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DOI: [https://dx.doi.](https://dx.doi.org/10.18820/24150509/SJCH46.v1.8)

[org/10.18820/24150509/  
SJCH46.v1.8](https://dx.doi.org/10.18820/24150509/SJCH46.v1.8)

ISSN 0258-2422 (Print)

ISSN 2415-0509 (Online)

Southern Journal for  
Contemporary History

2021 46(1):159-182

**PUBLISHED:**

23 July 2021

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## THE NAMIBIAN WAR: CHALLENGES TO THE ANGLO- GERMAN RELATIONSHIP IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

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**ABSTRACT**

*Events associated with the Namibian War (1904-1908) offer a glimpse into Anglo-German antagonism in Southern Africa. The Namibian War enveloped German South-West Africa (GSWA), but its effects radiated to the German colony's southern neighbour, the Cape. This paper re-examines events that some historians have looked at but considers these events through the lens of Anglo-German antagonism. It examines how in the Cape, the war prompted outrage over blacks' poor treatment, created a refugee crisis, and emboldened German soldiers to cross the frontier, violating the Cape's sovereignty. The study surveys how intercolonial relationships, as they played out through the war, mirrored Britain and Germany's relationship in Europe. It evaluates how the Namibian War's residual effects created Anglo-German tensions in Southern Africa and how despite flashpoints, the Cape and GSWA governments were occasionally able to cooperate. By re-examining evidence already utilised by other scholars, the paper analyses how and why the war continued. It evoked the Cape and GSWA's suspicion towards and frustration with one another. It evaluates how by 1906, the Cape's experiences with GSWA – as it struggled to resolve problems diplomatically – served as another reason for the British Government to press for South Africa's unification during the first decade of the twentieth century. The study posits that the story of the Namibian War and its effects on the Cape form part of a larger project on the German geopolitical threats that influenced the Union of South Africa's constitutional development.*

**Keywords:** German South-West Africa, Cape Colony, Anglo-German antagonism, Hereros, Nama, Namibia, black oppression, refugees

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Namibian War enveloped German South-West Africa (GSWA) from 1904 to 1906, with residual action lasting into 1908.<sup>1</sup> Modern historians like Ulrike Lindner refer to the conflict as the Herero and Nama genocide.<sup>2</sup> What began as an early military success for the Hereros ended in the complete annihilation of the Herero and Nama, two African populations in GSWA.<sup>3</sup> The war that the German colonial apparatus waged against the Hereros and the Nama was not an event confined to the borders of GSWA. In every sense, it was a regional event, enveloping neutral British South Africa. GSWA felt the war's direct effects, especially the Hereros and the Nama. First, the German authorities denied the Hereros and the Nama political rights.<sup>4</sup> Then, the Germans massacred 75 per cent of the Herero population, beginning in January 1904, and approximately 50 per cent of the Nama population, beginning in October 1904.<sup>5</sup>

Southern Africa, particularly the Cape, felt the reverberations. The war upset the transplanted Damara residing in the Cape and Africans and Coloureds of the Northwest Cape who descended from the Nama and other

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- 1 IL Evans, *Native Policy in Southern Africa: An Outline* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), p. 137; For a contemporary account of the conflict, see, *The Rand Daily Mail*, 26 October 1905; Contemporaries in the Transvaal thought that the Germans mismanaged their relations with Africans, African policy, and the conflict, see, *The Rand Daily Mail*, 24 December 1906.
  - 2 Lindner claimed that the Germans killed 75 to 80 per cent of the Herero population, see, U Lindner, "Transnational movements between colonial empires: Migrant workers from the British Cape Colony in the German diamond town of Lüderitzbucht", *European Review of History* 16 (5), 2009, pp. 684-685; H Bley, *South-West Africa under German Rule 1894-1914* (Evanston, IL, USA: Northwestern University Press, 1971); JM Bridgman, *The Revolt of the Hereros* (Berkeley, CA, USA: University of California Press, 1981); P Curson, *Border Conflicts in a German African Colony* (Bury St. Edmunds, UK: Arena Books, 2012); P Gifford and WR Louis (eds.), *Britain and Germany in Africa: Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule* (New Haven, CT, USA: Yale University Press, 1967); JB Gewald, "The Great General of the Kaiser", *The Botswana Society* 26, 1994.
  - 3 The Hereros were an African ethnic group of cattle-herders that lived near Windhoek. The Nama were an African ethnic group who farmed and resided in the southern section of GSWA. For further reading on the causes of the Namibian War see, Bridgman, *The Revolt of the Hereros*, pp. 57-58; Bley, *South-West Africa under German Rule 1894-1914*, p. 143; For modern perspectives of the genocide, see, H Melber, "How to Come to Terms with the Past: Re-Visiting the German Colonial Genocide in Namibia", *African Spectrum* 40 (1), 2005; Additionally, see, E Pape, Postcolonial debates in Germany – An Overview, *African Sociological Review* 21 (2), 2017.
  - 4 H Bley, "Social Discord in South West Africa, 1894-1904". In: P Gifford and WR Louis (eds.), *Britain and Germany in Africa* (New Haven, CT, USA: Yale University Press, 1967) pp. 609-610.
  - 5 Bley, "Social Discord in South West Africa, 1894-1904", p. 609.

Khoekhoe populations.<sup>6</sup> Simultaneously, the war aroused a fear among whites elsewhere in Southern Africa that there would be similar uprisings. While the Cape Government already contended with many problems in the Northwest Cape (including several security challenges related to the German presence in Southern Africa), they now faced a refugee crisis, and the Cape Government's communications with the Colonial Office indicated concerns about the German military's border violations.

Using archival sources from the Colonial Office and War Office records at the National Archives at Kew in the United Kingdom, which included correspondence between colonial officials and reports from the Cape Mounted Police, I developed new material about conflicts at the Cape's border with GSWA. The War Office records also contain documents with plans for the invasion of GSWA, British assessments of the German threat, and Military Intelligence reports.

In the Namibian War's historiography, Helmut Bley, Jon Bridgman, Peter Curson, Marion Wallace, and Jan-Bart Gewald's works looked at the war's origins, engagements, results, and genocide.<sup>7</sup> Another section of Southern African historiography has examined how British South Africa's relations with German South-West Africa (GSWA) mirrored Britain's larger interactions with Germany. Lindner believed that the Cape and GSWA adopted their European homelands' political characteristics because the British and German governments dictated colonial policy. However, Lindner alleged that the Cape and GSWA did not engage in the Anglo-German antagonism because they "could always focus on common challenges thrown up by their dealings with the other, the colonised Africans, and the establishment of colonial rule in unknown African countries".<sup>8</sup> In contrast, Tilman Dederig and Peter Curson asserted that the Anglo-German rivalry was present in Southern Africa.<sup>9</sup>

6 T Dederig, "War and Mobility in the Borderlands of South Western Africa in the Early Twentieth Century", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 3 (2), 2006, p. 179; M Legassick, *Hidden Histories of Gordonia: Land dispossession and resistance in the Northern Cape, 1800-1990* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2016), p. 251. The Damaras were an African ethnic group that resided in the northwest section of GSWA. The Khoekhoe were an African ethnic group that included the Nama. They were in southern GSWA and the northwestern Cape. For this paper, Coloureds are an ethnic group of mixed parentage in the Cape. Often, Coloureds in the Northwest Cape were related to the Nama. Many Africans in the Northwest Cape were also related to the Nama.

7 Bley, *South-West Africa under German Rule 1894-1914*; Bridgman, *The Revolt of the Hereros*; Curson, *Border Conflicts in a German African Colony*; M Wallace, *A History of Namibia: From the Beginning to 1990* (London: Hurst & Co., 2011); Gewald, "The Great General of the Kaiser".

8 U Lindner, "Imperialism and Globalisation", *German Historical Institute London (GHIL) Bulletin* 32 (1), 2010, p. 7.

9 Lindner, "Imperialism and Globalisation", p. 7; Dederig, "War and Mobility in the Borderlands of South Western Africa in the Early Twentieth Century", pp. 278-280; Curson, *Border*

Within the context of the Namibian War, my work supports Dederling and Curson's assertions that British South Africa and German South-West Africa's relationship paralleled Britain and Germany's relationship.<sup>10</sup> However, this study extends from their work by demonstrating that the Cape and GSWA's intercolonial relationship during the Namibian War was not only antagonistic but also collegial.

To prove that the Cape and GSWA relationship was dualistic, I consider the effects of German colonial conflict on the Cape along the frontier. I intend to address; how the war aroused discontent among the black population created a refugee crisis in the Cape, and led to border violations as German soldiers crossed into the Cape in pursuit of Nama combatants.

## 2. GERMANS' TREATMENT OF BLACKS OUTRAGES THE CAPE, 1906

The Namibian War's disruption to the Cape's affairs was multifaceted. For two years, the Hereros and Nama attained several victories against German forces and mostly evaded capture. Their victories humiliated the Germans and worried neighbouring, white-run colonies, such as the Cape and Natal. *The Rand Daily Mail's* message was clear: "It would be disastrous to the equilibrium of all Africa south of the Zambesi if any black nation were able to boast of triumph over a white foe".<sup>11</sup> German loss would signal to Africans across the region that they could overthrow white rulers. By 1906, General Lothar von Trotha, the German general in charge of operations in GSWA, exercised brutal methods – such as giving no quarter to African resistance fighters – and extracted more victories against the Hereros and Nama.<sup>12</sup>

Germans' treatment of the Hereros and the Nama generated fear, discontent, and anger among Cape blacks.<sup>13</sup> Beyond their concern for the welfare of the Hereros and their Nama relations, Cape blacks were equally

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*Conflicts in a German African Colony*, pp. 118-122, 180.

10 I use the term "Namibian War" for the reasons that Marion Wallace outlined in Wallace, *A History of Namibia: From the Beginning to 1990*, p. 374. She uses "war" because it covers the German conflicts with the Hereros, Nama, and Bondelswarts. It rejects "revolt", "rebellion", and "uprising", which otherwise acknowledge "the legitimacy of German rule". "War" also indicates the conflicts' scale and the "loss of life". "Namibian" moves away from describing "the war in ethnic terms".

11 *The Rand Daily Mail*, 1 November 1904. For other similar sentiments, see, *The Rand Daily Mail*, 5 March 1905; *The Rand Daily Mail*, 10 March 1905.

12 Gewalt, "The Great General of the Kaiser", pp. 70-71.

13 I use the term "blacks" when referring to Coloureds and Africans. "Cape blacks" denotes Coloureds and Africans from the Cape. "Cape Coloureds" refers to Coloureds specifically from the Cape.

anxious about their well-being. The Germans treated the Cape blacks residing in GSWA just as poorly. At various points during the war, German troops were stationed close to the border. Their presence alarmed Cape blacks. They did not know what German troops might do to them, including abducting, arresting, or killing them. A cause of particular outrage was the Cape Government's decision to offer aid to GSWA. Cape blacks could not understand why the Cape – with a known history of showing tolerance towards Africans and Coloureds – would help the German authorities in any capacity. Moreover, they had “look[ed] upon the passage of supplies through Cape Colony for the use of the Germans as an unfriendly act”.<sup>14</sup> All these war-related concerns fed their fear that the Cape Government began to take similarly severe actions against them.<sup>15</sup>

The archives do not include most Cape African and Coloured accounts regarding their outrage over the Namibian War. Instead, their sentiments were conveyed indirectly in the official records of the Colonial Office, the Cape Government, and military intelligence. In January 1906, the Military Intelligence Department relayed some of the frustrations that Cape blacks felt. They could not understand why the Cape Government would aid the Germans in their campaigns against the Hereros and the Nama. By helping GSWA, the British seemed “to show that we have forgotten the great assistance these natives were to us as border scouts, &c., in the late war [sic]”.<sup>16</sup> To a degree, German aid disrespected Coloureds and Africans as former allies to the British during Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902).<sup>17</sup> It demonstrated to them that the Cape and the British valued an Anglo-German relationship and a relationship between whites more than one with blacks.

The creation of supply depots was the first of these acts of aid offered by the Cape. During the war's first two years, German troops had struggled to defeat an enemy who employed guerrilla tactics. For the German military

14 The National Archives (TNA; Kew), CO 879/91, 805, Memorandum by the Honourable the Colonial Secretary [Colonel C.P. Crewe], 11 April 1906 (memorandum).

15 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, Report by Captain HS Simon, No. 4 Reconnaissance Party, 11 April 1906 (report).

16 As I conducted the research for this article, I found contemporary terminology difficult to associate with modern terms, especially because GSWA race designations did not coincide with those used in South Africa. For example, German and British sources used the terms “Hottentots” and “natives” indiscriminately during the Namibian War. “Native” is a derogatory name for people of African origin. Primary literature failed to make distinctions or to investigate self-proclaimed cultural identities. Colonial sources used “Hottentot” and “native” interchangeably without consistency.

TNA, CO 879/91, 805, S./201/9, Military Intelligence Department – Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General, 17 January 1906 (letter).

17 Dederling, “War and Mobility in the Borderlands of South Western Africa in the Early Twentieth Century”, p. 279.

to execute more effective campaigns, they needed accessible supplies and munitions. Establishing supply depots was the answer. To ensure the supply depots did not become easy targets for the Nama in the southern GSWA, the German military sought to construct the depots in the Cape. The Cape Government agreed. The supply depots would be in foreign territory, removed from the action. While the Cape Government consented, Major RS McClintock one of the general Staff, who was stationed in South Africa, wrote a memorandum revealing the difficulty in maintaining these depots on the Cape side of the border. Most importantly, Cape Coloureds specifically viewed the Cape Government's move as helping the Germans in their "operations against their [Nama] kinsmen north of the Orange River".<sup>18</sup> In a way, the depots were a personal attack. They gave the Germans the means to kill Nama compatriots. It insulted Cape Coloureds because the Cape Government – Cape Coloureds' home government – provided the German military with these tools and seemingly sanctioned German action against the Hereros and the Nama. It was inflammatory. As a result, Coloureds' loyalty to the Cape Government was at stake.<sup>19</sup> Because of the anger the depots aroused, Major McClintock surmised that Cape Coloureds might soon seize the supplies and ammunition at the depots so the German military would not have the chance to use them on their Nama brethren. From there, the memorandum departed from reality. Its author suggested that after the Cape Coloureds intercepted the contents of the depots, they would move onto "an open rebellion" against the Cape Government.<sup>20</sup> Major McClintock claimed it would not be long before the Boers of the Northwest Cape joined Cape Coloureds in the rebellion. He expected that any uprising with or without the aid of the Boers would last at least several months. The northwestern section of the Cape was an unbridled frontier. Therefore, the northwest was a likely place for a rebellion in the Cape to break out. While the characteristics of the region formed the basis for that part of the memorandum, the idea of rebellion was still conjecture. What was not speculation was how much the Cape-authorized German supply depots had upset Coloureds from the Northwest

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18 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, RS McClintock, Memorandum on the Present State of Affairs on the Border between Cape Colony and German South-West Africa, 30 March 1906 (memorandum).

19 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, RS McClintock, Memorandum on the Present State of Affairs on the Border between Cape Colony and German South-West Africa, 30 March 1906 (memorandum).

20 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, RS McClintock, Memorandum on the Present State of Affairs on the Border between Cape Colony and German South-West Africa, 30 March 1906 (memorandum).

Cape. Their resentment was concentrated and intense enough to instil fear in the general Staff that a similar Coloured rebellion in the Cape was possible.<sup>21</sup> Aside from the supply depots, the mere presence of German troops on or near the Cape border generated Cape blacks' resentment. On 1 June 1906, Sir Edward Grey asked Lord Elgin to write a memorandum about the German troops and the subsequent "feeling of unrest among the natives due to the presence of Germans on British territory".<sup>22</sup> After Grey received it, he planned to forward the memorandum to the German Chargé d'Affaires.<sup>23</sup> The head of South Africa Department responded 19 days later. Fred Graham explained that the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Elgin, planned to delegate the composition of the memorandum to the Cape Government. Elgin felt they were better acquainted with the German authorities' usage "of British territory in a manner calculated to cause discontent among the natives on the British side of the border could only be satisfactorily prepared in the Colony".<sup>24</sup> The Colonial Office believed that the German administration purposely placed troops close to the Cape border to arouse anger and fear among blacks.<sup>25</sup> Despite the Cape Government supporting this narrative, Graham advised the British Government to wait before taking any further action. Recently, the Colonial Defence Committee had made provisions for employing two army officers to aid the Cape Mounted Police in thwarting illicit activities along the Cape's border with GSWA. Elgin thought it wise to await their report on the German authorities' actions before bringing the matter to the German Government's attention. He wished to avoid inflaming Anglo-German tensions unnecessarily.<sup>26</sup>

For two months, the British Government failed to act on Cape blacks' concerns. Thomas Smartt, one of the Cape's ministers, sought to address the Cape Government's grievances with GSWA without further delay. On 30 August 1906, the Cape minister demanded: "the German authorities to abstain from acts calculated to cause unrest amongst the Colonial natives in these parts".<sup>27</sup> When the Cape Government permitted the Germans to place supply depots in the Cape to bring a swift end to the war, the Cape

21 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, RS McClintock, Memorandum on the Present State of Affairs on the Border between Cape Colony and German South-West Africa, 30 March 1906 (memorandum); Curson, *Border Conflicts in a German African Colony*, p. 115.

22 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, E Barrington – Colonial Office, 1 June 1906 (letter).

23 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, E Barrington – Colonial Office, 1 June 1906 (letter).

24 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, F Graham – Foreign Office, 20 June 1906 (letter).

25 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, F Graham – Foreign Office, 20 June 1906 (letter).

26 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, F Graham – Foreign Office, 20 June 1906 (letter).

27 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, TW Smartt – W Hely-Hutchinson, 30 August 1906 (letter).

Government risked its relationship with Cape Coloureds.<sup>28</sup> Despite the Cape Government's efforts, the German colonial administration derided the Cape for not doing enough to aid them at different junctures during the campaigns. At several points, *The Rand Daily Mail* reported on the German press's criticism of GSWA's colonial neighbour.<sup>29</sup> On 19 October 1904, it informed readers that "The 'National Zeitung' to-day contains a bitterly Anglophobe leading article, in which it is alleged that the British authorities are not willing to co-operate with the Germans by stopping the rebels from crossing the Cape frontier".<sup>30</sup> The protectorate's government did not recognise the Cape's sacrifices. Smartt responded to the German colonial administration's rebuke, threatening that "there will be no alternative but to issue other instructions should any further acts of a similar nature occur".<sup>31</sup> Smartt wanted to send a warning to the German administration. If Windhoek did not take steps to curb the actions of the German military, so they did not vex blacks residing in the Northwest Cape, the Cape Government threatened to stop assisting the Germans in ending the war. Blacks' welfare was important to the Cape Government. It was willing to upset Windhoek – and by default, Germany – to ensure Cape blacks' safety. Despite Smartt's protests, the affronts continued. Ironically, as the German campaigns continued, the Cape also faced accusations of mistreating Africans. In July 1906, the Cape Government reported on Nama refugees from GSWA under the Cape's care. As it turned out, the refugees' living conditions were poor, which prompted Cape blacks' outrage.<sup>32</sup> A Cape officer in the region composed the report. Upon forwarding the report, Military Secretary AR Cameron instructed Colonial Secretary Charles Preston Crewe to verify the information from "Colonial sources" concerning the death rate and the "distress amongst the native refugees".<sup>33</sup> In the meantime, Cameron reported that their condition was "not altogether satisfactory".<sup>34</sup> This prompted Cameron to pursue more information on the refugees' treatment, after which he planned to forward any findings to CP Crewe and Governor Walter Hely-Hutchinson.<sup>35</sup>

28 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, TW Smartt – W Hely-Hutchinson, 30 August 1906 (letter); Dederling, "War and Mobility in the Borderlands of South Western Africa in the Early Twentieth Century", p. 286.

29 *The Rand Daily Mail*, 19 October 1904; *The Rand Daily Mail*, 25 October 1904; *The Rand Daily Mail*, 1 November 1904; *The Rand Daily Mail*, 17 November 1904; *The Rand Daily Mail*, 3 January 1905.

30 *The Rand Daily Mail*, 19 October 1904.

31 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, TW Smartt – W Hely-Hutchinson, 30 August 1906 (letter).

32 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, Military Intelligence Department Report, ca. 30 July 1906 (report).

33 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, AR Cameron – CP Crewe, 26 July 1906 (letter).

34 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, AR Cameron – CP Crewe, 26 July 1906 (letter).

35 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, AR Cameron – CP Crewe, 26 July 1906 (letter).



The Military Intelligence Department produced the awaited report for the Cape Government at the end of July 1906. Conditions in the Cape-run refugee camp were grim. Matjeskloof was a “French Roman Catholic Mission Station” located near Springbokfontein.<sup>36</sup> While priests tended to the camp’s daily operations, the district magistrate at Springbokfontein supervised the camp. The camp was a collection point and an overflow facility for camps at Steinkopf and Port Nolloth. Matjeskloof was overcrowded, too. Of the refugees, 570 were women and children, while 20 were men. The disproportionate number of women and children to men reflected the African resistance practice of leaving non-combatants in the Cape to ensure their safety. Additionally, the practice increased fighters’ mobility as they engaged with German troops.<sup>37</sup>

At Matjeskloof, most of the refugees were dying because of “starvation, insufficient clothing, and scurvy”.<sup>38</sup> They were living off minimal rations from the Cape Government and had “a shed for use as a hospital, and [were] provided empty sacks for making shelters”.<sup>39</sup> A doctor attending the refugees at the mission reported that the number of deaths would increase if the refugees did not receive better food and blankets. Many times, Dr Michael Cowan had contacted the district magistrate at Springbokfontein about the conditions and needs of those in the camp, but the magistrate failed to follow the doctor’s advice. Matjeskloof was under the Cape Government’s oversight, and its conditions were deplorable. It upset Cape blacks to see Nama refugees from GSWA treated no better than under German rule. While the Cape Government did not report any complaints from Cape blacks regarding Matjeskloof, the Cape Government’s relationship with blacks was at risk. That was one reason for the report. The Cape Government had a responsibility to the Nama refugees’ welfare.<sup>40</sup>

A final provocative episode was the German authorities’ conduct towards Cape Africans employed in GSWA, as well as Herero and Nama prisoners during the war. On 29 August 1906, the Cape Government passed along Cape Africans’ accounts to the Colonial Office that detailed their experiences while under German employment. Part of the same communication between the

36 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, Military Intelligence Department Report, ca. 30 July 1906 (report).

37 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, Military Intelligence Department Report, ca. 30 July 1906 (report).

38 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, Military Intelligence Department Report, ca. 30 July 1906 (report); Dederer painted a different picture of the camp. It was a place where “security measures were extremely lax” and refugees engaged in the horse and mule trade, see, Dederer, “War and Mobility in the Borderlands of South Western Africa in the Early Twentieth Century”, p. 287.

39 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, Military Intelligence Department Report, ca. 30 July 1906 (report).

40 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, Military Intelligence Department Report, ca. 30 July 1906 (report); Curson, *Border Conflicts in a German African Colony*, p. 136.

Cape and the Colonial Office addressed solutions for navigating the ongoing problem with Cape Africans employed in GSWA. The previous month, the Cape Cabinet suggested that the Cape install a representative in GSWA to investigate the Africans' allegations. Until Elgin approved the representative's appointment and the representative could collect sufficient evidence, Hely-Hutchinson proposed the British Government should wait to address the matter with the German Government.<sup>41</sup>

Joseph R. Quinn, the assistant resident magistrate at the Ndabeni Location, reported the specific incidents of African abuse to which Hely-Hutchinson referred. The individuals who reported the abuse were Jack Seti, John Culayo, and James Tolibadi. In one case, the Germans had murdered Barnes Matebe, a Cape African from St. Mark's District. The latter incident prompted grave concern in the Cape Government.<sup>42</sup> In Seti's case, he had worked as a camp labourer in GSWA. He charged that Africans were "constantly being tied up and thrashed for no reason whatever".<sup>43</sup> The incidents went beyond arbitrary abuse. In December 1905, Seti explained that "on the way to Windhoek, some mules broke away from me. I was with another native. The conductor (Mr. Assinger) and a German soldier fired upon us, but we managed to escape into some bushes".<sup>44</sup>

The second testimony that Quinn reported came from Culayo, who had worked as a waggon driver for the German protectorate's government. He attested to witnessing the same random abuses by the Germans. Culayo had also been present at Barnes Matebe's murder in May 1906. He testified, "I was with a convoy at a railway station (Douw's River) in the Swakopmund area" at the time.<sup>45</sup> Without reason, the conductor charged that Culayo "was insolent and ordered him to dismount. Mr Dewar [the conductor] then went to a soldier and asked him to shoot Barnes Matebe. I saw this soldier put a bullet into his rifle and shoot Barnes Matebe".<sup>46</sup> Shortly after the soldier shot Matebe, Matebe died from the bullet wound that he sustained in the groin. Culayo helped bury Matebe the following day.

The third sworn statement that James Tolibadi provided was much more extensive. Tolibadi was "a foreman labourer" who witnessed young and old Herero and Nama female prisoners forced

"to carry heavy iron for construction work, also big stacks of compressed fodder. I have noticed cases where women have fallen under the load and have been

41 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, W Hely-Hutchinson – Elgin, 29 August 1906 (letter).

42 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, LS Jameson – W Hely-Hutchinson, 22 August 1906 (letter).

43 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, Jack Seti's Sworn Statement, 11 August 1906 (statement).

44 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, Jack Seti's Sworn Statement, 11 August 1906 (statement).

45 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, John Culayo's Sworn Statement, 11 August 1906 (statement).

46 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, John Culayo's Sworn Statement, 11 August 1906 (statement).

made to go on by being thrashed and kicked by the soldiers and conductors. The rations supplied to the women are insufficient, and they are made to cook the food themselves. As a result, they are always hungry, and we labourers from the Cape Colony have frequently thrown food into their camp".<sup>47</sup>

Placing non-combatants in these labour camps served the dual purpose of "punish[ing] the insurgents" and "pacify[ing] the colony".<sup>48</sup> In other cases, the Germans tied prisoners up and flogged them. According to Tolibadi, the situation was not much better for Cape Africans employed by the German authorities. They were subject to imprisonment without a trial and arbitrary flogging. In one case, Tolibadi stated, a conductor "thrash[ed] one of the men with a sjambok, beating him unmercifully on his face and body. A Dutchman thrashed the other man".<sup>49</sup> Afterwards, the soldiers untied the men. Tolibadi "noticed that their faces were swollen and covered with wounds".<sup>50</sup> German soldiers and conductors treated all Africans the same.

On 6 October, Francis Campbell at the Foreign Office responded to the Cape Government's request for a British representative stationed in GSWA. He informed the Colonial Office that Sir Edward Grey would approve the request if the Foreign Office could secure the German Government's consent. Campbell suggested that the British consul in GSWA could "diminish the number of cases of ill-treatment" by investigating abuse claims and advocating on Cape Africans' behalf.<sup>51</sup> The consular appointment was temporary, and the British Government promised to fund the remaining 50 per cent of the salary not paid by the Cape Government.<sup>52</sup>

The war had outraged Cape Coloureds and Africans. Germans treated Cape African employees and Herero and Nama prisoners poorly. The refugee camps were run poorly at home, and the Cape Government aided GSWA during the war. Compared to how Cape blacks viewed the war, the Cape Government did not perceive their actions as providing aid to GSWA's campaigns against the Hereros and Nama. The Cape Government could take this view because they ignored how their aid negatively affected GSWA's African populations.<sup>53</sup> If anything, what the Cape officials offered was reasonable assistance within the bounds of neutrality. The Cape Government's efforts would show the German Government at Windhoek just enough support to improve intercolonial relations.

47 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, James Tolibadi's Sworn Statement, 11 August 1906 (statement).

48 J Kreienbaum, "Guerrilla wars and colonial concentration camps: The exceptional case of German South West Africa", *Journal of Namibian Studies* 11, 2012, p. 85.

49 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, James Tolibadi's Sworn Statement, 11 August 1906 (statement).

50 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, James Tolibadi's Sworn Statement, 11 August 1906 (statement).

51 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, FA Campbell – Colonial Office, 6 October 1906 (letter).

52 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, FA Campbell – Colonial Office, 6 October 1906 (letter).

53 Lindner, "Imperialism and Globalisation", p. 15.

Little did Cape Coloureds know that the German authorities scorned Hely-Hutchinson for the Cape Government's lack of aid to the German war effort. In contrast, current research suggests that before the refugee crisis, the Cape Government provided more aid – mostly selling supplies – to the Germans than the Cape authorities acknowledged.<sup>54</sup> Despite the aid the Cape provided GSWA, relations between the Cape and GSWA did not improve as expected because of the Cape's limited logistical assistance. Although the Cape Mounted Police killed one African resistance leader, Jacob Marenga, in September 1907.<sup>55</sup> The risk did not pay off. The Cape Government did not win Windhoek over, and, ultimately, the Cape Government damaged its relationship with Cape blacks. As an added frustration, the Cape Government could not wholly address blacks' concerns without the British Government's aid. The Cape ministers and Hely-Hutchinson still required the British Government to represent them in intercolonial affairs.

### 3. REFUGEES IN THE CAPE, 1904-1906

The refugee crisis developed in the Cape due to the Namibian War. Frustration over the influx of Nama refugees and the question of their care did not emanate from the Cape blacks. Instead, the refugee crisis exasperated the Cape Government. From 1903 onwards, "the flow of refugees [...] became a persistent issue for both the German and British authorities".<sup>56</sup> Before their campaigns against the Hereros and Nama, German authorities had been fighting the Bondelswarts in 1903.<sup>57</sup> The Cape was obligated officially to take in refugees from GSWA who crossed the border because the Cape was a neutral state with a blanket asylum policy. It exercised a policy of tolerance towards Africans. Additionally, in November 1904, the acting consul general for Germany requested that the Cape Government permit refugees to pass into the Cape if an altercation at the border presented an "urgent necessity".<sup>58</sup> In return, the acting consul general promised to reimburse the Cape Government for the refugees' care. Unofficially, German treatment of Africans horrified the Cape's newspapers.<sup>59</sup> The *Cape Daily Telegraph* pronounced,

54 D Grimshaw, *Britain's Response to the Herero and Nama Genocide, 1904-07: A Realist Perspective on Britain's Assistance to Germany During the Genocide in German South-West Africa* (MA, Uppsala Universitet, 2014), pp. 49-50.

55 JR Masson, "A Fragment of Colonial History: The Killing of Jakob Marengo", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21 (2), 1995, p. 247.

56 Curson, *Border Conflicts in a German African Colony*, p. 134.

57 Bondelswarts were an African ethnic subgroup of Nama located in GSWA's southernmost region near Warmbad.

58 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, DH von Jacobs – E Smith-Brook, 12 November 1904 (letter).

59 For accounts, *The Rand Daily Mail*, 10 March 1904; *The Cape Times*, 27 February 1904; *Eastern Province Herald*, 27 February 1904; *Eastern Province Herald*, 1 March 1904.

“There have been so many cases of cruelty and injustice to natives [...] It will be very hard for the British Government to refuse these people a safe asylum, as during this war in GSWA, both the Hottentots and Damaras have refrained from doing any injury to the British”.<sup>60</sup> While the crisis started as a moral issue, it quickly became a question of money. In order “to stem the flow of refugees and bring some degree of order and control” the Cape administration created “a centralised camp near Steinkopf”.<sup>61</sup> The refugee question proved to be a contentious point between the Cape and GSWA governments.

In 1904, the Cape Government began to permit Hereros and Nama to flow into the Cape from GSWA. The Cape ministers explained that Cape Common Law provided blanket asylum to African refugees from GSWA. The Cape Government could not easily arrange for their extradition because Cape Common Law required each refugee’s consent for extradition. Cape Premier Leander Starr Jameson and the Cape Government did not think it was likely that the refugees would refuse asylum and return to GSWA. Given the expenses incurred for the refugees’ care and the refugees’ kinship with Africans and Coloureds in the Northwest Cape, Cape Premier Jameson declared the refugee crisis “a matter affecting this Government”.<sup>62</sup> Previously, the acting consul general for Germany had offered to reclaim the refugees and care for them. The Cape Government could not readily accept the German offer due to the pressures from Cape blacks. The Cape Government found itself in a dilemma. Should they hold on to the refugees to satisfy Cape blacks despite the financial burden it entailed, or should they return the refugees to GSWA at the risk of offending Cape blacks? After seeking the acting consul general’s advice, the Cape Government decided to keep the refugees in their care. The Cape had the opportunity to rid themselves from the financial responsibility, but they decided otherwise. Later, German authorities would point out that the Cape had decided to grant the refugees asylum. To the Germans, the refugee conundrum was of the Cape Government’s own making.<sup>63</sup>

Aside from the Cape Government’s decision to grant all refugees asylum, the ongoing hostilities between the German administration and Africans in the German protectorate were the original reason for the refugee problem. A closer look at the refugee camps, like those located at Matjeskloof, revealed that women and children comprised an overwhelming majority of refugees. There were the traditional refugee border-crossings, where those not fighting simply traversed into the Cape. In 1906, Marenga, one of

60 *Cape Daily Telegraph*, 27 February 1904.

61 Curson, *Border Conflicts in a German African Colony*, p. 135.

62 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, LS Jameson – W Hely-Hutchinson, 29 October 1904 (letter).

63 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, LS Jameson – W Hely-Hutchinson, 29 October 1904 (letter).

the African resistance leaders, directed Nama non-combatants across the border when the escalation in fighting endangered non-combatants' lives and when travelling with non-combatants hindered the campaign. A less obvious cause for the refugee problem was Nama usage of the camps as part of their fighting strategy. The camps gave rise to a means of fighting that could best be described as a "drop-and-go" strategy. Nama men would accompany women and children to the Cape to ensure their safe passage. After they settled, the men would escape to resume operations against the Germans. In other cases, combatants pursued by German soldiers fled into the Cape to elude capture or death and settled in the Cape afterwards. However, resistant fighters sometimes found that landing on the Cape's soil was not enough to guarantee their safety.<sup>64</sup>

Over time, the increasing flow of refugees created a logistical nightmare for the Cape authorities. In January 1906, Consul General HP von Humboldt relayed a request from Governor von Lindequist, who wanted the Cape Government to instruct its police and soldiers to confiscate the incoming refugees' weapons and to take measures to ensure refugees did not re-enter GSWA. The Cape authorities claimed they attempted to comply but struggled to restrain the refugees because they did not have the resources to guard the border.<sup>65</sup> In Tilman Dederling's work, "The Prophet's 'War against Whites'", he suggested that Cape authorities were not interested in helping the Germans because the Cape Government sought to preserve relations with Cape Africans.<sup>66</sup> He also explained that the German authorities were convinced that the Cape Government had more sinister plans, such as "acquiring the territory 'below its value' once the Germans had exhausted their strength" fighting the Hereros and Nama.<sup>67</sup>

Von Lindequist requested aid with refugee containment because he feared that some refugees were claiming asylum to fight another day. Initially, Jameson denied that combatants temporarily claimed asylum to evade capture. However, the Cape Government received intelligence in April from the Cape Mounted Police. A "representative of the German Consul" and German authorities alleged that several "emissaries" had been communicating frequently between the refugees and African resistance fighters in GSWA by crossing the border.<sup>68</sup> The refugees had been able to do so because some of

64 Curson, *Border Conflicts in a German African Colony*, p. 133; Wallace, *A History of Namibia: From the Beginning to 1990*, p. 168.

65 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, HP von Humboldt – Selborne, 12 January 1906 (letter).

66 T Dederling, "The Prophet's 'War against Whites'": Shepherd Stuurman in Namibia and South Africa, 1904-7", *The Journal of African History* 40 (1), 1999, pp. 4-5.

67 Dederling, "The Prophet's 'War against Whites'", p. 5.

68 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, Report by Colonel Robinson, Chief Commissioner of the Cape Mounted Police, ca. 11 April 1906 (report).

the Cape's refugee camps were close to GSWA's border. In a memorandum dated 11 April 1906, CP Crewe admitted that "the complaint made by the German authorities has some foundation".<sup>69</sup> Consequently, on 2 April 1906, von Humboldt had called on the Cape authorities to confiscate the refugees' weapons again, but with the additional condition that they place the refugees in camps at a considerable distance away from the border. The Cape Government was willing to honour the request, provided the Germans were "prepared to pay any extra charge for internment".<sup>70</sup> They pressed this point because the German Foreign Minister, Baron Oswald von Richthofen, had promised repayment via Baron von Nettelblatt at Carlsbad in August 1905. The Cape ministers set about calculating the costs for the refugees' care. At the time, the most recent record of the Cape Government's expenses was from December 1904. The Cape Government maintained that the German Government owed £981 6s. 6d. for the care of "320 white and 1 275 coloured men, women, and children".<sup>71</sup> The cost dramatically increased by 1907, accumulating to £6 000.<sup>72</sup> Since August 1905, the German Government had not reiterated further repayment offers for the refugees' care. The Cape Cabinet needed to take new measures to guarantee repayment. Crewe suggested a series of sanctions. These included withdrawing police and soldiers guarding the refugee camps, leaving the refugees free to leave and return to German territory. He also proposed reneging the Germans' ability to house supply depots in the Cape and closing the drifts to German traffic. As a disclaimer, Crewe wrote that they should seek the British Government's approval for any planned sanctions before enacting them. When Lieutenant Voules of the Cape Mounted Police closed Rahman's Drift to the Germans earlier in 1906, it created a diplomatic disaster for the British Government. Crewe did not want a repeat of the event, which was the reason for his stipulation if they enacted the sanctions.<sup>73</sup>

By 14 June 1906, Windhoek had not answered the Cape Government's request for reimbursement. Jameson reminded Hely-Hutchinson on that day that this was the case and proceeded to detail the history of the refugee crisis. He forwarded to Hely-Hutchinson no fewer than 16 communications sent to the German authorities between 1904 and 1906. The Cape Cabinet wanted to reach an agreement with the German administration regarding the status

69 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, Report by Colonel Robinson, Chief Commissioner of the Cape Mounted Police, ca. 11 April 1906 (report).

70 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, Report by Colonel Robinson, Chief Commissioner of the Cape Mounted Police, ca. 11 April 1906 (report).

71 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, LS Jameson – W Hely-Hutchinson, 14 June 1906 (letter).

72 Curson, *Border Conflicts in a German African Colony*, p. 136.

73 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, LS Jameson – W Hely-Hutchinson, 14 June 1906 (letter); TNA, CO 879/91, 805, W Hely-Hutchinson – Elgin, 23 May 1906 (letter).

of refugees as residents of GSWA and the cost of their care. The content of these communications also included the German authorities' explanation for not paying for the Africans' care. Throughout 1905, the German administration attempted to facilitate the refugees' return to GSWA. In a letter from 19 May 1905 to GSWA's governor, the Cape ministers expressed that they permitted the arrival of refugees and agreed to grant them asylum. In response to the Cape's request for funds to care for the refugees, the German governor replied that he could only provide for their welfare if they returned to GSWA. Three months later, the acting consul general for Germany requested that the Cape Government return the refugees to the German authorities' care due to the poor conditions under which the Cape authorities kept the refugees. At one point, the Cape ministers had considered returning the refugees to GSWA, especially since Governor von Lindequist promised that the German authorities would only punish combatants.<sup>74</sup> Doing so would have alleviated the financial burden and simplified the process of settling the refugees. Ultimately, the Cape Government did not return the refugees to the Germans. Jameson justified the Cape Government's decision to keep the refugees. Some of the Africans who crossed the border specifically applied for asylum, while others simply crossed the border. Jameson explained that Cape Common Law granted all incoming refugees blanket asylum – even if they did not apply – and they could only extradite individual refugees to GSWA. However, this was only possible if an individual agreed to extradition, which Jameson claimed would never happen.<sup>75</sup>

Later in Jameson's history of the refugee question, he included a statement from von Humboldt dated 9 May 1906. The consul general provided an extensive explanation of the German Government's position towards the refugees and reasons for not paying the Cape for their care. The German authorities could not justify the costs because the refugees were no longer German subjects. Von Humboldt stated that they could not be German subjects because they were no longer rebels. In fact, "the natives still in arms in the German Protectorate [...are not] insurgents; they are to a great extent merely a big band of robbers and murderers".<sup>76</sup> Because the refugees claiming asylum had been "robbers and murderers", they were not German subjects and did not qualify for the care of the German colonial administration. In effect, von Humboldt and the German authorities disowned the refugees.

74 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, Statement concerning the Views of the German Government with respect to the Payment of Costs for the Refugees from German South-West Africa, 9 May 1906 (statement).

75 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, LS Jameson – W Hely-Hutchinson, 14 June 1906 (letter).

76 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, Statement concerning the Views of the German Government with respect to the Payment of Costs for the Refugees from German South-West Africa, 9 May 1906 (statement).



The idea that Hereros and Nama were no longer German subjects originated in General von Trotha's declaration of extermination, the "*Vernichtungsbefehl*", in October 1904. Von Trotha's order labelled Hereros GSWA's enemies and promised to kill all Hereros who remained in GSWA. Von Humboldt and the Germans believed that it was in the interest of all whites to contain the Africans' threat. He explained that the Cape had done a poor job of managing the refugees within that context because they had repeatedly escaped to fight the Germans. On this basis, under the 1899 Peace Conference of The Hague, the German Government was not obliged to reimburse the Cape Government.<sup>77</sup>

In November 1906, the situation had not changed. Throughout 1906, the Cape Government had also been contesting GSWA's encroachment along the Cape's border at the Orange River. In March 1905, German troops added to the drama when they constructed a road along the river as a supply route for the German army. The Cape Government objected to the project because they believed the road was within the Cape's territory. Since then, the Cape Government had pressured GSWA to halt the project. To ease the situation and reopen negotiations, the British Government pressed Hely-Hutchinson, Jameson, and the Cape ministers to drop the issue of the road the German attempted to build along the Orange River. The British Government hoped this concession would encourage the German Government to pay for the refugees. They never paid, even after the Foreign Office pressured the German Government the following year. While the Germans did not budge, the refugee crisis confirmed that the Cape still sought the British Government's intervention in intercolonial affairs. Although British intervention during the refugee crisis did not resolve the Cape Government's problem. The Cape Government was in a peculiar place in terms of sovereignty. It could not act in ways that would interfere in Britain's foreign affairs. Where it could proceed in intercolonial matters, it was unsuccessful on its own. For a self-governing colony, it still required Britain's oversight. The Cape could be reckless without the British Government's supervision, igniting international incidents between Britain and Germany. As the Germans fought the Hereros and the Nama, another problem arose. Because of the ongoing campaigns, there was an

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77 The 1899 Peace Conference of The Hague was a series of international agreements relating to how countries should conduct war. Under Articles 57 and 58, a neutral state was entitled to compensation for internment combatants whose internment facilities were far removed from the front. See, The Avalon Project, "Laws of War : Laws and Customs of War on Land (Hague II); July 29, 1899", <[https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th\\_century/hague02.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/hague02.asp)>, accessed 24 May 2021.

influx of German troops in Southern Africa. The increased German military presence in the region would be yet another test for the Cape.<sup>78</sup>

#### 4. GERMAN SOLDIERS CROSSING THE BORDER, 1906

While the refugee crisis worsened Anglo-German relations, the crisis's associated problems did not present immediate threats to the Cape's security. In contrast, the actions of German soldiers dramatically increased Anglo-German tensions in the region. As the Namibian War wore on, German soldiers committed border-crossing infractions more frequently. In most cases, German soldiers entered well into the Cape. It was not just a minor misstep because German soldiers were pursuing African combatants.<sup>79</sup> As Wallace explained in *A History of Namibia*, "African military success was predicated on mobility", which included "crossing and re-crossing international borders".<sup>80</sup> Crossing the border into any British territory – the Cape or the Bechuanaland protectorate – allowed the Hereros and others to remain in the field and able to fight another day. It held off the possibility of defeat until the future. Because of the fluidity of the border, European understandings of war did not apply. Individuals could cross borders freely. Had the Cape's shared border with GSWA not been fluid, the presence of a border might have been enough to deter German soldiers from entering British territory without permission. Dederling supported the idea that the border's fluidity was the problem. He argued that "the mobility of inhabitants across colonial borders" influenced the intercolonial relationship between the Cape and GSWA.<sup>81</sup> Conflict on one side of the border residually affected the abutting colony. In the case of the Namibian War, border crossings in the Cape only tested Anglo-German relations in southern Africa.

As of January 1906, German soldiers still respected the Cape's sovereignty and made a point of stopping at the border. In a letter to Selborne, von Humboldt informed him that the Cape seemed to harbour a Nama leader, Simon Kooper and that several of Kooper's fellow combatants had also entered British Bechuanaland, a territory the Cape administered.<sup>82</sup> At the time,

78 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, W Hely-Hutchinson – Elgin, 28 November 1906 (letter); Curson, *Border Conflicts in a German African Colony*, p. 136.

79 Gewalt also pointed out that German troops received orders to pursue the Herero refugees until they left German South-West Africa, see, Gewalt, "The Great General of the Kaiser", pp. 70-71.

80 Wallace, *A History of Namibia: From the Beginning to 1990*, p. 168.

81 Dederling, "War and Mobility in the Borderlands of South Western Africa in the Early Twentieth Century", p. 275.

82 Kooper's name has also been spelled "Cooper", "Copper", and "Kopper". British Bechuanaland was the southern section of Bechuanaland.

German soldiers had been chasing the African combatants. Von Humboldt was quick to point out that the soldiers did not proceed beyond the border. "The German troops...had to desist from pursuing them at the frontier".<sup>83</sup> It was one of the last times that German soldiers recognised the border with the Cape. The remainder of von Humboldt's report hinted that the Cape should aid the Germans in capturing and relocating Kooper and his compatriots to the Cape's interior. The Cape Government did not respond to the request. Although one German military officer reasoned that the Cape did not remove Kooper and his compatriots because they had "settled across the frontier" and were "a valuable resource for their fellow tribesmen in the field", which only offended the German authorities.<sup>84</sup> It provided them with another reason to accuse the Cape and the British Governments of acting "unneighbourly" despite the Cape's willingness to sell animals, foodstuffs, and supplies to the German military at the risk of jeopardising the Cape's own supply needs.<sup>85</sup>

March 1906 marked the scene of a bloodthirsty dash after prisoners of war who had escaped German custody. This time, the pursuers crossed into the Cape. Initially, the report from Smartt to Hely-Hutchinson placed four German soldiers at fault for violating the border at Walvis Bay.<sup>86</sup> Walvis Bay had been part of the Cape's territory since 1884. In late April 1906, the British Ambassador in Berlin, Sir Frank Lascelles, would relay to Grey that the soldiers were individuals attached to a "private firm".<sup>87</sup> During the event of 24 March, the four Germans chased the prisoners eight miles into Walvis Bay and fired at them before their arrest and return to Swakopmund.<sup>88</sup> David Eadie, the resident magistrate at Walvis Bay, apprised the Secretary at the Law Department that his office had collected statements and written a police report, but he had yet to initiate or receive communications from Windhoek.<sup>89</sup> Upon learning about the incident, the Cape Government sought legal action against the German protectorate.<sup>90</sup> The Cape Attorney-General's office drew up a report on the event, spelling out the Cape's legal standing as they prepared to take action against the Germans. For the Cape Government, the

83 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, HP von Humboldt – Selborne, 12 January 1906 (letter).

84 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, Officer Commanding the Troops in the German Protectorate of South-West Africa, Verbal Communication, 16 March 1906 (report).

85 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, S./208/20, Extracts from Report of Colonel Trench, 19 January 1906 (report).

86 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, TW Smartt – W Hely-Hutchinson, 2 April 1906 (letter).

87 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, F Lascelles – E Grey, 29 April 1906 (letter).

88 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, TW Smartt – W Hely-Hutchinson, 2 April 1906 (letter).

89 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, D Eadie – Secretary at the Law Department, Cape Town, 27 March 1906 (letter).

90 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, TW Smartt – W Hely-Hutchinson, 2 April 1906 (letter).

main issue was not the prisoners' asylum statuses. That was indisputable.<sup>91</sup> Instead, their concern was that "The Germans have carried on hostilities in British territory".<sup>92</sup> The event was "a clear violation of sovereignty", requiring a response with the British Government's aid.<sup>93</sup>

On 20 April 1906, the British Government made a diplomatic representation on the Cape Government's behalf. Lascelles communicated with Heinrich von Tschirschky, the Head of the German Foreign Office. He explained, "I am instructed by His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State [Grey] to lose no time in bringing this report to Your Excellency's notice and to urge that immediate enquiries may be made into the incident".<sup>94</sup> Grey wanted answers about the incursion at Walvis Bay. He demanded an investigation. Nine days later, the desired information arrived. The four soldiers were "employees of Arthur Koppel firm which is carrying out the construction of the Otavi Railway and by which the fugitive natives were employed [sic]".<sup>95</sup> The German Government's relief was that the individuals involved were not the German protectorate's soldiers. Thus, they avoided an international incident. After the findings revealed the nature of the violation, von Lindequist ordered the firm never to undertake any action that would again violate the border. As much as von Lindequist's assurance eased tensions over the violation, he nor the firm apologised for the event. Only Under State Secretary Otto von Mühlberg offered a half-hearted apology. Throughout 1906, this was only one of three apologies that the German Government offered for border infractions.<sup>96</sup>

On 1, 4, and 11 May 1906, German soldiers breached the Cape border. Their actions created an international incident. The infractions were distressing enough to garner the attention of the House of Commons during the Prime Minister's question time. It took the Cape Government an entire month to sort through the information and more than three months for the Foreign Office to decide how to address what happened. The incident on 1 May was a misunderstanding. A German patrol was tracking armed Nama and "crossed the English border near Klipdam".<sup>97</sup> After crossing the border, they had "been stopped by the British Police, half an hour east of Biesjespoort, disarmed, and

91 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, Violation of British Territory at Walfish Bay by German Soldiers. Report of the Additional Legal Adviser, 28 March 1906 (report).

92 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, Violation of British Territory at Walfish Bay, 28 March 1906 (report).

93 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, Violation of British Territory at Walfish Bay, 28 March 1906 (report).

94 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, F Lascelles – H von Tschirschky, 20 April 1906 (letter).

95 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, O von Mühlberg – F Lascelles, 26 April 1906 (letter).

96 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, F Lascelles – E Grey, 29 April 1906 (letter); TNA, CO 879/91, 805, O von Mühlberg – F Lascelles, 26 April 1906 (letter).

97 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, HP von Humboldt – W Hely-Hutchinson, 8 May 1906 (letter).

sent back to GSWA. The police kept their arms and ammunition".<sup>98</sup> Because the patrol crossed the border, the Cape Mounted Police had confiscated the patrol's firearms. In reaction, von Humboldt, representing von Lindequist, protested the Cape Mounted Police's disarmament of the German soldiers and the Cape Mounted Police's failure to return the soldiers' weapons on their way back to German territory. Eventually, the Cape authorities sent these weapons back to the German military. Von Humboldt also placed some of the blame for the incident on the Cape Government. He pointed out that the Cape Mounted Police were not completing their duties at the border, especially in helping the Germans catch African resistance fighters. To remedy the situation, von Humboldt offered to send German troops to assist the Cape Mounted Police in guarding the border. Later that month, the Cape's ministers informed Hely-Hutchinson that the offer was unnecessary. Instead, they insisted that the German protectorate instruct its soldiers on the importance of honouring borders.<sup>99</sup>

The Cape offered proof that the Cape Mounted Police had been doing its utmost to guard the border. Major FH Elliott of the Cape Mounted Police provided the police commissioner with Private Edward Jarvis's sworn statement. Private Jarvis had been the trooper who stopped and disarmed the German patrol. Major Elliott presented the testimony as part of his call for the German authorities to put in place orders that would prevent a repeat of the incident. On 1 May, a German patrol became lost and entered the Cape near Narougas. By 25 May, von Humboldt informed Hely-Hutchinson that Windhoek would place the soldiers before a tribunal due to the border violation.<sup>100</sup>

On 4 May, German troops had pursued Marenga into the Cape's territory. Pursuits often ended in border violations. "During these guerrilla engagements, the German forces repeatedly violated the frontiers with Cape Province. They ended under the partial mediation of German missionaries and officers of the British Cape Police".<sup>101</sup> While the German troops chased Marenga, the Cape Mounted Police became involved and cut off the German pursuit because they had entered the Cape.<sup>102</sup>

Marenga's manoeuvre and the Cape Mounted Police's interference had angered the German troops trying to capture Marenga for some time.

98 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, HP von Humboldt – W Hely-Hutchinson, 8 May 1906 (letter).

99 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, HP von Humboldt – LS Jameson, 9 May 1906 (letter); TNA, CO 879/91, 805, Cape Ministers – W Hely-Hutchinson, 21 May 1906 (letter).

100 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, FH Elliott – Commissioner Commanding, Cape Mounted Police, 10 May 1906 (letter); TNA, CO 879/91, 805, Private Edward Jarvis's Statement, 10 May 1906 (statement); TNA, CO 879/91, 805, W Hely-Hutchinson – Elgin, 25 May 1906 (letter).

101 Bley, *South-West Africa under German Rule 1894-1914*, p. 150.

102 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, W Hely-Hutchinson – Elgin, 11 May 1906 (letter).

Eventually, Marenga surrendered “to the Cape police, who refused to hand him over to the German authorities”.<sup>103</sup> The Cape authorities’ unwillingness to comply was not unusual. According to Dederer, the Cape authorities generally did not deport African combatants to GSWA because it “could antagonise their own African population”.<sup>104</sup> Major Elliott described the whole incident as “a race between Germans and Cape Mounted Police”.<sup>105</sup> The Germans wanted to apprehend him, while the Cape Mounted Police seemingly desired to save him. Although, the Cape Mounted Police ironically were responsible for his death in 1907. To Major Elliott, the Germans’ indiscretion when they entered the Cape’s territory was of lesser importance compared to the way the Germans had attempted to capture Marenga.<sup>106</sup>

In the meantime, news of the incident reached London. On 16 May, the House of Commons addressed the border violation involving the “pursuit of the insurgent leader Morenga”.<sup>107</sup> Answering why German troops crossed the border was important to the British Government. Germany was becoming increasingly aggressive towards Britain, and it was not impossible that GSWA mirrored Germany’s aggressive stance. The British Government’s spokesperson, Sir Walter Runciman, explained that the German Chargé D’Affaires had quickly acknowledged the border violation and that the German Government disapproved of it.<sup>108</sup>

On 15 May, von Humboldt furnished the Cape Government with an apology for the incident that occurred. Von Humboldt also assured the Cape Government that Windhoek would remind German troops not to cross the border. However, by the time von Humboldt had apologised for the German troops’ transgression on 4 May, German soldiers had already entered the Cape’s territory allegedly in pursuit of Marenga for a second time. On 11 May,

103 Wallace, *A History of Namibia: From the Beginning to 1990*, pp. 170-171.

104 Dederer, “The Prophet’s ‘War against Whites’”, p. 4.

105 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, FH Elliott – Commissioner, Cape Mounted Police, 19 May 1906 (letter).

106 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, FH Elliott – Commissioner, Cape Mounted Police, 19 May 1906 (letter); The German forces ambushed Marenga’s forces and wounded Marenga on 4 May. See, Masson, “A Fragment of Colonial History: The Killing of Jakob Marengo”, p. 250.

107 United Kingdom, House of Commons, *Hansard*, 16 May 1906, Volume Number 157; Simultaneously, *The Rand Daily Mail* reported that London newspapers congratulated Elliott on his success in the affair. *The Rand Daily Mail* celebrated Elliott’s capture of Marenga as demonstrating British willingness to aid the Germans during the war, see, *The Rand Daily Mail*, 7 November 1907; After Marenga’s capture, the Cape authorities arranged to house him far from the South-West Africa border, see, *The Rand Daily Mail*, 15 August 1907; Two days later, *The Rand Daily Mail* reported Marenga’s escape, see, *The Rand Daily Mail*, 19 August 1907.

108 United Kingdom, House of Commons, *Hansard*, 16 May 1906, Volume Number 157; For press coverage of the House of Commons debate, see, *The Rand Daily Mail*, 20 August 1907.

German soldiers entered as far as ten miles into the Cape's territory. The Cape Government found the third incursion inexcusable. The consul general assured them that the German commanding officer had received orders not to cross the Cape's border. Since the instructions had been clear and the incident had evoked outrage in the Cape Government, GSWA's government took action against the officer commanding.<sup>109</sup>

There were still other incidents of border crossings by German soldiers for the remainder of the year. However, the three that occurred in May continued to bother the Cape Government. In June, they pressed the Foreign Office to extract apologies from the German Government for all three incursions. So far, the German Government had issued apologies for the third infraction and "unofficially" via von Humboldt for the second incident.<sup>110</sup> However, it had not proved satisfactory to them because they wanted statements of regret directly from the German Government. In particular, the Cape Government had yet to receive an admission of wrongdoing for the first incident of the roving German patrol. The Foreign Office did not address this episode with the German Government because the Germans had apologised sufficiently. The Foreign Office believed the German authorities had done enough to address the second and third incidents. The German authorities had reprimanded the German officers responsible for the border violations and reissued orders to German troops, reminding them not to cross the border. Therefore, the Foreign Office decided to drop all further protests related to the three incursions.<sup>111</sup>

## 5. CONCLUSION

German invasions alarmed the Cape authorities. To the Cape Government, the German troops' willingness to violate the borders and German officials' calm response represented a blatant disregard for the Cape's sovereignty and its borders. They felt insulted that they did not receive a full and direct apology from the German Government. Given the liberties that German soldiers were willing to take to capture African combatants, the Cape ministers began to ask themselves what the presence of aggressive German troops could mean for the Cape and South Africa in the future. Securing the northwest region – an

109 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, W Hely-Hutchinson – Elgin, 11 May 1906 (letter); TNA, CO 879/91, 805, HP von Humboldt – W Hely-Hutchinson, 15 May 1906 (letter); TNA, CO 879/91, 805, W Hely-Hutchinson – Elgin, 23 May 1906 (letter); TNA, CO 879/91, 805, W Hely-Hutchinson – Elgin, 29 May 1906 (letter).

110 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, F Graham – Foreign Office, 26 June 1906 (letter).

111 TNA, CO 879/91, 805, F Graham – Foreign Office, 26 June 1906 (letter); TNA, CO 879/91, 805, E Barrington – Colonial Office, 11 July 1906 (letter).

area sprawling between Springbokfontein and Port Nolloth – became critical to the Cape and equally vital to the British Empire. The Cape's borders formed the borders of the Empire, and the Cape's borders required rigorous defence. Any weakness along the Cape's borders radiated and became the British Empire's weakness.<sup>112</sup>

The Namibian War was incendiary for Anglo-German relations in Southern Africa. It had troubled Cape Coloureds and Africans, such as Seti, to observe Africans' mistreatment in GSWA. To an extent, GSWA forced the Cape Government – arguably blacks' strongest supporter in South Africa – into an uncomfortable position, playing a role in the German campaigns against Africans. Aside from attempting to install a British consul in GSWA, the Cape Government's actions alarmed Cape blacks and violated their trust in their government as the war progressed. In addition to the war's political strain on the Cape Government, the ensuing refugee crisis placed a financial burden on the Cape. Building resentment towards GSWA climaxed in 1906 when German soldiers crossed the border and violated the Cape's sovereignty. Although the German Government attempted to make amends for the violations. These events formed the beginning of the full-fledged Anglo-German antagonism in southern Africa.

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112 A large portion of the Northwest Cape included the area formerly known as Gordonia District. For more on the region, see, Legassick, *Hidden Histories of Gordonia*.