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

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Abstract
This thesis investigates the British response to the Herero and Nama genocide, committed in German South-West Africa, now Namibia in 1904-07. The records of the British Foreign Office will be used to assess Britain’s response to the atrocities. This thesis will determine how much the British authorities knew about the events at the time, the effects of the war on the British colonies in South Africa, the ways in which the British helped the Germans, why they helped the Germans and why there was no intervention. The theory of realism will be applied to explain why the British authorities acted the way they did, whilst using Hyam’s interaction model to demonstrate how decisions were made in the British Empire. This thesis demonstrates that the British Foreign Office co-operated with Germany for its own self interest and was indifferent to the suffering of the Herero and Nama as realpolitik dictated Britain’s response to the events.
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**List of Acronyms**

CMP – Cape Mounted Police  
CO – Colonial Office  
FCO – Foreign & Commonwealth Office  
FO – Foreign Office  
GSWA – German South-West Africa  
LO – Law Office  
UN – United Nations  
UNGC – United Nations Genocide Convention  
WO – War Office
1. Introduction

The twentieth century’s first genocide was committed against the Herero and Nama people by the Imperial German Government in German South-West Africa (GSWA) (*Deutsche-Südwestafrika*), present day Namibia, between 1904-07. It was one of the most brutal suppressions of an uprising in African colonial history. The various genocides of the last century have shown the importance of the international community in the prevention and stopping of genocide, it is relevant therefore to research how individual states react to genocides. The British Empire was in a unique position as the Cape Colony and Bechuanaland bordered much of GSWA yet the historiography on the genocide has largely ignored Britain’s role. It is through an analysis of the vast records of the British Foreign Office (FO) that Britain’s role in the genocide will be examined. This thesis will assess Britain’s response to the genocide using realist theory from international relations to understand the decisions taken by the FO in its response to the events in GSWA.

This thesis classifies Germany’s war of extermination against the Herero and Nama people as genocide. Key to genocide is intent, this has been proved beyond doubt from the German sources, principally through Trotha’s extermination order and the strategy of sealing off the desert so the Herero would perish from thirst. The strategy of blocking the means of life from the Nama which was designed to kill demonstrates that genocide is applicable to the Nama as well. The concentration camps established by the Germans continued the genocide and tens of thousands died through deliberate neglect. The mortality statistics with 60-100,000 Herero and a third of the Nama being killed are testament to genocide being committed.¹

This thesis will assess principally how the FO in London responded to the genocide by using their records from 1904-07. It is the first time a study has comprehensively analysed London’s perspective. The Cape Colony and Bechuanaland’s response will also be assessed as they dealt with the practical problems war in GSWA brought to the British possessions in South Africa. Hyam’s model of interaction will be invoked to demonstrate how decisions were made in the British Empire and is useful in understanding the FO position.

The theory of realism will also be applied to the analysis. The FO’s remit was to secure foreign relations and to ensure the national interest was being met. The war in GSWA had a significant impact on the British colonial possessions in South Africa. As this involved relations with Germany, the FO was sent large amounts of information regarding the situation in order for it to make decisions on how to deal with the crisis. Realist theory is based on several assumptions about how states operate in a system of anarchy and these assumptions have implications for a states foreign policy. This theory will be implemented throughout the analysis but it is in chapter four where the theoretical model will be applied fully to assess Britain’s response to the genocide, discussing why Britain co-operated with Germany rather than intervened. This thesis postulates that realist theory can explain why the British authorities acted the way they did.

In sum, what this thesis intends to do is assess Britain’s response to the genocide. The aim is to create a full account of the problems faced by the British for the period 1904-07 in both the Cape Colony and Bechuanaland and to assess primarily London’s role and decisions during this period and the reasons why Britain remained indifferent to the genocide.

1.1 Disposition

The thesis is split up into five sections, beginning with theory and method in chapter two, followed by the empirical analysis in chapter three, with the sub chapters centred around three key research questions. To what extent did the British Government know about the German atrocities of 1904-07? What was the direct impact of the Herero and Nama uprisings on the British colonies? In what ways did the British help the Germans? Chapter four deals with the thematic analysis and is centred on the research question, why did the British help the Germans and not intervene against the genocide? This section summarises the empirical analysis with the theoretical model.
2 Theory and Method

2.1 Historiography

The genocide in GSWA has only received scholarly attention very recently. The British Blue Book was the first published account of the events in 1918, however its purpose was political and was not aimed at providing a nuanced historical analysis, although it does provide useful testimonies.

Lempkin, who coined the term genocide, had included the Herero as genocide in his unfinished ‘History of Genocide’. Bridgman and Worley have classified scholar interpretations under the “genocide school” and the “non-genocide school”. Some scholars argue that the war with the Herero and Nama was not genocide. The non-genocide school which includes scholars Poewe and Schlosser question the accuracy of the numbers that died. Schlosser argues that more Herero escaped to Bechuanaland than previously thought. However the British records reveal this not to be the case. Lau centres on intent in genocide. She interprets General von Trotha’s extermination order to the Herero as a piece of “psychological warfare, never followed in deed”.

The genocide school (which this thesis agrees with) base their argument on the clear intent of Trotha’s proclamation and the tactics and strategy were intended to commit genocide. Moreover, they contend that the extremely high death rate, is testament to Trotha’s policy intention to exterminate the Herero and Nama. The first major monograph was written by Drechsler, an East German historian, he was the first to apply the term genocide and still remains one of the most relevant studies of the genocide. His account was closely followed by Bley who also termed it genocide, he was a West German historian. Drechsler’s account has been criticised for its

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5 Bridgman and Worley, “Genocide of the Hereros,” 34.
8 Helmut Bley, Namibia Under German Rule (Hamburg: Lit Verlag, 1996).
Marxist-Leninist explanation of a “monolithic German administration which from the very beginning had a grand plan for the total disappropriation of the indigenous population and carried it through with its almost unlimited power”.\(^9\) Zimmerer, is one of the most eminent scholars of the genocide today. In contrast to Drechsler, Zimmerer argues that “steps towards annihilation warfare were taken before the so-called battle at the Waterberg”.\(^10\) Drechsler also overlooks African agency, he stated that the “Germans decided the course of the war”.\(^11\) Zimmerer in his study of “native policy’ showed…continued resistance of Africans”\(^12\), thus demonstrating the agency of the indigenous populations. Gewald has challenged the “notion that the Herero revolted according to a pre-mediated plan”.\(^13\)

Until very recently the literature focussed predominately on the Herero, with many more articles written exclusively about them. The Nama genocide has been under researched and with fewer scholars regarding it as genocide. However, Drechsler did provide a good account of the Nama conflict and the recent publication by Olusoga and Erichsen devote much of their book to the Nama campaign as does Wallace in her book.\(^14\)

One issue with the historiography is the reliance on German imperial sources, which can only present a one dimensional view. A further issue with using the German sources is the colonialist viewpoint they have. The Herero and Nama have an oral tradition which has not been fully utilised. Gewald has explored the African viewpoint by using oral testimony and is opening up this avenue. He has also reintroduced the Blue Book which contains contemporary accounts from the Herero and Nama.\(^15\)

One of the most interesting aspects about the genocide in GSWA is its connection to the Holocaust. Drechsler had made this claim but it was Melber who “attempted for the first time a systematic analysis of the connections between German policies in SWA and both the later apartheid policy and the Third Reich”.\(^16\) Zimmerer has

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\(^10\) Ibid., 334.
\(^11\) Ibid., 331.
\(^12\) Ibid., 333.
\(^13\) Ibid., 332.
\(^16\) Zimmerer, “Colonial Genocide,” 335.
compared the “war of annihilation (1941-4) in Eastern Europe and the related occupation policies as a colonial war and part of the German imperial project, identifying personal experience, institutional memory and public perception as major trajectories of German colonial fantasies, knowledge and experiences”. Moreover, the social Darwinism and eugenics that was developed by Eugen Fischer is a connection Olusoga and Erichsen make in their book. It appears it is the race war where the connection seems to be most critical between the events in GSWA and the Holocaust. This argument puts the Holocaust as the culmination of a historical process of which the Herero and Nama genocide forms part of the beginning of the process.

The emphasis of research has been into Germany’s role in the genocide, with studies on the international reaction to the genocide being comparatively slim. Bridgman and Worley in their article have a section dealing with the response of other nations to the genocide, this unfortunately does not detail individual nations’ responses but rather states a general European feeling of ignorance and ability to rationalise German actions due to the frequent occurrence of European colonialists’ excesses when suppressing uprisings. The British reaction to the genocide has been largely overlooked and is merely a footnote in the major monographs on the events, with the exception of the killing of Marenga which was done on British territory in a joint action by the Cape police and German military, which has gained scholarly attention.

The scholars that do mention the British role, agree on a level of co-operation of the German and British authorities and these include Curson, Dedering, Drechsler, Lindner and Wallace. Dedering is the first to devote two articles about the effects of the war on the Cape Colony and provides a good account of the security and economic issues that faced Cape officials. His main arguments confirm the findings of this thesis. However, Dedering’s articles do not cover the full response of the Cape government and do not take into consideration Bechuanaland. Whilst he does cite London’s view this is only taken into limited consideration. Curson has recently

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17 Ibid., 336.
18 Olusoga and Erichsen, The Kaiser’s Holocaust, 245.
written a book about Presgrave, an Australian who was Marenga’s secretary who was killed by the Germans. His book has a small chapter detailing some of the cooperation of the British and German authorities.\textsuperscript{21} Lindner has also written an article about British and German co-operation during the event, through looking at colonial identity.\textsuperscript{22} These papers do add to the knowledge on Britain’s role, however, they are not comprehensive and the FO view in London has not been fully assessed. They all use, to a small extent, some of the records this thesis will use from FO records, however some of the key reports have been overlooked and these records shed light on Britain’s role in GSWA. This thesis will address this lack of British perspective, in particular the FO role through the large amount of documents held at the National Archives.

2.2 Theory

This thesis will investigate why the British authorities, in particular the FO, acted the way they did. Why did officials in London show indifference to the evident killing around them. Why did the FO permit practical help to the German army and support the German authorities? Why was there no intervention or protest to German methods? This thesis will utilise the international relations theory of realism. In addition to realist theory, Hyam’s interaction model on how decisions and policy was formulated between the centre (London) and the periphery (colonies) will be used.

Realist Theory

Realism is the oldest and most dominant theory in international relations. It explains why states behave in the way that they do. It is a theory about great power politics. Realist ideas have been around for many centuries and it was developed into an international relations theory known as classical realism in the 1940s by Morgenthau. It has developed further into neo-realism or structural realism which was formulated by Waltz in 1979. There are differences in the details of the definitions in realism but there are five assumptions about the international system. Mearsheimer’s summary of

the five assumptions that are shared by realists will be used for the purpose of this study.

The first is that the international system is anarchic. “This is because it is a system comprised of independent political units (states) that have no central authority above them”.23 There is no authority higher than the sovereign state in an anarchic world, this means “sovereignty… is the governing authority within a polity that renders a state to be independent and free from external control”.24 The second assumption is that states inherently possess some offensive military capability. As states possess some offensive military capacity, states are therefore potentially dangerous to each other.25 However, some are more threatening than others. The third assumption is that states can never be certain about the intentions of other states. “Specifically, no state can be certain another state will not use its offensive military capability against the first”. Intentions of states can change rapidly, which means a friendly nation can change into an unfriendly one very quickly, which produces an atmosphere of uncertainty.26 The fourth assumption is that the “most basic motive driving states is survival”. In order to survive states need to maintain their sovereignty and the key to this is state power.27 The fifth assumption is that states think “strategically about how to survive in the international system” and that “states are instrumentally rational”.28

These main assumptions provide the back bone of realist thought and have a variety of consequences for a states foreign policy. One of the major reasons why states are reluctant to intervene in genocide is due to sovereignty. The state is sovereign, they choose how to govern their affairs, both internal and external. This has been the case since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. “Until fairly recently, sovereignty was understood to mean that… non-intervention in domestic jurisdiction was sacrosanct; and that sovereign immunity was guaranteed. This implied that within its borders a state rules supreme”.29 In this situation it is not the business of other states to interfere with policies of other states. It is a major obstacle to this day, even

26 Ibid., 10.
27 Ibid., 10.
28 Ibid., 10.
with the United Nations Genocide Convention (UNGC), a fundamental problem is still the primacy of state sovereignty.

“States operate in a “self-help” system” so they should always act according to their own self-interest. Alliances can be formed, however they are only “temporary marriages of convenience”. Implications of this “self-help” system can be seen in international law, as there is no hierarchical authority in an anarchic system, “law can only be enforced through state power. But why would any state choose to expend its precious power on enforcement unless it had direct material interest outcome?”

It is the issue of morality in foreign policy in which realism presents a dark view. As realism is about power politics and statesmanship involves “mitigating and managing, not eliminating, conflict; seeking a less dangerous world, rather than a safe, just, or peaceful one. Ethical considerations must give way to “reasons of state (raison d’état)”. There was however by the time of the uprising in 1904 several pieces of international law which dealt with creating a more ethical approach to warfare, the most noteworthy being the Hague Convention of 1899. This aimed to protect civilians and also combatants during a war.

Morgenthau stated that “the actions of states are determined not by moral principles and legal commitments but by considerations of interest and power”. A moral or ethical foreign policy runs in contradiction to realist theory as intervening against a regime that commits crimes against its own citizens just for humanitarian reasons does not bring any real benefit to the state conducting the intervention. Interventions rarely happen purely for moral and ethical reasons. As was the case with Russia in the nineteenth and early twentieth century intervening in the Ottoman Empire on behalf of oppressed Christians, the real motive was to gain power in the region. Neither does the United Nations guarantee an intervention. In the crisis in Darfur, the Security Council “have used their power to veto to stymie any real efforts to accomplish any such favourable outcomes”, this is because China has petroleum and weapons contracts with Sudan, as does Russia. It is the rational self-interest,

31 Ibid., 11.
34 Ibid, 48.
realpolitik that dictates a states foreign policy. FO priorities are securing the national interest, if the lives of subjugated natives are in danger in another colonisers territory, this would not be on the list of national interests, which engenders indifference. It is therefore not in the interest of the state to intervene purely for ethical or moral reasons, for an intervention to be in the interests of the state they must coincide with the general interest of the state. As Bartrop and Totten conclude “realpolitik continues to drive the decisions and actions of states”.\(^{36}\)

Hyam’s Interaction Model

‘Interaction’ model for a case-study\(^ {37}\)

While realist theory works with states and how they interact, this study also takes into account different actors at different levels within the state. The relationship between London and her colonies is also an essential part of this study. Hyam, a historian of the British Empire, has developed an interaction model which will be used to show how the colonial authorities and London worked with each other. The model has the centre (metropolitan elite) at the top of the model with the periphery (overseas interests) at the bottom. Operating in between these two levels is the interlock, the proconsul (or in this case the Governor or High Commissioner) who communicated between the levels. The two level model allocates economic motives primarily to the periphery level and political or strategic considerations primarily to the elite level.\(^ {38}\)

As the model has the centre on top, which in this case is the FO, as it is responsible for foreign policy, it gives the centre the eminent position, as having the final say on what happens in the periphery. This model demonstrates the structure of how policy was formed between the colonies and London. Hyam asserts that “neither the

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\(^{36}\) Ibid., 19.


\(^{38}\) Ibid., 80.
metropolitan nor the local level of action was in itself unilaterally decisive”. What this model does best is demonstrate the different interests of the two different levels. The centre, the FO, is primarily concerned with geo-political considerations and decisions and what you see in the model is decisions being passed down to the colonies. The local pressures from the periphery which were primarily economic, were being sent up the chain of command.

Key to this flow of information was the role of the interlock, the Governor/High Commissioner, who communicated back and forth the problems of both sides. “It was they [the interlock] who could determine the extent to which imperial policies worked out at the centre, or local pressure erupting overseas, would be implemented or endorsed”. Consequently they played a major role in developing policy between the two levels.

Any FO needs to make sure that foreign relations with key states are not damaged by events taking place in the periphery of their empire and the geo-political interest of the state in the centre were higher than the interests of the periphery in the colonies. The expected interests of the FO, is to ensure Britain’s national interests are upheld, to maintain relations with other powers, especially the great powers and to ensure the survival of the state, which meant maintaining its security. Hyam asserts that the model does give primacy to the metropolitan level. This fits well with realist theory, which places interests of the state as the prime mover in foreign policy.

Expectations

By applying realist theory and Hyam’s model to the British response to the genocide, a number of expectations will be made.

Firstly, it expects that realist theory can sufficiently answer why there was no intervention but co-operation by the British. Realism is well suited to this period of study because at the beginning of the twentieth century the international arena was truly anarchic with states being the only actors, as there was for example no United Nations. State sovereignty is a powerful force in realism and as GSWA was German territory, the FO is expected not be interested in an intervention because Germany

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39 Ibid., 79.
40 Ibid., 79-80.
41 Ibid., 81.
was suppressing a rebellion in her own jurisdiction, the British FO would not regard in any way as their problem how Germany dealt with her own natives.

Realist theory explains that states are chiefly concerned with their security and maintenance of their own survival. An intervention therefore could risk security and as states are sovereign, another state would be reluctant to intervene on that basis alone. The threat posed by the uprising in GSWA was not a direct threat to the British state but rather on its periphery in its colonial possessions in Southern Africa. The German army in GSWA reached 15,000 troops by 1906, which posed a security problem for the British.

Realist theory assumes that states act rationally in their self interest. The choice presented to the FO was how can Britain’s interests be best secured. The FO knew that British South Africa was in a vulnerable position after the Boer War, maintaining its security was paramount. In addition to this the balance of power in Europe was changing with Germany becoming increasingly dominant economically and militarily by 1904, although she was not yet seen as an enemy. It is therefore expected, that it would be in Britain’s interests to co-operate with Germany rather than to intervene.

Secondly, it expects that realist theory can explain why there was indifference to the genocide by the British authorities. Realist explanations of the moral and ethical effect of realism on foreign policy ensures that ethical and moral concerns are subservient to the higher interests of the state and these interests are based on a rational calculation of cost and benefit.

Thirdly, using Hyam’s model it predicts that the pressures from both the periphery and centre will drive the policy of the British authorities and as the centre is the apex of the decision making it is expected that London will provide the ultimate strategy and decisions.

2.3 Methodology

This thesis will be in the tradition of critical source based political history and will use the records of the British Foreign Office to investigate the British response to the genocide in GSWA. In this section, an overview of the sources used will be given and a rationale for the time frame of the study.

The files this study will use are the general correspondence files of the FO, which consist of three types of documents, “original dispatches from British representatives abroad with any enclosures, drafts of outgoing despatches and minutes from officials within the Foreign Office and domestic correspondence with foreign representatives in Britain, with other branches of the British government and with private individuals and bodies”. The general correspondences have been split up into different time periods due to administrative reforms taken over the years. The records that will be used are split into the years 1891-1905 and 1906-1913. The year 1906 saw large scale reform which changed the way in which the FO dealt with its paperwork but also changed the way it archived its documents. It made access to the files easier and more efficient. Before 1906 departmental registers were arranged by country or subject. After 1906 a card index system was introduced to search name, subject and place. In order to analyse the events in German South-West Africa from 1904-07 it is necessary to straddle these two administrative periods.

For the years 1904-05 the necessary files relating to the rebellion are in a collection which has been arranged under ‘Native Rising in German South-West Africa’ which is in the Foreign Office and predecessor: Political and Other Departments: General Correspondence before 1906, Prussia (later German Empire). The later years from 1906-07 are arranged in the ‘Foreign Office: African Department: General Correspondence from 1906’ under Germany, which deals with Germany’s African colonies. The general correspondence contains the most relevant information as it shows the development of foreign policy and what the officials in the FO thought about the events in GSWA. The files are arranged so that every report or despatch has a covering page which explains what the enclosed document is about, the date received and there is a space for officials to make comments on the report or despatch in the minutes section. As the records were not available to the public and it was only in 1958 that the Public Records Act gave clear instructions on public access to the documents, which stated that they could be viewed after fifty years, officials did not have to worry about their words being in the public domain during their time in office.

There are potential issues with the records. When assessing primary sources, such as the FO records, it is essential to undertake an external and internal evaluation of the

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43 The National Archives, Guide Reference: Overseas Information 14, *Foreign and Commonwealth correspondence and records from 1782*. 
records. The external evaluation involves classifying the documents. The documents used in the study are the original records of the FO, which contains the reports and information received from other government departments along with the FO assessment of the information and what action they took. The internal evaluation of the document is a more complicated affair. When assessing a source it is important to assess the documents proximity criterion, “is the source close in time and space to the depicted event”.  

The FO received many reports and despatches from various streams of information, the Colonial Office (CO), War Office (WO) or from its embassy in Berlin. The Governor or High Commissioner would use information from reports to summarise and then propose policy using this information which would then be passed onto the FO. Therefore the views of the Governor or High Commissioner who interpreted the information they received, may have influenced the FO decisions. In the process the original source and information may have become distorted. On many occasions however the original reports were included along with the Governor or High Commissioners comments. Furthermore, the actual reports written by those who witnessed events will have been affected by their agency, “the scope within which an actor can think and act, where structural factors such as, for instance, culture and ideology set up the outer limitations of action, by influencing the actor’s perception of reality”.  

It is important to understand how the information was collected by the source witness. For example, Colonel Trench personally witnessed events however he did obtain information frequently from third parties, which could call into question its reliability and the accuracy of the information. Trench could well have misunderstood what he saw or heard and then relayed inaccurate information. It is important to understand if the “source was intended for a particular audience or aimed at achieving a specific effect may have influenced its content, presentation and wording”. This is clearly a problem with documents coming from different government departments and as is demonstrated by a telegram from High Commissioner Selborne who was convinced the German army intended to invade the Cape Colony, in order to drive that point to London, he almost certainly exaggerated information in order for his  

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45 Ibid., 38.  
46 Ibid., 40-1.
assertion to be taken seriously. Although he did not deliberately attempt to deceive, he could have altered the reliability of the information to London.

There could be distorted information coming from the colonies back to London or inter-departmental rivalry which allowed the information to be inaccurate, in order for one authority to gain an advantage over another. The information the FO received was debated among officials in the minutes. There appears to be a generally open and honest interaction between the officials however their agency could implicate how they viewed the events. Careerism could be an issue as officials in the FO could be seen as merely saying what their superiors want to hear.47

In terms of the proximity criteria, the reports were coming from a time and place close to the events and the FO minutes demonstrate the decision making within the department, these records then are the most suitable and the most accurate documents to use, despite their flaws as Levine concludes about diplomatic records “one can generally assume that the level of veracity in the document, both of information and opinion, is reasonable”.48

The time frame of this study is 1904-07. It will begin with the outbreak of the uprising of the Herero in 1904 which was followed by the Nama uprising and it will end in the spring of 1907 when Germany officially called an end to the war. The decision to end this study when the Germans officially ended the war requires some explanation. There is a disagreement of opinion about when the war actually ended, with the general consensus being that it ended in 1907-08. However some argue it continued long after, even up to 1913. It is clear that the war did not finish with the German proclamation on 31 March 1907 that officially ended the war. Whilst the majority of the fighting was over there was still some pockets of fighting and rebel leaders causing problems. The most famous being Marenga. He was killed in 1907 by the British in a joint Anglo-German operation. Whilst this clearly shows the Anglo-German co-operation, this event has been researched at length and along with the peace agreement with Kooper are events which require a study on their own and so remain out of the scope of this thesis. The aim of this study is to investigate the British reaction to the genocide and its role in the events. The majority of Herero and

48 Ibid., 23.
Nama were killed between 1904-06 and this is where this thesis will focus its investigation.

A note on terminology is also needed. This thesis will use the term Britain and British authorities. This encompasses the Cape Colony and Bechuanaland as they were ultimately ruled over by London. Despite the Cape being self-governing, London could exert considerable influence on the Cape as London had responsibility for its international relations.
3. Empirical Analysis

3.1 Historical Background

Imperial Germany was a relatively late European coloniser and acquired South-West Africa in 1885 during the Scramble for Africa. In the beginning it seemed the most promising of all the German colonies gained in Africa due to the climatic conditions which allowed German settlers to live there. However the increased settlers flowing into GSWA by the end of the nineteenth century created tensions with the native populations. The German authorities had signed protection treaties with the different tribes and an exploitative colonial policy emerged.

There were three principle groups in GSWA, the Ovambo, which were not colonised, the Herero and the Nama. Much of Namibia is desert with certain regions suitable for settling in the centre of the country. These lands were predominately the Herero’s, who were pastoralist people with cattle being their way of life. They were part of the Bantu tribe, the Herero nation was divided into almost 20 different paternal groups.49 Samuel Maherero was the leader of the Herero. The Nama lived in the south of the country and there were 12 Nama bands.50

There had been uprisings in the past in GSWA and in 1903 the Bondelswarts (Nama tribe) rose up in the south. This gave the Herero an opportunity to rebel as the Governor of GSWA, Leutwein, was in the south suppressing the Bondelswarts. The reason for the uprising by the Herero was their maltreatment. There was a dual legal system where white settlers got away with crimes committed against the native population and natives were discriminated.51 In 1897, a cattle disease, rinderpest, decimated the cattle of the Herero who were then forced to sell their land to German settlers. This loss of land coupled with the construction of the Otavi railway through Hereroland52 brought the Herero into an impossible situation. After provocations by German officers on the 12 January 1904, war broke out, nobody “expected it would end in genocide”.53 The Herero won some impressive victories. Governor Leutwein hurried north but the Herero failed to capitalise on their gains. Germany in the meantime sent reinforcements and a new leader, the infamous General von Trotha. He

50 Olusoga and Erichsen, The Kaiser’s Holocaust, 23.
had been given the task of putting down the rebellion at any cost. The Herero had retreated to the Waterberg and were awaiting some sort of negotiations to end the war, as had been done in the past. Trotha had no such plans and encircled the Herero and wanted to “achieve complete military victory”. There was a weak spot in the south-east corner of the encirclement and the Herero fled east into the desert. After the battle of Waterberg the genocide began, the Herero were pursued into the Omaheke desert and sealed off, this was a death sentence in the waterless desert. Trotha did not offer any peace terms and on the 2 October 1904, he issued his infamous extermination order which formalised a policy already underway. By December 1904, Trotha’s policy was deemed to have failed against the Herero and for a variety of reasons Trotha’s extermination order was rescinded and the Herero survivors put into concentration camps.

The Nama who had been unaffected and even had been employed as scouts for the German army during the campaign for the German army had seen the brutal tactics of the Germans and were convinced they would be next. When the order to disarm the natives in the south came the Nama decided to rise up. In October 1904 an issue with a German administrator led to some Nama tribes rising up against the Germans. This caused a further problem to the German authorities as the Nama employed guerrilla warfare. The German army cut off the essential means to life of the Nama, which targeted women and children and thus it was also an extermination war. Part of the strategy to stop the guerrilla warfare was to send the Nama to the concentration camps. Trotha issued a similar order to the Nama but the realisation came that Trotha’s policy was not working and the Trotha was recalled back to Berlin.

A vast network of concentration camps was established which provided forced labour for the German authorities and was also designed to break the resistance of the Nama guerrillas. The majority of the interned were the decimated women and children. This continued the genocide for the Herero and in particular the Nama. The death rates were extremely high and at the infamous Shark Island concentration camp, the Herero and Nama were deliberately killed by neglect through improper shelter, insufficient food and forced labour. On 31 March 1907 the German authorities officially stated the war had ended and in 1908 the concentration camps were closed and the last Nama rebel leaders in the south ended their campaign. A period of

54 Wallace, *The History of Namibia*, 163.
servitude now begun with the Herero and Nama being forced to wear identity badges and formed into organised labour without freedom of movement. Germany had finally “settled” their colony. During the First World War, South Africa invaded the colony for the British and at the Treaty of Versailles, the colony was to be administered by the British under a mandate from the League of Nations which South Africa would do on behalf of Britain.

3.2 An Overview of the Foreign Office, Colonial Office and the British Empire in Southern Africa

In order to assess Britain’s foreign policy towards the uprising in GSWA it is vital to understand how Britain’s foreign policy worked and how the British Empire functioned and communicated. The FO was founded in 1782 and was tasked with developing foreign policy and maintaining relations with foreign countries, it is this department’s records that will be used to investigate British policy towards the genocide in GSWA, as it came under their remit. The FO was the central nerve centre for decision making within the British Empire. As the events in GSWA impacted on relations with Germany the CO sent its communications with the colonies to the FO so it could determine and approve policies in dealing with the complex problems the uprising in GSWA caused the British Empire.

Each government department has a Secretary of State who is head of the ministry and they are also a member of the cabinet, the highest decision making body in the British government. From November 1900 to December 1905, Lord Lansdowne was foreign secretary under a Unionist government. This changed in December 1905 after the fall of the government and the new administration under the Liberals took power with Sir Edward Grey as Secretary of State. “The years under lord Lansdowne were the transitional ones both in terms of policy and of Foreign Office organisation”.\textsuperscript{56} Lansdowne began the shift in Britain’s foreign policy and Grey continued it. Britain’s foreign policy change between 1900-07 was due largely to external developments, “primarily the weakening of Russian power after 1905 and the emergence of a more restless Germany”.\textsuperscript{57} This created a shift in the balance of power in Europe. Britain


was forced out of isolation to seek new partners. Whilst Britain engaged in agreements with France and Russia she by no means wanted to antagonise Germany and “Lansdowne, for his part remained anxious to find ways of co-operating with her”.

The FO’s role as a government bureaucracy was to “prepare political decisions”. Otte has summarised its role, “the chief function of this organism was the gathering, storing, analysing and retrieving of policy-relevant information so as to ensure informed decision-making”. Under Lansdowne reform was being prepared and initiated. “The new scheme was put into operation on 1 January 1906. It was more than a merely administrative revolution; it transformed the policy-making process”. The way information was archived was changed to make it more efficient and “after 1906, men who had been clerks began acting as true advisors”. The permanent under-secretary was the key figure in the Foreign Office. They did the day to day running of the department. This can be seen especially in the involvement of Charles Harding who assumed that role from 1906. Harding pushed through the reform of the FO and thought of the FO as a “policy-making bureaucracy”. The FO was divided into four departments and the one which concerns this study is the Africa Department. Eric Barrington is a key figure here as he was the principle private secretary to Lansdowne and in 1905 he became the Assistant Under-Secretary for Africa and he became a major contributor to the discussions surrounding GSWA.

The FO’s information came from a variety of sources and for it to work effectively it needed to work with a variety of government departments. Due to the military nature of the events in GSWA the WO communicated regularly with the FO especially through the military attaché with the German forces in GSWA and in regards to legal issues, the Law Office (LO) was communicated with. However the one government department with which the FO worked especially close with was the CO. As GSWA southern border was shared with Cape Colony and its western border with Bechuanaland these two British territories supplied the majority of the information on the events in GSWA. They reported this to the CO who then passed on

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58 Ibid., 277.
59 Ibid., 3.
60 Ibid., 5.
61 Steiner, “The Last Years of the Old Foreign Office,” 59.
62 Ibid., 63.
63 Ibid., 84.
relevant information to the FO. The main source was the telegraphs coming from the colonies which Hyam calls the “nerves of empire”.64

The primary source of information flowing into the FO was the despatches. Despatches that arrived at the FO passed through a hierarchy of hands, issues were generally dealt with by lower officials but if it was important or was unfinished it proceeded further up the chain with only the most important and controversial issues going to the “permanent-under secretary and finally to Sir Edward Grey”.65 In the Foreign Secretary’s dispatch boxes each telegram was attached with a sheet giving the views of the subordinate officials. Once the Foreign Secretary initialed his own or any other minute, “the office is authorized to carry it out without any further reference to him”.66 The events in GSWA certainly captured the attention of the FO. All of the most senior officials within the FO made comments in the minutes of the despatches, including Lord Lansdowne and later Sir Edward Grey. As Germany was a major power, relations with her were paramount.

The FO had the final say on foreign policy and Hyam writes “Imperial policy was mainly subsumed under foreign policy”,67 which shows the primacy of foreign policy over colonial policy. As is expected from Hyam’s model there will be an interaction between the colonies and London and with the events in GSWA, impacting greatly on relations with Germany, it is expected that the FO will play a leading role in this. The FO had their interests of maintaining relations with foreign powers, especially key powers such as Germany and to ensure that the national interest was served. This task of the FO does not change when the genocide of 1904-07 takes place. It is expected according to the theoretical model that the FO will act rationally to secure the national interests of Britain.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies from October 1903 to December 1905 was Alfred Lyttelton. In December 1905 with a change in government, The Earl of Elgin became Colonial Secretary and remained until April 1908. They were responsible for relations with the colonies and administering them. However, the British Empire was not a monolithic organisation closely governed from London and it was the “men on

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64 Hyam, *Understanding the British Empire*, 19.
65 Steiner, “The Last Years of the Old Foreign Office,” 88.
66 Ibid., 88.
67 Hyam, *Understanding the British Empire*, 11.
the spot” 68 such as the Governors and High Commissioners that played a large role in determining policy with the support of the CO.

The two British territories that were affected by the events in GSWA were very different. Bechuanaland was claimed by the British in 1885. It was administered directly by Britain through the High Commissioner and was a protectorate. Mafeking was its capital and it was more of a buffer territory and was not developed as the Cape Colony was. Until 1905 the High Commissioner for South Africa was Viscount Milner, who was succeeded by The Earl of Selborne. These figures were responsible for British South Africa and were London’s representatives in the colonies.

Britain acquired the Cape Colony in 1806 which had first been colonised by the Dutch in the seventeenth century and had developed into an important trading post. Britain also possessed Walfish Bay, a harbour in GSWA. The British and Boers or Afrikaners did not mix well and in the 1840s the Boers moved away from the Cape Colony and established the Orange Free State and the South African Republic which were both Afrikaner republics. The tensions culminated in the Boer War 1899-1902. This was a gruelling guerrilla war which stretched the British Empire to its limits and ended with Britain securing its domination of the region. The Cape Colony had responsible government and therefore had its own parliament and ruled its own domestic affairs. The Prime Minister of the Cape during the period of the genocide was Jameson and the Governor was Hely-Hutchinson. It is the Cape’s policy and its relations with London which are critical to this study.

3.3 British Knowledge of the Genocidal Events in German South-West Africa

To understand Britain’s response to the events in GSWA in 1904-07, it is essential to know how much the British authorities knew of the events taking place there. The FO was a nerve centre of information flowing from all over the British Empire. Its close links with the CO and WO ensured the FO received all the latest information on events in GSWA which would allow them to shape policy and these records reveal how much the FO knew about the genocide. This chapter will demonstrate that the British authorities had accurate information and knew of every stage of the genocide.

68 Ibid., 21.
The genocide happened in phases against the Herero and Nama which affected them both at different times. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section details the military operations against the Herero and the sealing off of the desert, the second section deals with the war in the south against the Nama and the final section details the knowledge of the concentration camps and forced labour. The FO relied on several different streams of information to assess what was happening in GSWA. There were four principle streams of information; the WO papers which mainly consisted of the reports by the military attaché attached to the German forces in GSWA, Colonel Trench and Major Wade, despatches from the Admiralty, despatches from the CO which consist of despatches from a variety of sources in Walfish Bay, Cape Colony and Bechuanaland and the final source of information came from the FO’s embassy in Berlin.

First Phase of the Genocide Against the Herero

The first despatch from the Cape concerning the Herero rebellion was sent on the 27 January 1904 from the Governor of the Cape Colony who sent the previous days report from the Cape Times detailing the outbreak of the Herero uprising. The anger of the Germans in GSWA and the first signs that this would be a brutal suppression of the uprising was captured in a report from John Cleverly, the Resident Magistrate of Walfish Bay who wrote on the 20 January 1904 that “from the opinions expressed by the Germans themselves little short of the extermination of the tribes in the protectorate will result”. Cleverly later reported in May 1904 that “I have heard, myself, Germans who were in action describing boastfully how their troopers bayoneted Herero women”. From the beginning of the war, local British officials saw the killing of women, who had not been fighting and were shocked, however this was not breaking the normal conduct of warfare. This was noted in the Hostages Trial at Nuremberg in 1948 against German commanders who had conducted operations in the Balkans campaign during the Second World War, where captured guerrilla fighters were killed as reprisals. The verdict was that “no criminal responsibility

69 TNA: FO 64/1645, FO Minutes, Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary, Alfred Lyttelton, 27 January 1904.
70 TNA: FO 64/1645, Resident Magistrate Walfish Bay, John Cleverly to the Secretary to the Native Affairs Department Cape Town, 20 January 1904.
71 TNA: FO 64/1645, Resident Magistrate Walfish Bay, John Cleverly to the Secretary to the Native Affairs Department, Cape Town, 30 May 1904.
attaches to the defendant [Field Marshal] List because of the execution of captured partisans”, this was due to the United States and British military code permitting reprisals and it was thus acceptable.72 What this demonstrates is that killing civilians does not equal genocide and at this stage it was not genocide.

In June 1905 the General Staff at the WO sent a memorandum on the military situation in GSWA, which provided a summary of the war thus far. It detailed Trotha’s concentric movement of several columns upon Waterberg which “culminated in an action on the 11th and 12th August but although the Germans were to some extent successful they failed to crush the enemy as they had hoped to be able to do and the rebels in spite of severe losses managed to slip away principally in a south-easterly direction. The operations now resolved themselves into purely guerrilla warfare…The majority of the Herero bands were however gradually driven off to the eastward”.73

The intention of Trotha’s attack on the Waterberg and what was expected of him is detailed in a newspaper report forwarded by the ambassador at the British embassy in Berlin in August 1904 which stated that “attacks have been made on von Trotha for having failed to annihilate the enemy at Waterberg”.74 The use of the term annihilation has been subject to dispute, with some scholars arguing it meant to just militarily destroy the military destruction of the Herero75 and others arguing it meant a physical annihilation of the Herero people. What is clear is that after the “‘battle’ at the Waterberg, the German army started to implement their genocidal programme in earnest”.76

The infamous extermination order, known as Trotha’s proclamation to the Herero of October 1904, was enclosed in one of Trench’s reports in 1905, however no mention is made of it in the FO minutes.77 As Zimmerer asserts “this order did not initiate genocide, the practice was already well under way but it lent further

73 TNA: FO 367/8, Memorandum on the Military Situation in German South West Africa, General Staff, War Office, 28 June 1905.
74 TNA: FO 64/1645, H.M. Ambassador British Embassy, Berlin, Sir. Frank Lascelles to Foreign Secretary, Lord Lansdowne, 29 August 1904, extract from an article in ‘National-Zeitung’.
75 Poewe, The Namibian Herero, 60.
77 TNA: FO 64/1647, Minutes and Report from Colonel F. Trench to The Secretary to the War Office, 26 September 1905.
legitimacy to it”. Trotha’s policy was to cordon off the desert into which the Herero had fled after the battle of Waterberg. After some months difficulties remained and after pressure from Berlin, as the military attaché in the Berlin embassy stated “the General [Trotha] has decided to give up the plan of ringing the Omaheke Desert (into which the greater portion of the Hereros had been driven)”. This report shows that Trotha’s policy of pushing the Herero into the desert and keeping them there was known to the British authorities. Trench’s note that the “Omaheke desert [was] to be tenanted only by the bones of the Hereros who died of thirst in their flight eastwards after the Waterberg”, reveals that the British authorities knew the ringing off the desert was a death sentence. Trotha was ordered by Berlin to rescind the proclamation in December 1904 when it became clear that Trotha’s policy was not working and he was to take the Herero as prisoner. However, this was after tens of thousands of Herero deaths, making it genocide as the intent from Trotha is clear. The process of rounding up the survivors from the desert was now undertaken.

The new Governor of GSWA, von Lindequist, in December 1905 delivered a new proclamation to the Herero to get them to surrender and assured them they would be looked after. Trench was under no illusions of what Lindequist’s new policy meant. The German authorities “intended to resume punitive expeditions when some little time has elapsed since the proclamation [by Lindequist] to the Hereros”. In February 1906 Trench reported that there was a “scarcity of coloured labour [which] was partly due to a fear on the part of the Governor that if the Hereros who had surrendered… were at once shipped off to work… in the cold sea climate at Lüderitzbucht… no further surrenders would take place… it would inconvenience the departments, firms etc. that had the use of prisoners… finally… given orders that 800 Hereros are to be sent to Lüderitzbucht every month commencing with February”. Trench’s observation shows the real intention of offering the Herero’s a chance to surrender, the German authorities needed them to work for them and their suffering and

81 TNA: FO 367/8, Report by Colonel F. Trench to The Chief Staff Officer, Cape Colony District to War Office, 16 December 1905.
82 TNA: FO 367/8, Report from Colonel F. Trench to the Secretary at the War Office, 24 February 1906.
extermination would now continue in the concentration camp system which is dealt with in the third section.

**Conduct of Military Operations in the South Against the Nama**

The Nama realised they were also at risk of suffering the same fate as the Herero and revolted in October 1904, which was reported from the Berlin embassy that “Hendrik Witbois, chieftain of the Witbois tribe [the leading Nama tribe], has solemnly declared war against the Imperial troops”. The war against the Nama was much closer to the British authorities in South Africa and thus was of more interest to the British authorities.

Some of the fighting took place near the Cape/GSWA border and the Cape Mounted Police (CMP) witnessed not only fighting but the atrocities that the Germans committed and passed on this information to the Cape government. It is evident that many in the CMP were shocked by the Germans behaviour. They remark especially on the shooting of women and children. Colonel Neylan (CMP) in an interview in June 1905 stated, “the Germans have shot a great many women”. Major Berrange CMP, reported in November 1905 that, “Marenga [Nama rebel leader] states… the Germans are shooting women and children on sight”. It was not just the non-combatant Nama who experienced harsh treatment by the German army. In May 1905 Private Brabant-Smith of the CMP witnessed a fight between the Nama and Germans. The CMP found a wounded Nama boy, Lance-Corporal Barrell (CMP) asked Captain Besh (German Officer) not to kill the Nama boy, however the CMP later found him bayoneted through the stomach. Later when they buried the Nama dead they found several had been bayoneted. “Three Hottentots [Nama] who attempted to run away were… riddled with explosive bullets from a few feet distant… one prisoner was taken by the Germans and was shot the next day. I consider the treatment of the Hottentots by the Germans was most inhumane”.

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83 TNA: FO 64/1645, H.M. Ambassador British Embassy, Berlin, Sir. Frank Lascelles to Foreign Secretary, Lord Lansdowne, 15 October 1904.
84 TNA: FO 64/1646, Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary, Alfred Lyttleton, 21 June 1905, enclosed an interview with Colonel Neylan CMP, 19 June 1905.
85 TNA: FO 64/1647, Monthly Report from Major C. Berrange to Lieutenant Colonel Neylan, 3 November 1905.
86 Hottentot was a derogatory term used in the FO records for the Nama.
87 TNA: FO 367/12, Statement from Private S. Brabant-Smith CMP, 19 May 1906.
disregard for Nama lives illustrates how the war against the Nama was as destructive as the Herero campaign.

The Nama were comprised of different tribes and the German treatment of the various tribes differed from one tribe to the next. Whitaker of the CMP explained in a report that surrender conditions “only apply to Bondelzwaarts under Marenga. Witbooi and his followers are if possible to be exterminated, no chance of surrender is to be given to them”.

The usage of the word extermination does mean just that.

The war against the Nama was very different to the Herero campaign. The Herero would fight in a pitch battle whereas the Nama used guerrilla fighting. Trench reported in October 1905 about Trotha’s changing tactics, realising the concentric attacks were not good for guerrilla warfare: “the country is being divided into Districts – each under a field officer… a proportion of each garrison – generally about a third – is kept ready to march at an hour’s notice and to each post is allotted a certain area proportionate to its size with which it is expected to become perfectly acquainted”.

This was a similar strategy employed against the Boers by the British, by dividing up South Africa with the block house system.

Trotha issued a proclamation to the Nama in April 1905 which was forwarded by the Cape Governor to London. The proclamation “shared many of the features of the earlier decree against the Herero, without going quite as far. The general offered food and work… to those who gave themselves up, but also threatened the Nama with the fate of the Herero”. Despite the proclamation not outlining Trotha’s intent as directly as the Herero proclamation, the way the war against the Nama was fought highlighted its genocidal nature as Zimmerer asserts, “the Germans deliberately aimed at cutting the enemy [Nama] off from the essential means of life, hereby deliberately targeting women and children, too. In so doing this became a war of extermination as well”. Whilst there was no ringing of the desert as was done to the Herero, the

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88 TNA: FO 64/1646, J. Whitaker, CMP to Colonel Neylan, CMP, 18 May 1905.
89 TNA: FO 64/1647, Report from Colonel F. Trench to The Chief Staff Officer, Cape Colony District, Cape Town to War Office, 10 October 1905.
90 TNA: FO 64/1646, Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary, Alfred Lyttelton, 19 May 1905.
91 Wallace, The History of Namibia, 169.
Germans did try to guard the waterholes in the south which Trench witnessed and reported the Germans were holding all the waterholes in the area of East Namaland.\textsuperscript{93}

The Nama when caught were sent straight to the concentration camps to serve as labour but also served as “holding camps for civilians who had been forcibly moved out of the battle zone in order to prevent them supporting the guerrilla fighters”.\textsuperscript{94} As with the Herero, the German authorities tried to lure the Nama to give themselves up under the pretence that they would be taken care of, which of course did not happen. This can been seen in Trench’s note that Samuel Isaak’s people [Nama tribe] were allowed “their own cattle… freedom does not mean complete freedom of movement but compulsory settlement, military control and observation, work without wage and only for food and freedom… a certain difference in the way of handling them compared to prisoners of war in order to encourage further surrenders”.\textsuperscript{95} However this was not to be the case. In December 1905, Colonel Trench quite aptly stated “I think that the general hope is that they [the Nama] will soon die out”.\textsuperscript{96} This is what the intention was in the concentration camps.

\textbf{Concentration Camps and Forced Labour}

After the genocide was committed by military means it was continued in a system of concentration camps and through forced labour by the inmates. Detailed reports reached London about these concentration camps, which describe graphically what fate awaited the Herero and Nama as they entered the concentration camps. The concentration camps were most deadly for the Nama who had particularly high death rates. There has been a debate about the nature of the camps, with Erichsen labelling Shark Island for instance as a death camp.\textsuperscript{97} This is not the case as forced labour was being conducted. They were not death camps in that their sole purpose and activity was extermination. Thus, although these camps cannot be classified as death camps, a series of measures were put in place by the German army that ensured a state of deliberate neglect and probable death for inmates.

\textsuperscript{93} TNA: FO 367/8, Report by Colonel F. Trench to The Chief Staff Officer, Cape Colony District to War Office, 7 November 1905.
\textsuperscript{94} Zimmerer, “Colonial Genocide,” 328.
\textsuperscript{95} TNA: FO 367/8, Report by Colonel F. Trench to The Chief Staff Officer, Cape Colony District to War Office, 16 December 1905.
\textsuperscript{96} TNA: FO 367/43/11, Military Attaché British Embassy, Berlin, Colonel F. Trench to H.M Ambassador British Embassy, Berlin, 22 April 1907.
\textsuperscript{97} Olusoga and Erichsen, \textit{The Kaiser’s Holocaust}, 10-11.
The most infamous camp was Shark Island off the coast of Lüderitz where “inmates were deliberately killed through neglect”\(^98\) and stories of German brutality, especially against the women shocked the men who saw it. An Inspector of the CMP, Berrange reported in October 1905:

The whole system in GSWA is rotten… two reliable men informed me that… in June last at Kubeck some Hottentots were captured, amongst them being a woman who was “enceinte” [pregnant]. She was forced to march at the head of the company. The following day the child was born, nevertheless she was forced to continue the march until she died. The prisoners men and women, are taken from the island to the docks to off-load the boats. They are in a shocking condition, especially the women.\(^99\)

Both Trench and Wade noted the harsh conditions at Shark Island. Trench’s report from November 1905, is particularly harrowing. In November 1905 he reported that at Shark Island:

50 children, 150 women, 150 men, they look very feeble and the camp out along a lot of rocks is very wretched and filthy. There seems to be absolutely no attempt at sanitation and, though it is cold enough for officers to wear their cloaks on their way to mess of an evening, the prisoners seem to have no clothing save a blanket or so, and no shelter save what they can rig up for themselves with sacks etc. The island is much exposed to the cold s.s.w wind – which always seems to blow here and dysentery and pneumonia seem prevalent as before. Dante might have a written a notice for the gate.\(^100\)

This detailed account demonstrates the neglect the prisoners received. It was not just the concentration camps in Lüderitz that Trench and Wade witnessed. In a report from November 1905, Trench visited Keetmanshoop, where the native settlement was made into a camp surrounded by barbed wire, 100 men in there with 200 women and

\(^99\) TNA: FO 64/1647, Major C. Berrange CMP to Lieutenant Colonel Neylan CMP, 21 October 1905.
\(^100\) TNA: FO 367/8, Report by Colonel F. Trench to The Chief Staff Officer, Cape Colony District to War Office, 24 November 1905.
Enclosed in a report from Trench are the German army ration scales, it is evident that the Prisoner of War rations that are located at the bottom of the ration scale was extremely limited. The meat ration for soldiers is 500 grams daily whilst the POWs received 30 grams of bacon or fat. They got second class rice 750 grams whilst the soldiers got 1500 grams of potato. The soldiers were almost spoilt with the extent of their rations.

Both Colonel Trench and Major Wade visited Lüderitz and spoke with German officers about death rates at the camps. After a conversation with the Chief Staff Officer in October 1905 Trench was told that at Lüderitzbrucht and Swakopmund there were “7000 Hereros, Hottentots etc. 500 die every month on an average”. “The sea air and the food they get do not agree with them!”.

In a February 1907 report, Major Wade who made a similar visit, was informed of the death rate for Lüderitzbrucht, that “50 or 60 die a week and has been up to 70”. With camp records mostly being destroyed or lost, it is difficult to be certain what the actual death rate was but Erichsen’s comprehensive study analysing the available data offers a relatively accurate idea of the death rates. He stated that the death rate for prisoners from mid September till end of December 1906 was 279.4. With a death rate of 60 a week it would be 240 a month and with 70 a week it would be 280, this shows that Wade’s death rate figures for his period are very accurate. The death rate figures that Trench and Wade reported back were large and it also showed that the German military had no problem with revealing the high death rate. Erichsen used a German missionary’s figures on the death rate who had been inside Shark Island and estimated the death rate to be around 50 a week, again this corroborates the figures that were given to Trench and Wade.

Trench surmises that “the Hottentots are permitted to die out, but the Herero and Damaras, who are good labourers and herdsmen, are to be retained, in a semi-servile

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101 TNA: FO 367/8, Report by Colonel F. Trench to The Chief Staff Officer, Cape Colony District to War Office, 7 November 1905.
102 TNA: FO 64/1646, Report from Colonel F. Trench to The Secretary to the War Office, 26 June 1905.
103 TNA: FO 64/1647, Report from Colonel F. Trench to The Chief Staff Officer, Cape Colony District, Cape Town to War Office, 3 October 1905.
104 TNA: FO 367/41/87, Report from Major Wade to The Colonel on the General Staff, Cape Colony, 24 February 1907.
105 Olusoga and Erichsen, The Kaiser’s Holocaust, 162.
107 Olusoga and Erichsen, The Kaiser’s Holocaust, 214.
state as farm labourers”. Von Lindequist realised that they had a shortage of labour and used the Herero mainly for this purpose but it was the Nama who felt the full extermination force of the concentration camp. Wade reported that “Cornelius the Chief of Bethany tribe has died of scurvy [at Shark Island]…prisoners there… dying like flies”. Trench also wrote it is “not easy to avoid the impression that the extinction of the tribe would be welcomed by the authorities”. He was writing about the Witbooi’s fate, who had been recently transported to the concentration camps. Wade also corroborated Trench’s view when he concluded in August 1906 that the Herero and Nama had been “exterminated”. It is clear that the impression that the two British officers got from visiting Lüderitz was that the extermination of the Nama was desired and they used the word extermination in a sense which meant the physical destruction of the Herero and Nama.

The Herero and Nama prisoners were forced to work and many were worked to death. They were forced to build piers at Lüderitz and to unload cargo from the supply ships. Trench was informed that 2000 Herero prisoners worked on railway construction and as Olusoga and Erichsen noted, the construction of railway, was the “engine driving the whole concentration-camp system”. They also provided labour to many private firms and individual German settlers. The horrific forced labour was witnessed not only by Trench and Wade but by James Tolibadi, a Cape native who had worked for the Germans and provided an affidavit to the Assistant Resident Magistrate of Uitvulgt about the treatment of the natives in GSWA stated:

> During my stay in that country I could not help noticing the bad treatment meted out to the women prisoners by the German soldiers and conductors...these unfortunate women are daily compelled to carry heavy iron for construction work, also big sacks of compressed fodder. I have noticed cases where women

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109 TNA: FO 367/41/88, Report from Major Wade to The Colonel on the General Staff, Cape Colony, 24 February 1907.
111 TNA: FO 367/8, Report from Major Wade to The Colonel on the General Staff, Cape Colony, 25 August 1906.
112 TNA: FO 64/1647, Major C. Berrange to Lieutenant Colonel Nolan-Neylan, 21 October 1905.
113 TNA: FO 64/1646, Report from Colonel F. Trench to The Secretary to the War Office, 12 July 1905.
have fallen under the load and have been made to go on by thrashing and kicked by the soldiers and conductors. The rations supplied to the women are insufficient, and they are always hungry.\textsuperscript{115}

These examples show the graphic reports that were being sent from those on the ground in GSWA and passed that information back to the British authorities as they deemed it important for them to know about these atrocities. Consequently, the horrific experience suffered by the Herero and Nama in the concentration camps and enduring forced labour was not only well known by the British authorities but was witnessed and well documented.

**Summary**

Throughout 1904-07 the British authorities received many reports on the horrific treatment of the Herero and Nama. Thousands of reports were sent to the FO from the colonial authorities. Only twice in all these years did a FO official comment on the reports in the minutes. “The German treatment of their prisoners is far from humane and one would imagine this to be a bad policy”, remarked a FO official to the January 1907 Wade report.\textsuperscript{116} Charles Harding a senior FO official noted “the extermination of the prisoners by death from scurvy is a horrible measure to contemplate, considering that their liberty at the close of the rebellion was promised to them”.\textsuperscript{117} Whilst those who witnessed the atrocities such as the CMP officers and even Trench and Wade were shocked by the treatment of the Herero and Nama, officials in London were clearly indifferent to the suffering, which is evident by the lack of comment and their inaction. Subsequently, the FO’s inaction even in the face of Trench and Wade’s concerns, is in line with the theoretical model as moral and ethical considerations are rarely involved in foreign politics. The suffering of the Herero and Nama was simply not an issue for the FO and hence their indifference, they had other priorities.

This chapter has shown that the information flowing in to the FO about the war in GSWA was not only comprehensive but also accurate, even down to the death rates at the concentration camps. This chapter has shown that every stage of the genocide was known about by the British government in London. In particular the reports by Trench

\textsuperscript{115} TNA: FO 367/12, Sworn Affidavit of James Tolibadi, 11 August 1906.
\textsuperscript{116} TNA: FO 367/41/50, FO Minutes to Major Wade Report, 15 February 1907.
\textsuperscript{117} TNA: FO 367/41/80, FO Minutes to Major Wade Report, 28 March 1907.
and Wade are instrumental in knowing precise details and attitudes of the German authorities in GSWA. In March 1907, Wade reports that “about 80,000 Hereros and Hottentots out of about 100,000” had been killed by the Germans.\footnote{118 TNA: FO 367/41/92, Report from Major Wade to The Colonel on the General Staff, Cape Colony, 10 March 1907.} Drechsler states that 75,000 Herero and Nama had died.\footnote{119 Drechsler, “Let Us Die Fighting” 214.} The British authorities therefore knew what was taking place in GSWA.

### 3.4 The Direct Impact of the Herero and Nama Uprisings on the British Colonies of South Africa

The effects of the war in GSWA were felt throughout the whole of Southern Africa. The border regions between GSWA and the Cape Colony and Bechuanaland became a flashpoint and created various problems for the British authorities. This chapter will examine the various impacts the war in GSWA had on British South Africa. The majority of these problems were most acute and were of greater relevance to the Cape Colony because it was in an economic position to provide supplies for the Germans and majority of the border issues emanated from the Orange River frontier between the Cape and GSWA and it is the effects of the war on the Cape colony which caused the largest amount of problems. Bechuanaland as a protectorate was sparsely populated and could offer little assistance to the Germans, therefore most of this chapter will deal with the Cape Colony. The first section will deal with the official policy of British South Africa towards the war. This is followed by details of complaints that the Germans held against the British authorities. The pressure for supplies is discussed and the problems from refugees coming from GSWA are detailed. The next sections will deal with the security issues arising from the conflict, the protection of the border regions, recruitment of the Boers and border violations by the German army. The final section explores the tensions created between London and the Cape Colony due to the differing policy objectives. This chapter will demonstrate that the impact on the British colonies in South Africa was great and created complex problems for the British authorities to solve.
Official Policy of the British Authorities Towards the War in GSWA

The first issue the British authorities had to determine was what stance to take against the uprising. Were they going to be on the German side or support the Herero and Nama making a stand against their oppressors? Officially, the colonial territories of South Africa chose the third policy of official neutrality, thereby remaining impartial.

The reasons why the South African colonies adopted the official policy of neutrality is highlighted in a telegram from the Governor of the Cape in February 1905 which stated that:

Cape ministers have been anxious to avoid:
(i) Irritating the natives in GSWA;
(ii) Alienating our own natives on this side of the border;
(iii) Unduly hampering the German authorities;
(iv) Unnecessary expenses in guarding the frontier whilst the German Consul General has naturally been doing all he can to use the Cape Colony as a base of operations against the natives in South Damaraland – the very thing which Ministers consider ought not to be allowed.¹²⁰

This seemed an appropriate policy and was designed to keep the British colonies out of the conflict and minimise its effects on British territory. Dedering uses the term “neutrality for our own safety” which was formulated by Jameson,¹²¹ which summed up the Cape’s position well.

German Complaints Against the British Colonies

From the outbreak of the rebellion tensions between the British colonies in South Africa and the German authorities emerged. The German authorities wrote continuous representations to the FO in London about the attitude of British South Africa, in particular the Cape Colony. They became more intense as the German army struggled to defeat the Herero and later the Nama where a protracted guerrilla war was carried out against the Germans.

The German authorities in the beginning of the uprising blamed Britain for the rebellion. The commander of H.M.S. Partridge, a ship stationed in Walifish Bay

¹²⁰ TNA: FO 64/1646, Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary Alfred Lyttelton, 25 February 1905.
¹²¹ Dedering, “War and Mobility,” 280.
remarked as early as February 1904, that the “German authorities… put the rising down to the British”122 and in September 1904, Maherero wrote to the British tribal leader, stating the Germans fought with him because “I lent the English some men to work at Johannesburg”.123 Maherero acknowledges that the Germans felt the British were the source of the problem.

A major source of complaint by the German government and press was that the British colonies were helping the Herero and Nama. The Germans accused the British of helping the Herero and Nama by providing them with shelter in their territory, which allowed them to refresh themselves. The Germans also accused the British of supplying the natives with arms and ammunition. Newspaper articles from German newspapers were sent from the British embassy in Berlin back to London. A typical example is an article from June 1905 in the Nationalzeitung which wrote that the British were “favouring the rebels and allowing them to return to German territory with their arms after a period of repose”.124 Throughout 1904-07 the German government made representations to London about alleged British support to the Herero and Nama. Berlin was being told by the authorities in GSWA that they were being hindered by the British authorities and even Trotha complained the Nama were getting their rifles and ammunition from British territory.125 The FO constantly denied this was the case. An incident in August 1906 reveals that the British even suspected the Germans were trying to frame them, when ammunition being sold to the natives was the same type used by the Germans. Since the British were tipped off by the German Consul, the Cape authorities concluded that it was either “stolen from German forces or introduced by the Germans for some purpose of their own”.126 According to realist theory, this sense of suspicion is an outcome of an anarchic state order. As Mearsheimer explains “states in the international system fear each other. They regard each other with suspicion, and they worry that war might be in the

122 TNA: FO 64/1645, Extract from “Partridge’s” Letter of Proceedings No:- 12 of the 17 February 1904.
123 TNA: FO 64/1646, High Commissioner, Viscount Milner to Colonial Secretary, Alfred Lyttelton, 4 March 1905.
124 TNA: FO 64/1646, Whitehead, British Embassy, Berlin to Foreign Secretary Lord Lansdowne, 30 June 1905, extract from the Nationalzeitung.
125 TNA: FO 64/1646, Dr. von Jacobs, Acting Consul General for Germany to High Commissioner, Earl of Selborne, 26 May 1905.
126 TNA: FO 367/8, A. Cameron, Government House, Cape Town to Colonel Crewe, 1 August 1906.
offing… there is little room for trust among states”.\textsuperscript{127} It is little wonder that Germany feared Britain’s position as British support was crucial to bring the uprising to an end.

The British authorities actively took measures to prevent arms and supplies from getting to the rebels. The Cape Prime Minister, Jameson, wrote that the Cape was not going to comment on German attacks on the Cape, stating that they are using every “endeavour possible to guard against supplies of any description whatsoever reaching the rebels though Cape Colonial territory”.\textsuperscript{128} However it was a difficult task and it was noted that “a good deal of illicit trade… has taken place” which had now been dealt with a CMP officer reported.\textsuperscript{129} Despite these assurances Germany still complained and remained suspicious about Britain’s position.

The Germans believed that Britain should not remain neutral to the uprising and should join the Germans using a racial argument that it was a race war. The British military attaché in Berlin commented that “public opinion in Germany here lays stress on the principle of white races standing by one another”.\textsuperscript{130} For the Germans, Britain taking a neutral stance amounted to supporting the natives rebelling against German rule.

**Pressure for Supplies**

Bechuanaland as a protectorate had a limited economy and was sparsely populated by settlers, the Cape Colony was different. It was located by the sea and was one of the key trading posts of the British Empire. It also administered Walfish Bay, the only useful port in GSWA. The Cape Colony was pressurised by the Germans for supplies as GSWA had limited supplies due to lack of railways and poor sea ports. Supplies reached GSWA from Walfish Bay and other ports in GSWA by ship and over the Orange River on the drifts which were located on the border.

Due to the official policy of neutrality, supplies permitted to go to GSWA from the Cape were supposed to be restricted to the “necessaries of life to an amount not exceeding fifty tons monthly over the drifts on the northern border especially for the use of civil inhabitants, on permits which were obtainable through the Department of

\textsuperscript{127} Mearsheimer, “The False Promise,” 11.
\textsuperscript{128} TNA: FO 64/1647, T. Smartt, Prime Minister’s Office, Cape Town to Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson, 23 October 1905.
\textsuperscript{129} TNA: FO 367/42/44, Lieutenant Colonel Commissioner Commanding CMP, Macleod Robinson to The Under Secretary, Defence and Police Branch, Cape Town, 1 December 1906.
\textsuperscript{130} TNA: FO 64/1645, Military Attaché, British Embassy Berlin, Gleichen to H.M Ambassador British Embassy, Berlin, Sir Frank Lascelles, 11 November 1904.
the Colonial Secretary”. These rules were relaxed in April 1905, due to the “progress that has been made in suppressing the rebellion in German territory, and the consequent removal of hostilities from the country immediately adjacent to the colonial border”.

British companies trading in GSWA pressured the British authorities to be allowed an increase in tonnage permitted to cross the border into GSWA because of the restrictions. In February 1905, a CMP report stated the “South African Territories Company is very anxious to push through a large quantity now”. The German authorities were constantly writing to the Cape to allow for more supplies to be let through. There were numerous complaints by both private companies and the German authorities about the closure of drifts which did happen from time to time but it was usually only for a small amount of time. For example on 1 January 1905, the Germans complained that the drifts were closed, the Cape responded stating they were open. The Cape always denied it was done on purpose and stated they were open or had been closed due to a misunderstanding.

It was not just the Germans who were asking for supplies. Due to the officially declared British neutrality, the Herero and Nama asked the British for the same civilian supplies as the Germans received. In July 1904, the Herero Chief Counsellor to Maherero met with Cleverly, resident magistrate of Walfish bay, begging for guns and ammunition, Cleverly stated this was not possible. The official policy towards natives was that supplies were not permitted to them.

Refugees
The most physical effect of the war in GSWA was the Herero and Nama refugees fleeing the German atrocities into British territory. The refugees were permitted to stay in the British colonies. As the Prime Minister of the Cape, Jameson stated, “native people who have been in rebellion against the German government have in

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131 TNA: FO 64/1646, T. Smartt, Prime Minister’s Office, Cape Town to Officer Administering the Government, 22 February 1905.
132 TNA: FO 64/1646, Cape Prime Minister, Leander Jameson to Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson, 11 April 1905.
133 TNA: FO 64/1646, Colonel Neylan CMP to Commissioner CMP, 11 February 1905.
134 TNA: FO 64/1646, Acting German Consul-General, Cape Town to Cape Government, 13 January 1905. Responded to by TNA: FO 64/1646, E. Brook, Government House, Cape Town, 20 January 1905.
some instances claimed asylum on the grounds that they are political refugees and to these, and those others who have been driven across by the operations on the German border… under the common law of the colony these persons have been granted asylum and cannot now be put across the border into German territory without their consent”.\(^{136}\) In August 1904, the CO, explained to the Germans that they could not stop the refugees from seeking asylum in British territory and the British would prevent and disarm those who took part in the rebellion from returning to German territory.\(^{137}\) The Germans were worried because the refugees not only contained women and children but also rebel leaders such as Maherero and Marenga.

Bechuanaland received the Herero who had started their journey through the desert. Bechuanaland’s policy was to disarm the Herero, move them from the border region but not to intern them. It is clear that after the battle of Waterberg the Herero started crossing into British territory in larger numbers. On 6 September 1904, “Damaras\(^ {138}\) [Herero] are coming over into this reserve in great numbers”.\(^ {139}\) In December 1904, Samuel Maherero, leader of the Herero requested permission to reside in Bechuanaland, which was allowed by the FO.\(^ {140}\) The exact amount of Herero who managed to get to Bechuanaland has been a matter of dispute with some arguing as many as 6,000 made it over the border\(^ {141}\) and most accepting 1,000 as does Bley.\(^ {142}\) According to a report by Acting Magistrate Merry, who was stationed in Tsau, where the Herero refugees were, there were 1,175 refugees.\(^ {143}\)

The Cape differed from Bechuanaland in that it put her refugees into custody and disarmed them. The Cape set up concentration camps to contain the refugees at Steinkopf and Matjeskloof.\(^ {144}\) The concentration camps received the Nama refugees as they fled over the Orange River or into Walfish Bay. Refugee men who were fit to work were sent mainly to the copper mines. The guerrilla campaign by the Nama took

\(^{136}\) TNA: FO 367/27/411, Cape Prime Minister, Leander Jameson to Governor Walter Hely-Hutchinson, 14 June 1906.

\(^{137}\) TNA: FO 64/1645, Colonial Office to High Commissioner, Viscount Milner, August 1904.

\(^{138}\) The Herero were sometimes referred to as Damaras in the FO records.

\(^{139}\) TNA: FO 64/1645, Assistant Resident Magistrate, M. Williams to Acting Resident Commissioner, 6 September 1904.

\(^{140}\) TNA: FO 64/1645, High Commissioner, Viscount Milner to Colonial Secretary, Alfred Lyttelton, 7 December 1904.


\(^{142}\) Helmut Bley, *Namibia Under German Rule* (Hamburg: Lit Verlag, 1996), 150.

\(^{143}\) TNA: FO 367/27/66, Acting Magistrate G. Merry to The Resident Commissioner, Mafeking, 30 December 1905.

\(^{144}\) Dedering, “War and Mobility,” 287.
a toll on the fighters, women, children and aged men. The various rebelling Nama tribes asked the Cape to receive their people, which in almost all cases they did. In May 1905, Marenga and Johannes Hendrik asked if their civilians could enter British territory\textsuperscript{145} which was granted by the Cape. Cornelius Fredericks in July 1905, asked for his children, women and aged men to be allowed to GSWA.\textsuperscript{146} By September 1905, figures for the refugees in Cape Colony were 320 white and 1275 coloured refugees.\textsuperscript{147} According to all the figures compiled from the FO records about the Nama refugees there were 2,055 in the Cape.\textsuperscript{148} Deder ing uses German figures to state that by April 1906, there were 2,062 refugees in the Cape,\textsuperscript{149} which are very close to the British figures.

The German authorities complained in April 1906 that rebels were crossing between the Cape and GSWA and requested them to be moved back from the border to prevent communication with members of their tribe. They had been moved some distance from the border though the Germans still considered that too close,\textsuperscript{150} so the British moved the refugees 50 miles from the frontier.\textsuperscript{151} In March 1907 with peace declared, the refugees were free to return to GSWA if they wished.

**Protection of the Border Regions**

A major problem for the British colonies in South Africa was their vast borders which were, often in remote and hostile territory. Furthermore, the police tasked with policing the borders were very few which caused problems in a wartime situation. The German authorities alleged that the natives obtained supplies from British territory and that refugees made their way back to GSWA, these were difficult issues to control with so few border police.

At the end of September 1904, High Commissioner Milner asked Colonial Secretary Lyttelton if he could raise auxiliary troops, which would cost £10,500, as he

\textsuperscript{145} TNA: FO 64/1646, Colonel Neylan CMP to Commissioner CMP, 17 May 1905.
\textsuperscript{146} TNA: FO 64/1647, Captain Cornelius Fredericks to The Resident Magistrate, Port Nolloth, 19 July 1905.
\textsuperscript{147} TNA: FO 64/1647, T. Smartt, Prime Minister’s Office, Cape Town to Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson, 25 September 1905.
\textsuperscript{148} TNA: FO 367/27/210, T. Smartt, Prime Minister’s Office, Cape Town to Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson, 5 April 1906. and TNA: FO 367/27/273, Military Secretary, Major Cameron to Imperial Consul-General for Germany, Cape Town, 16 May 1906.
\textsuperscript{149} Deder ing, “War and Mobility,”286.
\textsuperscript{150} TNA: FO 367/9/178, Memorandum by Colonial Secretary, Cape Colony, 11 April 1906.
\textsuperscript{151} TNA: FO 367/27/205, FO Minutes, 23 May 1906.
felt it was necessary to properly guard the border.\textsuperscript{152} In October, Milner again asked frantically to sanction the force, however the CO stated they did not want to incur that expenditure.\textsuperscript{153}

Milner admitted in December 1904, that despite extra measures to prevent the Herero from retuning to German territory, refugees “may occasionally find their way back to German territory”.\textsuperscript{154} The border region in Bechuanaland was very remote and in harsh territory and thus extremely difficult to fully secure, however although Bechuanaland did not manage to intern its rebels the Cape were able to do it.

Despite fears over expenditure, the manpower for border force in British South Africa was increased slightly due to the war. Milner increased them in Bechuanaland in October 1904, the N’gami post was reinforced by 12 extra native police and one European non-commissioned officer.\textsuperscript{155} The Cape had more men than Bechuanaland. The Colonial Secretary wrote to General Brook “on a border which is considerably over 400 miles in length, were we to keep an adequate force, we should require not less than 1500 men... new posts have been established and there are now 72 non-commissioned officers... against a total strength of in 47 April last”.\textsuperscript{156} This demonstrates the woefully inadequate force the British placed on their borders and the vulnerability of the British in South Africa.

\textbf{Recruitment of Boers}

In 1902 the Boer war ended. This had been a tough guerrilla war that Britain had to fight against the Boers in their South African colonies. It brought an uneasy peace between the Boers and the British. The Cape authorities were naturally very concerned with any signs of Boer activity. When Boers started going to GSWA to work for the German army, alarm bells started ringing in the Cape government, this is no surprise as the Germans had backed the Boers in the war only two years earlier.

The Boers were employed to run the transport system for the German army. There was not an insignificant number of them working with estimations of Boers in GSWA

\textsuperscript{152} TNA: FO 64/1645, High Commissioner, Viscount Milner to Colonial Secretary, Alfred Lyttelton, 29 September 1904.
\textsuperscript{153} TNA: FO 64/1645, Colonial Secretary, Alfred Lyttelton to High Commissioner, Viscount Milner, 15 October 1904.
\textsuperscript{154} TNA: FO 64/1645, High Commissioner, Viscount Milner to Colonial Secretary, Alfred Lyttelton, 15 December 1904.
\textsuperscript{155} TNA: FO 64/1645, High Commissioner, Viscount Milner to Acting Resident Commissioner, Mafeking, 29 October 1904.
\textsuperscript{156} TNA: FO 64/1646, Colonial Secretary to General Brook, Early February 1905.
between 1,300-5,000.\textsuperscript{157} The transport service for the Germans was entirely managed by the Boers. A South African Military Intelligence Report stated that “Chief Transport Officer…Windhoek was held by Ex-General Maritz… ex-Commandant Van der Venter at Lüderitz… in less than 12 months they will have a large and well equipped transport service at their disposal, several thousand men well armed and mounted”,\textsuperscript{158} Having such high profile Boers in GSWA working for the German army was clearly a concern for the British officials in South Africa because these Boers had fought against the British in the Boer War which had ended only a few years before the uprising in GSWA.

The greatest fear the Cape authorities had was another Boer rebellion backed and armed by the Germans. In February 1905 Milner made it clear he wanted the Boers to be disarmed before coming back into GSWA after the end of their period of service.\textsuperscript{159} Several worrying reports came from military intelligence. In an interview with Stephanus Kock, brother of late General Kock, Boers went to work in “GSWA nominally as transport riders, but really to be armed and ready to proceed to the Transvaal when the general rising took place”.\textsuperscript{160} By January 1907, the Boers were discharged from German service.

\textbf{Fear that the Rebellion Would Spread to the Indigenous Africans in British Colonies}

It was not only the Boers that threatened the security of the Cape. British natives in the Cape were watched carefully and policy was directed to ensure that the Herero and Nama rebellion did not spread to the British territories. The main reason why the British authorities were worried was because as this November 1904 report stated:

\begin{quote}
The Bastards and Hottentots of GSWA are one family with the Bastards and Hottentots of the Cape Colony. The Hereros are Kafirs of the great Bantu tribe, some millions of whom reside under the British flag…rumours…have been circulated among native tribes that a time would come when the British government would show its true colours and settle with them.\textsuperscript{161}
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[157]{TNA: FO 64/1646, Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary, Alfred Lyttelton, 11 June 1905.}
\footnotetext[158]{TNA: FO 64/1646, South African Military Report No. 341, 1 May 1905.}
\footnotetext[159]{TNA: FO 64/1646, High Commissioner, Viscount Milner to Colonial Secretary, Alfred Lyttelton, 10 February 1905.}
\footnotetext[160]{TNA: FO 64/1646, Secret Interview by (A), Cape Town, 29 July 1905.}
\footnotetext[161]{TNA: FO 64/1646, Intelligence Report (Military), Cape Town, 15 November 1905.}
\end{footnotes}
The British fearing that the sympathies of their own natives would be with the Herero and Nama, had to ensure that they appeared not to be openly associated with the German authorities.

**Border Violations by the German Military**

The German army were a constant source of irritation to the British authorities in South Africa. There were numerous border violations some being very serious with large numbers of German soldiers pursuing the Herero and Nama fighters crossing the border. It was something the British authorities never thought would happen as a FO official noted “the Germans would never dream of such a thing as violating our territory”.162

There were many border violations, with one being reported in July 1905.163 However it was in 1906 that the border was violated heavily by the German military, which coincided with the war in the south reaching the border area. By June 1907 the Cape government listed six clear border violations by the German army.164

Border violations are a serious issue for any state to deal with and it was particularly worrying for the British who did not want the presence of German soldiers in their territory which could scare British natives to rebel.

**Tensions Between the Imperial and Colonial Authorities**

The physical effects of the war were seen in the British colonies who passed on their concerns to London. The Cape in particular wanted representations on a variety of issues. The differing policy objectives between the colonial and metropolitan authorities brought a clash of opinion and towards the end of 1906 and the beginning of 1907 tensions between London and the Cape were fraying.

The main point of contention between London and the Cape was the payment for the maintenance of refugees. The Cape unlike Bechuanaland put the refugees fleeing from GSWA into concentration camps and it cost the Cape government considerable expense to do this. In December 1904 the Cape Prime Minister, Jameson, requested

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162 TNA: FO 64/1645, FO Minute, 17 June 1904.
163 TNA: FO 64/1646, Colonial Office, F. Graham to The Under Secretary of State Foreign Office, 22 July 1905.
164 TNA: FO 367/43/192-96, Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary, Earl of Elgin, 18 May 1907.
that the maintenance of the refugees be paid by Germany. The German Consul’s response was that the “British police on the frontier either to strongly prevent the fugitives from crossing the border or to deliver them afterwards to the legitimate Imperial German authorities”. Due to Cape common law the refugees were granted asylum and could not be put across the border into German territory without their consent. Again in September 1905, the Cape asked for representations for maintenance costs, the FO hesitated stating the Germans “already refused” however they did go ahead with the representation. The Cape continually asked for representations to be made until the end of the war.

In June 1906, Cape ministers stated that the German government was not bound by the Hague Conference to refund the cost of internment of natives coming from GSWA into the Cape Colony. However, the Cape Government now founded its claim for a refund on Baron von Richthofen’s [former German Foreign Minister] promise that the German government would pay for the internment of rebels. Whilst the FO attempted to get the German government to pay, they did not want the Cape government to upset Germany. The Cape government realised they might be able to force Germany to pay by restricting the supplies from the Cape and by threatening to release the interned refugees. Supplies were occasionally disrupted as monthly permits were reduced to weekly permits and with one of the trading posts over the river, Violsdriift, being closed. However, the pressure from London to not stop the supplies prevailed and no significant disturbance was encountered and the refugees were not released either at the behest of the FO.

It is clear that London did not want the Cape to affect its relations with Germany as is evident from this FO minute, “the shilly-shallying of the Cape Government whose habit of never knowing their own minds for two minutes together has more than once landed us in considerable difficulties with the Germans”. The German ambassador

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165 TNA: FO 64/1646, E. Brook, Government House, Cape Town to Imperial Consul-General for Germany, 16 December 1904.
166 TNA: FO 64/1646, Acting Consul-General for Germany, D. Von Jacobs to Major E. Brook, Cape Town, 24 December 1904.
167 TNA: FO 64/1647, FO Minutes, 14 September 1905.
168 TNA: FO 367/27/410, Cape Prime Minister, Leander Jameson to Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson, 14 June 1906.
169 TNA: FO 367/9/264-5, Colonial Office, F. Graham to The Under Secretary of State, Foreign Office, 3 November 1906.
170 TNA: FO 367/27/175, Eric Barrington, FO to Colonial Office, 17 May 1906.
171 TNA: FO 367/63/417, FO Minutes, 8 June 1907.
made representations against the unfriendly attitude of the Cape government.\textsuperscript{172} By 1907 the FO had lost any hope that the Germans would pay and London was not going to force Germany. The Prime Minister of the Cape, stated he wanted to limit “supplies as a pure act of retaliation”,\textsuperscript{173} this is something the FO did not want to happen. The Cape requested London’s intentions in late February 1907, saying the “present uncertainty causes Ministers considerable amount of embarrassment”\textsuperscript{174} and the cost of internment rose to £5,757.13s. 6d by November 1906.\textsuperscript{175} In April 1907 a second round of negotiations between GSWA Governor Lindequist and Cape Prime Minister Jameson were conducted but this again failed to make the Germans pay and the issue remained unresolved.\textsuperscript{176}

Hyam’s model in this case demonstrates how decisions were made in the British Empire. In the model, the Cape Governor, Hely-Hutchinson and the High Commissioner of South Africa, Milner later replaced by Selborne, played key intermediary roles in forwarding on the concerns of the Cape government and in turn urging caution from London. It certainly was an interaction with both sides negotiating with each other and pushing each other to do what they wanted. However, in this case London did prevail with restraining the Cape despite the Cape’s occasional attempts to undermine London. The Cape Prime Minister wrote that he “considers it desirable that Cape Colony should firmly uphold their position, but should leave questions of higher politics to His Majesty’s Government, in whose decision Government of Cape of Good Hope would acquiesce”.\textsuperscript{177} This is exactly what happened. The Cape government was overruled because of the higher dictates of foreign policy. Hyam’s model gives primacy to the centre, so it is reveals the power relations between London and the colonies and how decisions were made. The Cape were concerned with a relatively small amount of money and the FO ensured that London’s priorities came first in securing relations with Germany.

\textsuperscript{172} TNA: FO 367/63/67, Eric Barrington FO to Colonial Office, 5 February 1907.
\textsuperscript{173} TNA: FO 367/63/267, FO Minutes, 3 April 1907.
\textsuperscript{174} TNA: FO 367/63/142, Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary, Earl of Elgin, 21 February 1907.
\textsuperscript{175} TNA: FO 367/ 27/769, Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary, Earl of Elgin, 26 December 1906.
\textsuperscript{176} TNA: FO 367/63/337, Colonial Office, H. Just to The Secretary of State, Foreign Office, 22 April 1907.
\textsuperscript{177} TNA: FO 367/63/21, Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary, Earl of Elgin, 31 December 1906.
Hyam’s model can similarly be applied to the border violations. The Cape wanted representations about border violations but the FO blocked many of these. For instance in September 1906 the Cape requested for representations to be made to the Germans. One FO official remarked “I do not quite see why “[Cape] ministers” are so over excited over this incident”. FO official Harding remarked that the CO “have reservations as does he about representations. EG [Edward Grey] states he can just mention it in conversation with Metternich [German Ambassador to London], not an official representation”. London had to balance its relations with the Cape by mentioning the matter to Metternich, however they were not willing to undertake a representation. The issue of the border being crossed by the Germans was clearly a large violation of sovereignty, however, the FO had to weigh up whether it was worth damaging relations with Germany, as this would be detrimental for the security of the region. London wanted the uprising in GSWA put down quickly to ensure the stability of the region. In terms of FO concerns, in this particular context, the swift end to the Herero uprising took precedence over the German army crossing over the frontier.

Summary

The issues Bechuanaland and in particular the Cape faced with the war in GSWA were numerous and complex. The effects of the war spilled over into British territories and with an official policy of neutrality the Cape hoped to contain the situation. The events in GSWA posed a number of security and political threats for the British. There were four major areas where the effects of the war were most acutely seen. The FO was most concerned with not damaging Anglo-German relations and it is this which became London’s main policy direction. The British South African authorities were constantly being asked to provide supplies by both sides and the problem of refugees fleeing into the colonies caused additional problems for the authorities. The war created multiple security issues, from the fear of a Boer or a native rebellion in British territory and the problems associated with protecting and policing the borders. This was made worse by the German army’s frequent border violations. The central tenant of realist theory is security of the state and for London it was paramount to ensure the security of its possessions in South Africa and thus

178 TNA: FO 367/12/322, Minute from Minsters of Cape Colony, 12 September 1906.
179 TNA: FO 367/12/319-20, FO Minutes, 22 November 1906.
secure its empire whilst simultaneously ensuring the security of Britain within Europe by not damaging its relations with Germany. As Hyam’s model demonstrates the FO took primacy in decisions and gave strategy, which is why in several areas, the dispute with Germany over the maintenance of refugees and the violation of the border, the FO intervened and made sure the Cape did not disrupt relations with Germany.

3.5 ‘Benevolently Neutral’ - British Assistance to the Germans During 1904-07

The previous chapter discussed the impact the war in GSWA had on the British colonies and although the British authorities had decided on a policy of neutrality this chapter will demonstrate that the British were far from neutral and were backing a German victory and aiding the German authorities on different levels. Through physical help with supplies, containing the refugees, allowing Shark Island to be transferred to GSWA, permitting Boers to work for the German army, letting border violations by the German army go unchallenged and co-operating with the German military. The British authorities clearly demonstrated they were on the Germans side. Britain’s role in the events in GSWA has been classified by scholars in various terms, Drechsler spoke about the “close political collaboration between German and British imperialism”,180 Dedering classes it also as collaboration and Lindner identifies it as co-operation.181 This chapter agrees with these terms, there was collaboration and co-operation. What is evident is the indifference of the British authorities as to how their help continued the suffering of the Herero and Nama.

Supplies

The previous chapter outlined the policy of the Cape allowing a small amount of supplies to pass to GSWA strictly for the use of the civilian population. What is clear from the FO records is that the Cape were supplying more than their permits granted and that these supplies ended up in the German military’s hands. What is more, the Cape Prime Minister endorsed this practice up until problems with the maintenance of refugee question caused friction with GSWA. The FO supported the Cape’s earlier decisions to allow supplies to go to GSWA and was later crucial in ensuring the

supplies continued when the Cape wanted to disrupt supplies. The FO was therefore instrumental in maintaining supplies to GSWA.

For the German military, the issue of supplies was a major problem. The areas the German army had to operate in were vast, waterless and perfect for guerrilla warfare. The Germans had long communication lines that were vulnerable and keeping the men supplied posed a serious problem. With GSWA being a country that relied on imports for survival, the Cape became critical to keep the military operations moving, as is noted by a report from the British embassy in Berlin which stated that “until sufficient supplies were in hand, no offensive operations could be undertaken against them [the Herero and Nama]”.182 The British held Walfish Bay, the only useful port in GSWA and the use of this to the Germans from 1905 was of great help. The Germans did attempt to use Swakopmund in GSWA as a harbour but as was reported back to the Cape government, it could take ships “three months waiting to discharge their cargoes”.183 This was because the ships were lying off the town and stores had to be landed by raft. Having access to Walfish bay was therefore crucial for German supplies. There were no railways in the south of GSWA and as the military attaché in Berlin noted, that to end the war sooner would “depend partly on the improvement in communications, and therefore on the railways”.184 The German army relied on ox-wagons to supply their military operations around GSWA.

At the start of the war, the FO and Cape were weary about supplying the German military as supplying the German troops could cause trouble with their own natives. This changed in April 1905 as the Cape Prime Minister stated:

> Progress that has been made in suppressing the rebellion in German territory, and the consequent removal of hostilities from the country immediately adjacent to the colonial border; which fact considerably minimises the danger of trouble being expected from Natives… now prepared to somewhat relax the rigidity of the restrictions which formerly prevailed, and have given amended instructions

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to the officer commanding the Cape Police cordon between the two territories…

granted facilities for landing stores and supplies at Walvis Bay.\textsuperscript{185}

From the very beginning the Cape knew that supplies were going to the German military, despite the official ban on this. It was clear that the goods allowed for civilian purposes were not reaching civilians, as there were no civilians there to receive it. A February 1905 report from the CMP confirmed that “there is no civil population to trade with now”.\textsuperscript{186} Despite this, in September 1905, a new drift was opened at Scuit Drift allowing 25 tons a month of goods and additional fodder to go over Rahmans Drift to help the civil population.\textsuperscript{187} The Cape Governor, Hely-Hutchinson was under no illusions as he telegraphed back to London “these supplies are stated by the Germans to be for the civil population, but it is clear that as the troops are on short rations at Warmbad they will take their share of them”.\textsuperscript{188} The end destination of the supplies then was to the military. Both Foreign Secretary’s wanted the supplies to continue even though it was going to the military. In November 1905, the CO informed Lansdowne about the German military being supplied from the Cape, his response was to give the Germans “every facility which can be given without exciting the natives”.\textsuperscript{189} The Cape Governor again in February 1906 informed London about the extent of supplies going to the German military and stated that they “will shut their eyes to the real destination of the supplies and will not take any step to interfere with the existing arrangements unless it is desired by His Majesty’s Government that they should do so”.\textsuperscript{190} In the following month “Cape ministers raise the question of continuing the grant of permits for the passage of supplies to GSWA” due to it going to the German military. Grey’s response mirrored his predecessor Lansdowne. “It would create very bad feeling in Germany if at this late stage of the

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{185} TNA: FO 64/1646, Prime Minster Cape Colony, Leander Jameson to Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson, 11 April 1905.
\textsuperscript{186} TNA: FO 64/1646, Colonel Neylan CMP to Commissioner CMP, 11 February 1905.
\textsuperscript{187} TNA: FO 64/1647, T. Smartt, Prime Minister’s Office, Cape Town to Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson, 12 September 1905.
\textsuperscript{188} TNA: FO 64/1647, Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary, Alfred Lyttelton, 9 November 1905.
\textsuperscript{189} TNA: FO 64/1647, Foreign Secretary, Lord Lansdowne to Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson, 23 November 1905.
\textsuperscript{190} TNA: FO 367/9/138, Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary, Earl of Elgin, 16 February 1906.
\end{flushleft}
revolt we were to stop the supplies. Express Sir E. Grey’s hope that nothing will be done to put an end to the existing arrangements”.191

In the official records there is only one time when the Cape sold arms to the German army. In January 1904 the German Consul in the Cape asked the Governor for 14,000 rifle cartridges.192 This was permitted by the FO as an official wrote he concurred with the Capes decision to allow the sale because there was “no question of neutrality”.193 By allowing the sale of arms to a belligerent, it was a clear breach of neutrality, however this was not a problem for the Foreign Secretary. This appeared to be the only time munitions of war were sold to Germany by the Cape government directly, as the border was only closed to arms and ammunition. However, Dedering has found that it was smuggled over illegally by the Germans on permits given from Cape officials.194

The German army received all manner of goods but it appears that transportation was most keenly sought by the German army. A wood factory in the Cape got a contract to process 25,000 trees to be made into mule wagons for the German government195 and a South African harness maker obtained a contract to supply harnesses to the “Germans for over 30,000 mules”.196 It was the amount of animals that were supplied to GSWA that is astonishing. Every three months a statement of the cargo of shipments from Cape Town to GSWA were received by the Cape government. As an example from September – November 1905 period, 3,387 horses, 24,345 oxen, 13,915 mules and 9,875 donkeys were sent.197 Throughout 1905 the other three month periods saw similar amounts of shipments. It was stated that up until December 1905, 9,641 horses had been sent to GSWA,198 with another report putting the amount of animals sent to GSWA at 40,000.199 These animals were of high value to the German military. As these figures demonstrate oxen was supplied

191 TNA: FO 367/9/136, FO Minutes, 3 March 1906.
192 TNA: FO 64/1645, Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary Alfred Lyttelton, 25 January 1904.
193 TNA: FO 64/1645, FO Minute, 28 January 1904.
194 Dedering, “War and Mobility,” 283.
195 TNA: FO 64/1647, Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary, Alfred Lyttelton, 15 August 1905.
196 TNA: FO 64/1647, High Commissioner, Earl of Selborne to Colonial Secretary, Alfred Lyttelton, 21 August 1905.
198 TNA: FO 367/11/480, Maercker, Windhoek to H.Q. Keetmanschoop, 22 December 1905.
199 TNA: FO 64/1647, High Commissioner, Earl of Selborne to Colonial Secretary, Alfred Lyttelton, 21 August 1905.
the most to the German authorities and these were of great importance to the German army as the ox-wagon was their main mode of transport. Not only were the animals delivered but also water was sent weekly from Cape Town to Lüderitz amounting to £1000 a week.\textsuperscript{200} In addition, food for soldiers and animals was provided. In April 1906, the FO minutes noted that 100,000 rations and 200 tons of oats were being sent from Cape Town to GSWA and delivered to the front in three months.\textsuperscript{201} This was clearly in breach of the permitted supply of goods from April 1905, which was 50 tons for Ramans Drift, 25 tons for Scufts Drift and 50 tons at Rietfontein.\textsuperscript{202} The border authorities, the Cape government and the FO allowed the permit amounts to be surpassed. Traders in the Cape wanted to exploit this and as Curson writes, Upington, a key trading town enjoyed “an economic boom” during the war.\textsuperscript{203} The German Consul General in Cape Town had established a “complex system of bribery and clandestine interference” \textsuperscript{204} to obtain supplies illegally into GSWA.

Colonel Trench’s reports illuminate the extent of supplies, he was in a unique position to witness the amount of supplies going to the German army. He reported that the southern line of communication from Ramansdrift was listed by the German military as a supply line,\textsuperscript{205} which showed Trench that the Germans were not only being supplied by the Cape but relied on its supplies. Trench observed that the “troops operating in the south have, for the last six months or more, have been almost entirely supplied from over our border, or that it is in great measure due to assistance given by our people, that the rising of the Bondelswarts [Nama tribe] has now practically been put down”.\textsuperscript{206} The FO minute to this final report merely stated the “Germans don’t acknowledge our help”. This quote shows the FO was not concerned by ethics but power and money. This quote is indicative of realist theory in action, as there is sheer indifference to the suffering of the Nama. A further chilling report from Trench which receives no FO attention concerns the supplies for the Otavi railway, such as tools and

\textsuperscript{200} TNA: FO 367/8/167, Report from Colonel F. Trench to The Chief Staff Officer, Cape Colony District for transmission to the War Office, 24 November 1905.
\textsuperscript{201} TNA: FO 367/8/475, FO Minutes, 4 April 1906.
\textsuperscript{202} TNA: FO 64/1647, Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary, Alfred Lyttelton, 20 October 1905.
\textsuperscript{203} Curson, \textit{Border Conflicts}, 114.
\textsuperscript{204} Dederin, “War and Mobility,” 283.
\textsuperscript{205} TNA: FO 64/1647, Report from Colonel F. Trench to The Secretary to the War Office, 15 September 1905.
rails being unloaded at Walfish Bay. It was being built by Herero slave labour, which is also covered in Trench’s reports.

It was not just the Cape that was supplying the Germans, although they were the main suppliers. High Commissioner, Selborne, asked for permission to send supplies and cattle from Bechuanaland to GSWA. The FO gave the green light to this. It was the same consideration that dictated the flow of supplies from Bechuanaland as the Cape, as long as there was no risk to the natives rebelling, they could supply as they wished to GSWA.

There was a brief moment where the Cape attempted to regain control of the amount of goods passing through to GSWA and Neylan head of the CMP border was replaced by Elliot as he had allowed 500 tons of supplies through the border instead of 125 tons in April 1906 but this did little to bring the amount of supplies down. The Cape wanted to impose supply restrictions from late 1906 onwards to force the Germans to pay for the maintenance of refugees, whilst some supplies were disrupted, on the whole London prevented this from happening. This occasion occurred in May 1906, when the German charge d’affairs told the FO that the “Prime Minister Mr. Jameson, had given assurances which guaranteed a sufficient supply to the German troops from Cape Colony”. The German charge d’affairs wanted to make sure this would be maintained and the FO gave assurance that this would be maintained. Dedering, Lindner and Wallace have argued that the Cape government was inconsistent with their support to the Germans during the uprising, as the Cape cut off the border several times and disrupted supplies. However, the FO were consistent in their relationship with the Germans and throughout the uprising wanted supplies to be maintained to the Germans.

The Cape and the authorities in London were fully aware that the German army was being supplied large scale from the Cape but also Bechuanaland, not only was this permitted but it was actively enforced by the FO after 1906. From the reports of Trench and other sources it is clear that the German army relied very heavily on these supplies especially in the campaign against the Nama. Dedering has also come to the

207 TNA: FO 64/1647, Report from Colonel F. Trench to The Secretary to the War Office, 24 July 1905
208 TNA: FO 64/1647, FO Minutes, 22 November 1905.
209 TNA: FO 367/9/170, Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary, Earl of Elgin, 11 April 1906.
210 TNA: FO 367/9/165, Eric Barrington, Foreign Office to Colonial Office, 8 June 1906.
same conclusion that the “German war effort depended completely on the importation of goods through British territory”.211

Containing the Refugees

The German authorities asked the Cape to “arrest, disarm and surrender the rebels”. The Cape responded stating “instructions issued to police authorities to prevent as far as possible co-operation between the natives of this colony and rebellious tribes in GSWA, if found in this colony are to be taken into custody [and] disarmed”.212 Even though the Cape believed they were not under any obligation by international law to intern the refugees, they chose to do so and when the German authorities complained that the refugees were too close to the border, they were removed to a greater distance from the border. In Bechuanaland the refugees were not interned but were prevented from crossing the border.

The colonial authorities in South Africa willingly denied legal rights to the head rebels in order to keep them interned for the Germans. High Commissioner, Selborne stated that if Maherero (the leader of the Herero) was “placed in a more civilised district where he could obtain legal advice and might be prompted to dispute our right to detain him”.213 A similar issue happened with Marenga (a Nama rebel leader) in the Cape because the “difficulty in keeping Marenga detained, [we] will try to detain him as far as practically possible”,214 this was in January 1907, when Marenga had sought refuge in the Cape. In these two cases the leaders of the tribes rebelling against German rule were stripped of their rights in order to keep them from returning to GSWA and participating in the rebellion.

By removing those Herero and Nama from the conflict with GSWA and preventing their return, the British were helping the German military, it was especially useful to have Maherero and Marenga away from the warzone. The Colonial Secretary of Cape Town even stated the colonial government wanted to help the Germans end the rebellion by “delaying or indefinitely postponing the return of this body of fighting

211 Dedering, “War and Mobility,” 281.
212 TNA: FO 64/1645, T. Smartt, Prime Minister’s Office, Cape Town to the Officer Administering the Government, 19 September 1904.
213 TNA: FO 64/1647, High Commissioner, Earl of Selborne to Colonial Secretary, Earl of Elgin, 18 December 1905.
214 TNA: FO 367/63/111, Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary, Earl of Elgin, 26 January 1907.
men to German territory”. The Cape in particular by interning the rebels and then moving them further still from the border, did exactly what the Germans wanted them to do as it made it harder for the fighters in the field to continue fighting.

**Shark Island**

Shark Island was the “largest and most feared concentration camp” in GSWA and it was responsible for the most deaths in the concentration camp system. The FO records reveal that Shark Island was actually leased from the Cape to GSWA which is something that has been completely overlooked in the existing literature, even Erichsen’s in depth study about Shark Island fails to mention that it was under British ownership.

In November 1897 the island was leased by the Cape to GSWA for 10 years, with a possibility for it to be renewed for a further five years at the discretion of the Cape. In October 1905 Hely-Hutchinson received a telegram from the GSWA Governor who wanted to discuss a settlement of the lease of Shark Island. On 15 Nov 1906 the new agreement was granted and Shark Island was removed from the lease in exchange for some mainland of GSWA. Foreign Secretary Grey had “no objection to the course proposed”. From the reports of Trench and Wade the FO knew what was going on in Shark Island and it was obvious why the Germans would want to gain full ownership of it. This decision by the British authorities highlights their sheer indifference to the suffering of the Herero and Nama. The FO was in a position to obstruct German activities over the lease of the island but chose to allow the Germans to have it. It demonstrates that geo-political and economic interests took precedence over the suffering of the Herero and Nama, as is shown in the theoretical framework.

**Allowing Boers to Work for the Germans**

The Boers ran the entire transport operations of the German army and were thus crucial in keeping the German army in active pursuit. The Cape authorities allowed the Boers to work for the German army, something which helped the Germans

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215 TNA: FO 367/ 27/542, Colonial Secretary’s Office, P. Truter to E. Holland Prime Minister’s Office, 3 August 1906.
216 Curson, *Border Conflicts*, 79.
217 TNA: FO 367/43/450, Secretary for Agriculture, Cape Town to The Imperial German Consul General, Cape Town, 2 May 1907.
218 TNA: FO 367/12/640, Eric Barrington, Foreign Office to Colonial Office, 13 December 1906.
immensely. FO minutes stated that, “we have continued to shut our eyes to the way in which British subjects are recruited for service with the Germans and have indeed made our neutrality so benevolently neutral as only to have requested that when the men eventually return to the Cape, their arms may be taken away first”.219 The FO recognised how helpful they were being to the Germans despite the security risks for the Cape of allowing the Boers to work for the Germans. The Cape allowed the Germans to recruit manpower from British territory to help them but the Herero and Nama were not allowed to recruit their own tribesmen from over the border to help them, this demonstrates clearly that British sympathies and support were fully with the Germans.

Border Violations
The German army crossed the border between GSWA and the Cape on numerous occasions. In total there were six clear border violations by the German army. The Cape government saw these as a serious violation of their territory and infringement of sovereignty and petitioned London to make representations on the matter. London’s response was one of not wanting to challenge the Germans.

In March 1905, four German soldiers pursued into Walfish Bay and fired on five native men, two women and four children, who were recaptured 8.8 miles within British territory.220 Representations were made by London but the German explanation was that they were not German soldiers, which the FO noted “seems satisfactory”.221 The Cape government were outraged by the violation of sovereignty and that acts of war were carried out on Cape territory and used the Herero in Walfish Bay as witnesses. The Herero witnesses stated that it was German soldiers that chased them and the boot prints were from German regulation boot. The CMP acknowledged that the Herero were telling the truth,222 however the FO decided to drop the matter.

An attack by Germans on Marenga in May 1905 took place when Germans fired on rebels who were in British territory making it impossible for CMP to do their job. The FO response was sympathetic to the Germans and stated that “the firing by

219 TNA: FO 64/1646, FO Minutes, 3 May 1905.
220 TNA: FO 367/11/603, Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary, Earl of Elgin, 3 April 1906.
221 TNA: FO 367/11/607, FO Minute, 1 May 1906.
German troops at rebels in British territory does not seem to have been an incident worth considering. It is hardly to be expected that in the heat of action they would be able to determine the precise moment at which the rebels crossed the border and they do not appear themselves to have crossed into British territory… representations hardly called for”.  

In May 1906, two violations committed by the German army whilst in the pursuit of Marenga, for which the Germans apologised. The Cape complained to London and requested representations to be made however, the FO sympathised with the Germans once again and Grey stated he did not want to take action against the Germans as they had apologised.

A serious violation took place in October 1906 when 200 armed German soldiers crossed the border and watered their horses. The FO acknowledged it was a serious border violation however did not want to mention it officially “in view of the negotiations on the question of the refugees”, so again, representations were not made. In another incident, the Ferreira raid, a small gang of armed Boers crossed the border into the Cape to provoke a rebellion, which ultimately failed. The FO minutes stated there was “no need to make representations to the Germans over Ferreira’s raid, even though they were armed by the Germans”. These examples show that the FO let Germany off the hook on a number of occasions and made as little issue as possible over the violations, London could have made a much larger issue out of it but chose not to. This allowed the German army to operate without fear of being punished by the British authorities and also tacitly implied British governmental support of Germany’s actions against the Herero and Nama.

Co-operation with the German Military

It was not just the infamous killing of Marenga where the German and British nations militarily collaborated. The CMP and the German army on various occasions cooperated with each other on the border.

A clear example of the co-operation of the German and British is the appointment of Trench to be attached to the German forces in GSWA. Trotha viewed Trench’s

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223 TNA: FO 367/8/612, FO Minute, 28 June 1906.
224 TNA: FO 367/27/188, FO Minutes, 18 May 1906.
226 TNA: FO 367/27/682, FO Minutes, 8 December 1906.
appointment as a positive move to strengthen relations. Trotha wanted to have a British officer to offer “advice and assistance”.\textsuperscript{228} Privately Trotha thanked Trench for his “sympathy, advice, interest and assistance”.\textsuperscript{229} It went so well that in December 1906 Trotha said that relations between the Cape government and the German military authorities were “now excellent”.\textsuperscript{230}

The Cape proved to be useful for sick German soldiers to pass through from the border regions and then to be taken by sea back to GSWA. Whereas the Herero and Nama fighters were prevented from going back to GSWA, the German soldiers were permitted to be repatriated. The transportation of sick German soldiers became routine with convalescents transported monthly from Rahman’s Drift to Port Nolloth.\textsuperscript{231} The British cited this as a right of passage due to the Geneva Convention. However, in August 1906 when the passage of 150 invalid German soldiers through Port Nolloth caused questions to be asked by Wade questioning if they really were invalids.\textsuperscript{232}

**Being on the Germans Side**

The above sections have demonstrated that the British were siding with the Germans and helped the Germans out wherever possible, so long as it did not affect their own natives. The British authorities were not concerned with breaking their own neutrality as is stated in this FO minutes from March 1905, “the real reason why we have declined to help the Germans is not because to do so would be a breach of neutrality but because, if we do, the natives will very likely turn on us”.\textsuperscript{233} This shows that the early policy feared native rebellion, this changed later but highlights there was no problem with breaking neutrality. Some reports describe the British assistance as “a generous act of a friendly power”\textsuperscript{234} or that “a friendly neighbouring power should

\textsuperscript{228} TNA: FO 64/1646, Report by Colonel F. Trench to The Secretary to the War Office, 26 June 1905.
\textsuperscript{229} TNA: FO 367/8/524, Report from Colonel F. Trench to The Chief Staff Officer, Cape Colony District for transmission to the War Office, 10 February 1906.
\textsuperscript{230} TNA: FO 367/8/526, Report from Colonel F. Trench to The Chief Staff Officer, Cape Colony District for transmission to the War Office, 10 February 1906.
\textsuperscript{231} TNA: FO 367/27/377, Prime Minister, Cape Colony, Leander Jameson to Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson, 11 June 1906.
\textsuperscript{232} TNA: FO 367/8/765, Report from Major Wade to The Colonial General Staff, Cape Colony, 25 August 1906.
\textsuperscript{233} TNA: FO 64/1646, FO Minute, 9 March 1905.
\textsuperscript{234} TNA: FO 64/1646, South African Military Intelligence Report, No. 341, 1 May 1905.
justifiably expect all reasonable assistance in quelling an internal rebellion”. The British saw themselves as partners with the German colonisers.

In August 1905, Baron von Mettelbladt, the German Consul in the Cape Colony said in a German newspaper interview that the Cape Prime Minister, Jameson said to him “the sympathies of the Cape Government were entirely with the Germans and though, on account of the native policy of that government, they could not declare their sympathies too openly, the Germans may count on their moral support and as far as possible on their practical assistance”. This statement can be seen to be true due to the telegraphs made by the Cape government and the FO minutes where Barrington noted that we “can’t appear to be openly on the side of the Germans”. This insinuates the position that they were on the Germans side. This is hardly surprising given that Lindner argues that there was a “notion of a common interest among all colonisers in Africa”. Britain and Germany’s imperial projects were similar, creating secure economic benefits in their colonies and wars with natives made the region unstable, so it was in the interest of the colonisers of South Africa to bring the rebellion to a close. As Drechsler wrote, Milner regarded the rebellion as a “threat to the peace of the whole of South Africa”.

The British authorities wanted to make it known to the German government that they were on their side and were helping them in every way possible. The FO attitude towards the Germans was made explicit in an August 1905 telegram to the British ambassador in Berlin, where the FO instructed the ambassador to tell the Germans how much help they had given them. Lansdowne instructed the British ambassador in Berlin, Lascelles to challenge von Mühlberg’s statement, in which he blamed the difficulties of the German troops on the support “which the natives received from British territory”. Lansdowne was clearly frustrated and set out a long protest stating how the British authorities had helped the Germans as much as they possibly could do, without risking rebellion in their own territory. In September 1905, he wrote:

235 TNA: FO 367/9/177, Memorandum by Staff Captain, Major Clintock, Army Head Quarters, Pretoria, 30 March 1906.
236 TNA: FO 64/1646, H.M. Ambassador, British Embassy, Berlin, Sir Frank Lascelles to Foreign Secretary, Lord Lansdowne, 23 August 1905, Article from the Frankfurter Zeitung.
239 TNA: FO 64/1646, Foreign Secretary, Lord Lansdowne to Colonial Secretary, Alfred Lyttelton, 31 August 1905.
The friendly attitude which His Majesty’s Government have throughout the present insurrection adopted towards the German forces, pointing out that in those cases in which they have unfortunately not seen their way to complying fully with the wishes of the German government they have been actuated solely by a desire to avoid action which must inevitably lead to a spread of insurrection to the natives in British territory… instructions… to disarm all rebels might cross into the Colony… In January 1904 the German Consul General… asked to purchase 14,000 rifle cartridges… granted… and to recruit German subjects for service in GSWA… granted as also a subsequent application… to buy 24 rifles… Anglo-German frontier… 1000 miles… officer and men were alike working strenuously to carry out the wishes of His Majesty’s Government to observe strict neutrality and that persons likely to supply ammunition to the natives were carefully watched… no obstacle has been placed in the way of the German authorities recruiting British subjects in South Africa for employment in connection with the military operations… restrictions… at Walfish Bay were removed… and the rigidity of restrictions on the traffic between the Cape and GSWA have been relaxed.240

Representations were made to the Germans stating how much the British were helping them however, the British government made no representations against the Germans for their treatment of the Herero and Nama. This demonstrates where British concerns lied, with power. The many reports coming from Trench and Wade but also by the CMP officers who were outraged by what they saw the Germans do was never taken up with the Germans. Not once was it mentioned to the German government and this highlights the indifference the British government had to the suffering and affirmed that the British supported the Germans actions in suppressing the rebellion. The ministers of the Cape wrote to the Governor in August 1906, stating the Cape was doing “everything possible to assist the German government in bringing hostilities to an early termination. They feel, however, that their efforts are not meeting with the appreciation which they deserve”.

240 TNA: FO 64/1647, Foreign Secretary, Lord Lansdowne to H.M. Ambassador, British Embassy, Berlin, Sir Frank Lascelles, 19 September 1905.
241 TNA: FO 367/12/324, T. Smartt, Prime Minister’s Office, Cape Town to Governor Walter Hely-Hutchinson, 30 August 1906.
Commissioner, Foreign Secretary and Governor all wanted a quick end to the hostilities in GSWA, which is something Drechsler has pointed out\textsuperscript{242} and Curson also agrees that the political leaders wanted an end to the uprising.\textsuperscript{243}

The different treatment of the Herero and Nama and the Germans bears testimony to the fact that the British were on the Germans side. For example the British tried to prevent, as best they could, supplies and arms getting to the Herero and Nama. In May 1904 the German government complained that a trader in Bechuanaland had sold 50,000 cartridges. Lansdowne said if this is true it was necessary to “take action”,\textsuperscript{244} whereas supplies to the German military was permitted, even encouraged. In November 1904, eight German soldiers retired to Rietfontein in the Cape for protection, they had been escorted to Port Nolloth and their “arms and ammunition have been sent to Cape Town and handed over to German Consul”.\textsuperscript{245} This would not have happened to the Herero or Nama, the British were not being neutral and shows the British sided with the Germans.

\textbf{Summary}

The most important way the British authorities helped the Germans was via supplies. At least in the southern theatre of war against the Nama, the German army’s operations would have been severely hampered and may even have been forced to retreat. The British authorities supported the Germans from the beginning, which is evident throughout the FO records. It is clear that the British government was aiding the German authorities in more than physical ways. The FO went to great lengths to state how much they were helping the Germans, which clearly shows the British government’s willingness to support the Germans and in doing so endorse their methods. It was not seen as a problem that the Germans were exterminating thousands of Herero and Nama. There was not one point where the FO thought it was necessary to give representations to the German government about the treatment of the Hereros and Nama. The British were indifferent to the suffering of the Herero and Nama, as was seen through the transfer of Shark Island to the Germans. The British authorities

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{242} Drechsler, \textit{“Let Us Die Fighting”} 219.
\item \textsuperscript{243} Curson, \textit{Border Conflicts}, 174.
\item \textsuperscript{244} TNA: FO 64/1645, Foreign Secretary, Lord Lansdowne to Colonial Office, 3 May 1904.
\item \textsuperscript{245} TNA: FO 64/1645, Administrator of Cape Colony to High Commissioner, Viscount Milner, 9 November 1904.
\end{itemize}
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acted in a manner that was expected from the theoretical model through their co-operation with the Germans.

What should we label Britain’s role in the events of 1904-07? Scholars have stated it was co-operation or collaboration. This is clearly the case and the British authorities actions made them tacitly complicit. What is clear is that the British helped Germany out significantly during their campaign against the Herero and Nama and Wade’s opinion captured what the British had done for the Germans, perhaps slightly exaggerated, when he wrote the Germans “were fully alive to the fact that they were practically carrying on the war by our favour and permission”.246

246 TNA: FO 367/41/178, Report by Major Wade to The Director of Military Operations, War Office, 3 July 1907.
4. Thematic Analysis

4.1 Discussion of the Main Arguments Behind Britain’s Co-operation with Germany and why there was no Intervention

It is of fundamental importance in genocide studies to understand how the international community responds to genocide and most importantly to assess the key states reactions. The theoretical model will be applied in this chapter to give an explanation as to why there was co-operation between the British and Germans but no intervention. Realist theory will firstly demonstrate that it was in Britain’s interest not to intervene and instead co-operate with Germany to suppress the uprising. This is because of London’s interests in not wanting to damage relations with Germany and the overriding concern of security that through helping the Germans security in the region could be achieved. Secondly, realist theory can account for why there was indifference to the suffering of the Herero and Nama. Hyam’s model will be used to demonstrate how decisions were made and the primacy of the FO over colonial decisions.

The first section will take up London’s perspective and the geo-political rivalry with Germany. The next will deal with the Cape’s perspective, the economic view. The third section looks at the security issues of the German military threat to the British colonies, the Boers being employed by the German army and the fear of a rebellion by the natives in British territory. The next sections deal with the hypocrisy of British rule, the racism and indifference to the genocide and the status of the Herero and Nama. Dedering has commented that London and Cape Town had to “balance contradictory interests in their relations with the Germans in Namibia”.247 This is of fundamental importance in understanding why the British authorities aided the Germans.

London’s Concern - Geo-political Rivalry with Germany

The overarching reason why London did not intervene and actively assisted the German government was because “at high politics level of decision making, strategic

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247 Dedering, “War and Mobility,” 278.
and geo-political calculations were dominant”. London had two problems to consider, firstly the relative imperial weakness of the British Empire in South Africa and secondly, Britain’s political and economic marginalisation in Europe. London’s interests were dominant and they overruled the Cape to ensure the continued support for Germany. One of the central assumptions of realist theory is the survival of the state, it was essential therefore for the FO to ensure that the security of the British state and its possessions were secured. This follows to another assumption that states act rationally through self-interest and London’s response was dominated by her interests.

There was a sense of imperial weakness in the British Empire, as highlighted by Kennedy who points out that “however imposing the empire may have appeared on a world map, district officers knew that it was being run on a shoestring”. The reality was that “imperial resources of all kinds, money, manpower, even support from home and abroad were in short supply”. In particular, South Africa was a weak spot in the British Empire, which was made significantly weaker following the Boer War. The Germans had supported the Boers during that war and it was crucial to maintain and improve relations with Germany. The location of South Africa is vital in understanding its significance for London, British Africa was a gigantic footnote to the Indian Empire and there was a need to protect the security of the Cape route to India. German weltpolitik had to be carefully assessed, as was highlighted in the Moroccan Crisis of 1905 where France and Germany mobilised their armies. This incident demonstrated how a colonial dispute could make its way back to Europe. Thus London had to ensure that the security of British South Africa was assured and to do this Germany had to be appeased to help ensure the security of the region and Europe.

It was not just the British Empire in Africa that the FO had to take into consideration. There was as Kennedy argued a crisis of the “middle powers” within Europe. The balance of power was shifting and the “speed and extent of Germany’s

248 Hyam, Understanding the British Empire, 78.
251 Hyam, Understanding the British Empire, 85
252 Curson, Border Conflicts, 175.
further growth in industrial, commercial, and military/naval terms”. Germany then loomed larger as a potential enemy, “primarily a naval and European one”. This helped cause the European powers to divide into two armed camps. Britain responded with an end to splendid isolation which led to the signing of agreements with Japan and France in 1904, but many in the Liberal government, did not see themselves as part of an anti-German coalition. Foreign Secretary Lansdowne certainly did not regard these agreements as directed against Germany. Despite the naval race and other aspects of German policy which made Britain and Germany rivals there was at this stage still a desire to keep the German government on side and avoid any possible wars with them. Even small gestures of goodwill to the Germans was encouraged by the FO. This was seen in a FO minute from March 1905 where a request by an owner of a fleet of ships asked permission for these to be placed at the disposal of the German government, the FO minutes stated “the offer may do good…to relations with Germany”. Lansdowne’s representation to the German government, where he listed all the help the British side had given GSWA, clearly outlines the FO position of helping and accommodating the Germans as much as possible and saw them as colonial partners rather than as rivals or as an enemy. For the FO the interests of Britain and Germany merged together over the uprising. The FO was concerned about the uprising spreading and further destabilising the region, it was thus as Mearsheimer describes states co-operating in an anarchic world a “temporary marriage of convenience”. The interests of the two colonial powers coincided which enabled co-operation.

It was the Cape which decided on whether to permit supplies to GSWA or not, as that was a domestic concern. It was a matter for London to be involved when international relations came into play which the Cape recognised when they told London they wanted to “avoid any step tending to embarrass the relations between the German Government and His Majesty’s Government”. The Cape was also aware that London was concerned with maintaining good relations with Germany.

254 Porter, The Lion’s Share, 199.
257 TNA: FO 64/1645, FO Minutes, 1 February 1904.
259 TNA: FO 64/1647, Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary, Alfred Lyttelton, 9 November 1905.
the end of 1906, when the Cape government implemented some supply restrictions and wanted to halt it altogether in an effort to force the German government to pay for the maintenance of refugees, London intervened. A FO official noted “it would create very bad feeling in Germany if at this late stage of the revolt we were to stop the supplies, express Sir. Edward Grey’s hope that nothing will be done to put an end to the existing arrangements”.260 This point was put more forcefully across after the Cape became more agitated, with the Cape complaining that “this action [to stop all supplies] has been practically prohibited by His Majesty’s Government”.261 A similar situation arose with the repeated border violations, the Cape wanted representations to hold the German army to account but again out of geo-political reasons and the FO’s wish to appease Germany the FO dismissed the Cape. The FO was more concerned with maintaining relations with Germany than with their own colony. Using Hyam’s model it explains that there was a dialogue between London and the colonies however the FO overruled the Cape and dictated what would happen. London’s interests, the interests of the state, were more important than the Capes interests, which was an almost trivial matter of a relatively small amount of money. There were larger issues at stake in the desire to protect the state.

Dedering wrote that the British “did not intend to provoke their German neighbours”.262 This is certainly a correct view of Britain’s policy towards the war. As realist theory states, it is state interests that dictate foreign policy. It was therefore not in Britain’s interest to support an intervention on behalf of the Herero and Nama. This could have risked war with Germany and how would intervening have benefited Britain? Realists argue that foreign policy is based on a rational calculation of costs and benefits.263 Britain would not gain anything by helping the Herero and Nama, in fact they would endanger their own security and thus their survival by risking war with Germany. The balance of power was changing in Europe with Germany becoming stronger and with Germany not yet an enemy it was in Britain’s interest to work with Germany to bring the uprising to an end. The FO was able to determine policy in South Africa, overriding and controlling the Cape in order to secure its overriding interest of maintaining good relations with Germany. The FO had to take

260 TNA: FO 367/9/136, FO Minutes, 6 March 1906.
261 TNA: FO 367/63/123, Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary, Earl of Elgin, 16 February 1907.
262 Dedering, “War and Mobility,” 278.
into account Germany’s new position and the weakness of South Africa and through diplomacy they hoped to avoid a confrontation with Germany over the war in GSWA, which is what they achieved. Throughout the war London’s stance could be termed a “friendly neutrality” towards Germany as Trench had written.\textsuperscript{264} It was an unwritten rule that “all European powers were anxious that Africa should not threaten international peace. All agreed that their friendship was more important than their African interests”.\textsuperscript{265}

**The Cape’s Concern - Economic**

Whereas geo-political interests dictated London’s response to the war in GSWA, the Cape’s concern was altogether different. Their primary concern was economic in nature. South Africa had just been through a long costly war and the economy of the Cape was in recession.\textsuperscript{266} The poor economic position was mentioned in a report in early 1905 that the “finances of the colony were not in a position to bear so serious a strain as would be imposed on them by maintaining a large force”.\textsuperscript{267} The war in GSWA brought expense for the Cape Colony with increased border police and later the containing of refugees coming from GSWA. This would later become a diplomatic issue as the Cape tried to recover the costs of keeping the refugees. However the war also created great economic benefits for the Cape. The neutral stance of the Cape was broken by allowing supplies to GSWA and thus raising money for the colony. The Cape capitalised on its unique position in being the only country around GSWA that could supply the German army.

From the beginning the issue of refugees were seen in economic terms. When the Herero refugees were entering the colony, Milner was not concerned with humanitarian aid but rather with how much money they could make from them. Milner wrote that “an opportunity presents itself of increasing the revenues of the Protectorate [Bechuanaland] to no inconsiderable extent”.\textsuperscript{268} this was in reference to a report stating Herero refugees were willing to pay taxes. The exchange of the Shark Island lease was also a matter of economics. The Cape saw things through an

\textsuperscript{264} TNA: FO 367/8/349, Report from Colonel F. Trench to The Chief Staff Officer, Cape Colony District for transmission to the War Office, 26 December 1905.
\textsuperscript{265} Hyam, *Understanding the British Empire*, 114.
\textsuperscript{266} Dedering, “War and Mobility” 280.
\textsuperscript{267} TNA: FO 64/1646, Colonial Secretary to General Brook, February 1905.
\textsuperscript{268} TNA: FO 64/1645, High Commissioner, Viscount Milner to The Resident Commissioner, Mafeking, 14 March 1904.
economic lense and its relations with GSWA were determined by economics. Drechsler quite rightly asserts that the relationship between British and German imperialism was one of “economic co-operation”.\textsuperscript{269} He regards this as being most fundamental in their co-operation, there were however many other factors involved.

Through the selling of supplies to the German forces the Cape stood to make large amounts of money, as is detailed in the previous chapter, because the German authorities bought huge amounts of supplies. The Prime Minister of the Cape captured the attitude of his government when he said “the large expenditure by the German government is of great benefit to the Cape of Good Hope, and my Ministers are evidently anxious to do nothing to interfere with it… will shut their eyes to the real destination of the supplies and will not take steps to interfere with the existing arrangements”\textsuperscript{270} The FO agreed but only because they wanted to create no bad feeling towards Germany, whereas the Cape was thinking in purely economic terms. Any kind of intervention to end the war and thus the genocide would have lost the Cape government valuable revenue. The Cape certainly was exploiting the situation to maximise their economic benefit and realist theory can account for the Cape’s economic strategy. It was in their self-interest to supply the German army as it improved their revenue. Despite the economic benefits of the war, the Cape Ministers recognised the security problems of the rebellion and reported to the Prime Minister of the Cape that they “are doing everything possible to assist the German Government in bringing hostilities to an early termination”\textsuperscript{271} The uprising destabilised the region which meant that by supplying the German army, the Cape were backing and increasing the chances of a German victory, which would end the security concerns. For the Cape their strategy served two interests, firstly, economic interests that were tied in with their second interest, security. Both London and the Cape’s interests coincided on wanting a termination to the war as it ensured the security of the region.

Security Issues – Fear of German invasion, Boer Uprising and Native Uprising

The security concerns for the British were centred on three issues, fear of a German invasion, fear of a Boer uprising and fear of an uprising by their own natives. The

\textsuperscript{269} Drechsler “Let Us Die Fighting” 218.
\textsuperscript{270} TNA: FO 367/9/138-9, Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary, Earl of Elgin, 16 February 1906.
\textsuperscript{271} TNA: FO 367/12/324, T. Smartt, Prime Minister’s Office, Cape Town to Governor Walter Hely-Hutchinson, 30 August 1906.
British authorities in South Africa and in London were greatly concerned about the large numbers of German troops in GSWA and the possible future use of them. Coupled with this threat were the large amounts of Boers who went to work for the German army. In addition to these concerns, there was also a risk of natives in British territory rebelling. In an anarchic system, the survival of the state and therefore its security are paramount for foreign policy and explains why Britain chose not to intervene and co-operate with the Germans. The British authorities found themselves in a situation which threatened the security of their colonies in South Africa which could also have consequences back home in Europe. In both the policies of the colonies and London it was the security of the empire that was most important.

The Cape authorities were unnerved by the large amounts of troops in GSWA and there were frequent reports from High Commissioner Selborne asserting his anxiety, in May 1905 that “16,000 German soldiers to be worked up to 30,000… recruited between 3-4,000 Boers… they will therefore if they wished be in a position to squeeze us”.272 London however was less concerned and took a less alarmist view. CO replied that German troops are there just to crush the rebellion.273 Selborne was backed by Hildyard and Trench. Throughout his time as being attached to the German forces in GSWA and later as Military Attaché at the Berlin embassy, Trench consistently argued that the Germans were planning an invasion along with a Boer uprising. “I cannot escape the impression that the suppression of the native revolt is going hand in hand with preparations for the subsequent use of the protectorate troops – or a portion of them – across the Orange River, should the occasion demand it”.274 As the fighting continued Trench was “convinced the Germans are not making any serious attempts to end the revolt which they could quickly do if they wished, but are making it an excuse for keeping troops near the border with a view to a possible war between us and Germany”.275 The reason for the concern by British officials about the presence of a large contingent of German soldiers in GSWA can be attributed to the second and third assumptions in realist theory, that states possess some offensive military capacity and states can never be certain about the intentions of other states.

272 TNA: FO 64/1646, High Commissioner, Earl of Selborne to Colonial Secretary, Alfred Lyttelton, 24 May 1905.
273 TNA: FO 64/1646, Colonial Secretary, Alfred Lyttelton to High Commissioner, Earl of Selborne, 5 June 1905.
274 TNA: FO 367/11/511, Report from Colonel F. Trench to The Secretary to the War Office, 15 March 1906.
275 TNA: FO 367/8/393, FO Minutes, 14 March 1906.
Selborne, Hildyard and Trench clearly viewed the German intentions as dangerous to the British colonial possessions. It is a classic reaction to being in a world where states fear each other.

The pressure from South African officials meant that the Director of Military Operations in London assessed the situation and sent a memo to the Cabinet in June 1905, which stated:

With regard to the question as to whether the recent increase in the strength of the German forces constitutes in any way a danger to Great Britain, it is quite evident that at present the German troops are fully occupied in dealing with the natives… of the total force in the country three-quarters appear to be employed in the lines of communication… thus leaving a comparatively small number available for employment at the front… when the natives have finally settled down…probable that the strength of the German force will be reduced. If it is not, its presence, especially in the event of our being at war with Germany, might act as an incentive to malcontents within British territory to rise, but actual fighting value of the force itself would not be great so long as we retain command of the sea… question of supply contributes an important factor… practically all supplies, as well as ammunition and stores, must therefore be imported… irrespective of our being at war with Germany, she might, in the event of a rising in British South Africa, intentionally or otherwise, fail to prevent the passage from her Protectorate of armed Boers across the frontier… when assembled on British territory, form an important addition to the rebel forces.276

The WO was not overly concerned and this view was supported by Gleichen, the British military attaché in Berlin and Wade. Grey at the FO noted “I do not believe that they [Germany] are in this way deliberately preparing for a war with us”.277 The authorities in London did not take the threat as seriously as the colonial authorities and the FO prevailed in its view that no preparations were needed. However, it did play on their minds and the authorities would not have wanted to provoke Germany into an invasion. One way they could decrease the risk of a German invasion was through a lack of intervention in GSWA.

276 TNA: FO 367/8/267-8, Memorandum, General Staff, War Office, 28 June 1905.
277 TNA: FO 367/8/393, FO Minutes, 14 March 1905.
Connected to the threat of a German invasion of the Cape was the German army’s employment of large amounts of Boers to work as transport riders. The fear was that the Germans would back a Boer rebellion or use them in an invasion of the Cape. This is something which concerned both London and the Cape. The Boer War “exhausted the imperial enthusiasm of the British people” 278 and the government did not want to risk any more imperial wars. The history of Anglo-German relations in Southern Africa highlights how alliances are temporary in an anarchic world, “today’s alliance partner might be tomorrow’s enemy”.279 During the Boer war the Germans were anti-British, supporting the Boer rebels. However, during the rebellion of the Herero and Nama, as has been shown in the previous chapter, the British and Germans were collaborating. Ten years after the genocide, British forces invaded GSWA during the First World War. Southern Africa, then was a particularly volatile region and in 1904-07 Britain chose to co-operate with Germany to secure the region as it made sense according to British self-interest at the time. The large amount of Boers employed by the Germans by the army were of concern to the British officials despite the Anglo-German co-operation. As soon as war broke out in GSWA the Cape authorities became suspicious of the Boer community noting the “extreme disloyalty of the north-western Cape”280 where many Boers resided. What worried the Cape government was the recruitment of Boers by the German army. The fear was that the Germans were arming them and the Boers would return armed to the Cape. Throughout the war, the authorities in South Africa sent worried messages back to London and it appears the Boer issue concerned London more than the large numbers of German soldiers present which was expressed in this FO minute “the recruitment of large numbers of Dutch [Boers] for GSWA… the most disquieting feature in the matter”.281

The Boer issue worried the authorities to the extent that the commander of the armed forces in South Africa in May 1905 recommended that “should the home government see its way to offer the free use of Walfish Bay to the German government…the latter in case of acceptance could no longer encourage Boer plots in

278 Porter, The Lion’s Share, 178.
280 TNA: FO 64/1647, Memorandum, Colonial Office, 28 October 1905.
281 TNA: FO 64/1646, Colonial Secretary, Alfred Lyttelton to High Commissioner, Earl of Selborne, 5 June 1905.
their territory”. In that same month the restrictions to Walfish Bay were relaxed. It
seems that one factor in allowing for the relaxation of supplies was that the Cape
authorities were attempting to appease the Germans so they would not back a Boer
rebellion. It was in Britain’s interest to supply the German army for two reasons.
Firstly, to help the German army to end the uprising and thus secure the region. The
second was to give the Germans a reason to prevent them from encouraging the Boers
to undertake another rebellion in the Cape. It was crucial for the British authorities to
prevent another Boer uprising, as any threat to British rule in South Africa would
have implications for the rest of the British Empire, as it was a key communications
line to India, the jewel in the imperial crown.

Grey, in response to rumours of the German authorities supporting a Boer uprising
commented that, "it is quite possible that the Germans have encouraged these rumours
amongst the Boers, but the Germans cannot have war in South Africa without having
war in Europe and this I do not think they mean to provoke; and if we did have a war
with Germany it would not be in South Africa that the [illegible word] would be
decided”.

He recognised that it could lead to a European war and that it would not
just be contained as a colonial war. It was also clear by 1905 that the Boers and
Germans hated each other, and were constantly fighting. The Germans merely used
the Boers for their needs and did not plan an invasion with or without the Boers and
Grey saw through the rumours. However, one incident which did frighten the British
authorities was Ferreira’s Raid, where a small gang of armed Boers crossed the border
into the Cape to provoke a rebellion, this episode was “only rendered probable by the
Germans supplying him with arms”. Dederings has called the Ferreira Raid a case of
Germany playing the ‘Boer card’, rather than involving their own troops. This raid
failed and there were no more incidents involving the Boers during the 1904-07 war,
however it reminded the authorities of the possibility of another Boer rebellion,
encouraged by German backing. Whilst Grey did not think the Germans wanted to
prove a war with Britain, his comments do highlight that if there was a war in
Southern Africa between Germany and Britain then it would ultimately be settled in
Europe. Grey did not want to risk any such war in Southern Africa. Therefore

\[282\] TNA: FO 64/1646, South African Military Intelligence Report, No. 341, 1 May 1905.
\[283\] TNA: FO 367/9/145, FO Minutes, 4 April 1906.
\[284\] TNA: FO 367/8/828, Eric Barrington, Foreign Office to H.M. Ambassador British Embassy,
Berlin, 9 January 1907.
anything that could provoke that, such as an intervention on behalf of the Herero and Nama was out of the question, as this could risk war with Germany in Southern Africa and in Europe. This would risk the security and thus the survival of the state, as was seen a decade later in the First World War.

An additional fear that the British authorities had was that their own natives might rebel. This was because “the Bastards and Hottentots of GSWA are family with the Bastards and Hottentots of the Cape Colony. The Hereros are Kafirs of the great Bantu tribe, some millions of whom reside in under the British flag”.286 There were numerous reports stating that the British natives were becoming frustrated with the British helping the Germans. This threat would persist as long as the Germans did not get the rebellion in their own colony under control. Officially supplies to the Germans were restricted, with them only supposed to be going to the civilian population. However, as was demonstrated in the previous chapter, large amounts of supplies were going to the German army. This was never publically acknowledged by the British officials as they feared it would provoke their own natives. The British authorities relaxed the official rules of supply even further in 1905, when the authorities deemed it safer to give more aid to the Germans. It was in Britain’s interest to supply and co-operate with the Germans to ensure that the rebellion would be put down quickly, so that the risk of the rebellion spreading over the border would be prevented.

The large amount of German soldiers and the Boers going over to GSWA to work for the German army did pose a security issue for the British. The South African authorities were most alarmed by this threat. It was discussed at the highest levels in London and although London did not see an invasion by Germany into British South Africa as a credible threat, there was still uncertainty. Due to the large amount of German troops stationed there, an intervention was not in Britain’s interest as it could spark an invasion by the German army or a Boer rebellion backed by the Germans. If pressure would have been put on Germany then the Boers may have been encouraged to revolt or the Germans may have invaded the Cape if pressure was brought to bear on them. The fear and paranoia after the Boer War and the importance of Cape Colony in the imperial project meant that the British authorities would not risk anything which could threaten the security of their South African possessions. This

286 TNA: FO 64/1646, Intelligence Report (Military), Cape Town, 23 November 1904.
fear was well founded as during the First World War a Boer uprising happened. Realist theory explains how self-interest dictated Britain’s response, in particular the need to ensure the state’s survival and thus its security. This ensured co-operation and not intervention against the Germans to help prevent a German invasion and to encourage the Germans not to support or instigate another Boer rebellion. Suppressing the rebellion in GSWA was essential to prevent the rebellion spreading to their own natives.

**Hypocrisy of British Rule of Colonial Subjects – Colonial Collusion**

The Blue Book, compiled by the British during the First World War to present the case that Germans were unfit to colonise and therefore Britain should be allowed to govern GSWA, presents a warped view. The British authorities were no stranger to many of the methods the German authorities were using during the genocide and therefore did not find all the practices abhorrent and the Germans themselves reminded the British that they had used similar methods. Colonial genocide literature has identified settler colonialism as structurally prone to genocide as Moses concludes in using Australia as an example. Shaw challenges the view that “Britain’s relationship to genocide is constituted by its vigilance towards the genocide of others” and that the “British state...have been involved directly and indirectly in genocide”. He identifies one area of Britain’s genocidal activities was in the realm of its imperialism and colonialism. The mindset of the colonisers was therefore similar in many respects, as it was not just Germany that had committed genocides in its colonies but also Britain had done as well.

The British throughout their empire used brutal methods when dealing with rebellions. When the Cape minister Sir Lewis Mitchell commented that the Germans are the enemies of the coloured people, the German Consul General von Jacobs protested. Jacobs stated that “South African history clearly showed, the British government has taken on their part on various occasions, i.e. to punish those coloured

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287 Louis, *Great Britain and Germany’s Lost Colonies*, 51.
289 Ibid., 2417.
290 Ibid., 2425.
Tribes who are lacking of obedience and respect towards their government”. Trench, a senior British officer highlighted the distinction between fighting against Europeans and fighting against natives and praised Trotha’s change of tactics with the Nama as a “tardy recognition of the fundamental differences between civilised and savage warfare”. Lindner has argued that Trench acknowledged the “mutual consent and support of the two imperial powers in the campaign against the Herero”.

The Boer War was a brutal affair, with the British military resorting to extreme measures to combat the Boer guerrillas. The German authorities on several occasions justified what they were doing by comparing themselves to the British in the Boer War. In his September 1905 report, Trench attaches the extermination proclamation to the Herero. He wrote that a member of the German Headquarters staff had written a side note to it which “defended the proclamation and referred to the cries to heaven of the Boer women and children driven to their death in Lord Roberts concentration camps”. The Boer women and children were confined to concentration camps in an effort to break up the support network of the Boer fighters. Although these camps were not designed to exterminate the Boers, the conditions were far from humane and they suffered from high death rates. As Hochschild stated, “27,927 Boers, almost all of them women and children had died in the camps, more than twice the number of Boer soldiers killed in combat”. The high death rate in the concentration camps in GSWA were compared to the Boer War by Dernberg the German Colonial Secretary, when he explained to the Reichstag about the fate of the Nama who had suffered high death rates in the concentration camps of GSWA. He stated that the great mortality was not the result of the Nama’s confinement on Shark Island, Mr. Dernberg stated that “after the Boer War was over and the Boers in concentration camps, in a climate they were accustomed to, and people able to help themselves, the mortality was 264 per mil and among the children 433 per mil.” The Germans made out that what

291 TNA: FO 64/1646, Dr. von Jacobs, Acting Consul General for Germany to Major Brook, The Officer Administering the Government, Cape Town, 4 February 1905.
292 TNA: FO 64/1647, Report from Colonel F. Trench to The Chief Staff Officer, Cape Colony District for transmission to War Office, 10 October 1905.
293 Lindner, “Encounters Over the Border,” 15.
294 TNA: FO 64/1647, Report from Colonel F. Trench to The Secretary to the War Office, 26 September 1905.
they were doing was normal for a colonial power struggling to maintain order during a colonial rebellion.

The German army cut off the essentials for life to bring the Herero and Nama to their knees. They did this to the Herero when they cordoned off the desert and Baron von Mettelbladt stated that “all the farms which have water holes should be garrisoned” during the Nama campaign. The German authorities used Boer War strategies as a justification. It is true that in an effort to end the guerrilla fighting and break the Boers, the British cut off their food supplies by destroying crops and farm buildings and poisoned wells. The British were hardly in a moral position to criticise German methods as their own were similar. As Sarkin writes “states themselves often abstained from commenting on the treatment meted out by the colonisers, mostly likely because they feared reciprocal criticism for the various abuses conducted in their own empires”.

The shocking conditions of German concentration camps in GSWA are well documented but conditions in refugee camps in the Cape were also not pleasant. A South African military intelligence report described the large refugee camp formed at Matjeskloof in the Cape Colony. The refugees were described as being in a:

Wretched condition… and a very large proportion are dying from starvation, insufficient clothing and scurvy… they have been at Matjeskloof eight days, during which time 15 more have died, mostly young women and children. Government, beyond providing a small ration of bread, fat and sugar have done absolutely nothing for these people… doctor Cowan of Springbokfontein… says people are dying simply from want of sufficient nourishment and clothes and unless more blankets and proper food are provided this enormous death rate will continue… at Steinkopf, five or six months… over 100 died.

298 Hochschild, To End All Wars, 33.
How could the British complain about the conditions in German concentration camps when their own were not dissimilar? It highlights the disregard the British authorities had for the native populations.

It was therefore hypocritical of the British authorities to criticise German practices as they themselves often employed many of these measures especially during the Boer War and even against the refugees from GSWA. It did not seem overly harsh to the British what the Germans were doing, despite people on the ground, such as CMP officers being outraged at witnessing such appalling acts. The Germans themselves justified their actions by comparing themselves to Britain’s Boer War tactics. The FO knew that in an event which threatens the security of the state, measures are taken to quell rebellions and even extreme measures were accepted. German sovereignty meant they could do what was required to bring the colony under control and under realist theory the survival of the state is paramount. It is rational for states to use this type of violence in the survival of the state as states will do anything to maintain power as the Germans demonstrated in GSWA but also as Britain did two years prior during the Boer War. The FO understood this.

Racism and Indifference to Genocide

Racism was prevalent in the European world view at the turn of the twentieth century. The British were no exception and this racism coloured their view of the world. As a coloniser, Britain subscribed to the view that they were superior to the natives they presided over. As Trench aptly wrote, “the maintenance of the prestige of the white man is one of the principles, all over the world, of our administration”. This, he claimed was the reason why there was “extreme improbability… of our assisting natives against Europeans”.301 Britain could not support the Herero and Nama or indeed intervene on their behalf because that would undermine their own position as a coloniser. The natives were seen as distinctly different to the Europeans and this difference meant seeing them as inferior, as Grey himself noted in July 1906, “the natives do not have our European ways”.302

The treatment of whites and natives was different. The British interned the refugees and Herero and Nama fighters but did not intern the German soldiers that

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301 TNA: FO 64/1647, Report from Colonel F. Trench to The Secretary to the War Office, 13 September 1905.
302 TNA: FO 367/27/344, FO Minutes, 5 July 1906.
crossed the border in the same manner. In a FO instruction from November 1904 it is clear that the lives of whites were more important, by stating it was only necessary to intervene “where the lives of white men are in evident danger from uncivilised or semi-civilised tribes and of confining themselves to the rescue and removal of those who have been in danger”. This demonstrates that the FO felt that the whites were only worth saving. The British authorities saw the Herero and Nama who rebelled as being in the wrong, as the High Commissioner Hely-Hutchinson stated when “Presgrave, a white man actively assisting the natives in GSWA in their rebellion against the German authorities, it has to be taken into consideration in deciding whether any formal application should be made to the German government for redress. In my opinion, it puts him out of court”. No representations were made and this shows that the British authorities were indeed racist, viewing the Herero and Nama as inferior from themselves.

Lindner has written that British officials in the FO were highly critical about Germany’s conduct during the war. An analysis of FO minutes reveals this was not the case. Throughout the numerous reports going to the FO from 1904-07, only twice did any FO official comment in the minutes about the suffering of the Herero and Nama. The transfer of Shark Island to GSWA was approved by the FO, despite them knowing what was taking place there. This shows the sheer indifference to the fate of the Herero and Nama. Realist theory can explain this indifference, as it assumes that states act rationally, it was simply not rational for Britain to support an intervention. “The actions of states are determined not by moral principles and legal commitments but by considerations of interest and power”. It was thus not an issue for the FO to transfer Shark Island to the Germans, for the FO it was simply in their economic and geo-political interests to exchange it with Germany, it did not matter what took place on that island. According to realist theory a rational calculation of cost and benefits is taken in foreign policy. Protesting to Germany about how they treated their natives would offer no benefit to the British state. It could have had the opposite effect of endangering damaging relations with Germany and thus exposing themselves to

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303 TNA: FO 64/1645, FO Report, E. Gye, 18 November 1904.
304 TNA: FO 64/1647, Governor, Walter Hely-Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary, Alfred Lyttelton, 13 November 1905.
307 Ibid., 51.
security risks. What Germany did to her own natives, was not of concern to the British FO. This is why there was indifference to the many reports detailing the atrocious treatment of the Herero and Nama.

This indifference and lack of any desire to comment on German methods to the German government, show that the FO did not think the methods used were out of the ordinary and worth commenting on. The racist views of the FO impeded any thought that the natives were not to be dealt with in an extreme manner. As Hyam writes “there is little place in governmental decision-making for acting upon doctrinaire principles or the fiercer dictates of morality”308. As Germany was a white European coloniser and the Herero and Nama were colonised natives, the British authorities by default took the Germans side, as assisting rebels in a native uprising would have undermined their own colonial project. As Lindner has argued, the interest before “1914 in African colonies was certainly to define a white European identity against the challenge of the indigenous population and to uphold European supremacy in Africa”.309 It was in Britain’s interest for Germany to regain control of its colony.

Summary
This chapter has summarised the main themes of the empirical analysis with the theoretical model. Realist theory explains that states act in their own state interests. For both London and the British colonies in South Africa policy was determined by their interests. Drechsler puts the policy of the British purely down to economic reasons,310 which is partly true but does not fully explain why Britain co-operated with the Germans. Dedering’s assessment is much closer to the mark as he encompasses the major reasons why the British authorities acted the way they did. Dedering writes that there were three issues at stake, global political considerations, political and security concerns of British South Africa and the economic interests of the Cape Colony.311 The argument of this chapter is that it was London’s interests which dominated and their primary concern was with maintaining and even improving relations with Germany and to protect the security of their South African possessions. This outcome fits with Hyam’s model, as the centre level (London) takes

308 Hyam, *Understanding the British Empire*, 35.
310 Dedering, “War and Mobility,” 218.
311 Ibid., 278.
precedence. The Cape took the war as an opportunity to revive its economy, until they became entangled in a dispute over the maintenance of the refugees.

Security concerns played a major role with the fear of the large German forces and in particular the threat of a Boer uprising sponsored by the Germans and the threat of the rebellion spreading to their own natives. No one in the British authorities wanted to risk another war in Southern Africa and it was therefore essential to ensure the security of British overseas possessions. It was a rational policy choice to co-operate with Germany in suppressing the rebellion as it risked the entire security of Southern Africa. Germany were not seen as the enemy by the FO in 1904 and felt no obligation or duty to speak up for the Herero and Nama despite reliable information about their treatment.

Realist theory accounts for the indifference displayed by the FO towards the horrendous treatment of the Herero and Nama. This is because “ethical considerations must give way to ‘reasons of the state’ (raison d’état)”\(^{312}\). There was no benefit for speaking up for the Herero and Nama for the British and it was not in their interests, it simply was not an issue to the FO that the Germans treated their natives in a terrible manner. The FO also knew that when a rebellion takes place states will use all their power to suppress it, as was highlighted during the Boer War.

State sovereignty is one of the major hindrances to intervention during genocide. An incident in May 1905 took place where CMP officers had witnessed the German military’s shooting of four women. They complained to Neylan, the commander of the border force about it. Neylan’s response to the complaint demonstrates how sovereignty was an issue, “police [CMP] are not permitted to cross Border Line, and any interference with measures considered necessary by the German Forces in GSWA must be discountenanced”.\(^{313}\) It was therefore entirely up to the Germans what they did in their own territory.

In sum, realist theory provides an explanation for the co-operation in GSWA. Britain’s interests coincided with Germany’s interests in 1904-07 which enabled their co-operation to suppress a security problem which posed problems for both states. London’s interests were to appease Germany and to ensure the security of the empire, it therefore had no interest in intervening on behalf the Herero and Nama which

\(^{312}\) Donnelly, “Realism,” 31.

\(^{313}\) NA: FO 64/1646, Lieutenant Colonel Neylan to Sub-Inspector Burges, 3 May 1905.
accounts for the FO indifference to their suffering. Britain had more to gain through co-operation with the Germans in terms of power, security and economic stability.
5. Conclusion

This thesis has investigated Britain’s reaction to the genocide of the Herero and Nama in GSWA. The war in GSWA had a variety of direct impacts on the colonies in British South Africa and also had implications back in London. The problems the British authorities faced were based on the security, geo-political and economic implications of the war.

The FO records demonstrate that the British authorities in London were given reports that were highly accurate and knew about every stage of the genocide. Many of the reports called them atrocities and described German policy as one of extermination against the Herero and Nama. In particular Trench’s and Wade’s reports give some of the most accurate and graphic accounts, even obtaining accurate death rates for Shark Island. The FO were in no doubt about the extent of the suffering and the extreme measures the Germans were taking in GSWA.

Britain’s reaction was determined by different actors in the imperial system. Hyam’s model shows the interaction between the periphery, the colonies, who had their own pressures and interests, and the centre, London, who had differing interests. Policy was initially formulated by the Cape government in the Cape Colony and the High Commissioner for South Africa in Bechuanaland. The Cape set out their official policy of neutrality, as the safest policy. As the uprising in GSWA became more serious, relations with Germany were at stake and so, the FO began having an active role in policy towards the war in GSWA. As is seen in Hyam’s model, the FO did have primacy and produced the strategy and made decisions on how policy would be formulated towards the events taking place in GSWA. What is clear is that the official policy of neutrality was broken and the attitude of the Cape towards GSWA was “benevolently neutral”. The Anglo-German co-operation went further than has previously been mentioned in the literature. It is clear that the German army was supplied almost entirely from British South Africa and the many concessions granted to the German authorities, such as not making representations over border violations or interning the refugees coming over to British territory helped the Germans tremendously. The most disturbing finding is that Shark Island was owned by the British and leased to and then transferred to GSWA in 1906. Britain’s actions made them tacitly complicit in the genocide and it is clear that the British were backing a German victory.
To recapitulate the theoretical model’s expectations, the first being that Britain would co-operate with Germany as this was in the interest of Britain and that an intervention would risk Britain’s security. The second expectation was that the FO would be indifferent to the suffering of the Herero and Nama because ethical and moral concerns were subservient to the higher interests of the state. The third expectation was that using Hyam’s interaction model, it would show how policy was formulated between the two levels of the centre and the periphery and as the centre is the apex of the decision making it is expected that London will provide the ultimate strategy and decisions. The thematic analysis has confirmed these expectations. The theoretical model explained why the British authorities acted the way they did. The British authorities acted logically according to realist theory and Hyam’s interaction model. Therefore, the FO had no choice but to act the way it did, they were indifferent to the suffering of the Herero and Nama because they had higher interests. There was no question that a European coloniser would not help its fellow coloniser against a native uprising. Foreign policy is “based on a rational calculation of costs and benefits”\(^{314}\) and there was simply no benefit to helping the Herero and Nama, the rational choice for Britain was to support the Germans and end the uprising whatever the cost to the Herero and Nama.

The international arena exists in a state of anarchy and assumes that states act to ensure their survival and consequently act in their own states interests. The FO had to calculate what its interests were. One of the main interests was to ensure relations with Germany were not disrupted, that was in the national interest between 1904-07, as Germany was not yet an enemy. By 1904 Britain found itself in a new situation in Europe. The balance of power was shifting with Germany rising as an economic and military giant. London had to take this into account and foreign policy was at that time to maintain good relations with Germany. London was also aware of Britain’s weakening position in the world and the Boer War had stretched imperial rule. Consequently the fragile security of British South Africa had to be maintained. For London it was primarily about geo-politics and security. The FO had to secure British South Africa, which was of paramount importance, as another Boer rebellion or a native uprising in British South Africa would cost money and reserves. Germany and Britain’s interests coincided which enabled a partnership. There was also an

\(^{314}\) Donnelly, “Realism,” 51.
underlying fear, although not taken too seriously by London, that the Germans might invade British territory or aid a Boer rebellion. There was a real fear of the rebellion spreading to their own natives. It was therefore rational that the FO would co-operate and aid the German authorities as much as they could. The FO even forced the Cape to continue with supplies to Germany when the Cape wanted to pressure Germany in order for them to pay for the maintenance of refugees.

The Cape, on their part, acted according to realist theory. It was rational for them to co-operate with Germany on two levels, both on security and economic terms. The war in GSWA gave the Cape a chance to gain economically from the revenue generated by supplying the Germans, which was needed in the aftermath of the Boer War. The Cape along with the FO wanted an early termination to the war for security reasons. The whole of Southern Africa was destabilised by the war in GSWA and it was not in the Cape’s or the FO’s interest for the uprising to continue in GSWA despite the economic advantages.

Realist theory provides an explanation as to why there was no intervention by the British despite their claim to be a moral empire. Realist’s point out that “the actions of states are determined not by moral principles…but by considerations of interest and power”.315 The suffering of the Herero and Nama was not of interest to the FO. It was not rational to intervene on behalf of them because that went against the interests of the British state of security in the region and maintaining relations with Germany. It is realpolitik, as Bartrop and Totten state, that has been responsible for the lack of interventions for genocide.316 This is something that has hindered interventions in subsequent genocides. For the FO, Germany could do whatever it wanted in its own territory to quell an uprising, just as Britain had done two years prior in the Boer War.

As mentioned previously, Britain’s role in the genocide was one of co-operation which made them tacitly complicit. The current British government do not regard the events in GSWA as genocide and in a correspondence from this author to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the official in charge of the South Africa desk made it clear that these events were not genocide and rather atrocities.317 In this way, the British government can protect themselves. The former European colonists are

316 Bartrop and Totten, "Realpolitik," 19.
317 Hugo Frost, Desk Officer, Southern Africa Section, Foreign & Commonwealth Office to Daniel Grimshaw, Letter Correspondence, 8 May 2014.
keen not to open “Pandora’s Box” on colonial era abuses.\textsuperscript{318} As \textit{realpolitik} is still a major hindrance in genocide prevention and intervention, the FCO should take note of Britain’s role and response to the genocide of the Herero and Nama and the role \textit{realpolitik} plays in indifference to genocide.

This thesis has aimed to bring about a more comprehensive understanding of Britain’s role in the genocide of the Herero and Nama, there is however scope for further research to be conducted. The National Archives in London have a vast array of documents relating to the events in GSWA in 1904-08. There are more volumes within the FO records which could be utilised for instance in research after the year 1907 when this study ends. The WO files contain large amounts of records relating to the period, which were not used in this thesis. There is still much work to be done on this issue.

In the final analysis, Britain co-operated with the Germans during the genocide of the Herero and Nama because it suited its interests. The FO’s geo-political interest of maintaining relations with Germany and its security interests enabled collaboration between the two countries. The FO remained indifferent to the suffering of the Herero and Nama because moral considerations gave way to the higher interests of the state. Realist theory provided an explanation for Britain’s response. For the British authorities their policy of “benevolent neutrality” had worked, there was no native or Boer rebellion, nor was there a German invasion and relations with Germany were not too badly affected and the authorities in the Cape gained economically from the situation.

\textsuperscript{318} Sarkin, \textit{Colonial Genocide}, 155.
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