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*A united South Africa:
with or without South West Africa?*

*South Africa incorporated Namibia in three stages.
The Cape Colony annexed the fourteengvano islands in 1874, the Walvis
Bay enclave in 1884; and conquered the rest of the mainland in 1915.¹*

¹ Keith Gottschalk: SOUTH AFRICA IN NAMIBIA 1915-1980s, in: PERSPECTIVES ON NAMIBIA. PAST AND PRESENT, ed. by Christopher Saunders, OCCASIONAL PAPERS NO 4, CENTRE FOR AFRICAN STUDIES: UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN, 1983, p. 69.

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Introduction

In this thesis I want to look at the particular relation between South Africa and South West Africa. Since when has South West Africa been seen as part of South Africa? From the beginning of European settlement in Southern Africa? Or later? Were there parts in South Africa which related more closely to South West Africa than others? What did it mean to South Africa when South West Africa became a German Protectorate? What did it mean to Britain as the influential European power at the Cape? To answer these questions I look at the different attempts to unite the British Colonies in South Africa with the Afrikaner Republics. Here of special interest to me is if there existed different concepts in South Africa and in Britain, and secondly, what part South West Africa played in concepts of unification.

German South West Africa was handed over to the Union of South Africa as a mandate after the First World War. Was the Union a substitute for Britain?

The affair gets even more interesting if one looks at the relations between the Union of South Africa and South West Africa in time of the mandate. In 1946 Smuts, on behalf of the Union, applied before the General Assembly of the United Nations for the permission to incorporate South West Africa in the Union. That indicates that the Union of South Africa had genuinely an interest in the territory, especially if one recalls the objection of the Union to release South West Africa from the mandate in an independent country. One way of argumentation was legally. The Union denied the United Nations the right to demand such an act because the Union did not accept the United Nations as the legal successor of the League of Nations, under which the Mandate was installed.

Did the Union of South Africa argue for an incorporation of South West Africa only because of a legal dispute?

Right after the First World War the Mandate system was invented by the League of Nations to deal with the colonies of the powers which had lost the war. Interesting enough, Smuts as one of the founders of the League was the author of a booklet with the title *The League of Nations: A Practical Suggestion*. In there the Mandate system was described and it was mentioned to which colonies it should be applied - only to these that had been possessed by Austria, Russia and Turkey. The ones Germany had possessed “are inhabited by barbarians who not only cannot possibly govern themselves but to whom it would be impracticable to apply any idea of political self-determination in the European sense...”². Thus, Smuts recommended the annexation of South West Africa and Botha at the Peace Conference argued for it in terms of the national security of South Africa.

Botha’s argument was that “unless the territory were incorporated into South Africa, the small German population would continue to foment trouble in order to get back to Germany and these troubles might extend to the Union”³.

So, the argumentation changed from after the First World War to the argument with the United Nations.

But apart from strategy or juridical differences the Union claimed that South West Africa was “an integral part of the Union”⁴. Ronald B. Ballinger argues in his book “SOUTH-WEST AFRICA. The Case Against the Union” (South African Institute of Race Relations: Johannesburg, 1961) that “The Union’s attitude is historically conditioned and based on real ties with South-West Africa on family, economics and security.”⁵

Were these ties knitted only under the mandate or did they exist before? As can be seen, they existed before. Economic ties, for example, were knitted with the first traders who came from the Cape into the territory. And they went on to exist right through the German colonial period, for example in the mining industry. So, why was South West Africa not incorporated before Germany proclaimed her protection?

² S. C. Saxena: *Namibia: Challenge to the United Nations*, Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan, 1978, p. 14.

³ *ibid.*, p. 16.

⁴ Ronald B. Ballinger: *SOUTH-WEST AFRICA. The Case Against the Union*, South African Institute of Race Relations: Johannesburg, 1961, p. 32.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 45.

The first period - the 1870s and 1880s

The first chapter concentrates on the 1870s. In this time, actions from Britain were taken for a unification of South Africa for the first time. On the other side are the 1870s exactly that period in which the Cape Colony directed a good deal of her actions away from the East, the direction British actions took. Itself became involved in events in South West Africa and tried to do so with Britain as well. In this time, that is right from the beginning, the differences between Britain and the Cape Colony on the unification of South Africa became obvious. Especially when Germany began to show her interest for South West Africa, the different reactions at the Cape and in Britain increased.

The first concrete attempts to unite the British colonies in South Africa with the Afrikaner Republics was made by Lord Carnarvon in his second period in office as Secretary of the Colonies.⁶ Two aspects were important for that development. First, the British Government regarding public interest tried to reduce the costs for the colonies that were heavy burdens on the taxpayer. Under the Gladstone Cabinet at the beginning of the 1870s plans to give up the South African colonies except the Cape peninsula itself were openly discussed. But no majority was found for that. The other possibility was to give responsible government to the colonies that they had to maintain themselves in respect of internal affairs. Foreign affairs would after all still be handled through the Home Government. That way was pursued, and in 1872 the Cape Colony received self-government status. But this alone, the British Government thought, would not guarantee a unification of South Africa in any nearer future and under British leadership. The political

⁶ In his first period in office Canada had been united in 1867. Now he wanted to do the same with South Africa. See Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson (ed.): THE OXFORD HISTORY OF SOUTH AFRICA. 1870-1966, Vol. II, London New York Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 293.

atmosphere at the Cape was not to count on for the kind of action the British Government had in mind.⁷

It was thought that after the received self-government the Cape would take over the initiative, but that did not happen. Thereby, the Cape Government was not against the idea itself. But the following actions taken by the Home Government were badly received at the Cape because it was thought that the Cape should take on the leadership in the process, not Britain. Main differences were the way in which the Cape Government thought it should happen and the territory which should be included, and time was a great factor.⁸

That was exactly what the Colonial Secretary Lord Carnarvon was sure the British Government did not have.

His first attempt to bring the unification on its way was to held a conference in the Cape with representatives from each Colony and Republic. This failed because of the resistance from the new Cape Government to accept British leadership in things it regarded as internal South African. That meant a break of the rights of the Cape Government, it was argued.⁹ That led to the Cape Government boycotting the conference. After the South African Republic also refused to participate, the failure was obvious.

The South African Republic in the Transvaal was becoming an economic stabile and prosperous state. The Government tried to break free from the dependency on British harbours in the South by promoting a railway to Delagoa Bay. The Bay had come, after some time of quarrelling between Portugal and Great Britain, under Portuguese rule.¹⁰ If the South African Republic could manage to build a railway to Delagoa Bay it would mean that Britain would lose its harbour monopoly she had on the south coast. And not only would she lose in the South, the fear extended that a strengthening of the South

⁷ There was no British majority at the Cape. See: A REVIEW OF THE PRESENT MUTUAL RELATIONS OF THE BRITISH SOUTH AFRICAN COLONIES, p. 1, in: A REVIEW OF THE PRESENT MUTUAL RELATIONS OF THE BRITISH SOUTH AFRICAN COLONIES TO WHICH IS APPENDED A MEMORANDUM ON SOUTH AFRICAN RAILWAY UNIFICATION AND ITS EFFECT ON RAILWAY RATES. PRINTED BY AUTHORITY 1907.

⁸ M. Wilson and L. Thompson: THE OXFORD HISTORY..., p. 295.

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 294.

¹⁰ In 1875 Delagoa Bay was given to Portugal by Marshal Macmahon. See M. Wilson and L. Thompson: THE OXFORD HISTORY..., p. 296.

African Republic becoming independent of British harbours could lead to a confederation with the Orange Free State, the other Republic north of the Cape. And that this would finally mean for Britain to be blocked out from the possibility to expand further north.¹¹

To prevent that from happening Carnavon came up with the plan to annex the Transvaal as a Crown Colony by means of a coup as long as the government was still weak. The plan came into existence in April 1877. But, although the plan succeeded, the weakness of it showed soon after. Plans for a real annexation in terms of maintaining and governing the territory had never been made.¹² On the other side, the population of the South African Republic resisted.

Had there been no actual resistance to the annexation itself it now occurred afterwards. First, by means of a deputation to London under Paul Kruger to protest against the annexation. But Carnavon as well as his successor Hicks Beach refused to open the discussion.¹³ The next step was armed resistance. The possibility for that was opened when the British forces in Natal were reduced. The Afrikaner succeeded that way. In August 1881 the Convention of Pretoria was signed through which the Transvaal got self-government.¹⁴

The development so far shows that the British focus for a unification of South Africa was directed to the East with regard to further extension to the North above the Limpopo.¹⁵

As contrast to that, it is interesting to look at developments at the Cape in that time concerning plans and ideas of a future South Africa.

As it was indicated in the rejection of Carnavon's conference on that issue, the Cape Government had strong feelings which role it should play in the whole matter. But not

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² Shepstone and a small police unit occupied Pretoria in January 1877. He threatened the Volksraad with a possible Zulu attack to underline his demands for reforms in the South African Republic. But in April after he had rejected the reforms he announced the Transvaal being a British Colony. By doing so he fulfilled what he was told to do before the campaign had started.

See M. Wilson and L. Thompson: *THE OXFORD HISTORY...*, p. 296.

¹³ *ibid.*, p. 299.

¹⁴ The Pretoria Convention was the peace treaty after the British forces were beaten at Majuba. In the Convention it was stated that the Transvaal got self-government status under British suzerainty. The African population was dealt with by a 'British Resident' and geographical boundaries the Transvaal was bound to were included.

See M. Wilson and L. Thompson: *THE OXFORD HISTORY...*, p. 300.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 293.

only did it react in negative way to British interference, there also existed other ideas what a future South Africa should be built of.

At the same time Carnavon directed his actions to the East, the Cape Government focused on the West and tried to get the British Government involved there.

Relations between the Cape Colony and South West Africa already existed for a long time.¹⁶ Missionaries had used Cape Town as harbour on their way to the territory. Traders from the Cape had expanded their routes into it. All these called on the Cape Government for help in times of difficulties within the territory. And not only Europeans, but Africans also had asked for support by being provided with ammunition and arms.¹⁷

When in 1874 the Cape Government received a petition from Kamaherero and other Herero chiefs in which it was asked to assist against a further immigration of Afrikaners into the territory, it took that as a request for protection. That led to direct activities of the Cape Government to arrange for an annexation of South West Africa.¹⁸

In June 1875 the House of Assembly of the Cape passed a resolution¹⁹ which dealt with the extension of the Cape Colony up to Walvis Bay. In December the Governor informed the Home Government about the plan to send a commissioner to the territory as first step of a possible annexation in the future. Here it is important to remember that, although the Cape Colony had received responsible government in 1872, this concerned only internal affairs. External ones were handled after all by the British Government. Thus, any annexation had to be done by Great Britain.

In the next month the different intentions and interests started showing. The Home Government had reacted positively to a 1874 resolution from the Cape concerning Walvis Bay, but there it stopped. Lord Carnavon reminded the Cape Government, in contrast, that Great Britain was still expecting the Cape Colony to take over Griqualand West

¹⁶ They began with the first missionaries coming to South West Africa in the 1820s. See I. Goldblatt: HISTORY OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA from the beginning of the nineteenth century, Cape Town Wynberg Johannesburg: Juta & Company Limited, 1971, p. 12.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 38-39.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 53-54.

¹⁹ In the resolution it was declared "that it is expedient to extend the limits of the Colony on the west coast to include Walvis Bay and such tract of country inland as may be found necessary...and that the Government take such preliminary steps as may place it in a position to introduce a Bill to effect the annexation to this Colony of such territory".

See I. Goldblatt: HISTORY OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA..., p. 54.

which had been annexed by Great Britain in 1871 under exactly that expectation. Furthermore, Carnavon saw a confederation, if not incorporation, between Griqualand West and the Cape Colony as first step towards the unification. In 1876 Molteno, the Cape Prime Minister rejected the confederation, but agreed to an incorporation.²⁰

Despite the negative reaction from the British Government regarding the annexation of the entire territory of South West Africa the Cape Government proceeded in its actions by sending Palgrave²¹ to South West Africa. The Cape Governor misjudged the situation there when he thought that an annexation would be an easy task because the territory under investigation, the Nama- and Damaraland, had “for years been subject to the influence of the Government...”²². That became clear to Palgrave when he encountered many difficulties from different leaders with regard to the plan to build up a magisterial structure in the territory.²³ But all the difficulties Palgrave encountered did not change the Cape convictions.

Palgrave recommended to, at least, annex the coastline because it would serve several points that are important for an understanding of the role South West Africa played in plans the Cape had for a future South Africa. A confederation of the whole of Southern Africa needed the inclusion of South West Africa to be complete. The annexation of the coastline, therefore, would be a step in that direction because, as Palgrave explained, it would put a halt to any future Portuguese expansion from Angola to the south, take away the possibility for the Republics in the interior to establish a port outside of British control, and last it would civilise the people of the territory.²⁴

In November 1877 Sir Bartle Frere, the Cape Governor, sent Palgrave’s report to the Home Government together with his strong recommendation for the annexation of the

²⁰ The actual incorporation took another four years and finally happened in 1880.

See M. Wilson and L. Thompson: *THE OXFORD HISTORY...*, p. 285.

²¹ Palgrave was sent to the territory to get protection requests from the kapteins or chiefs as basis for actions of annexation. He became first Resident and magistrate for Walvis Bay.

See I. Goldblatt: *HISTORY OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA...*, p. 55 and 69.

²² *ibid.*, p. 54.

²³ *ibid.*, p. 55.

²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 60-61.

whole territory that bordered the Portuguese colony, the Transvaal and the Orange River.²⁵ But Great Britain had other concerns. The annexation of the Transvaal in April and different wars in South Africa throughout the years 1877 and 1878²⁶ brought expenses to the British taxpayer. Further, the problems in the annexed Transvaal and the general orientation to the East concerning a united South Africa gave no priority to the plans of the Cape. Therefore Lord Carnarvon refused the annexation of the whole territory, but approved the one of Walvis Bay because of strategy. With that annexation two of the three points in Palgrave's report were fulfilled, the Portuguese expansion to the south was stopped and the best suitable place for a harbour on the west coast becoming British brought an end to any plans that might have existed in the Republics to break free from the dependencies of the British harbours in the South. The actual annexation took place on 12 March 1878. This rather clear refusal did not put an end to the Cape intentions regarding South West Africa.

In 1880 another request by the Cape Government regarding the annexation of the entire coastline of South West Africa reached the Home Government. Lord Carnarvon's reply to the one from 1875 had been interpreted as not completely opposite to the plan in future. Lord Kimberley's reply to that new request was explicit in the negative position held by the British Government. He explained that Great Britain was not interested in any further annexation in South West Africa.²⁷ On the contrary, it was more interested in handing over Walvis Bay to the Cape Colony. When in October 1883 the Cape Government still had not taken it over Lord Derby, Lord Kimberley's successor as Secretary for the

²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 62.

²⁶ In 1877-8 the Griqua, Tswana and Khoikhoi roused in Griqualand West and British and Cape Colonial forces got into war with the Xhosa.

See M. Wilson and L. Thompson: *THE OXFORD HISTORY...*, p. 285.

In addition to that, Carnarvon feared that Britain would get involved militarily in South West Africa, too, if an annexation was pursued.

See I. Goldblatt: *HISTORY OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA...*, p. 62.

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 80: "Her Majesty's Government are of the opinion that the Orange River should be maintained as the north-western limit of the Cape Colony and they will give no countenance to schemes for the extension of British jurisdiction over Great Nama- and Damaraland."

Colonies, went so far as to mention the possibility of abandoning Walvis Bay, if the Cape Government did not make any progress in that direction.²⁸

This was taken seriously at the Cape as a statement by Merriman, leader of the Ministry at that time, shows:

“If this takes place either the Boers get a sea port and block the Englishmen out of South West Africa or the Germans take it and intrigue for ultimate possession of the Transvaal.”²⁹ Both possible consequences meant an end to the plan of an integration of South West Africa into a future united South Africa as territory under British and Cape influence.

What comes out in Merriman is that a new competitor for South West Africa had arisen over the last years, the German Reich.

When in August 1880 a war broke out between the Nama and the Herero the missionaries of the Rhenish Mission Society, alarmed by the limits Palgrave had as Special Commissioner for Walvis Bay, had remembered their being German subjects and turned to the German Government for help.³⁰ That had resulted in an inquiry of the German ambassador in London whether or not protection for German subjects in the territory could be guaranteed. Earl Granville, British Foreign Secretary, put the Secretary of the Colonies, Lord Kimberley, in notion to inform the Cape Government about the matter. But he made clear in his reply that guarantees could only be given for the actual British annexation, Walvis Bay.³¹

In 1883 a German merchant, Lüderitz, started purchasing land in South West Africa around Angra Pequena.

Unaware of the far reaching effects this was taking in the next two years Scanlen, the Cape Prime Minister, on a visit to London in November 1883 promoted the idea of a Monroe doctrine³² for Southern Africa. Granville’s answer to Bismarck about his asking

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 84.

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 87.

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 72-73.

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 79.

³² Monroe doctrine: “The American continents by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintained are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European power.” See I. Goldblatt: HISTORY OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA..., p. 98, footnote 11.

for the claims Great Britain exactly laid on South West Africa was seen by Scanlen himself as well as at the Cape as indication for support by Great Britain. Granville admitted that real claims included only Walvis Bay and some islands opposite Angra Pequena, but “any claim of sovereignty or jurisdiction on the part of a foreign power over any part of the coast between the Portuguese boundary and the Orange River would be regarded as an encroachment on the legitimate rights of the Colony”³³.

In the period after the Annexation Act of Walvis Bay in 1884 fell events that encouraged the Cape Government in its thinking of South West Africa as still being part of British plans about South Africa. In relation to another German request for specifying Great Britain’s claims to South West Africa Granville involved Derby. Derby understood the repeated German asking on that matter whether Great Britain intended to lay claims to the territory. Knowing about the Cape attitude to that he sent telegrams to the Cape Government asking for indications of willingness to take over any territory that would be annexed by the British Government.³⁴ Here, a real chance presented itself to the Cape Colony, but the Cape Government saw itself in no position to make any definite promises “in the present state of our Colonial affairs”³⁵.

London wanted an assertion that the Cape Colony would take over any annexation made in South West Africa, but the Cape Government wanted the safety of the annexation through the Home Government to go from there when it felt the time being right for it.³⁶ In May 1884, therefore, Governor Robinson replied to Derby that “Ministers had decided to recommend Parliament to undertake control and cost of coastline from Orange River to Walwich Bay”³⁷. As this became known by the German Government it led to strong protest directed to the British Government and Granville as the Foreign Secretary in

³³ *ibid.*, p. 85.

³⁴ *ibid.*, p.87.

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ In 1890 Fairfield gave a good explanation for the situation over the last years: “The truth about the mutual attitude of the Home and Cape governments in relation to the question of annexing the South West coast...is that each was willing to take it, but neither wished to take it at its own expenses.” Quoted from Ronald F. Dreyer: *THE MIND OF OFFICIAL IMPERIALISM. British and Cape government perceptions of German rule in Namibia from the Heligoland-Zanzibar Treaty to the Kruger Telegram (1890-1896)*, Essen: Hobbing, 1987, p.57.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 89.

particular.³⁸ The whole dispute was initiated over the question if Great Britain had any claims to Angra Pequena. That was connected to the declaration by the German Government on 24 April that “he [Lüderitz] and his possessions are under the protection of the Reich”³⁹, the first official step to the establishment of the German protectorate in South West Africa. In connection to Lüderitz’s land purchases before that a deputation from the Cape reached London in May formed of merchants who wanted British authority to be extended over Angra Pequena and further.⁴⁰

After Granville accepted the German claim to Angra Pequena on 14 June 1884, he wanted Derby to inform the Cape about the new situation. That was done in a telegram to the Cape that was seen as containing not enough information on the issue and interpreted by the Cape Government as suggesting a delay in the decision about an annexation.⁴¹ The decision of the British Cabinet on 21 June to recognise Angra Pequena as under German protection was not transmitted immediately to the Cape. Only after another telegram from the Cape Government asking for information on the subject from the 9th July Derby informed it about the decision, but due to his understanding of the whole affair regarding the German interest in South West Africa as being restricted to the protection of German subjects and not as beginning of a German colony he awakened hopes in the Cape with his answer of a possible annexation north to Angra Pequena “provided always that the cost should be borne by the Cape”⁴². The Cape Parliament reacted immediately and passed two days later a resolution in which it stated its readiness to “annex the whole coast from the Orange River to the Portuguese border, if it was proclaimed British territory.”⁴³

This was followed on 25 August by a note from Robinson to Derby in which he reported “that his Ministers urged Britain to protect the coastline including Angra Pequena”⁴⁴. By then reality was different. Lüderitz had purchased more land and Bismarck had protested

³⁸ After Bismarck was informed through a telegram from the German Consul in Cape Town he gave his protest to Granville on the grounds that the Cape was not legally permitted to annex.

See I. Goldblatt: HISTORY OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA..., p. 89.

³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 88.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 93.

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 94.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 96.

strongly against the Cape resolution from the 16 July.⁴⁵ On 5 September the German protection for the territory from the Orange River to the Cunene River was official.⁴⁶

Prime Minister Upington's reaction - he was disappointed that the Cape Government had not been more involved in the negotiations between the British and the German Government - shows two things. First, that the Cape Government up to that point had still believed in the real possibility of annexation, and second, that they were still interested in the South West African territory, even if it did not include the coastline. This shows further that for the Cape the strategical aspect of the coast was not the only reason for the desire to annex South West Africa. Goldblatt calls the Cape activities in that stage as an act of desperation.⁴⁷ Where, one has to ask, did the desperation come from? Sure, there was some confusion on the side of the Cape about the British position, and therefore the withdrawal of Britain from South West Africa came probably unexpected in its finality. But one should remember that the Cape Government had been interested long before Germany played any role and had been indicated it several times to the Home Government. Also important to remember is that Britain's personal interest ended with the annexation of Walvis Bay. Ronald F. Dreyer gives an explanation for that desperation: While Great Britain excluded South West Africa where British supremacy in South Africa was concerned the Cape Government included it.⁴⁸ This conviction on the side of the Cape Government did not change in the following years, even though the German protectorate was established and recognised by Great Britain.

⁴⁵ It proposed to the Home Government an annexation of the land behind the coastal strip under German protection to the Transvaal border.

See R. F. Dreyer: *THE MIND OF OFFICIAL IMPERIALISM...*, p. 58.

⁴⁶ I. Goldblatt: *HISTORY OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA...*, p. 95.

⁴⁷ See p. 96.

⁴⁸ See R. F. Dreyer: *THE MIND OF OFFICIAL IMPERIALISM...*, p. 228.

The last decade of the nineteenth-century

In this chapter I concentrate on South West Africa in the 1890s and the second phase of British actions directed towards unification. The Anglo-German Agreement and the events resulting from that in the 1890s marked a further step for the Cape Government away from the possibility of incorporation of any of South West African territory in a united South Africa. Interesting here are the reactions of the Cape Government to the new situation in Southern Africa as they are in an important way different to Britain's. After the first period of active British attempts to unite South Africa in the 1870s, the 1890s became the second. Important persons involved in the events were Joseph Chamberlain as the Colonial Secretary, Cecil Rhodes and Dr. Leander S. Jameson in regard to the Jameson Raid. The century ended with the South African or Anglo-Boer war. Although I do not go into any deeper investigation of the war, it is an important factor on the way to South Africa's unification. But the effects the war had in that respect I deal with in the next chapter.

Although the German protection was recognised over South West Africa by Britain, the reaction of the Cape to the Anglo-German Agreement in 1890 shows that the Cape still thought of the territory as belonging entirely under British influence. In the agreement boundaries were set and British and German spheres of influence defined. Looking at the agreement and actions taken by Britain before, it becomes clear that Britain was interested in maintaining its influence over Southern Africa, even if it was not particularly interested in the South West African territory.⁴⁹

After the rejection of the Cape request from 16 July 1884 to annex the whole country between the official German border and the Transvaal the Cape Government turned to the

⁴⁹ The Anglo-German Agreement speaks of German and British spheres of interest in South West Africa, especially with regard to Walvis Bay.
See R. F. Dreyer: *THE MIND OF OFFICIAL IMPERIALISM...*, p. 65.

argument that Germany planned to connect its protectorates German South West and German East Africa.⁵⁰ That would end with the blocking out of South Africa and Britain from the interior.⁵¹ This argument was taken seriously in Britain because it went in the same direction the British policy regarding Southern Africa did. An expansion to the North as far as possible had been included from the beginning in British plans for a united South Africa.⁵² Therefore, to prevent a bloc from the West to the east coast Britain declared Bechuanaland as protectorate in 1885.

The negotiations between Germany and Britain that led to the agreement in 1890 were based on border questions. But although single disputes took a long time after the actual agreement to be settled⁵³ the claim Germany laid to South West Africa was not questioned by Britain. On the contrary, Derby, in 1884, had welcomed Germany as neighbour⁵⁴ and Anderson, one of the British members in the 1890 negotiations, reported of “the friendly spirit shown during the negotiations...”⁵⁵.

Britain’s view on the whole situation was to make sure that Germany’s influence in South West Africa did not interfere with hers and her plans concerning the rest of Southern Africa.

But for the Cape Government the situation was different. Its attitude regarding Germany in South West Africa did not entirely change to the position of Great Britain. Even though the Cape Government was in questions on foreign affairs dependent on the British Government and officially in line with it, certain remarks and actions show that the Cape related to South West Africa in a way different from Britain.

At the beginning of 1890 Cleverly, the Cape magistrate of Walvis Bay, got to know of the intention of marching German soldiers who had landed in Sandwich Bay through the territory of Walvis Bay. He regarded this at “an act of war”⁵⁶ because against the German

⁵⁰ The so-called dream of a ‘German Mittelfrika’.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 59.

⁵² See footnote 10.

⁵³ Details regarding the border of the Bechuanaland Protectorate to the west, to the north to the Caprivi strip and between the Cape Colony and South West Africa to the south were partially negotiated until the First World War broke out, not always settled by then.

See R. F. Dreyer: *THE MIND OF OFFICIAL IMPERIALISM...*, p.69.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 186.

⁵⁵ Quoted from *ibid.*, p. 70.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 76.

perception the Cape Government did not regard the Walvis territory as a neutral zone. Although Cleverly was told to step down because Britain saw “Germany as a friendly power and that it is the duty of British officers to co-operate loyally with the German authorities”⁵⁷ the Cape Government insisted on the fact that as belonging to the Cape Colony the Walvis Bay territory was not neutral.

After the Anglo-German Agreement was concluded the Cape Government reacted with passing a resolution in which it expressed its disapproval.⁵⁸ Merriman, at that time treasurer, accused the British Government “to have concluded an arrangement intimately affecting the future of South Africa”⁵⁹.

Other examples for the Cape reluctance to accept Germany in South West Africa are shown in remarks given by Cape Government members on the difficulties Germany had in enforcing real control in the territory. Sprigg, Cape Prime Minister, reported while being on a visit in London about the on-going war in South West Africa and the Cape Government’s fear that it might spread to the Colony. He declared because of the German occupation being “nothing but a farce” that the Cape would buy the territory from Germany. His argument for doing so was that of British supremacy in the region, and that, therefore, Britain was “...responsible for the maintenance of peace throughout that country”⁶⁰. This makes clear that for the Cape Government British supremacy still included South West Africa.

Britain, on the other side, refused to do as proposed by Sprigg. Arguments on this side show that Britain viewed Germany as the power in charge for the territory and on one level with Britain as colonial power.⁶¹

Only when Rhodes followed Sprigg in his office as Prime Minister a change can be seen in the attitude of the Cape Government towards the German presence in South West Africa.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*

⁵⁸ The text of the resolution can be read on page 80 in R. F. Dreyer.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 81.

⁶⁰ Both quotations are from *ibid.*, p. 84.

⁶¹ *ibid.*

Fairfield referred to the circumstance that the war was not new in that region. But until now it had never spread to the Cape Colony.

Anderson defended the German sovereignty as colonial power. Britain could not interfere in its internal affairs, even in a colony, if British territory was not clearly in danger.

Rhodes wanted to bring the quarrel over the boundaries of the Walvis Bay territory and the Cape Colony at the Orange River to an end apart from his part in the July resolution from the Cape Government against the Anglo-German Agreement.⁶²

But particularly Rhodes is interesting to look at in respects of Britain's next phase in attempting a unification in South Africa.

The situation in the rest of Southern Africa was not much better than in the 1870s. In 1884 the Kruger Government in the Transvaal achieved the next step on the way back to independence, the London Convention.⁶³ In there British suzerainty, still included in the Pretoria Convention, was no longer mentioned, the name 'South African Republic' was given back to the territory, and Britain gave up her control over the treatment Africans got by the Republic. But it gave restrictions to any expansional dreams in the East or the West. Here, we can again see that Britain, although it gave priorities to other regions⁶⁴, had still in mind to prevent any situation that could lead to a west-east-bloc not under British influence. In the same direction British actions went when led against the attempt of the South African Republic to get access to the coast independently from British harbours.⁶⁵

In the 1880s, after Britain had lost direct influence on the Transvaal, it repeatedly tried to get the Transvaal involved in a customs union. That she thought was at least one step into the direction of a unification of the territories. But all attempts were rejected by the government of the South African Republic.⁶⁶

In 1895, Cecil Rhodes' frustration over the failing to introduce a railway and customs union which included the South African Republic resulted in a similar method taken against it under Carnarvon in the seventies - a state coup. The plan was built on two pillars, a revolution on the Witwatersrand and support by the British Government. Support Rhodes got from the Colonial Secretary who came newly into office in 1895, Joseph Chamberlain.

⁶² *ibid.*, p. 85.

⁶³ See M. Wilson and L. Thompson: *THE OXFORD HISTORY...*, p. 308.

⁶⁴ Meant are the crises in Ireland and Egypt, see *ibid.*

⁶⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 311-312.

⁶⁶ See *ibid.*, p. 312.

Two things are important at this stage: first, the support given by the British Colonial Secretary for the project even if it was outside of legality, and the other is that with Cecil Rhodes for the first time the Cape got heavily involved in the British plans for a unification.⁶⁷

The first aspect, Chamberlain's support, is not remarkable remembering that the whole plan was not too different from British attempts before. The remarkable aspect is that the plan got support in the Cape. Here, the person of Cecil Rhodes and his influence is the key. In 1890 Rhodes followed Sprigg as Cape Prime Minister. The government he formed was built on an alliance with the Afrikaner Bond. His friendship to Jan Hofmeyr was pivotal to that. After the British annexation of Bechuanaland in 1885, Rhodes came to the conviction that any further expansion to the North should be placed under the Cape Government leadership, not the British.⁶⁸ To that Hofmeyr agreed, as he also saw the British engagements as interference in South Africa's internal affairs. But for his plan of a military intervention in the Transvaal Rhodes needed a strip of the Bechuanaland Protectorate that lied on the border of the Transvaal. Thus, he entered into negotiations with the British Colonial Office during which Chamberlain got to know about it, as well as Bower, the Imperial Secretary in Cape Town, and Sir Hercules Robinson, the High Commissioner.⁶⁹ After Chamberlain was informed about the plan further through Robinson he did not object as long as the Transvaal became a British Colony. When in December 1895 tensions arouse in the Anglo-American relation Chamberlain demanded a quick move from Rhodes and provided him with some troops. Although Chamberlain was never in control he backed Rhodes up. But when the Jameson Raid⁷⁰ failed great damage was done to the political Anglo-Afrikaner relation in the Cape because the Afrikaner Bond stopped to co-operate. It came to see the whole event as British interference. The part of Cape politicians, who wanted to stop the British Government from interfering in South

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 314 onwards.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p. 306.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 316-317.

⁷⁰ Attempt in December 1895 to January 1896 to conquer the South African Republic under the shield of a rescue mission for the British people there. Named after its leader Dr. Leander Starr Jameson. See *READER'S DIGEST ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF SOUTH AFRICA. THE REAL STORY*, Cape Town: The Reader's Digest Association (Pty) Limited, 1989, p. 235-237.

African affairs, regained influence, and in 1898 it won the elections.⁷¹ Thus, the short episode of Cape Government support for plans for the unification of South Africa that found the approval of the British Colonial Office because it came close to their convictions of how to make progress in the situation of the unification in South Africa came to an end. In the meantime Chamberlain gained more power in the British government. His priority was to give support to British interests “wherever they seemed to be threatened.”⁷² And he was willing to involve the State. What Chamberlain concluded after the Jameson Raid was that it needed direct intervention from the British Government to unite the South African Colonies and Republics. But, although he acknowledged that good relations between Afrikaners and British inhabitants were crucial for the success of British supremacy in South Africa, his actions finally led to war between these two parties. His appointment of Sir Alfred Milner as High Commissioner in succession of Sir Hercules Robinson was one of these. Milner was known for his dedication to British imperialism. He was convinced of the superiority of the British and that this gave Britain “the moral right to rule other peoples, whether Asian, African, or Afrikaners.”⁷³ His goal was the extension of British supremacy, and every man who did not agree with him was not loyal to Britain. He never co-operated with the Cape Government, the Orange Free State Government or the South African Republic Government. All of these worked for keeping the peace in South Africa. Crucial for that was that Britain recognised the South African Republic as independent state.⁷⁴ But Milner was determined to enforce British supremacy and provided Chamberlain with reports which ultimately helped him to convince the British Government of the necessity to intervene militarily. In the memorandum he read to the Cabinet he said: “What is at stake is the position of Britain in South Africa - and with it the estimate formed of our power and influence in our colonies and throughout the world.”⁷⁵

⁷¹ Rhodes lost the support of the Afrikaner Bond and was followed by Schreiner.

⁷² M. Wilson and L. Thompson: THE OXFORD HISTORY..., p. 320.

⁷³ *ibid.*, p. 321.

⁷⁴ *ibid.*, p. 321-322.

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p. 324.

The events of the 1880s and 1890s concerning the unification of South Africa show, on the one side, that there still existed differences between the Cape Government and the British one about how the unification should be achieved and concerning South West Africa in particular if it was to be included or not. It is obvious from the British position in the Anglo-German negotiations on South West Africa that Britain did not have any genuine interest. For a short time, in 1883, the British Government supported the Cape position that “any claim of sovereignty or jurisdiction on the part of a foreign power over any part of the coast between the Portuguese boundary and the Orange River would be regarded as an encroachment on the legitimate rights of the Colony”⁷⁶. But it soon turned away from that when Germany indicated to support Britain in other parts of Africa, provided it got South West Africa. That Britain saw no difficulties in taking the offer and letting South West Africa fall under German authority indicates that South West Africa was not seen as important for maintaining British supremacy over Southern Africa by the British Government. And therefore, it did not thought of South West Africa as part of a future united South Africa where, in contrast, to sustain British supremacy was an important factor for British activities. Here, it also becomes clear that the question of British supremacy in South Africa was embedded in a broader British concept, known as the ‘strategic’ argument. The ‘strategic’ argument says that Britain’s activities in Africa were dominated by the desire to secure particularly India.⁷⁷ Therefore, the British focus in Africa lied from the Cape to the East. As the dominant sea power it was not afraid of being challenged on the sea, but India’s geographical position demanded to hold open the sea routes. That was best done when these routes were under British control. The Cape was important because of its strategical position on the Southern end of Africa functioning as gate to the Pacific ocean. That meant that it had to be maintained under British control. And to not face the danger that in times of war the Cape would easily be conquered by another power it needed surrounding territory under British control. The natural direction for the extension of British influence in the region was eastwards to avoid that any other power could establish itself behind the British in between the Cape and India. This can be

⁷⁶ I. Goldblatt: HISTORY OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA..., p. 85.

⁷⁷ R. F. Dreyer: THE MIND OF OFFICIAL IMPERIALISM..., p. 88.

seen as early as in the annexation of the Republic of Natalia in 1843 by the British Government.⁷⁸ And the strategical aspect continued to play a big role. The fear that the South African Republic in the Transvaal would gain access to a sea port outside British control was connected with the aspect that this could lead to the establishment of a bloc by the two existing Republics in the interior of South Africa. This would, on the one side, mean the isolation of the British Colonies on the coast from the rest of territory under British influence in central Africa. But more seriously still, it could endanger the whole strategy pursued by Britain. The third aspect of the problem was that the Transvaal was, and still is, the economic centre of South Africa. Would the Colonies have been cut off from participation on the side of export through their monopoly on harbours it would have left them without an economic background to hold up against the Transvaal. The dependencies would have turned around completely. That, too, had put the whole strategical policy in danger. Therefore, it is understandable why Britain focused on the Eastern part of South Africa, and not on the Western. Also understandable is the readiness to intervene which Britain showed to ensure that things would go the way they would fit in with her strategical goals.

Another approach was taken by the Cape Colony. After it gained responsible government in 1872 the Cape Government made clear from the beginning that it saw a future unification of South Africa falling into internal affairs, not any longer into the affairs dealt with by the British Government. Thereby, it did not object the desirability of such a unification, but it should be done under the control and leadership of the Cape Colony. Any intervention of Britain was regarded as interference in Cape Colony's internal affairs which did not fall under British control as being only there to handle the foreign affairs of the Colony. But not only in this aspect it differed from the Home Government. Free from a broader strategical concept unlike Britain the Cape Colony focused on Southern Africa in its politics. And that included South West Africa. This is not surprising given the geographical closeness and the established connections to that territory through the

⁷⁸ READER'S DIGEST ILLUSTRATED HISTORY..., p. 155.

Europeans there because they entered it from the Cape Colony and turned to it in times when they felt in the need of help.

The effects of the war - 1902 to 1910

As indicated at the beginning of the last chapter I use this one to look at the effects the Anglo-Boer war had on the unification of South Africa.

The war ended 1902 with the Treaty of Vereeniging. In there it was stated that the former Republics remained Crown Colonies. that meant that Britain had achieved at least partly her goal, all four clusters of European settlement in South Africa were British Colonies. Already included was a later self-government for the two new Colonies, but instead of a certain date, as asked for by the Afrikaners, article 7 was held vague due to Milner's influence. Only the development it should take was mentioned - military administration would pass into civil which would be followed by representative and finally self-government.⁷⁹ That this came sooner as many had thought was connected to the economic situation in South Africa after the war and a change of government in Britain in 1905. Against Milner's hope that as soon as the gold mines were under British control it would have a positive effect on the whole of South Africa's economy the reality turned out to be different. Due to a shortage of cheap labour because of the low wages the whole industry was not recovering well. Milner put much effort in the overcoming of the situation. He allowed the recruitment of Chinese labourers and started negotiations with Portugal for recruitment from Mozambique.

Another point on which Milner was clear was that the Afrikaners needed to be 'denationalised'⁸⁰ to be formed into loyal subjects of the British Empire. And a strong increase of British immigrants was needed to turn the majorities in South Africa. But this did not happen. That meant that the relations between the two white communities were demographically not different from pre-war conditions. Especially in the former Republics the British communities remained small. This was an important aspect in respect of future

⁷⁹ M. Wilson and L. Thompson: THE OXFORD HISTORY..., p. 331.

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p. 330: The Afrikaner nationalism was thought to be the product of isolation and a lack of modernisation in education as well as administration as well as the economy.

self-government of the Orange River Colony and the Colony of Transvaal. In addition to that, Milner's plan of 'denationalising' the Afrikaner failed completely.⁸¹

That had effects for the events taking place in South Africa after the British Government changed in 1905 and Milner resigned from his position.

The new liberal government under Campbell-Bannerman pursued the old British policy towards South Africa of "a united, self-governing, pro-British South Africa"⁸². But, in contrast to the former government, he believed in Afrikaner co-operation as essential to success. Examples from the Cape showed that it was possible.⁸³

Jan Smuts visit to London in 1906 where he tried to find support for the granting of responsible government to the Transvaal ended with the positive decision by the British Cabinet. Elections were held from which Louis Botha and his party *Het Volk* emerged from them as the winners. The Orange River Colony soon followed in 1907, and both colonies were even granted self-government. Thus, just five years after the annexations as Crown Colonies both gained self-government what had effects on the political situation in South Africa. When in 1908 Jameson resigned and Merriman succeeded him as Cape Prime Minister three of the four colonies were ruled by Afrikaner or Afrikaner supported governments.⁸⁴ At the same time economics conditioned a unification.

The Customs Union from 1905 was in the debate. The Transvaal and Orange River Colony were economically stronger than the Cape Colony and the Colony of Natal. Therefore, the latter two needed the revenues they got from increasing rail tariffs and customs rates. At the same moment, the other two colonies wanted them to be decreased. Especially the Transvaal had made use of the railway route to Lourenço Marques as exchange for the recruitment of Mozambican labourers for the mines which it needed. But that resulted in even more loss for the coast colonies because the export was not handled over their ports.

⁸¹ *ibid.*, p. 332-333.

⁸² *ibid.*, p. 334.

⁸³ Particularly under Rhodes until the Jameson Raid, but also under the governments of Schreiner and Merriman. Taken from *ibid.*

⁸⁴ *READER'S DIGEST ILLUSTRATED HISTORY...*, p. 270.

Apart from economics Natal was under the effects of the Bambatha rebellion from 1906. That had fostered the insecurities of the white community. Unification meant for them most of all a more effective 'native' policy.⁸⁵

But why were the Transvaal Colony and the Orange River Colony interested in a unification with the 'British' colonies in the South?

Jan Smuts and Louis Botha's policy was based on 'conciliation' on different levels. One of these was the conciliation of Afrikaners with the British inhabitants of the Transvaal.

Another one operated on the regional basis and the "overcome[ing]" of "regional disputes".⁸⁶ In the granting of self-government to the Transvaal and the Orange River Colonies by the Campbell-Bannerman Government they believed one could see the positive outcome of this policy.

In 1908, several factors occurred at the same time. As shown above, economics as well as fears of insecurity were these factors within South Africa.

Did the events after the war indicate a withdrawal by Britain in the matter of unification?

To answer the question we need to take a look at how the war itself was received. For the imperialist enthusiasts the war had ended with the desirable situation of four colonies in South Africa which only needed to be unified to fulfil the old goal of a British South and Southern Africa, provided further expansion to the North once South Africa was united. The arguments they promoted for the unification were the same the four colonies had, but their hopes behind these were different. Continued disputes between the colonies on an economical basis could result in a bloc of the two colonies in the interior as the economically stronger ones against the coastal colonies, the weaker of the four. That would lead to a general weakening of British influence and was therefore contrary to the imperialist hopes. On the other side, an economically strong South Africa could mean an attraction to British emigrants. In that way Milner's goal to break the Afrikaner majority could still happen.⁸⁷

On the other hand, the war gave the possibility to overcome old differences in South Africa. Now Afrikaners and Britons who rejected British imperialism and regarded the war

⁸⁵ *ibid.*, p. 271.

⁸⁶ M. Wilson and L. Thompson: *THE OXFORD HISTORY...*, p. 341.

⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p. 346.

as purely that could join and work on a conciliation of the white communities of South Africa over plans for unification which would ultimately put an end to British interference.⁸⁸

Thus, the war served as catalysator for the unification. The curious aspect is that it does so for oppositional groups using almost the same arguments. Only their justifications differed. But for the first time Britain and all the colonies agreed on the unification of the four colonies which lied eastwards from the Cape.

What did happen to the plans about an inclusion of South West Africa?

To answer the question I take a look back to the situation that emerged in the 1890s. In that time Germany, with the support from Britain, could manifest its claim as power in South West Africa. The British support came by the allowance from the Government to use Walvis Bay as harbour where the reinforcement troops could land and arms and ammunition could be shipped to to suppress the hostilities.⁸⁹ Although the reactions of the Cape Government to that were rather negative because it feared involvement could do damage to the British image⁹⁰ they were bound to the decisions made in London. Foreign affairs, and that included relations to a third power, were conducted by Britain. And although Cleverly⁹¹, the magistrate of Walvis Bay, gave a negative picture of the German administration the British Foreign Ministry was pursuing the support. Another area of Africa was more important to the Government: Egypt and the Nile.⁹²

The Anglo-French conflict grew steadily, and Germany, after it had indicated support for Britain in 1884⁹³, began to show her unreliability to keep that. Therefore, Britain's attention was drawn to where Germany's turn could endanger the security of British sovereignty over the Nile.⁹⁴ That did not effect the British support for Germany in South West Africa, so Germany could proceed in manifesting its control over the territory. That

⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p. 347.

⁸⁹ R. F. Dreyer: *THE MIND OF OFFICIAL IMPERIALISM...*, p. 171-172.

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 172-173: "...the less we identify ourselves with the Germans in South West Africa the better for us and the English name...", Rose-Innes 1893, for example.

⁹¹ *ibid.*

⁹² *ibid.*, p. 194: "The Nile is Egypt, and Egypt is the Nile...", Rosebery 1894.

⁹³ I. Goldblatt: *HISTORY OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA...*, p. 92.

⁹⁴ R. F. Dreyer: *THE MIND OF OFFICIAL IMPERIALISM...*, p. 195-196. Germany gave a part of Cameroon under her influence to France providing France with a possibility to reach the Upper Nile after Britain had tried to keep her out.

development made it clear for the Cape Colony that because of its dependency on Britain in foreign affairs it would not succeed with its claim to South West Africa. Britain pursued another strategy. The anxiety of Cape Prime Minister Sprigg that hostilities in South West Africa would spread to the Cape Colony was not supported by the British Government in 1890 and there is no indication that that dramatically changed.⁹⁵

On the other hand, the Anglo-Boer war brought definitely attention away from the West to the East and the North. From the North of the Cape Colony guerrilla commandos under Smuts had operated with the help of Afrikaners living there.⁹⁶

However, one aspect I could unfortunately not investigate would have been insightful: the Cape Government's reaction to the outbreak of the Herero war and its pursuing until 1907 spreading south in South West Africa to the Nama. Especially, with regard to the Cape's anxiety in the 1890s that hostilities in South West Africa could come into the Colony, it would have been interesting to compare the reaction now and then.

Remarks that would mirror how the Cape Government thought about the war and the role of the German administration could also lead to insights on whether older judgements of German inability and British ability to administer the territory came up again. Or if, in relation to the negative perception at the Cape after the war of the British interference, reactions were different with regard to British supremacy.

Unfortunately, even in the literature I used I found no references which could answer some of these questions. For the answers I needed primary material I could not access. Nevertheless, I think that I can at least show some interesting aspects which are worth pursuing in further projects. They are explained in my conclusion at the end of this paper.

⁹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 160.

⁹⁶ M. Wilson and L. Thompson: *THE OXFORD HISTORY...*, p. 327.

The last chapter - from the First World War to the end of the Second World War

The end of the First World War changed the face of the world. Four colonial powers were defeated and their colonies were left to the victors. One of these colonies was German South West Africa that had been occupied by the forces of the Union of South Africa. Because the Allied and Associated Powers had agreed, before the end of the war, not to annex any of the colonies before the end of the war they were bound to that now. There was also resistance from many countries, especially the United States of America, when some tried to change that after the war. One of these countries was South Africa with its application for annexation of South West Africa. The reasons given for that application right after the First World War, how they changed over time, but, first of all, the events that resulted in the military action of the Union of South Africa against German South West Africa are topic of this chapter.

On the 10th August 1914, Prime Minister Botha declared that the Union should help Great Britain against Germany.⁹⁷ This would result in a campaign against German South West Africa to prevent Germany from using the harbours and the wireless stations in the territory. General Smuts as Minister of Defence explained: "England has treated us well, given us back our liberty, and now she needs our help."⁹⁸ Not all agreed. The most serious consequences resulted from the resignation of General Christiaan Beyers, the Commandant-General of the Union Defence Force. Not only did he resign, he also called for rebellion. The reasons he gave were that Germany had in no way shown any provocation towards the Union. He rejected reports of German soldiers crossing the

⁹⁷ I. Goldblatt: HISTORY OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA..., p. 202: As answer of the offer to use South African Defence Force troops in South Africa for duties until then performed by Imperial troops so that these could be employed somewhere else the British Government wrote:

"If your Ministers at the same time desire and feel themselves able to seize such part of German South West Africa as will give them command of Swakopmund, Lüderitzbucht and the wireless stations there, or in the interior, we should feel that this was a great and urgent Imperial service."

⁹⁸ Vic Aldaheff: South Africa in two World Wars. A NEWSPAPER HISTORY, Cape Town: Don Nelson, 1979, p. 13.

South African border in a violent manner as not true. The Defence Act of the Union would not provide legal support for actions taken against a country without former provocation of the Union by that country. Particularly interesting is his suspicion if Great Britain could be trusted regarding the reasons she had given for entering this war and what that meant for the Union if it accepted to help her. He referred to the history of South Africa as an example for British readiness to pursue goals, no matter what.⁹⁹

And really, a rebellion broke out. But it was small and short-lived, lasting from September to January 1915.¹⁰⁰

Meanwhile the campaign against German South West Africa had been started. In September 1914 the Union sent troops to the harbours. The first goal was to stop Germany from using these. The campaign was conducted by Botha himself. He chose a “three-pronged attack”, sending forces from the coast, the South and the West into the territory. On 9 July 1915 the German forces surrendered.¹⁰¹

With the end of the war a problem became obvious that would finally lead to heavy disputes between South Africa and the rest of the world represented in the United Nations.

The Allied and Associated Powers had subscribed to ‘no annexation’. But when General Smuts arrived at the Peace Conference in Paris he came with the application for annexation of South West Africa to the Union of South Africa. He was not the only one who tried to change the ‘no annexation’ formula. The Prime Ministers of Australia and of New Zealand, Hughes and Massey, applied for other parts of the ceased German colonial empire to be annexed to their countries.¹⁰² Neither of them succeeded due to the strict rejection of President Wilson of the United States. In connection with the foundation of the League of Nations he argued that “the world would say that the great powers first portioned out the helpless parts of the world and then formed a League of Nations”¹⁰³.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 13 and 15.

¹⁰⁰ READER’S DIGEST ILLUSTRATED HISTORY..., p. 302.

¹⁰¹ V. Aldaheff: South Africa in two World Wars..., p. 21.

¹⁰² S. C. Saxena: Namibia: Challenge to..., p. 16.

¹⁰³ *ibid.*, p. 17.

What reasons did the Union of South Africa have to justify the incorporation of South West Africa?

In 1918 Smuts had written a booklet in which he explained why the former German colonies should be excluded from the mandate system proposed in the same booklet.

In there the reason was what could be called a 'social-darwinistic' one:

"...the German Colonies in the Pacific and Africa are inhabited by barbarians who not only cannot possibly govern themselves but to whom it would be impracticable to apply any idea of political self-determination in the European sense..."¹⁰⁴. At the Peace Conference he used another argumentation, one that should show the necessity of incorporation in regard of security for the Union. He said "unless the territory were incorporated into South Africa, the small German population would continue to foment trouble in order to get back to Germany and these troubles might extent to the Union"¹⁰⁵. But no annexation came from it. What did come from it was that South West Africa was declared a 'C' class mandate. The explanation of that class of mandates included no remark on a later independence or self-determination. That served Smuts as explanation why South West Africa should not acquire independence.¹⁰⁶

Thus, after the First World War South Africa argued in two ways. First, the peoples of South West Africa were not ready for independence and needed therefore the guidance of another country. On the other side, were the remaining Germans used to justify the incorporation because they caused a threat to the Union. To prevent them from agitating against the Union it was necessary to incorporate the territory.

Throughout the Mandate the Union drew South West Africa legally as close as the Permanent Mandates Commission let it happen.

Right to the beginning of the Mandate a commission report on civil administration for the territory advised that it should be treated as if it was a fifth province of the Union, but under the conditions of the Mandate. Although the Union Government did not take this advice then - an Advisory Council for the Administrator was built instead - in 1922 it was

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p. 16.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, p. 17.

felt desirable by this Advisory Council to introduce some kind of representative government. But the problem were the Germans in the territory. Because the vote should only be granted to British subjects, but to exclude a great amount of whites was problematic. The solution was the naturalisation of the Germans, but a kind of passive naturalisation. Because if the Germans needed to apply they would cease to be German subjects. Therefore, an automatic naturalisation was introduced.¹⁰⁷ Not for the first time the Permanent Mandates Commission objected in regard to actions taken by the Union Government concerning South West Africa. Such a form of naturalisation it was feared would “destroy<...> a vital distinction and that such collective and almost compulsory naturalisation contradicted the principles of the Mandate.”¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, the Union Government passed the South-West African Constitution Act in 1925.¹⁰⁹

In 1946 Smuts argued for the incorporation of South West Africa before the General Assembly of the United Nations because “South West Africa is so thoroughly integrated with the Union that its formal incorporation is required mainly to remove doubts...”¹¹⁰

The 1925 Constitution Act had brought the first elections. Naturalised Germans won a majority in the Assembly. They used this majority to make clear which things the German population wanted to achieve or against which they protested. One of these was the steady immigration of South Africans to South West Africa because they got easier access to land. The reason for that is embedded in the whole attempt of the Union to govern South-West Africa as a Fifth Province and “an integral part of the Union”.¹¹¹ Subjects of the Union should be a majority to secure the strategy. The situation got worse when the Union Government gave land to 350 Afrikaner families coming from Angola to South West Africa. For these people the Government provided the huge amount of £ 500,000. But because of the constitution it needed the Assembly to agree before the money could

¹⁰⁷ I. Goldblatt: HISTORY OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA..., p. 219.

¹⁰⁸ S. C. Saxena: Namibia: Challenge to..., p. 18.

¹⁰⁹ I. Goldblatt: HISTORY OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA..., p. 220.

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 249.

¹¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 229.

used for its purpose. Here, the German majority took the chance to express their disagreement and denied the release.¹¹² In all coming elections the Germans would be defeated more and more, for the first time in 1929, the second elections.

In 1932, both sides tried to come closer together. Two important demands from the German population were agreed upon: German as the third official language and Germans could be naturalised easier. But before that was realised new hostilities crushed all hopes at that stage. One part the new dispute was about was that the leader of the United National South West Party had taken a step into the direction of the “Fifth Province”. the Germans heavily protested. Events so far show that the Union Government and the Union based Government of South West Africa both worked together, that the plan of the Union to place enough Union subjects in the territory to dominate the government and to secure the interests of the Union worked. And it would go on this direction. The resolution which allowed the administration as Fifth Province was passed in 1934.¹¹³ The German community was dissatisfied with the development. When the parole of return of the colonies to the Reich started the Germans in South West Africa had new hope. Nazi organisations for adults and youths were founded and had a high membership. Alarmed by that the Assembly wanted the Union Government to act upon the resolution. But in 1936 it declined “although the Union Government is of the opinion that to administer the Mandated Territory as a Fifth Province of the Union, subject to the terms of the Mandate, would not be in conflict with the Mandate itself...”¹¹⁴. Meanwhile the Nazi movement grew in South West Africa and with it the hope that South West Africa would soon return into the possession of Germany. That had an important effect on the Union’s justification of entering the war in 1939 as made by Smuts: What would happen to the Union when Hitler succeeded with the returning of South West Africa to Germany?¹¹⁵

The interesting aspect is that the argument of the security of the Union remained from the end of the First to the beginning of the Second World War although it seems as if the

¹¹² *ibid.* The Governor-General who had the constitutional right took upon him to do what was necessary to release the money.

¹¹³ *ibid.*, p. 230-231.

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 235.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 237.

actions concerning the administration as Fifth Province were based not entirely on claims of security. The incorporation after the occupation of the territory seems to be another aspect. Smuts confirmed in 1922: “‘C’ Mandates are in effect not far removed from annexation”¹¹⁶. And according to Keith Gottschalk he believed that “that country belonged to South Africa by right of conquest - it was part of the Afrikaner’s heritage.”¹¹⁷

In the conflict with the United Nations the Union of South Africa changed the strategy. Right after the Second World War, the League of Nations ceased to exist and the United Nations were founded. In 1946, Smuts gave the first report after seven years on the administration of the Mandate to the Fourth Committee and the General Assembly. At the same occasion he asked for the permission of formal incorporation of South West Africa. The General Assembly rejected 37:0 on the basis that “the African inhabitants of South African inhabitants have not yet secured political autonomy or reached a stage of political development enabling them to express a considered opinion which the Assembly could recognise, on such an important question as the incorporation of the Territory”¹¹⁸. Instead the Assembly favoured that South West Africa was to participate in the International Trusteeship System, which had succeeded the Mandate System of the League of Nations. The Union of South Africa refused and at the same time changed her argumentation as to why she was doing so. She denied that the United Nations had the legal right to put South West Africa under Trusteeship. When the League of Nations had dissolved itself, the Mandate had ceased to exist, too. South West Africa was no longer object of international affairs.¹¹⁹ In the words of Louw it meant “that with the passing of the League, and with the removal of League supervision, the Union of South Africa thereby, in addition to de facto possession, also acquired de jure possession.”¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ R. B. Ballinger: SOUTH-WEST AFRICA..., p. 45.

¹¹⁷ Keith Gottschalk: SOUTH AFRICA IN NAMIBIA 1915-1980s, in: PERSPECTIVES ON NAMIBIA. PAST AND PRESENT, ed. by Christopher Saunders, OCCASIONAL PAPERS NO 4, CENTRE FOR AFRICAN STUDIES: UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN, 1983, p. 70.

¹¹⁸ I. Goldblatt: HISTORY OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA..., p. 250.

¹¹⁹ R. B. Ballinger: SOUTH-WEST AFRICA..., p. 45.

¹²⁰ Union White Paper, South West Africa, 1947-48. House of Assembly Debates, March 19, 1947, Vol. 60, Col. 1327.

The case was handed over to the International Court of The Hague to clarify the legal position of the United Nations. The International Court decided that the Union should continue to be Mandatory of South West Africa, but under the Trusteeship System what also meant under the supervision of the United Nations.¹²¹ The Union of South Africa refused these terms. Her idea was to be judicially supervised by the International Court of Justice at The Hague and a new agreement by with the United States of America, the United Kingdom and France as “remaining members of the Allied and Associated Powers of the First World War”.¹²²

The refusal of the Union of South Africa to co-operate with the United Nations resulted over the next decades in more and more isolation. 1961 argued Ronald B. Ballinger in his article “SOUTH-WEST AFRICA. The Case Against the Union” (SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS: Johannesburg, 1961) to abandon that attitude, but he did not argue against the Union’s view that South West Africa was ‘an integral part’ of the Union of South Africa. He stressed the righteousness of the Union’s attitude through its bounds to South West Africa “based on...family, economics and security” and that it was “historically conditioned”.¹²³

He also shows that since Dr. Malan had become Prime Minister and the Nationalist Party had refused to co-operate with the United Nations in 1948 South West Africa was more and more integrated in the Union in deed and word. In 1948, six seats in the House of Assembly and two in the Senate were granted to white inhabitants of South West Africa.¹²⁴ Since 1949 the Union had stopped to give South West Africa the title ‘mandated territory’, and, Ballinger quotes Basson, a Member of Parliament, “...this Parliament ceased to be the Parliament *over* [my emphasis] South West Africa and became the Parliament of South West Africa.”¹²⁵

But Ballinger’s overall argument is that the Union of South Africa needed to overcome the isolation that had resulted from the non-co-operation for the best if its economy.

¹²¹ I. Goldblatt: HISTORY OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA..., p. 251, 252.

¹²² *ibid.*, p. 252.

¹²³ R. B. Ballinger: SOUTH-WEST AFRICA..., p. 45.

¹²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 19.

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 43.

Therefore, and because “...these decisions and the policy they reflect have not prevented the United Nations from examining, criticising and condemning the Union’s conduct of its internal affairs”¹²⁶ the Union could only gain from co-operation, and that is economically.

¹²⁶ *ibid.*

Conclusion

The relations between South West Africa and the Cape Colony is determined through Britain on two different levels. The first one, in some way, opened the relation and the second one closed it, at least for a while. Britain's striving after supremacy in Southern Africa was taken by the Cape Colony and projected onto South West Africa. But while the Cape Colony was involved in a Southern African conception, Britain saw herself in a world-wide one. Britain concentrated, in that dimension, on the East, and the Cape Colony included the West into the area it wanted to see under British supremacy. These differences became apparent when the unification of South Africa advanced. Britain was interested in the unification from a financial point of view - to spare the taxpayer money-, but most of all from a strategical one. The Cape was important as harbour on the way to India and the whole Pacific. Therefore, between the Cape and India should be no other maritime or land power which would cause danger to the British Empire by blocking the sea route or endanger Britain's position in South Africa. Logically, the direction for a unified South Africa under British flag as security against these fears lied to the East from the Cape. Free from these strategical obligations in a world-wide dimension the Cape Colony applied Britain's claim to supremacy in Southern Africa over the whole of Southern Africa, thereby directed it also to the West. But Britain and the Cape Colony were no equal partners. When another power, Germany, appeared in Southern Africa, on the one side Britain was not interested in, the Cape Colony noticed these power structures. Germany's reach for South West Africa, the territory in which the Cape had been interested in for quite some time, was tolerated and also supported by Britain. Because Britain's interests were the higher ones as coming from a European 'mother'-country, the Cape had to watch how South West Africa grew more and more into another country out of the influence sphere of the Cape. It could make its arguments, but in the end Britain decided that a German South West Africa would mean no danger to British superiority in Southern Africa. Because German support in other areas of Africa would be

helpful Britain was interested in keeping on good terms with it. At the same time South Africa was object to several attempt of Great Britain to pursue its plan of unification, even if force was needed. But here, the Cape Colony was more successful in standing its ground against Britain. The first attempt under Carnarvon in the 1870s literally failed because of the disapproval by the Cape Government of the British interference. The other plan, the annexation of the Transvaal, quickly showed its weakness. The next phase in the 1890s saw a short time of Cape support for a plan also supported by London. But that one, the Jameson Raid, failed like the first one because of to less of a concept behind an idea. But for the Cape Colony the consequences were important for the future. British interference in South Africa could be and was rejected at the Cape not only by Afrikaners, but also by Britons who regarded it as intervention in internal affairs. And these were not subject to the British Government because of the Cape Colony's self-government status. Especially after the South African War, the conviction that the South African colonies had to take the initiative in a unification movement to build a force against future British attempts of interference resulted in the strange situation that both parties aimed for the same goal. Each side had only different justifications. Thus, with the unification of the South African colonies in 1910, both had reached their goal. Due to certain developments in the years before the unification, the Britain's relation to particular Afrikaner politicians, Smuts and Botha, improved to such an extent that it had effects for South Africa's partition in the First World War.

The justification to extent first British, then particularly Cape and finally South African influence over South West Africa are interesting in comparison and in their development. The first reason the Cape Colony gave was that the territory was already under British influence informally. A formal act would just manifest for the world was already existed. But at the end of the nineteenth-century the argument changed. The Cape Colony argued now for the British interference in South West Africa, by then already German protectorate, because of concerns about the security of the Cape Colony. Britain rejected to interfere in affairs of another souverain power, but the security argument was to have a 'history' in the relations between South Africa and South West Africa. After the First World War that very argument was used by South Africa to promote an annexation of

South West Africa. But times had changed and annexations were no longer acceptable. So, it was denied, but South Africa was made the Mandatory of South West Africa. The understanding of South Africa of the Mandate differed from the institution that had supervisory functions, the League of Nations. But the real conflict broke out after the Second World War between the Union of South Africa and the United Nations. After the end of the War South Africa applied for permission of incorporation. The argumentation was based on the close relations that had grown between inhabitants of South West Africa and the Union. When that was refused the argumentation changed again. Now it was a twist on legal grounds. From the beginning of the Mandate to the 1960s, at least, two arguments run parallel, security and family bounds. Both could be combined in the 'integral part' South West Africa played for South Africa. While the stressing of the former aspect, security, was used by Smuts to involve South Africa in the Second World War, the latter served as assurance. After the refusal by the United Nations to permit South Africa the incorporation of South West Africa, South Africa bound South West Africa constitutionally as close as possible to the Union without formal incorporation. When in the 1960s the isolation that had resulted from the unsettled dispute with the United Nations began to show negative trends for the South African economy, this argument was used to give reassurance for the unchangeable situation, so that South Africa, to come out of the isolation could co-operate with the United Nations. The Union could only gain because the economy would grow and, no matter what the United Nations did, South West Africa was securely tight bound to the Union.

To come back to the time before the unification. I could, unfortunately, not investigate one event and its effects on the South African colonies, the Herero and Nama war from 1904 to 1907. The Cape reactions would have been interesting to investigate in how far the unstable situation in the North and West of the Colony, the bordering areas to South West Africa, were evaluated as possibility for the war to spread over to the Colony.

This time would have also been extremely interesting to investigate further in relation to the Colony of Natal. From the beginning of a newspaper research I can tell that Natal was, although or better because the more British of the old two, not supportive in the case of South West Africa in the 1870s and 1880s when the Cape Colony struggled to convince

Britain from the necessity of including South West Africa in the British influence sphere. The only newspaper article in the daily published Natal Witness over month in 1884 concerning South West Africa was the London announcement of the delegation of Cape merchants urging the British Government to sustain Angra Pequena under British influence. This rather secondary event made it into the newspaper, but the whole series of events in 1884 did not. Unfortunately I had to stop the research in the first half of the year 1904. But, although there were some more articles in the Natal Advertiser to the riots in South West Africa, the tone was very neutral and the articles very short. Interesting, of course, would be to pursue the research to the time when Natal was engaged in the Bambatha rebellion. Did the tone change in respect of another 'native' rebellion not to far away?

Last, in respect to the influx of Afrikaners into South West Africa under the Mandate it would have been positive to the project to take a closer look to the relations Afrikaners established to that territory before, under and after the German protectorate. The initial argument for the Cape Colony to recommend the annexation of Walvis Bay to the British Government, nevertheless, was to prevent that the Afrikaner Republics had otherwise the possibility to gain a harbour outside the British control.

Nevertheless, I hope that I could at least draw attention to some interesting continuencies as well as changes in the relation of the two countries in the time under investigation here.

What happened when - some dates

- 1806 Britain occupies the Cape for the second time after it occupied it in 1795, but lost it in the Peace treaty of Amiens in 1802
- 1838 Foundation of the Republic of Natalia
- 1843 Annexation of the Republic of Natalia by Britain
- 1868 Appellation of the missionaries of the Rhenish Mission Society in South West Africa to Prussia for protection
- 1871 Annexation of Griqualand West by Britain
- 1872 Cape Colony receives responsible government
- 1875 Resolution of annexation of Walvis Bay by the Cape Government
- 1877 Annexation of the South African Republic by Britain
- 1878 Walvis Bay becomes British territory
- 1877-78 Cape-Xhosa war, rebellions in Griqualand West
- 1880 Cape Colony incorporates Griqualand West
Outbreak of the Nama-Damara war in South West Africa, Rhenish missionaries ask for protection of the German Government
- 1881 Pretoria Convention
- 1883 First land purchases in South West Africa in the name of Lüderitz
Scanlen propagates Monroe doctrine for Southern Africa
- 1884 London Convention
Annexation Act of the Cape Parliament concerning Walvis Bay
Angra Pequena proclaimed German Protectorate in June
Declaration of German protection over the territory from Orange River to Cunene River in September
- 1885 Northern part of Bechuanaland remains protectorate, but the southern part becomes British Colony
- 1890 Anglo-German agreement

- 1893 Natal receives responsible government
- 1895-96 Jameson Raid
- 1899 Outbreak of the Anglo-Boer war
- 1900 South African Republic changes into British Colony of Transvaal
- 1902 Treaty of Vereeniging
- 1907 Self-government for the Orange River Colony and the Colony of Transvaal
- 1910 Union of South Africa
- 1914 Great Britain indirectly asks South Africa for occupation of German South West Africa
- 1915 Occupation of German South West Africa by South Africa
- 1920 South Africa acquires mandate over South West Africa
- 1925 South-West African Constitution Act
- 1926 Partial self-government (white adults) in South West Africa
- 1946 Refusal by the United Nations to allow incorporation of South West Africa in Union of South Africa

Who is who - some names

Governors and High Commissioners at the Cape:

1870-1877	Sir Henry Barkly
1877-1880	Sir Bartle Frere
1881-1889	Sir Hercules Robinson
1889-1895	Sir Henry Loch
1895-1897	Sir Hercules Robinson
1897-1901	Sir Alfred Milner
1901-1910	Rt. Hon. Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson (Governor)

Cape Prime Ministers:

1872-1878	J. C. Molteno
1878-1881	J. G. Sprigg
1881-1884	T. C. Scanlen
1884-1886	T. Upington
1886-1890	Sir J. G. Sprigg
1890-1893	C. J. Rhodes
1893-1896	Rt. Hon. C. J. Rhodes
1896-1898	Rt. Hon. Sir J. G. Sprigg
1898-1900	W. P. Schreiner
1900-1904	Rt. Hon. Sir J. G. Sprigg

1904-1908 Rt. Hon. Dr. L. S. Jameson

1908-1910 Rt. Hon. J. X. Merriman

Prime Minister in the Union of South Africa:

1910-1919 General L. Botha

1919-1924 J. C. Smuts

1924-1939 J. B. M. Hertzog

1939-1948 J. C. Smuts

Secretaries of State for the Colonies during 1870 and 1900:

Carnavon

Hicks Beach

Delby

Chamberlain

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