Kitchener's army of 250,000 men occupied strategic posts and fanned out across the sectioned properties, eliminating guerilla bands as they encountered them.<sup>6</sup> Even more shocking to Boer sensibilities, the British began arming native Africans and even enlisting them. By the end of the war, there were 50 percent more Africans fighting for the British than there were Boer forces still in the field. No friends of the Boers who

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<sup>4</sup> Marks, "War and Union," 161- 162.

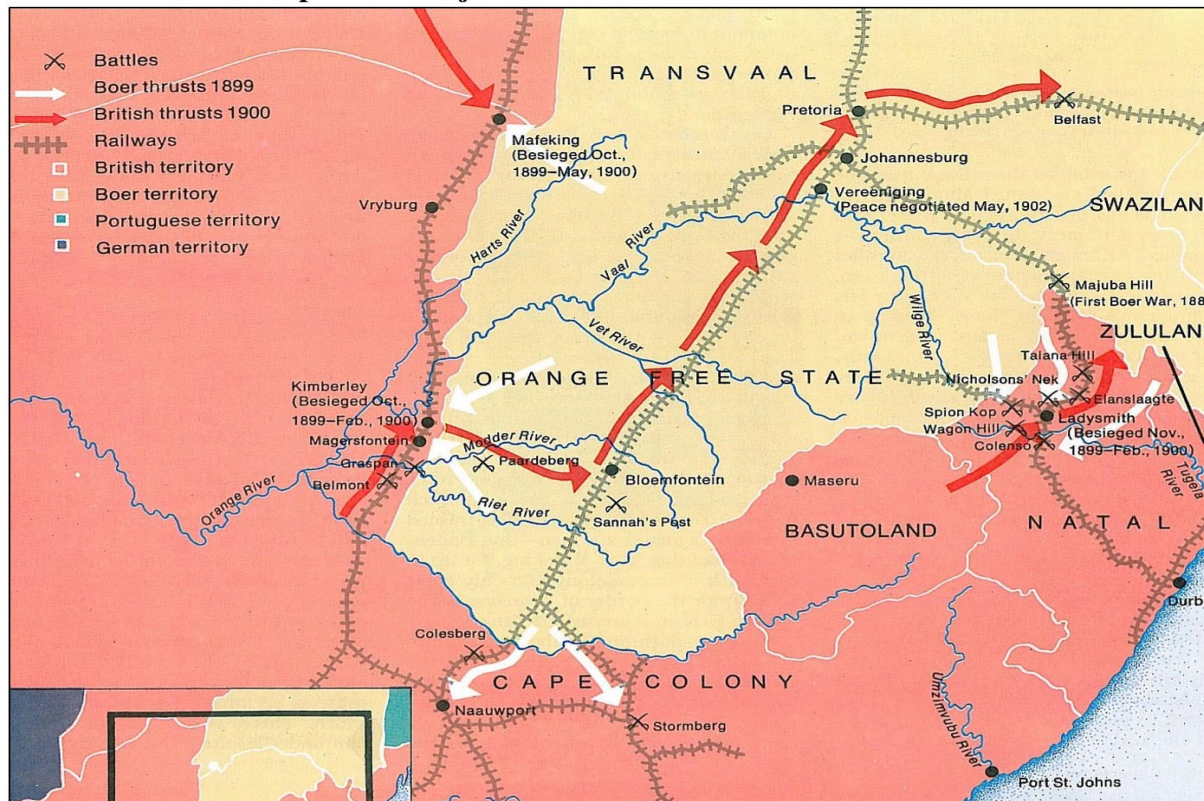
<sup>5</sup> Marks, "War and Union," 159-160. This amounted to about 10 percent of the pre-war combined population of the Boers in Transvaal and the Orange Free State.

<sup>6</sup> Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold, and War*, 460.

previously had stripped them of their land and property, newly armed African tribes such as the Bakgatla took advantage of the opportunity the war presented to loot Boer farms, raid livestock, and reassert their property rights.<sup>7</sup>

Facing these extreme measures, the Boer guerillas likely would have been eventually forced into an unconditional surrender. Unfortunately for Britain, the deployment of such a massive force and the high casualties it experienced made the war increasingly unpopular at home. Moreover, the war was taking a significant toll on the imperial budget. By 1902, the war was costing over a million pounds a week. Consequently, Salisbury's government sought peace. Though the Transvaalers and Free Staters opposed surrender, they recognized that continuing the fight was futile and agreed to a conditional surrender at Vereeniging on May 31, 1902.<sup>8</sup>

### Map of the Major Battles of the South African War



**Notice 1. how unsuccessful sieges halted the initially successful Boer advances, and 2. the swift British counteroffensive.**  
 Britishempire.co.uk. Second Boer War Map. <https://www.britishempire.co.uk/maproom/boerwarmap.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Marks, "War and Union," 161-162.

<sup>8</sup> South African History Online. Treaty of Vereeniging. For a full transcript of the Treaty, see Appendix C.

Despite pre-war projections, the war proved unexpectedly long and costly. Prior to the war, the British War Department estimated that the conflict would last up to four months, cost approximately £10 million, require no more than 75,000 troops, and result in a few hundred casualties at most.<sup>9</sup> Ultimately, the conflict lasted two and a half years, cost the British government £217 million, caused millions of pounds in property damage across South Africa, and cost the lives of 22,000 out of the 450,000 British soldiers deployed. Additionally, 75,000 British soldiers returned home sick or wounded.<sup>10</sup> In addition to the sufferings wrought upon the Boers by British soldiers, particularly the concentration camps and farm burnings,<sup>11</sup> the Boers themselves committed numerous atrocities, specifically against native Africans.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, war brought the South African gold and diamond industries to a complete halt for two years. Oddly enough, little damage occurred to the goldmines, at which the Boers unexpectedly posted guards in order to protect them against sabotage.<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps the worst part of the war was how unsatisfying the terms of the Treaty of Vereeniging would prove. The terms explicitly prevented the Imperial government from imposing taxes for the purpose of repaying war debts, disappointed humanitarian agitators by postponing the issue of native affairs, granted amnesty to Cape Boer traitors, hindered anglicization by granting “the Dutch language” legal protections and recognition in schools and courts, and included no clause ensuring a pro-British Transvaal government upon return to self-government. Essentially, the British gained the territories themselves, but with little to ensure they could retain them once self-government returned.

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<sup>9</sup> Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, 2.

<sup>10</sup> Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold, and War*, 468; Andre Wessels, *The Anglo-Boer War 1889-1902: White Man's War, Black Man's War, Traumatic War* (Bloemfontein: African Sun Media), 79.

<sup>11</sup> Conan Doyle, *The War in South Africa: its Cause and Conduct*, 84-85.

<sup>12</sup> Conan Doyle, *The War in South Africa: its Cause and Conduct*, 141-142. Conan Doyle includes nearly 30 reports of Boer shootings, hangings, and massacres against native African men, women, and children.

<sup>13</sup> Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, 209.

ii. ...Losing the Peace

Immediately prior to the war, Kruger allegedly told a friend that he could not prevent the British from taking Transvaal but that he would ensure that, when taken, Transvaal would merely be a “sucked orange.”<sup>14</sup> Whether or not Kruger actually made this prophetic statement, the former Boer republics found themselves in a state of ruin by the end of 1902. Essentially installed as sole dictator of the conquered Boer territories, Alfred Milner assumed responsibility for reviving and transforming the war-ravaged lands.

During his three-year tenure, Milner’s reforms and policies succeeded in rebuilding and modernizing Transvaal. Within an impressively short time, Transvaal experienced an unprecedented economic recovery and boom that would make South Africa the leading industrial powerhouse in Africa. However, Milner failed to hold the pro-imperial coalition together. Despite Milner’s successes, many of his policies proved deeply unpopular to certain interest groups. Thus, divisions arose among the pro-English element within South Africa, divisions that doomed post-war plans to anglicize the new territories and politically entrench the pro-English population. Consequently, Milner’s administration failed to accomplish the critical objective of men such as Milner, Chamberlain, FitzPatrick, and Rhodes: the transformation of South Africa into a culturally British dominion that the British Empire could rely on indefinitely for support.

Immediately after the war’s conclusion, Milner worked to prepare Transvaal and the newly created Orange River Colony (formerly the Orange Free State) for a return to self-government and unification with Cape Colony and Natal. However, Milner recognized that, for South Africa to become a loyal pro-British dominion, any return to self-government must only occur after the successful anglicization of South Africa. Specifically, he informed FitzPatrick on

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<sup>14</sup> Praagh, *The Transvaal and Its Mines*, 515.



November 28, 1899, that “How long the period of unrepresentative government may last, I cannot say. I, for one, would be for shortening it as much as possible, but not before a loyal majority is assured.”<sup>15</sup> Milner made this a paramount objective because, as he told the House of Lords in 1906, he believed that, should the Boers reclaim control of the former republics and still “hate” the British, they would succeed in their efforts “little by little, to reverse all that has been done, and gradually to get rid of the British officials, the British teachers, the bulk of the British settlers, and any offensive British taint which may cling to the Statute Book and the administration.”<sup>16</sup> In order to preempt this possibility by facilitating union and assuring a “loyal majority,” Milner worked to completely reorganize the former Boer republics’ administrative bureaucracies, rebuild their economics, enfranchise all their male European residents (namely, the Uitlanders), reform their legal codes, resettle their scattered populations, determine and fairly disburse wartime reparations, and anglicize their citizenry.

Relying on a clique of fellow Oxford Balliol men which came to be known as “Milner’s Kindergarten,” Milner set out to create what Kruger’s government lacked: a modern and efficient bureaucracy. Milner formed a Department of Mines in Transvaal and appointed a Minister of Mines to facilitate communication between the Johannesburg mine owners and his administration in Pretoria.<sup>17</sup> Milner also updated and strengthened old Boer laws regarding liquor and laborer passes and established an efficient Native Affairs Department to enforce these laws concerning African workers.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 2 (London: Cassell & Company, 1933), 35-36.

<sup>16</sup> “The Transvaal and Orange River Colonies; a Speech Delivered by the Right Hon. The Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., in the House of Lords, Monday, 26th February, 1906” (Westminster: Imperial South African Association, 1906), 5.

<sup>17</sup> Praagh, *The Transvaal and Its Mines*, 520.

<sup>18</sup> Marks, “War and Union,” 168-169.

Realizing that the mining industry was key to the economic recovery of Transvaal and for renewed English immigration and settlement, Milner immediately began restoring the industry and improving the business climate in general.<sup>19</sup> He prioritized the upkeep of roads, ended the unpopular concessions system, created a water board with broad powers to better supply Johannesburg, included members of the Chamber of Mines in legislative council and administration,<sup>20</sup> enhanced the quality and availability of Johannesburg's healthcare, improved sanitation and housing for unskilled miners, and encouraged the construction of new railways.<sup>21</sup> By 1906, Milner's reforms helped lead to the mining of over £24.5 million worth of gold annually in Transvaal, an astounding number that would increase to nearly £32 million in 1910.<sup>22</sup>

Unfortunately for Milner, the coalition that collaborated feverishly to force a confrontation with the Boers rapidly began to disintegrate once hostilities ended. Even before the official end of the war, the Uitlanders, exiled from Transvaal at the time due to the ongoing war, criticized Milner, their former patron, for his refusal to resettle refugees until the war's end.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, the Uitlanders clamored for the post-war capitol to be relocated from Pretoria to Johannesburg. Milner and FitzPatrick vigorously opposed and subsequently rejected this suggestion, as they did not want the new administration to be viewed as a tool of the gold-mining industry. Consequently, by mid-1902, R.J. Pakeman, former Milner supporter and current editor

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<sup>19</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 2, 389. Extract from Diary, Sept. 8, 1902. "[Milner established] two principles, forming 'two aspects of a single economic policy and the only right one.' The two principles were 'expenditure to develop the country, and thereby develop the sources of revenue; and reliance for revenue, not upon high rates of taxation, but an increase of the things taxed.' He surveyed the resources of the Transvaal, and the revenue which could be obtained from the Transvaal, and the revenue which could be obtained from the mines..."

<sup>20</sup> Praagh, *The Transvaal and Its Mines*, 25. One example being the appointment of Wilfred Wybergh, former president of the South African League, as Transvaal's first Commissioner of Mines).

<sup>21</sup> Praagh, *The Transvaal and Its Mines*, 37, 549. Transvaal and the Orange Free State possessed about 1,314 miles of railway by October 1899. By December 1904, the British administration projected to start construction on another 1,300 miles.

<sup>22</sup> Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, 224.

<sup>23</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 88.

of the *Transvaal Leader*, began to openly oppose Milner. Pakeman and others advocated for an immediate return to representative government and, in order to accomplish this, formed a political party, the Transvaal Political Association, in July.<sup>24</sup>

Milner further angered the capitalists with his refusal to fire Wilfred Wybergh as Commissioner of Mines, rumors of future tax increases on mining profits, fears regarding a renewal of the *bewaarplaatsen* issue, government insistence on payment of uncollected wartime land licensing fees, and Milner's quashing of a mismanagement and corruption investigation into his Commissioner of Railways, Sir Percy Girouard.<sup>25</sup> Led by Pakeman and others, Uitlander newspapers loudly criticized Milner from the end of the war right up to the end of his administration, effectively depriving him of any sort of public opinion grace period. In terms of formal resistance, Milner's appointed municipal council for Johannesburg almost immediately began voicing popular criticism of his administration.<sup>26</sup> Already beloved by few, Milner went on to provoke Thomas Cullinan, owner of the newly developed and fabulously bountiful Premier Diamond Mine, by successfully pushing for passage of legislation in 1903 that provided the Transvaal government with two-thirds of the profits from Transvaal diamond mines.<sup>27</sup>

To make matters worse, Milner also had to fend off the Imperial government, which expected Transvaal to help finance the massive war debt. Seeking to lessen the war's negative effect on popular support at home for imperialism, Chamberlain told a party of prominent Johannesburgers on an official visit that "England believes you can do it [make a large wartime financial contribution]... If you refuse—it will be the death blow of Imperialism."<sup>28</sup> In response

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<sup>24</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 98-99.

<sup>25</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 97-98, 106.

<sup>26</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 97.

<sup>27</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 106.

<sup>28</sup> Cartwright, *The First South African*, 125.

to this call to action, a group of mining companies decided to offer a voluntary loan of £30 million, a deal that ultimately fell through.<sup>29</sup> Thus, Transvaal managed to escape having to pay any sort of post-war contribution whatsoever.

However, major capitalist mining magnates and financiers such as Wernher, Beit, Robinson, Eckstein, Albu, Farrar, and FitzPatrick could not escape paying their due forever. Daringly, Milner attempted to raise revenue from the gold-mining industry. First, Milner successfully designated mining properties as falling within Johannesburg's municipal boundaries, thus subjecting them to city taxes and fees, bylaws, and regulations.<sup>30</sup> In 1902, he earned much animosity from the mine owners by supporting the Profits Tax, which quadrupled the pre-war tax on gold-mining profits to 10 percent.<sup>31</sup> Seemingly forgetful of the part played by the capitalists and by himself personally in causing the conflict, FitzPatrick complained, "our firms have had to finance the richest government in the world. Is it not absolute rot?"<sup>32</sup>

To be entirely fair, the capitalists deserve some credit for their wartime sacrifices. The magnates, too, had suffered gravely. Most of the mines remained shuttered until 1902, a three-year period devoid of profits. Moreover, many mine owners personally contributed substantially to the war effort: George Farrar donated funds from his company, East Rand Proprietary Mines, to sponsor an irregular corps, Abe Bailey served as an intelligence officer, and Wernher, Beit & Co. not only contributed to the upkeep of a Uitlander volunteer unit, the Imperial Light Horse, but also donated £160,000 worth of railway engines and rolling stock.

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<sup>29</sup> Cartwright, *The First South African*, 125.

<sup>30</sup> Marks, "War and Union," 166.

<sup>31</sup> Praagh, *The Transvaal and Its Mines*, 519.

<sup>32</sup> Alan Cartwright, *The Corner House: The Early History of Johannesburg* (Cape Town: Purnell, 1965), 176.

Perhaps seeking to cash in on their wartime support, the capitalists pressured Milner to help boost their production by resolving a serious labor shortage facing the mines. Worsened by the war, the labor shortage reached a breaking point in 1904, when a report by the Transvaal Labour Commission concluded that the gold mines required an additional 130,000 workers.<sup>33</sup> In an attempt to alleviate the shortage, the capitalists proposed a bold solution: the importation of contractual labor from China. While Chinese workers ultimately did ease the labor problem and even proved less expensive and more reliable than native African labor, the plan immediately received tremendous backlash across South Africa and in Britain, where opposition existed throughout the program's existence. In Britain, concerns were primarily humanitarian, with many opposed to the idea of Chinese "slavery."<sup>34</sup> In South Africa, the opposition centered on racial and economic fears. What ultimately broke the stalemate was the private support of Louis Botha, pre-war Transvaal general and post-war political leader of the Boers. According to FitzPatrick, Botha privately assured him that he and the Boers favored importing Chinese labor because it would re-start the critical revenue-generating mining industry, reduce competition between mining companies and Boer farmers for African labor, and provide employment opportunities for landless young Boers on the farms and in the newly reopened mines.<sup>35</sup>

After speaking with Botha, FitzPatrick convinced Milner to adopt the plan and agree to the import of contractual Chinese labor. With Milner's support, George Farrar formally proposed and carried a motion in the Legislative Council calling for the import of indentured Chinese workers on December 28, 1903.<sup>36</sup> Soon after, waves of poorly paid Chinese mineworkers began

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<sup>33</sup> Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, 221.

<sup>34</sup> Lionel Phillips, *Transvaal Problems: Some Notes on Current Politics* (London: J. Murray, 1905), 112-117.

<sup>35</sup> Cartwright, *The First South African*, 144.

<sup>36</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 109.

arriving in South Africa. By 1906, the mines employed 17,513 whites at 26 pounds and 15 shillings per month, 102,420 blacks at 2 pounds, 12 shillings, and 3 pence per month, and a staggering 53,062 Chinese at 2 pounds, 1 shilling, and 6 pence per month.<sup>37</sup>

Despite allegedly supporting the plan in private, Botha and Smuts immediately became the primary detractors, vociferously clamoring against the importation of more non-whites. Making the issue a key platform plank, the Boers used the specter of Chinese labor to rally Afrikaner voters and to divide the English. Exploiting racial fears and animosity toward the capitalists, the Boers dramatized the issue in order to split the English capitalists and mineworkers, as many white workers feared losing their jobs to the extremely inexpensive Chinese workers.<sup>38</sup> Directly encouraging these fears, Smuts declared in a campaign speech in early 1907 that “It appears to me that the policy is to rule the country in such a way that the white population will have no voice in the country, which will be ruled by Chinese and Kaffirs, who will be protected by the British Government in the interest of the mining magnates.”<sup>39</sup>

Another significant failure for Milner’s administration was his attempt at anglicization. Milner and FitzPatrick believed that long-term anglicization of South Africa was necessary for its sustained involvement within the empire. Furthermore, they believed that such anglicization must come about in two ways—through immigration and education. The two men tried desperately to increase British immigration to the countryside in order to dilute the “wholly Dutch, agriculturally unprogressive” Boers.<sup>40</sup> Allegedly, prior to his passing, Rhodes even

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<sup>37</sup> Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, 221. At the time, twelve pence made a shilling, and twenty shillings made a pound.

<sup>38</sup> Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, 221-222.

<sup>39</sup> Cartwright, *The First South African*, 143.

<sup>40</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 2, 282-285. Milner to Chamberlain, 25 January 1902. “If we do nothing, we shall be confronted sooner or later with an industrial urban population, rapidly increasing, and almost wholly British in sentiment, and, on the other hand, a rural population, wholly Dutch, agriculturally unprogressive... It is our duty to provide for the influx of a selected British population, who will do much to consolidate South African sentiment in the general interests of the Empire.”

promised FitzPatrick £2,000,000 to entice British immigrant farmers. Unfortunately for Milner and FitzPatrick, no such grant was ever made.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, despite imperial efforts and those of private individuals such as FitzPatrick, a mere 1,200 settlers arrived: far too few to turn the rural electorate in favor of the British.<sup>42</sup>

Determined to reform Transvaal's schools, Milner appointed E.B. Sargent to begin the process of anglicizing Transvaal's youth. While Sargent succeeded in hiring teachers with "pro-imperial" credentials and modelled his system on that used in Victorian-era public schools, the fact the attendance was not compulsory ensured that attendance by children was minimal.<sup>43</sup> Even putting the attendance issue aside, some individuals, notably Rhodes, dismissed the possibility of reconciliation or anglicization through education. Rather bluntly, Rhodes declared that "You will never get this country settled until you get our people on the land... You can educate as much as you like but, I tell you, the Dutch *have got the snake in* them. It's bred in them and it will come out again, even after generations..."<sup>44</sup> Regardless of whether or not the Boers had "the snake in them," the newfound rise in Afrikaner nationalism would doom anglicization and cultural assimilation through education. Consequently, too few new immigrants arrived to achieve

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<sup>41</sup> Cartwright, *The First South African*, 158.

<sup>42</sup> Marks, "War and Union," 177.

<sup>43</sup> Marks, "War and Union," 185.

<sup>44</sup> Duminy and Guest, *Fitzpatrick: South African Politician*, 294-296. FitzPatrick to Wernher, February 14, 1902. This very interesting letter captures the substance of several conversations between FitzPatrick and Rhodes and reveals a great deal about Rhodes in his final years of life. First, it reveals Rhodes's continued commitment to his business interests. For example, he conceded that selecting Johannesburg as the federal capital of a united South Africa would "suit me better too...as it certainly will be the business capital. It would suit the North (Rhodesia) too," discussed moving to Johannesburg, and elaborated on his many diversified investments in diamond mining, dynamite manufacturing, agriculture, and goldmining. Even more importantly, Rhodes discusses his refusal to reenter Cape politics, as "local taint" could detract from his ability to "take the premiership" of the future united South Africa, which he believed would take form "in a year or two - or three or four." Specifically, he told FitzPatrick "If I take the premiership [of Cape Colony] and we had to discuss federation, the Transvaal would say, 'Yes, we like Rhodes, but he is Cape Colony' and Natal would say, 'Yes, we like Rhodes, but he is Cape Colony...'" FitzPatrick then humorously comments to Wernher that "It struck me as so characteristic, and not a little amusing, that he should assume as a certainty the 'We like Rhodes.'" Regardless, Rhodes clearly wanted to live longer and continue playing a defining role in South African history.

English demographic dominance, and Milner's education schemes failed to convert the Boers to the English way of thinking.

Arguably the most significant hindrance to the efforts of Milner and the Transvaal Progressives to anglicize South Africa came in early 1906 with the defeat of Salisbury's Conservatives back in Britain. Much to the surprise of observers, Henry Campbell-Bannerman's Liberals won a landslide victory on a platform that capitalized on the South African "Chinese slavery" issue and, more importantly, on a tumultuous debate concerning free trade and protective tariffs. The unexpected outcome of this election had grave consequences for Milner and the Transvaal Progressives. First, it meant the removal of pro-imperial conservatives from the Colonial Office, effectively stripping the Progressives of their patrons and liaisons to the Imperial government. More importantly, it meant a rapid acceleration of the return of self-government to Transvaal and the Orange River Colony. Unfortunately for the Progressives and imperialists, there would be little governmental support to ensure that self-government meant government by the English settlers.

Alfred Milner resigned the high commissionership in 1905, ostensibly to allow the Transvaal British to regroup and distance themselves from his unpopular policies.<sup>45</sup> He returned to England and embarked on a successful career in both the private and public sectors, holding such positions as a directorship at the London Joint Stock Bank,<sup>46</sup> Secretary of State for War, and Secretary of State for the Colonies. Milner was succeeded in South Africa by Colonial Office Under-Secretary Lord Selborne. Selborne essentially continued Milner's policies, and thus one should consider the events of 1905–10 in any analysis of Milner's administration. However, the rapid return of self-government to Transvaal in 1907 doomed Milner's plan to

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<sup>45</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 106-107.

<sup>46</sup> Praagh, *The Transvaal and Its Mines*, 32.



gradually anglicize South Africa, and he himself admitted the process would require considerable time to “achieve complete success, and to ensure the retention of South Africa...”<sup>47</sup> Regardless, Milner appears to have largely succeeded in leading South Africa past the South African War in many respects. From an economic perspective, Milner’s administration outshone all previous South African administrations. By 1910, South Africa provided a third of the world’s gold supply and 98 percent of its diamonds. Not only did the mining industry prosper, but agricultural enterprises in Cape Colony prospered under the reforms and modernizations of Leander Starr Jameson, who surprisingly rebounded from his disastrous raid and became Prime Minister of Cape Colony in February 1904.<sup>48</sup>

Politically, Milner also succeeded in restoring self-government to South Africa. To the surprise of many, Transvaal hosted its first post-war election just five years after the conclusion of the war. Thus, Milner effectively succeeded in “rebuilding” and in modernizing Transvaal and South Africa. However, he utterly failed in accomplishing his chief objective: the creation of a loyal pro-British Transvaal and South Africa. During his tenure as high commissioner, Milner experienced little success in making Transvaal more culturally British, in solidifying the political power of the pro-British faction, or in attracting more British immigrants to the region. His failures would soon become extremely apparent.

### iii. **The Afrikaners Strike Back**

With the all-important Transvaal Parliamentary election of 1907 approaching, the stage was set for a rematch between the Boers and the Uitlanders. Defeated in war but not destroyed, the Boers, now starting to refer to themselves as “Afrikaners,” rallied and attempted to win back control of Transvaal through electoral victories. Concurrently, the primarily urban English

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<sup>47</sup> Alfred Milner, *Papers, 1886-1918*. Milner to Sadler, April 10, 1906.

<sup>48</sup> Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold, and War*, 520.

settlers, newly enfranchised and no longer “Uitlanders,” sought to successfully inherit the reins of political power from Milner. This time around, the former Uitlanders would receive no support from a sympathetic imperial government. Consequently, the English political party experienced decisive electoral losses, losses that stripped them of the legislative ability to shape post-war South Africa. Failure to control the post-war legislature effectively shut the English citizens out of political control in South Africa, eventually depriving the British Empire of one of its keystone territories.

The rules of the match were clear, the prize substantial. Transvaal would be divided into 69 electoral districts, and each male Transvaal citizen could cast his vote for the candidate of his choosing. As predicted from the outset, the election would essentially be a contest between the pro-Boer *Het Volk* party, led by former Transvaal generals Louis Botha and Jan Smuts, and the former Uitlanders, now reconstituted as the “Progressive Party” and led by George Farrar and Percy FitzPatrick. Two smaller parties, the Transvaal Responsible Government Association<sup>49</sup> and the Labour Party,<sup>50</sup> also ran candidates.

*Het Volk* and the Progressives represented vastly different perspectives on the future of post-war Transvaal. Naturally, the pro-English Progressives appealed to the urban populations in Pretoria and Johannesburg, as well as to the representatives of the gold-mining industry. Consequently, the Progressive platform favored the continuation of Chinese indentured labor, lowering duties on food imports, and the proliferation of the English language and culture in Transvaal. On the other hand, *Het Volk* appealed to rural Boers and vigorously opposed Chinese

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<sup>49</sup> Primarily an English political party of businessmen and mining magnates based in Pretoria and Johannesburg, the TRGA called for a rapid onset of self-government and weakening ties to Britain. Later renamed the Nationalists, not to be confused with the Afrikaner nationalists.

<sup>50</sup> Also a political party primarily composed of former Uitlanders, the Labour Party supported the causes of white mineworkers and other Johannesburg urban laborers.

indentured labor, supported protective tariffs on agriculture, and promoted bilingualism in Transvaal. Perhaps learning from the past mistakes of Kruger and other ultra-conservative Boers, the leaders of *Het Volk* did not directly oppose either the British government or the gold-mining industry. Thus, they offered no compelling reason for either faction to intercede. With time, the Boers would even lure the capitalists over to their side.

As the vote tallies rolled in, the results shocked almost everyone. Throughout the campaign, most observers expected a close race between *Het Volk* and the Progressives, with a high probability that neither party would secure an overall majority. However, *Het Volk* won an overwhelming majority, precluding the necessity of forming a coalition government with any other party. Out of the 69 seats up for election, *Het Volk* won 37, the Progressives won 21, the TRGA won six, Labour won three, and two Independents won the remaining two.<sup>51</sup> Prior to the war, Cape Prime Minister John X. Merriman told a Canadian friend that “They [the Boers] will fight as long as they have a cartridge, and then they will set to work to plot and struggle to throw off the yoke if it takes 25 years.”<sup>52</sup> Merriman’s prediction came true, but within a much shorter time span. Effectively shut out of Transvaal’s first post-war democratic government, the Uitlanders and Britain effectively won the war but lost control of their territorial acquisitions within five years of the Treaty of Vereeniging.

The devastating electoral defeat suffered by the Progressives raises many questions about the state of the pro-imperial coalition after the war. How could a coalition so adept at swaying public opinion and engineering an international crisis fail so miserably in encouraging an

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<sup>51</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 147.

<sup>52</sup> John X. Merriman, *Selections from the Correspondence of J.X. Merriman*, edited and with introduction by Phyllis Lewsen (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1969), pgs. 237-239.

effective exercise of the franchise it fought so hard to earn? The answer seems to lie in two critical miscalculations, one demographic and one psychological.

The first error involved serious census misinformation regarding Transvaal's Boer and Uitlander populations. Virtually every pre-war population estimate since 1890 showed the Uitlanders with significant numerical superiority.<sup>53</sup> With roughly 10 percent of the Boer population killed in the war, this population disparity logically should have grown even more in favor of the Uitlanders. Unfortunately for the Progressives and the rest of the pro-imperial coalition, the pre-war estimates were wildly inaccurate. Even after massive wartime losses, the male population of the Boers actually eclipsed that of the Uitlanders. By 1910, the Afrikaners maintained a slight but gradually increasing majority in South Africa.<sup>54</sup> Ironically, for all their incisive rhetoric regarding the administrative deficiencies of Kruger's government, the British placed incredible faith in the accuracy of the Boer government's 1897 census. Compounding this census error was a mistaken belief that immigration to Transvaal would continue at the same pace it had prior to 1899, eventually enabling English voters to completely swamp the Boers. Once again, this assumption proved false, as the gold mines relied increasingly on improved technology rather than on larger pools of skilled labor to enhance production. Thus, immigration largely plateaued by 1910, with immigration making up less than 10 percent of the white population increase between 1911 and 1946.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> E.g. The South African Republic's *Staats Almanak*, published in late 1896, recorded 245,397 whites living in Transvaal, of which 26,500 (men only) were enfranchised. Of this, it was estimated by *The Statist* in 1897 that approximately 179,417 were Uitlanders (104,947 men and 74,470 women) and 66,000 were Boers (33,000 men and 33,000 women). *The Statist: A Journal of Practical Finance and Trade*, v. 39 (London: The Statist Office, 1897), 873.

<sup>54</sup> Freund, "The Union Years 1919-48," in Bill Nasson, Carolyn Hamilton, and Robert Ross (eds.), *Cambridge History of South Africa*, II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 212.

<sup>55</sup> Freund, "The Union Years," 217,

More abstract but equally as important in explaining the election of 1907 was a fatal miscalculation involving human psychology. Simply put, the Progressives assumed that the pre-war imperial coalition would remain intact after the war. However, lacking an immediate unifying threat following the war, the coalition had largely shattered by 1907, and would completely disintegrate by 1921. As previously mentioned, the first faction to withdraw was the British imperial government. The passing of power in Westminster to a Liberal government under Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman effectively spelled the end of British imperial support to the pro-British faction in Transvaal. Moreover, it accelerated the process of Transvaal self-government, a process that Milner and the Progressives did not want to occur until racial bitterness from the war subsided and English culture prevailed.<sup>56</sup> In 1906, Smuts met Campbell-Bannerman in London and allegedly “put a simple case before him... It was in substance: Do you want friends or enemies?”<sup>57</sup> Perhaps motivated by this meeting with Smuts, Campbell-Bannerman chose to forgo waiting and called for a Transvaal election for November 1907. Remarking on this sudden shift in support from the Home Government, FitzPatrick complained that “Eighteen months of Liberal government have brought this country to a frightful pass... The cool, calculating cunning and undoubted perseverance of the Boers, the insensate malignancy and utter unscrupulousness of the Liberals, have combined to put us in an awful position.”<sup>58</sup>

Next went the capitalists, who never seemed terribly enthusiastic to begin with and now prioritized making up for lost time and profits. From the beginning, the capitalists never truly united around the Progressives. Thomas Cullinan, the Transvaal diamond magnate, supported the

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<sup>56</sup> “The Transvaal and Orange River Colonies; a Speech Delivered by the Right Hon. The Viscount Milner”, 8. Milner believed that “Every year that passed the memories of the war would grow a little more distant, and the trick of playing upon them less effective. Every year the obvious solicitude of the Government for the welfare of the people – the multiplication of good schools, the improvement of agriculture, the spread of railways, the hundred and one works of material advancement – would win us friends and soften the hostility of enemies.”

<sup>57</sup> Hancock and van der Poel, *Selections from the Smuts Papers*, vol. VII, 182.

<sup>58</sup> Cartwright, *The First South African*, 163.

TRGA. Sammy Marks, the pro-Kruger coal and liquor concessionaire, backed a small political group in Pretoria known as the Pretoria Political Association. J.B. Robinson, never a true English “race patriot” to begin with, supported *Het Volk*, which also received financial contributions from David Graaff, the owner of Imperial Cold Storage.<sup>59</sup> On February 6, 1907, Wernher wrote to FitzPatrick informing him of an overture made by Smuts to himself and Alfred Beit. During this meeting, Smuts allegedly offered to preserve Chinese labor importation until a solution could be found. All he demanded in return was the support of the capitalists.<sup>60</sup> Tempted by this offer, Wernher found himself writing to FitzPatrick that:

You will say I’m getting [to be] a pro-Boer. Well, from their point of view I would say they know their business and their country. It is a sore point to find we’ve been on the wrong track for twelve years and to find ourselves betrayed [by the British government]. But the want of appreciation on our own side does not blind me to the force of the other side... We have been shamefully treated and twice betrayed. But there is the position and we cannot alter it and can only hope that our new masters learnt something in their years of extremity and give us a fair and honest government.<sup>61</sup>

Echoing Wernher’s sentiments, Frederick Eckstein related that, despite *Het Volk*’s victory, his firm was determined not to “look so black into the future.” Even more surprising, he believed that Botha was “an earnest and sincere man” who sympathized with the interests of the mining industry.<sup>62</sup> Lionel Phillips, the former key Uitlander leader and partner in Wernher, Beit & Co. implicated in the Jameson Raid, returned from his self-imposed exile to head Wernher, Beit & Co.’s Johannesburg branch, Eckstein’s and Co., and now decided to court the Boers. Casting his previous prejudices aside, Phillips hosted Botha and Smuts at his house, introduced them to some of Johannesburg’s most prominent citizens, and worked to repair the divide

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<sup>59</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 135.

<sup>60</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 128.

<sup>61</sup> Duminy and Guest, *Fitzpatrick: South African Politician*, 420-421.

<sup>62</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 153-154.

between his firm and the Boers.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, *Het Volk* would go on to enjoy great support from the capitalists and would repay the favor on multiple occasions, including intervening in labor disputes, ending strikes, and negotiating with Mozambique to increase access to labor and decrease transport concessions.<sup>64</sup> The deaths of Rhodes in 1902 and Beit in 1906, combined with FitzPatrick's retirement from Wernher, Beit & Co. in mid-1907, further cemented the defection of the capitalist faction by removing perhaps the only three capitalist agents capable of retaining the group's loyalty to the pro-imperial coalition.

The desertions of the imperial government and the capitalists left the Uitlanders as the only faction still committed to Rhodes's vision for an anglicized imperial dominion within the British Empire. However, the Uitlanders could not remain united after the war. Despite being the largest opposition party in the Transvaal government, the Progressives utterly disappointed in their ability to offer a united front against the Boers. A rift soon emerged between those favoring conciliation, led by Progressive leader George Farrar, and those favoring outright obstruction, led by Percy FitzPatrick. The former group, which ultimately prevailed, recognized the declining situation of the British party and attempted to better its constituents and South Africa by burying racial tensions as soon as possible, even though this would mean effectively surrendering control to the Boers. The latter faction chose to offer as much resistance as possible in hopes that the vision of Rhodes, Milner, and others could still be salvaged. FitzPatrick succinctly summarized this way of thinking when he wrote to Phillips that:

Now, as a party, we are no match for them [the Boers] at their own game on their own ground... That's why I think we ought to fight hard for the essentials and have as simple and straightforward a policy as we can devise and allow the *verneuking* and the finessing to stand over. Go solid from the start for the British party, the policy as represented by

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<sup>63</sup> Cartwright, *The First South African*, 166.

<sup>64</sup> Marks, "War and Union," 190.

Milner—no compromise or bargaining or negotiation or hesitation of any sort with a view to conciliation!<sup>65</sup>

Unfortunately for the imperial dream, the Progressives never tapped into the same passion that the South African League's cries for political equality roused and never achieved the level of racial fraternity and cooperation which powered *Het Volk*. As a result, the Uitlanders lost their distinctive identity and broke down as a coherent political and demographic entity.

Lacking a convincing rallying cry, many Uitlanders began to see the future of South Africa not as a struggle of the races, but as one of the classes. Wilfred Wybergh, founder of the South African Labour Party, best described this new threat to Uitlander unity when he stated that “the struggle has already been transferred from the battlefield to the workshop and the mine.”<sup>66</sup> The emerging conflict between Johannesburg Uitlander capitalists and laborers became evident as early as the creation of the TRGA and the Labour party, parties that split the vote and political cohesion of the already numerically outmatched Uitlanders. The election of 1907 further shattered the fledgling Progressive Party. By December 1907, financier and prominent Progressive MP Abe Bailey had resigned, and others were reported to be “wobbling hard.”<sup>67</sup> As time progressed, more and more members dropped, financiers increasingly withdrew their support, and the party gradually crumbled. Regarding the unraveling of the once mighty coalition, Milner perhaps put it best when he reflected toward the end of his tenure as high commissioner that:

It would require some very potent and exceptional influence to unite the non-Dutch population in support of anything. Differing widely to begin with in origin and traditions... they are further split up by numerous cross divisions arising from business rivalry, from class antagonism, or from local jealousies. Mining interests versus commercial interests, Capital versus Labour, Pretoria versus Johannesburg, Town versus

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<sup>65</sup> Cartwright, *The First South African*, 139.

<sup>66</sup> Wilfred Wybergh, “Native Policy: Assimilation or Segregation,” *The State* 1:3 (April 1909): 455-464.

<sup>67</sup> Duminy, *Interfering in Politics*, 156.



Country, each of these antagonisms and others which might be enumerated, tend to divide the Europeans of more recent advent and would make co-operation between them, except in the actual presence of some grave catastrophe threatening them all, almost inconceivably difficult.<sup>68</sup>

Clearly, the resurgence of the Afrikaners did not, in the minds of most members of the three factions, constitute “some grave catastrophe threatening them all.” Growing increasingly comfortable with post-war Afrikaner rule, the coalition crumbled, costing the English settlers political control over South Africa and thus eventually depriving the British Empire of its South African dependencies.

#### iv. **Exit England**

After 1907, the English rapidly lost ground in South Africa and would continue to do so until a clean break occurred in 1961. With Transvaal decidedly back in the hands of the Boers following the Progressive Party’s dismal electoral performance, the Progressives made one last major attempt at taking back South Africa: union. However, the unification of Britain’s South African colonies did not enable the pro-British Progressives to reclaim political control. In a final but ultimately unsuccessful bid to retain political influence and South Africa’s participation within the British Empire, the remaining English political parties abdicated their autonomy and merged with the two developing Afrikaner political parties, Louis Botha’s moderate South African Party and James Barrie Hertzog’s Afrikaner-nationalist National Party.

Transvaal may have been lost, but union with Cape Colony and English-dominated Natal offered the possibility of shifting power back to the English. Furthermore, even if the Boers won yet again, there was hope that both sides would adopt the principle of “best-man government.” Perhaps best described by FitzPatrick’s March 1910 publication of “The Union: A plea for a

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<sup>68</sup> G.H.L. May, *British Supremacy in South Africa, 1899-1907* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 169. Milner to Chamberlain, December 5, 1904.

fresh start,” best-man government held that the new government of the Union should include the most capable administrators and statesmen from across South Africa, rather than solely members from one party or race.<sup>69</sup> Thus, FitzPatrick and Farrar began to contemplate pursuing the creation of a South African union. To their surprise, Botha and Smuts eagerly approved of the proposal. As a result, the two sides temporarily put aside their differences and united to convince Natal, Cape Colony, and the Orange River Colony to agree to form a union.

While FitzPatrick and the Progressives helped achieve union in 1910, union did not help them achieve supremacy in South African politics. Consequently, it soon became obvious that neither the pro-British Progressives nor Labour party would ever rule the newly united South Africa unilaterally. Rebranding themselves under Jameson as the Unionist party, the former Progressives hoped for victory in the 1910 general election, the first held after union. Unfortunately, the Boers completely rejected the principle of best-man government, choosing to run a highly organized campaign centered largely on pro-Boer racial sympathies. Once more, the British party came up short, gaining only 39 seats to Botha’s South African Party’s 67. The situation only worsened with time, as Unionists possessed a mere 25 seats after the 1920 general election. South Africa would continue electing Afrikaner majorities right up until the end of apartheid in 1994.

Determined to survive, the Unionists and Labourites took advantage of a growing division in the Afrikaner ranks, the first to be seen since the pre-war struggle between Transvaal “progressive” Boers and the staunch conservative “Krugerites.” This prior conflict received new life due to a split in 1914 between the moderate Afrikaners led by Botha and Smuts and the hardcore nationalists led by James Barrie Munnik. Like many of the Cape Boers prior to the

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<sup>69</sup> J. Percy FitzPatrick, “The Union: A Plea for a Fresh Start,” (Johannesburg: *Transvaal Leader*, 1910), 19-37.

South African War, Smuts saw South Africa's inclusion within the British Empire as a qualified positive. While he and most other Afrikaners certainly desired to protect Afrikaner culture, political power, and identity, they recognized that remaining an internally autonomous British dominion brought with it certain political, military, and economic advantages. In addition to receiving the protection of Britain's military and network of alliances, South Africa also benefitted from outsized investment and development courtesy of British capital and access to Britain's global trade network during times of peace and war.<sup>70</sup> Even before the official split, FitzPatrick conveyed to Milner in 1912 that "I have seen Smuts and Hertzog glaring at one another like wild animals and barely able to exchange words with civility... We saw and heard Hertzog go for Smuts on his education policy, and Smuts has told me that these scenes are nothing to what goes on in the Cabinet."<sup>71</sup> Following several heated disagreements, Botha removed Hertzog from his ministry in 1913, causing Hertzog and his nationalist followers to break away from the South African Party and form the National Party.

The struggle between Smuts<sup>72</sup> and Hertzog split the Afrikaner vote, preventing either Afrikaner party from securing an outright majority in the election of 1920. Seeing its opportunity to gain a political voice, albeit as a minor partner, the Unionist Party formed a governing coalition with Smuts's South African Party. The absorption of the Unionists into the South African Party in 1921 cemented this coalition and kept it in power for another three years.

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<sup>70</sup> E.g. British demand for platinum during World War II caused a near doubling in South Africa's platinum production between 1937 and 1945. In 1945 alone, Great Britain purchased South Africa's entire annual platinum output of 71,465 ounces. Davenport, *Digging Deep*, 410-413.; Bryce, *Impressions of South Africa*, 597-598. Bryce neatly summarized common opinions at the time regarding the benefits of Empire when he wrote "...the colonies derive even greater substantial advantages from the connection than does the mother country... The colonies... have not only some economic advantages in the better financial credit they enjoy, but have the benefit of the British diplomatic and consular service all over the world and of the status of British citizens in every country... And, above all, the British colonies have the navy of Britain to defend them against molestation by any foreign power."

<sup>71</sup> Cartwright, *The First South African*, 186.

<sup>72</sup> Louis Botha died in 1919 and was succeeded as leader of the moderate Afrikaners by Jan Smuts.

However, seeing its own chance to gain influence, the Labour Party formed a coalition with the National Party following the election of 1924, unseating the Unionist/South African Party conglomerate. Unfortunately for the Labour Party, the election of 1928 resulted in a National Party majority, making Labour support unnecessary. As the struggle between moderate and nationalistic Afrikaners assumed center stage in South African politics, English influence and voters rapidly lost relevance.

Largely due to the post-war disintegration of the pro-imperial coalition, South Africa's English population failed to prevent the increasingly nationalistic Afrikaners from gradually severing the relationship between Britain and South Africa. Despite joining the Commonwealth of Nations and assisting Britain in both world wars, South Africa slowly turned its back on Great Britain. It removed the dualism between the South African Flag and Union Jack in 1957, replaced "God Save the Queen" with an Afrikaans national anthem in 1957, almost removed the Union Jack (referred to as the "Blood Stain") from the South African flag in both 1948 and 1968, renounced British royal authority by declaring itself a republic in 1961, and finally withdrew from the Commonwealth in 1961, not rejoining until the end of apartheid in 1994. Once imagined as a source of support from which the Empire might draw strength, South Africa became little more than a reminder of Britain's waning influence on the world stage.

## Epilogue

Seeking fame, immortality, and the preservation of their treasured empire, imperialists in South Africa and Great Britain plunged the British Empire into a conflict with the Boers, a hardy group that ultimately conquered its conquerors. Cecil Rhodes, Alfred Milner, Percy FitzPatrick, and many others relished their roles as agents and propagators of the British Empire and as missionaries of a revised version of imperialism, one which they believed would be Britain's salvation in an eventual "New World Order" of clashing super empires. These politicians, financiers, and bureaucrats envisioned the global establishment of quasi-independent anglicized dominions as perhaps the only way for the British islands to retain their freedom and status as a considerable force in world affairs. While respectful of the semi-autonomous dominions' desire to govern their internal affairs, the "new" imperial system would create an economic, diplomatic, and military cooperative capable of securing Britain's position as the leading imperial power.

One such promising future dominion was South Africa. Here, Rhodes in particular knew he could make his mark on history. Consequently, he devoted much of his fortune and the last years of his life to preparing South Africa for its role as a support pillar for the increasingly cumbersome British Empire. Rhodes recognized that, for South Africa to serve such a purpose, the region needed to be consolidated and federated under the aegis of British supremacy. However, an obstacle blocked his plan: the existence of two quasi-independent and decisively anti-British agrarian Boer republics, the Orange Free State and the South African Republic. Transvaal's mushrooming economic and military power in particular imperiled Rhodes's strategy to force the Boer republics into submission via economic stranglehold. This stranglehold largely depended on a convenience of geography. Transvaal and the Orange Free State were landlocked, and thus dependent on British railways for their supplies and economic health.

Unfortunately for Rhodes, Transvaal's completion of the Delagoa Bay rail line in 1894 spelled disaster for his carefully premeditated murder of Boer autonomy.

With the completion of the Delagoa Bay line, Transvaal's regional ascendancy appeared inevitable. No longer with time on his side, Rhodes now needed to compete against both Transvaal and the clock: each and every day, Transvaal grew stronger, more prosperous, and better outfitted for military operations. Rhodes thus decided to take a massive gamble, one that threatened his imperial vision, reputation, and personal freedom. By supporting and guiding the Johannesburg Uitlander "Reform Committee," Rhodes maneuvered to eliminate the Boer obstacle to South African unification by directing and supporting an armed revolt to overthrow the Transvaal government. The dismal failure of this plot seriously strained British-Boer relations, setting the state for an eventual "racial struggle" between both groups.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, Jameson's calamitous "Raid" significantly increased the likelihood of war between Transvaal and its "suzerain," the British Empire. However, Rhodes's actions and the Jameson Raid were not merely destructive. In supporting the political organization of the Uitlanders, rallying three of the major Johannesburg gold-mining corporations (Consolidated Goldfields, Wernher Beit, & Co., and George Farrar's East Rand Proprietary Mines), and successfully soliciting the cooperation of high-ranking imperial statesmen (namely, Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain and South African High Commissioner Hercules Robinson), Rhodes succeeded in creating a

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<sup>1</sup> Particularly after the South African War, many saw the future of the region as a contest between the Afrikaner and English "races." Individuals such as FitzPatrick, Rhodes, and Milner sought to promote the English race, though none actively sought out the destruction of the Afrikaners. While both moderate and extremist Afrikaners sought to promote the Afrikaner culture and race, moderate Afrikaners such as Botha and Smuts preferred conciliation and a degree of equality. Meanwhile, nationalists such as Hertzog and D.F. Malan worked to place the Afrikaner race and culture at the undisputed forefront of South African society, often spurning English political and cultural influences. For more information, see Lindie Koorts's *D.F. Malan and the Rise of Afrikaner Nationalism* (2014) and Joanne L. Duffy's *The Politics of Ethnic Nationalism: Afrikaner Unity, the National Party, and the Radical Right in Stellenbosch, 1934-1948* (2006).

“proto-pro-imperial coalition,” one which laid the groundwork for a much more comprehensive and effective one which arose almost immediately in the Raid’s aftermath.

The post-Raid pro-imperial coalition shared many resemblances with its pre-Raid counterpart, but also differed in significant ways. Most notably, the post-Raid coalition placed much more emphasis on the political activism of the Uitlanders and saw them exercise far greater autonomy, operated over a much longer period of time, and experienced significant threats to its unity due to significant inter-factional and intra-factional dynamism and disagreement. The first of these differences, the role of the Uitlanders, is one that has been routinely neglected in subsequent historical analyses. While the pre-Raid Uitlanders seemed relatively unenthusiastic about their participation, the post-Raid Uitlanders proved to be a highly energized group of political activists. Under the leadership of the South African League, the post-Raid Uitlanders not only fulfilled their expected contributions to the pro-imperial coalition, but also eagerly exceeded the requests of their imperial supporters to the point where Milner, Chamberlain, and Greene needed to caution them to simmer down. Indeed, the Uitlanders’ growing autonomy and agitation nearly backfired on the pro-imperial coalition, as public opinion would not have favored a war to assist those who were thought of as “for war at any price.”<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, largely due to its much greater scope, the post-Raid coalition proved highly dynamic and experienced numerous incidents of discord throughout its existence. While Rhodes’s pre-Raid coalition absolutely broke down at the last moment largely in part due to disagreement over the “flag question,” the post-Raid coalition was threatened by disagreements over method, objective, and time frame. Seeing as the post-Raid coalition involved nearly every major mining company, numerous people from highly different factions, the cooperation and

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<sup>2</sup> Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 469. Telegram from Milner to Evans, July 21, 1899.

enthusiasm of three equally important factions, politicians operating in two vastly different regions in the world, and a highly volatile urban population, such disagreement should not come as a surprise. Rather, what is surprising are the results achieved by the dogged efforts of men such as FitzPatrick and Milner, ready to corral and persuade hesitant supporters and former opponents in the face of continuous attempts at dismantling the coalition launched by the Transvaal Boers, “cosmopolitan” capitalists, Westminster Liberals, and Cape moderates. The ability of the pro-imperial coalition’s leaders to achieve strategic unity within and between factions, especially at times when various blocs seemed ready to withdraw,<sup>3</sup> is perhaps the most important factor behind the origin of the South African War.

While the pro-imperial coalition succeeded in precipitating a British-Boer military struggle in which the British proved victorious, it failed dismally at achieving the higher objectives and vision as defined by Rhodes, Milner, FitzPatrick, and others. While the serious population miscalculation certainly hindered the pro-imperial coalition’s ability to firmly entrench the English element in South Africa and completely anglicize the region after the South African War, the coalition and its leaders were also overcome by the very consequences of their victory. Simply put, the military victory over the Boers gave both the Uitlanders and the capitalists a chance to make their own settlement on favorable terms with the militarily defeated but politically ascendant Boers. Cracks began to appear even before the war ended, as Uitlander refugees and jingoists loudly criticized Milner and the British government and as the capitalists repositioned themselves to prioritize their profitability and potentially switch sides in order to safeguard their holdings. Moreover, the coalition’s leadership failed to define a clear and

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<sup>3</sup> For example, threats to unity posed by the Jameson Raid’s failure, the split between the Chamber of Mines and Association of Mines, the “Great Deal” negotiations, the failure of the first post-Raid Uitlander petition, the Bloemfontein Conference, etc.



unifying threat after the war and failed to promote a common interest that could unite the pro-British South African voters and stem the resurrection of factional self-interest.

The deaths of Rhodes and Beit, retirements and/or electoral defeats of Chamberlain, Milner, Selborne, Salisbury, Jameson, Farrar, and FitzPatrick, and emergence of various niche political parties (such as the Labour Party and TRGA) all undermined British unity in South Africa and resulted in stunning early electoral losses to the incredibly unified and disciplined Afrikaner political bodies. Though a split in the Afrikaner ranks eventually developed between Botha and Smuts's moderates and Hertzog's Afrikaner nationalists, this occurred too late for the pro-British Progressives to exploit and recover from their earlier defeats or to achieve any semblance of unity. The English element in South Africa resigned itself to a diminishing role in South African politics, first as junior coalition partners, and then merely as voters within larger Afrikaner-led political parties. The decline in the power and influence of the English forces removed an important check on the rise of the nationalist Afrikaners, who desired to sever South Africa's formal and symbolic connections with Great Britain. Thus, South Africa gradually exited the British Empire and sphere of influence, turning what was once imagined as one of the Empire's keystones into a foreign power that could be considered neutral at best.

After World War II, the British Empire began to crumble in earnest. South Africa defiantly rejected Britain's attempts at salvaging the imperial order it spent the past two centuries meticulously establishing. Many other former British colonies and dependencies followed suit. The semi-autonomous dominion system envisioned by Rhodes never truly took root, and Britain found itself lacking the territories it once considered necessary for its self-preservation. While the global British Empire treasured by imperialists such as Rhodes, Milner, Chamberlain, and FitzPatrick did not die in their lifetimes, their actions inadvertently enfeebled at least one of the

support pillars that was meant to reinforce it. The failure to completely anglicize and adequately incorporate South Africa into the Empire represented one of the first of many similar failures. More importantly, it represented a significant blow to the semi-autonomous dominion system heralded by men like Rhodes as the British Empire's saving grace. Despite the best efforts, hopes, and vision of statesmen and dreamers like Cecil Rhodes, the sun set prematurely on the grand design to give South Africa a more permanent and defining role in the British Empire. Likewise, after two world wars, several economic crises, and the loss of almost all of Britain's remaining dependencies, the sun finally did set on the Empire itself.

## Appendix A

### Text of the Second Uitlander Petition to the Queen, March 24, 1899

(The historically significant Second Uitlander Petition to the Queen comprehensively identified and explained the numerous grievances held by the Uitlanders. Moreover, it publicly presented these grievances to the British public, press, and government agents in an official capacity. The Petition thus placed the Uitlander situation firmly in the minds of British citizens and consequently made a declination of assistance increasingly unlikely.)

#### **The HUMBLE PETITION of BRITISH SUBJECTS resident on the Witwatersrand, South African Republic, to HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY, QUEEN VICTORIA.**

##### **Sheweth that:**

1. For a number of years, prior to 1896, considerable discontent existed among the Uitlander population of the South African Republic, caused by the manner in, which the Government of the country was being conducted. The great majority of the Uitlander population consists of British subjects.
2. It was, and is, notorious that the Uitlanders have no share in the government of the country, although they constitute an absolute majority of the inhabitants of this State, possess a very large proportion of the land, and represent the intellect, wealth, and energy of the State.
3. The feelings of intense irritation which have been aroused by this state of things have been aggravated by the manner in which remonstrances have been met. Hopes have been held out and promises have been made by the Government of this State from time to time, but no practical amelioration of the conditions of life has resulted.
4. Petitions, signed by large numbers of Your Majesty's subjects, have been repeatedly addressed to the Government of this State, but have failed of their effect, and have even been scornfully rejected.
5. At the end of 1895 the discontent culminated in an armed insurrection against the Government of this State, which, however, failed of its object.
6. On that occasion the people of Johannesburg placed themselves unreservedly in the hands of Your High Commissioner, in the fullest confidence that he would see justice done to them.
7. On that occasion also President Kruger published a proclamation, in which he again held out hopes of substantial reforms.
8. Instead, however, of the admitted grievances being redressed, the spirit of the legislation adopted by the Volksraad during the past few years has been of a most unfriendly character, and has made the position of the Uitlanders more irksome than before.
9. In proof of the above statement, Your Majesty's petitioners would humbly refer to such measures as the following: —

The Immigration of Aliens Act (Law 30 of 1896);  
 The Press Law (Law 26 of 1896);  
 The Aliens' Expulsion Law of 1896.

Of these, the first was withdrawn at the instance of Your Majesty's Government, as being an infringement of the London Convention of 1884.

By the second the President is invested with the powers of suppressing wholly, or for a stated time, any publication which in his individual opinion is opposed to good manners or subversive of order. This despotic power he has not hesitated to exercise towards newspapers which support British interests, while newspapers which support the Government have been allowed to publish inflammatory and libellous articles, and to advocate atrocious crimes without interference.

The Aliens Expulsion Act draws a distinction between the Burghers of the State and Uitlanders which, Your Majesty's petitioners humbly submit, is in conflict with the Convention of 1884. Thus, whilst Burghers of the State are protected from expulsion, British subjects can be put over the border at the will of the President, without the right of appealing to the High Court, which is, nevertheless, open to the offending Burgher. This law was repealed, only to be re-enacted in all its essential provisions during the last session of the Volksraad.

**10.** The promise made by the President with regard to conferring Municipal Government upon Johannesburg was to outward appearance kept; but it is an ineffective measure, conferring small benefit upon the community, and investing the inhabitants with but little additional power of legislating for their own municipal affairs. Of the two members to be elected for each ward, one at least must be a Burgher. Besides this, the Burgomaster is appointed by the Government, not elected by the people. The Burgomaster has a casting vote, and, considering himself a representative of the Government and not of the people, has not hesitated to oppose his will to the unanimous vote of the Councillors. The Government also possess the right to veto any resolution of the Council. As the Burghers resident in Johannesburg were estimated at the last census as 1,039 in number as against 23,503 Uitlanders, and as they belong to the poorest and most ignorant class, it is manifest that these Burghers have an undue share in the representation of the town, and are invested with a power which neutralises the efforts of the larger and more intelligent portion of the community. Every Burgher resident is qualified to vote, irrespective of being a ratepayer or property owner within the municipal area.

**11.** Notwithstanding the evident desire of the Government to legislate solely in the interests of the Burghers, and impose undue burdens on the Uitlanders, there was still a hope that the declaration of the President of the 30th of December, 1896, had some meaning, and that the Government would duly consider grievances properly brought before its notice. Accordingly, in the early part of 1897 steps were taken to bring to the notice of the Government the alarming depression of the Mining Industry, and the reasons which, in the opinions of men well qualified to judge, had led up to it.

**12.** The Government at last appointed a Commission consisting of its own officials, which was empowered to enquire into the industrial conditions of the mining population, and to suggest such a scheme for the removal of existing grievances as might seem advisable and necessary.

13. On the 5th of August the Commission issued their report, in which the reasons for the then state of depression were duly set forth, and many reforms were recommended as necessary for the well-being of the community. Among them it will be sufficient to mention the appointment of an Industrial Board, having its seat in Johannesburg, for the special supervision of the Liquor Law, and the Pass Law, and to combat the illicit dealing in gold and amalgam.

14. The Government refused to accede to the report of the Commission, which was a standing indictment against its administration in the past, but referred the question to the Volksraad, which in turn referred it to a Select Committee of its own members. The result created consternation in Johannesburg, for, whilst abating in some trifling respects burdens which bore heavily on the mining industry, the Committee of the Raad, ignoring the main recommendations of the Commission, actually advised an increased taxation of the country, and that in a way which bore most heavily on the Uitlander. The suggestions of the Committee were at once adopted, and the tariff increased accordingly.

15. At the beginning of 1897 the Government went a step further in their aggressive policy towards the Uitlander, and attacked the independence of the High Court, which, until then, Your Majesty's subjects had regarded as the sole remaining safe guard of their civil rights. Early in that year Act No. 1 was rushed through the Volksraad with indecent haste. This high-handed Act was not allowed to pass without criticism; but the Government, deaf to all remonstrance, threatened reprisals on those professional men who raised their voices in protest, and finally, on the 16th of February, 1898, dismissed the Chief Justice, Mr. J. G. Kotze, for maintaining his opinions. His place was filled shortly afterwards by Mr. Gregorowski, the Judge who had been especially brought from the Orange Free State to preside over the trial of the Reform prisoners in 1896, and who, after the passing of the Act above referred to, had expressed an opinion that no man of self respect would sit on the Bench whilst that law remained on the Statute Book of the Republic. All the Judges at the time this law was passed condemned it in a formal protest, publicly read by the Chief Justice in the High Court, as a gross interference with the independence of that tribunal. That protest has never been modified or retracted, and of the five Judges who signed the declaration three still sit on the Bench.

16. The hostile attitude of the Government towards Your Majesty's subjects has been accentuated by the building of forts not only around Pretoria, but also overlooking Johannesburg. The existence of these forts is a source of constant menace and irritation to British subjects, and does much to keep alive that race-feeling which the Government of this State professes to deprecate. This feeling of hostility has infected the general body of Burghers. Most noticeable is the antagonistic demeanour of the police and of the officials under whom they immediately act.

17. The constitution and *personnel* of the police force is one of the standing menaces to the peace of Johannesburg. It has already been the subject of remonstrance to the Government of this Republic, but hitherto without avail. An efficient police force cannot be drawn from a people such as the burghers of this State; nevertheless, the Government refuses to open its ranks to any other class of the community. As a consequence, the safety of the lives and property of the inhabitants is confided in a large measure to the care of men fresh from the country districts, who are unaccustomed to town life, and ignorant of the ways and requirements of the people. When it is considered that this police force is armed with revolvers in addition to the ordinary police

truncheons, it is not surprising that, instead of a defence, they are absolutely a danger to the community at large.

**17A.** Trial by jury exists in name, but the jurors are selected exclusively from among the Burghers. Consequently in any case where there is the least possibility of race or class interests being involved there is the gravest reason to expect a miscarriage of justice.

**18.** Encouraged and abetted by the example of their superior officers, the police have become lately more aggressive than ever in their attitude towards British subjects. As, however, remonstrances and appeals to the Government were useless, the, in: dignities to which Your Majesty's subjects were daily exposed from this source had to be endured as best they might. Public indignation was at length fully roused by the death at the hands of a police-constable of a British subject named Tom Jackson Edgar.

**19.** The circumstances of this affair were bad enough in themselves, but were accentuated by the action of the Public Prosecutor, who, although the accused was charged with murder, on his own initiative reduced the charge to that of culpable homicide only, and released the prisoner on the recognisances of his comrades in the police force, the bail being fixed originally at £200, or less than the amount which is commonly demanded for offences under the Liquor Law, or for charges of common assault.

**20.** This conduct of a high State official caused the most intense feeling to prevail in Johannesburg. It was then thought that the time had arrived to take some steps whereby British subjects might for the future be protected from the indignities of which they had so long complained. It was therefore decided to make an appeal direct to Your Most Gracious Majesty, setting forth the grievances under which Your Majesty's subjects labour. A petition was accordingly prepared and presented to Your Majesty's Vice-Consul on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December, 1898, by some 4,000 or 5,000 British subjects. The behaviour of those present was orderly and quiet, and everything was done to prevent any infringement of the Public Meetings Law.

**21.** Owing to a technical informality, Your Majesty's Representative declined to transmit the petition to Your Majesty.

**22.** Immediately it became known that the petition would not go forward to Your Majesty, the Government ordered the arrest of Messrs. Clement Davies Webb and Thomas Robery Dodd, respectively the Vice-President and Secretary of the Transvaal Province of the South African League, under whose auspices the petition had been presented, on a charge of contravening the Public Meetings Act by convening a meeting in the open air. They were admitted to bail of £1,000 each, five times the amount required from the man charged with culpable homicide.

**23.** Thereupon Your Majesty's subjects, considering the arrest of these two gentlemen a gross violation of the rights of British subjects and an attempt to strain unduly against them a law which had already been represented to the Government as pressing most heavily upon the Uitlander population, decided to call a public meeting in an enclosed place, as permitted by the law, for the purpose of ventilating their grievances, and endorsing a fresh petition to Your Majesty.

**24.** Prior to holding the meeting the South African League ascertained from the Government, through the State Attorney, that, as in their opinion the meeting was perfectly legal in its objects, the Government has not intention of prohibiting it.

**25.** The meeting took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> of January, 1899, at the Amphitheatre, a large iron building capable of holding from 3,000 to 4,000 people. Prior to the advertised hour of opening an overwhelmingly large body of Boers, many of whom were police in plain clothes and other employees of the Government, forced an entrance by a side door, and practically took complete possession of the building. They were all more or less armed, some with sticks, some with police batons, some with iron bars, and some with revolvers.

**26.** The mere appearance of the speakers was the signal for disorder to commence; the Boers would not allow the meeting to proceed, but at once commenced to wreck the place, break up the chairs, and utilise the broken portions of them as weapons of offence against any single unarmed Englishman they could find.

**27.** There were present several Government officials, Justices of the Peace, and Lieutenants of Police in uniform, and the Commandant of Police, but they were appealed to in vain, and the work of destruction proceeded, apparently with their concurrence. Several Englishmen were severely injured by the attacks of the rioters, but in no case was an arrest effected, although offenders were pointed out and their arrest demanded; nor, indeed, was any attempt made by the police to quell the riot. Up to the present time no steps have been taken by the Government towards prosecuting the ringleaders of the disturbance, nor has a single arrest been made, notwithstanding the fact that the police officials who were present at the meeting admitted that some of the rioters were well known to them.

**28.** Those of Your Majesty's subjects who were present at the meeting were unarmed and defenceless, and seeing that the rioters had the support of the police and of some of the higher officials of the State, they refrained from any attempts at retaliation, preferring to rely upon more constitutional methods, and to lay a full statement of their grievances before Your Most Gracious Majesty.

**29.** The condition of Your Majesty's subjects in this State has indeed become well nigh intolerable.

**30.** The acknowledged and admitted grievances of which Your Majesty's subjects complain prior to 1895 not only are not redressed, but exist to-day in an aggravated form. They are still deprived of all political rights, they are denied any voice in the government of the country, they are taxed far above the requirements of the country, the revenue of which is misapplied and devoted to objects which keep alive a continuous and well founded feeling of irritation, without in any way advancing the general interest of the State. Maladministration and peculation of public monies go hand in hand, without any vigorous measures being adopted to put a stop to the scandal. The education of Uitlander children is made subject to impossible conditions. The police afford no adequate protection to the lives and property of the inhabitants of Johannesburg; they are rather a source of danger to the peace and safety of the Uitlander population.

**31.** A further grievance has become prominent since the beginning of the year. The power vested in the Government by means of the Public Meetings Act has been a menace to Your Majesty's subjects since the enactment of the Act in 1894. This power has now been applied in order to deliver a blow that strikes at the inherent and inalienable birthright of every British subject, namely, his right to petition his Sovereign. Straining to the utmost the language and intention of the law, the Government have arrested two British subjects who assisted in presenting a petition to Your Majesty on behalf of 4,000 fellow subjects. Not content with this, the Government, when Your Majesty's loyal subjects again attempted to lay their grievances before Your Majesty, permitted their meeting to be broken up and the objects of it to be defeated by a body of Boers, organised by Government officials and acting under the protection of the police. By reason, therefore, of the direct, as well as the indirect, act of the Government, Your Majesty's loyal subjects have been prevented from publicly ventilating their grievances, and from laying them before Your Majesty.

**32.** Wherefore Your Majesty's humble petitioners humbly beseech Your Most Gracious Majesty to extend Your Majesty's protection to Your Majesty's loyal subjects resident in this State, and to cause an enquiry to be made into grievances and complaints enumerated and set forth in this humble petition, and to direct Your Majesty's representative in South Africa to take measures which will secure the speedy reform of the abuses complained of, and to obtain substantial guarantees from the Government of this State for a recognition of their rights as British subjects.

And Your Most Gracious Majesty's petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray, &c., &c.

W. WYBERGH. &c., P.O. Box 317, Johannesburg, South African Republic, AND OTHERS.



## Appendix B

### Test of the “Rand Manifesto” Published in the “Cape Times” on July 4, 1899

(The “Rand Manifesto” succinctly and publicly presented the Uitlander demands to a peripheral population in South Africa. In addition to serving as a useful reference, the Manifesto provides evidence for the contention that the Uitlander movement’s operations extended beyond attempting to influence public opinion back in Britain.)

#### WHAT THE UITLANDERS REQUIRE.

The outcome of the understanding between the two Governments should be the inclusion amongst the permanent and fundamental laws of the South African Republic of a Reform Act, embracing, in addition to clauses providing for naturalisation and redistribution on the lines already indicated, the following amongst other provisions:

1. No burgher or alien shall be granted privileges or immunities which upon the same terms shall not be granted to all burghers.
2. No person shall on account of creed or religious belief be under any disability whatever.
3. The majority of the inhabitants being English speaking, English shall be recognised equal with Dutch as an official language of the State.
4. The independence of the High Court shall be established and duly safeguarded.
5. Legislation by simple resolution (besluit) of the Volksraad shall be abolished.
6. Free right of public meeting and forming electoral committees shall be recognised and established.
7. Freedom of speech and press shall be assured.
8. All persons shall be secured in their houses, persons, papers, and effects against violation or illegal seizure.
9. The existing forts and the adoption of other measures intended for the intimidation of the white inhabitants of the country being a menace to the exercise of the undoubted rights of a free people shall be declared unconstitutional.
10. Existing monopolies shall be cancelled or expropriated on equitable conditions.
11. Raad members must be fully enfranchised burghers and over the age of twenty-one years of age. Any candidate for the Presidency must be a fully enfranchised burgher over thirty years of age, and have been resident in the county for ten years.
12. All elections shall be by ballot, and shall be adequately safeguarded by stringent provisions against bribery and intimidation.
13. All towns with a population of 1,000 persons and upwards shall have the right to manage their own local affairs under a general Municipal Act. The registration of voters and the conduct of all elections shall be regulated by local bodies.
14. A full and comprehensive system of State education shall be established under the control of local Boards.
15. The Civil Service shall be completely reorganised, and all corrupt officials shall be dismissed from office and be ineligible for office in the future.
16. Payments from the Public Treasury shall only be made in accordance with the Budget proposals approved by the Raad, with full and open publication of the accounts periodically.
17. No person shall become a burgher and no fresh constituency shall be created except in accordance with the lines herein laid down, and officials shall have no discretionary power in this or any other matter affecting the civil rights of the inhabitants of the country.

## Appendix C

### Text of the Treaty of Vereeniging, signed May 31, 1902

(Only a few pages long, the Treaty of Vereeniging sought to entice the Boers to lay down their arms by promising them amnesty, funds for reconstruction, and a delay on the extension of civil rights to native Africans. While the treaty's terms concluded the war, they did little to further the anglicization of South Africa. Indeed, the treaty essentially allowed Boer wartime leaders to reorganize their followers into a formidable electoral constituency.)

THE FOLLOWING NOTICE is hereby published for general information. By order of His Excellency the High Commissioner and Administrator of the Transvaal.

WE Davidson, Acting Secretary to the Transvaal Administration -3rd June 1902.

ARMY HEADQUARTERS, SOUTH AFRICA

General Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, Command in Chief

AND

His Excellency Lord Milner, High Commissioner, on behalf of the BRITISH GOVERNMENT,

AND

Messrs S.W. Burger, F.W. Reitz, Louis Botha, J.H. de la Rey, L.J. Meyer, and J.C. Krogh, acting as the GOVERNMENT of SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC,

AND

Messrs W.J.C. Brebner, C.R. de Wet, J.B.M. Hertzog, and C.H. Olivier, acting as the GOVERNMENT of the ORANGE FREE STATE, on behalf of their respective BURGHERS

Desirous to terminate the present hostilities, agree on the following Articles.

1. The BURGHER Forces in the Field will forthwith lay down their Arms, handing over all Guns, Rifles, and Munitions of War, in their possession or under their control, and desist from any further resistance to the Authority of HIS MAJESTY KING EDWARD VII, whom they recognise as their lawful SOVEREIGN.

The Manner and details of this surrender will be arranged between Lord Kitchener and Commandant General Botha, Assistant Commandant General de la Rey and Chief Commandant De Wet.

2. Burghers in the field outside the limits of the TRANSVAAL and ORANGE RIVER COLONY, and all Prisoners of War at present outside South Africa, who are burghers, will, on duly declaring their acceptance of the position of subjects of HIS MAJESTY KING EDWARD VII, be gradually brought back to their homes as soon as transport can be provided and their means of subsistence ensured.

3. The BURGHERS so surrendering or so returning will not be deprived of their personal liberty, or their property.

4. No proceedings CIVIL or CRIMINAL will be taken against any of the BURGHERS so

surrendering or so returning for any Acts in connection with the prosecution of the War. The benefit of this clause will not extend to certain Acts contrary to the usage of War which have been notified by the Commander in Chief to the Boer Generals, and which shall be tried by Court Martial immediately after the close of hostilities.

5. The DUTCH language will be taught in Public Schools in the TRANSVAAL and the ORANGE RIVER COLONY where the Parents of the Children desire it, and will be allowed in COURTS of LAW when necessary for the better and more effectual Administration of Justice.

6. The Possession of Rifles will be allowed in the TRANSVAAL and ORANGE RIVER COLONY to persons requiring them for their protection on taking out a licence according to Law.

7. MILITARY ADMINISTRATION in the TRANSVAAL and ORANGE RIVER COLONY will at the earliest possible date be succeeded by CIVIL GOVERNMENT, and, as soon as circumstances permit, Representative Institutions, leading up to self-Government, will be introduced.

8. The question of granting the Franchise to Natives will not be decided until after the introduction of Self-Government.

9. No Special Tax will be imposed on Landed Property in the TRANSVAAL and ORANGE RIVER COLONY to defray the Expenses of the War.

10. As soon as conditions permit, a Commission, on which the local inhabitants will be represented, will be appointed in each District of the TRANSVAAL and ORANGE RIVER COLONY, under the Presidency of a Magistrate or other official, for the purpose of assisting the restoration of the people to their homes and supplying those who, owing to war losses, are unable to provide for themselves, with food, shelter, and the necessary amount of seed, stock, implements etc. indispensable to the resumption of their normal occupations.

His Majesty's Government will place at the disposal of these Commissions a sum of three million pounds sterling for the above purposes, and will allow all notes, issued under Law No. 1 of 1900 of the Government of the SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC, and all receipts, given by the officers in the field of the late Republics or under their orders, to be presented to a JUDICIAL COMMISSION, which will be appointed by the Government, and if such notes and receipts are found by this Commission to have been duly issued in return for valuable consideration they will be received by the first-named Commissions as evidence of War losses suffered by the persons to whom they were originally given. In addition to the above named free grant of three million pounds, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to make advances as loans for the same purpose, free of interest for two years, and afterwards repayable over a period of years with 3 per cent interest. No foreigner or rebel will be entitled to the benefit of this Clause.

Signed at Pretoria this thirty first day of May in the Year of Our Lord Thousand Nine Hundred and Two.

[Signed]

KITCHENER OF KHARTOUM, MILNER, S W BURGER, F W REITZ, LOUIS BOTHA, J H DE LA REY, L J MEYER, J C KROGH, C R DE WET, J B M HERTZOG, WJ C BREBNER, C .H OLIVIER

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