

# My second Presidency 1888-1893 - Paul Kruger

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13 July 2014

In Chapter X of his memoirs exiled ZAR President writes of his problems with Rhodes, and the Uitlanders

## CHAPTER X

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### PAUL KRUGER'S SECOND PRESIDENCY: 1888-1893

FOR the new elections writs were issued in my name and Joubert's. Both of us accepted the candidature, but I was re-elected by a large majority and, in May 1888, was sworn in as State President for the second time. In the session of the Volksraad of that year, instead of the former Secretary to the Government, E. Bok, Dr. Leyds was now elected State Secretary, and the former, on my motion, was appointed Secretary to the Executive Raad, a post which was created for this purpose.

In the first year of my new presidency, an event occurred which might easily have led to the most serious complications. Cecil Rhodes, had at that time begun to realize his imperialistic dreams, that is, his efforts to extend the British authority towards the north of Africa. At that time, Matabeleland and Mashonaland, to the north of the Transvaal, were governed by the Zulu Chief Lobengula, the son of Moselikatse, who had been driven out by the earlier settlers. But Moselikatse, the once so hated and cruel enemy of the Boers, had in later years entered into friendly relations with the Republic, and this friendship was continued under his son. Lobengula was even on very good terms with the Boers and often came into contact with the burghers of the Republic, who hunted in his territories.

In 1887, he sent one of his principal indunas to Pretoria with the request that the South African Republic would appoint a consul in his domains. This wish was granted, and Piet Grobler, who was well acquainted with the Matabele Kaffirs, was sent to represent the Republic. Before he started, I drafted a treaty by which Lobengula placed his country under the protection of the Republic.

Grobler took this document with him and, on his arrival at Bulawayo, read it to Lobengula, who fully agreed to the treaty, but asked for a few days' delay, to summon his indunas and hear their opinion before signing.

Grobler thought he would make use of this delay to meet his wife, who was on her way to join him, and who was at that time on the Crocodile River.

On the road, he came upon an armed detachment of Khama's Kaffirs, who were at war with Lobengula.

A patrol of these blacks were the first to approach him: he rode straight up to them, to ask what they wanted, but they all took to flight. Grobler caught one of them and told him to go and fetch the captain or leader of the detachment, so that he might hear what their object was. He himself went on a few hundred yards from his wagons to meet the main body, which immediately opened fire upon him.

While running back to his wagon, he was hit in the leg and fell. A young Kaffir girl called Lettering ran up and placed herself between the Kaffirs and the wounded man, so as to cover him with her

own body. Grobler's companions, consisting of five or six men, now opened fire and soon drove the enemy to flight. Grobler was carried to his wagon and was able to resume his journey towards the Crocodile River, but died of his wounds a few days after his arrival.

There is no doubt whatever that this murder was due to the instigation of Cecil Rhodes and his clique.

It was Rhodes's object to obtain possession of the South African interior, and he was afraid lest his plans should be frustrated by Grobler's appointment. A long correspondence ensued between the Government of the South African Republic and the British High Commissioner concerning this incident, for Khama was under British protection. In order to avoid an open conflict, the Government of the Republic was obliged to content itself with an arrangement by which Khama was to pay Grobler's widow a pension of 200 a year.

In order to explain Rhodes's connection with this -matter and with the whole further history of my own struggles and those of the Republic, I must here refer to the origin of the Chartered Company and the aims and efforts of the Rhodes party. Cecil Rhodes is the man who bore by far the most prominent part in the disaster that struck the country.

In spite of the high eulogiums passed upon him by his friends, he was one of the most unscrupulous characters that have ever existed. The Jesuitical maxim that " the end justifies the means " formed his only political creed. This man was the curse of South Africa. He had made his fortune by diamond speculations at Kimberley, and the amalgamation of the Kimberley diamond-mines put him in possession of enormous influence in the financial world. Later, he became a member of the Cape Parliament and, in 1890, rose to be prime minister of Cape Colony.

But, long before this, he had turned his attention to Central South Africa; for it was due to him that Goshenland and Stellaland became incorporated with Cape Colony. He looked upon these domains as a thoroughfare, a kind of Suez Canal, to Central South Africa.[1] As early as 1888, he induced Sir Hercules Robinson, the High Commissioner of that time, to enter into a treaty with Lobengula, the chief of the Matabele. Later, he managed to turn this to his advantage when, through the payment of a large sum of money, supplemented by a quantity of fire-arms, he succeeded in obtaining a concession from Lobengula for himself. This concession merely gave him the right to search for gold or other metals in the country ; but he used it to obtain a firm footing in Matabeleland, with the intention of preventing the extension of the South African Republic in this direction.

He soon saw that he would not be able to carry out his plans without protection from England.

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[1 In the early days of Kruger's presidency, Rhodes tried to win him as an ally. On his way from Beira to Cape Town, he called on Kruger at Pretoria and said: "We must work together. I know the Republic wants a seaport: you must have Delagoa Bay."

Kruger replied:

"How can we work together there? The harbor belongs to the Portuguese, and they won't hand it over."

"Then we must simply take it," said Rhodes.

"I can't take away other people's property," said Kruger. "If the Portuguese won't sell the harbour, I wouldn't take it even if you gave it me; for ill-gotten goods are accursed."

Rhodes then ceased his endeavors to gain Kruger over. - **Note by the Editor of the German edition.]**

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So he went to England to obtain a charter giving him the right to certain monopolies and independent action.

He procured it without much difficulty, for he found bribery a useful ally when fine speeches were insufficient for his purpose, and he was not the man to spare money if some object was to be attained.

It is certain that a number of influential persons in England received shares in his Chartered Company. He even tried to win over the Irish faction in Parliament, which was not at all in harmony with his plans, by a present of ,10,000.'

Who knows how many more large sums he spent with the same object! This will never be revealed. Rhodes was capital incarnate. No matter how base, no matter how contemptible, be it lying, bribery or treachery, all and every means were welcome to him, if they led to the attainment of his objects.

Rhodes obtained his charter, although one might well ask what rights England possessed over this district to enable her to grant a charter; and a company was formed with a capital of one million sterling.

Soon afterwards, in 1890, Rhodes fitted out an expedition to take possession of "his" territory. The protest of the Matabele king was ignored. Rhodes took possession of Mashonaland, and built several forts: Fort Charter, Fort Salisbury and Fort Victoria. It soon became evident, however, that Mashonaland was of little value, either agriculturally or as a mining district. Under the impression that Matabeleland possessed valuable gold-fields, he set about to annex it. In order to do so, he must involve Lobengula in a war, and he succeeded but too well.

It is affirmed in Africa that it was Rhodes, through his administrator, who informed Lobengula that the Mashonas had stolen cattle, and that it was his duty to punish the raiders. Lobengula at once dispatched a band of his people, as was the custom in such cases, to revenge the robbery. Rhodes used this fact as an excuse to demand Lobengula's punishment, on account of the massacre of the Mashonas. Whether there be truth in this statement or not, one thing is certain: Rhodes had his way and his war. A force under Dr. Jameson quickly dispersed the Matabele; the Maxim guns cut them down by hundreds.

It is said that Lobengula died near the Zambesi during his flight. What must have been the thoughts of the black potentate, during those last few hours of his life, when they dwelt on the arts of a so-called Christian nation? Such thoughts never influenced a man like Rhodes. He forthwith explored Matabeleland in all directions in search of gold, but with poor results.

So he deliberately made up his mind to possess himself of the rich gold-fields of the South African Republic, the highroad to which was the possession of South Africa itself. History knows the successful issue of this base design\*.,! In 1888, President Brand of the Orange Free State died, after having been President for twenty five years. In his stead was elected Francis William Reitz, who afterwards became State Secretary of the South African Republic: a man esteemed by all who know him; one of those men of whom we often read in books, but whom we seldom meet in real life; a man of superior and noble character, whose one aim in life is to serve his country: in a word, a man whom it is a privilege to know.

Shortly after his inauguration as State President, in 1889, a second conference took place between the Governments of the two Republics, with the object of establishing a closer alliance between the two states. The conference met at Potchefstroom and had a very different result from the first. The two Republics bound themselves to come to each other's assistance in case the independence of either should be wantonly threatened from without.

A commercial treaty was also concluded, establishing mutual free trade, with the exception of the products and other goods on which the South African Republic was bound to levy import duties in order to protect the monopolies which she had granted. An arrangement touching the railways, which I had proposed at the first conference, was now accepted.

In 1888, I again visited Johannesburg, where I met with a very friendly reception. In the addresses that were presented to me, I was asked to establish a municipality and to increase the number of

judicial officers. This last request I at once granted by appointing Dr. Jorissen as a special judge for Johannesburg (the other demands were fulfilled later).

After granting this request, I never ceased thinking how I could meet the wishes of the new population for representation, without injuring the Republic or prejudicing the interests of the older burghers. For, although all the complaints of the Uitlanders always met with a friendly hearing from the Executive Raad, which had received full powers from the Volksraad to legislate for the population of the gold-fields, and although as much was granted as possible, nevertheless it was evident to me that some means must be found to give the Uitlanders a voice in the representation of the country.

I believed that I had discovered this means in the institution of a Second Volksraad, and it was my own idea, for which I made myself alone responsible, that to this body might be entrusted the discussion of all questions, such as, for instance, the gold laws, telegraphs, etc., which were mainly of interest to the new arrivals.

In this manner I endeavored to open the way to the new population for the legal presentation and remedy of their grievances. Hitherto they had been prevented by the conditions necessary for obtaining the franchise. The constitution prescribed that a foreigner must have been registered for five years on the field cornets' lists before he could be naturalized. My proposal for a Second Volksraad involved this alteration in the law, that only two years' registration would be necessary for purposes of naturalization and that the naturalized person would then have the right to vote for members of the Second Volksraad and for all officials holding elective posts, with the exception of the State President, the Commandant General and the members of the First Volksraad.

Any person enjoying this right for two years, therefore, in four years in all after his registration on the field cornets' lists as an inhabitant of the Republic, would become entitled to be himself elected a member of the Second Volksraad. Ten years later, he was to receive full burgher rights, that is to say, the same civic rights as those possessed by the old burghers.

This proposal met with lively opposition, as some members of the Volksraad looked upon it as a piece of class legislation, as, in a certain measure, it undoubtedly was, while others were of the opinion that it gave too many rights to the foreigners. The matter was adjourned in order that the opinion of the people might be taken. The burghers, however, approved of the proposal, which was a proof of their confidence in their President; for I feel sure that such a proposal would never have been carried if it had been moved by any other than myself. In re198 KRUGER'S SECOND PRESIDENCY sponse to the public wish, the law was now passed, by a large majority, at the next annual session of the Raad.

The Uitlanders contended in the English press, and Mr. Chamberlain made the contention his own, that the Second Volksraad was of no practical use.

It is only necessary to say that, notwithstanding that the laws and resolutions of the Second Volksraad had to be submitted to the ratification of the First Volksraad, the latter body only once rejected a decision of the Second Volksraad, and that was in the matter of the dispute about the bewaarplaatsen, when the Second Volksraad wished to grant the mining rights of an estate, without more ado, to a tenant who had leased only the surface rights.

It must not be forgotten either that these alterations of the constitution in favor of the Uitlanders were introduced by myself and accepted by the Volksraad in spite of the fact that, only a little earlier, an incident had occurred at Johannesburg of a character very insulting to me and to the burghers.

I was going to Norval's Point, on the Orange River, to meet the High Commissioner in the matter of the Swaziland question. On the road, I stopped at Johannesburg, where, as usual, a deputation came to lay its grievances before me. It was quite impossible for me to concede all the wishes of these people on the spot. One of the deputation threw the reproach in my face that I treated the new

population with contempt. I angrily answered:

"I have no contempt for the new population, but only for men like yourself."

In the evening, a riot took place in front of Mr. van Brandis's house, where I was staying: the flag of the Republic was pulled down and torn to pieces.

It is easy to see that this provoked the old population almost beyond endurance, but I quieted them by saying that the inhabitants in general were loyal burghers and that the scandal must be laid to the charge of a few rioters. When I met the High Commissioner at Norval's Point, he spoke to me of the riot at Johannesburg, and I said:

"Yes, Sir Henry; you see, those people remind me of a baboon I once had, which was so fond of me that he would not let any one touch me. But one day we were sitting round the fire, and unfortunately the beast's tail got caught in the fire. He now flew at me furiously, thinking that I was the cause of his accident. The Johannesburgers are just like that. They have burnt their fingers in speculations and now they want to revenge themselves on Paul Kruger." A fresh occasion for provoking foreign hatred against me presented itself at the time of the septennial commemoration of the Declaration of Independence at Paarde Kraal. I made a long speech to some thousands of people in which I set forth how I viewed the history of my people in the light of God's Word. I began by addressing my hearers:

"People of the Lord, you old people of the country, you foreigners, you new-comers, yes, even you thieves and murderers!"

The Uitlanders, who were always on the watch to invent grievances against the President and the Government, were furious at this address, and declared that I had called them thieves and murderers, which was, of course, an absolute lie. I merely wished to say that I called upon everybody, even thieves and murderers, if there were any such in the meeting, to humble themselves before God and to acknowledge the wonders in God's dealings with the people of the Republic. If any insult was conveyed in these words, it applied just as much to the old as to the new population, as any sensible person, who took the trouble to follow my train of thought, would have perceived for himself.

The Swaziland question, in connection with which I had gone to meet Sir Henry Loch, had given the Republic great trouble. Swaziland formerly belonged to the Republic, but was taken from it by the Royal Commission of 1881. Except on the east, it is bounded on every side by the South African Republic. Some of the burghers had obtained certain concessions from the Swazi king, Umbandine.

Other persons, mostly adventurers, demanded similar concessions, and were so great a nuisance and annoyance to the King that he asked the British Government to send him an adviser. No time was lost in complying with his request, as this would bring Swaziland within the sphere of British influence. Offy Shepstone, son of the Sir Theophilus Shepstone who annexed the Republic in 1877, was appointed adviser to Umbandine by the High Commissioner. But the confusion in the land grew worse and worse, till at last the real government of the country was handed over to a kind of committee consisting of Boers and Englishmen. It was obvious that such a condition of things could not last, and Sir Hercules Robinson did not appear at all averse to the annexation of the country by the Republic. Needless to say that this arrangement did not suit the Jingo and "humanitarians" in England; so the British Government decided to dispatch Sir Francis de Winton as a special envoy to look into the affairs of Swaziland.

General Joubert had an interview, on behalf of the South African Republic, with Sir Francis de Winton, at which he explained the reason why the Transvaal Government desired to incorporate Swaziland with the Republic. After the British Government had received de Winton's report, they commissioned Sir Henry Loch, the new Governor of Cape Colony, to communicate with me.

We met in conference at Blignautspont; and Rhodes was also present at the meeting. I did all I could to induce the British Government to agree to the incorporation of Swaziland, as well as of

Sambaanland and Umbigesaland, with which the Republic had already come to an understanding. Sir Henry Loch did all in his power to obtain the consent of the Republic to a scheme for a railway which Natal desired to build as far as Johannesburg in order to bring about a general South African customs-union. I would not listen to the proposal of a general customs-union; not because I was opposed to the scheme, but because my first condition was always my demand for a port: port first, customs-union after.

I agreed to the railway scheme, not on any special grounds, but because I desired to meet Natal in the matter. But I declined to treat this railway scheme, as a condition in entirely different questions; and with regard to the tariff question, it was necessary that I should first put myself in communication with the Portuguese Government, as there already existed an understanding between myself and them on the subject.

In fact, the Portuguese Government had only determined to build the Delagoa Bay Railway on condition that no new line to Johannesburg should be built that would be shorter than the Delagoa Line. The outcome of the conference was that the High Commissioner agreed to draft a deed which he was to submit to me. At the same time he expressed the wish that Dr. Leyds, who was present at the negotiations, should remain behind and be present also at the drafting of the document in order to explain it, should it be necessary to throw additional light upon any particular point for my benefit. He was then to sign a declaration that he had been present at the drafting of the deed. Thereupon the conference broke up.

Shortly afterwards Sir Henry Loch sent me his draft proposals, containing the following main points: Swaziland to be governed in common; the Republic to receive permission to build a railway as far as Kosi Bay. A strip of land, three miles broad, was ceded to her for this purpose.

But the British Government retained the protectorate over this district and over Kosi Bay as well: a condition which made the acceptance of the offer by the Republic impossible from the commencement;

The Transvaal, besides, to receive permission to annex a small piece of land, the so-called Little Free State, situated between the Republic and Swaziland.

Sir Henry Loch insisted that this was the understanding at which he had arrived with me at Blignautspont, and that Dr. Leyds, after the closing of the conference, had expressed himself satisfied with the conditions and had signed them in proof of his agreement. Both Dr. Leyds and I disputed this assertion, and I refused to accept the conditions of the draft.

Loch threatened that, unless it was accepted, the British Government would avail themselves of their right, under the London Convention, to send an armed force into Swaziland.

Shortly after, Jan Hofmeyer came to Pretoria, in order to mediate, and, with his assistance, the first Swaziland Convention was agreed upon. Needless to say that the Republic received very little benefit indeed: nay, she lost; for she was prevented from making any treaty in future with the natives in the north and north-west.

Further, she had to agree not to put any difficulties in the way of a railway connection with Natal and here we again see Cecil Rhodes's hand to assist the Chartered Company to the best of her ability in the north. This last condition, as we shall see later, gave rise to great difficulties.

The Volksraad accepted the agreement, but expressed its regret very freely at the absence of mutual accommodation which the Republic had encountered on the part of England. The unsatisfactory state of things resulting from this agreement lasted until 1893, when a second Swaziland Convention was concluded.

Two events occurred during my second presidency which called forth great opposition against myself. The first of these was the Adendorff trek; the second a conference on church matters. The Adendorff trek had its origin in a concession which a certain Adendorff and Mr. B. Foster, jun., had obtained in Banjailand and which they vainly endeavored to sell to Cecil Rhodes. Rhodes declared

that the concession was illegal, whereupon its owners resolved to trek to the territory which had been leased to them.

The High Commissioner and Rhodes both opposed this trek, as they considered that it endangered the interests of the Chartered Company, and they asked me, in accordance with the Swaziland Convention, to forbid the trekkers to carry out their project. I immediately published a declaration against the trek and issued a proclamation in which the burghers throughout the country were strictly forbidden to take part in it.

Any one disobeying the proclamation was threatened with the utmost rigors of the law. A section of the burghers openly protested against this proclamation, and, although I knew that it was likely to cost me some of my popularity, I was in honor bound to observe the decisions of the Swaziland Convention, little though they appealed to me. How dear this attitude cost me was shown at the next presidential election; for, although my opponents brought up many other grievances against me, the fact that I had prevented the Adendorff trek was one of the chief reasons that caused a number of burghers to vote for my opponents. This question afterwards came up for discussion in the Volksraad, and, in the debate that followed, many influential members spoke against the proclamation, including the late General Joubert and Mr. S. Chalk Burger, who became Acting President of the Republic during the late war, after my departure for Europe. Eventually, however, the Volksraad accepted the proclamation and nothing came of the whole movement, this being due, to a great extent, to my endeavors to see the burghers personally, whenever I could, and persuade them from joining the trek.

At the same time that the Republic had to encounter these difficulties in external politics, quarrels arose in regard to church matters.

After the war of 1881, the burghers felt the necessity of consolidation in ecclesiastical matters, and the result was a union between the Hervormde and the Nederduitsch-Gereformeerde Churches. The third evangelical church community, the Christelijk-Gereformeerde, or so-called Doppe Church, of which I was a member, had hesitated to join the union, and was therefore not directly mixed up in these quarrels. Shortly after the union, fresh differences of opinion arose, and several burghers, whose leader was Christian Joubert, wished to have no more to do with the union and decided to remain in the Hervormde Church. Others followed later on, and their leader was A. D. W. Wolmarans, who was at that time in Europe as a delegate. Difficult questions naturally arose regarding the right of ownership to church property, for the members who separated from the Hervormde Church laid claims to its property, as did those who remained faithful to the union. It is not surprising that this situation gave rise to bitter disputes and many quarrels.

In order to put a stop to these bickerings, I sent a circular note to the pastors and elders of the different parties, inviting them to a conference at which an attempt would be made to remove these difficulties. It took place, in 1891, in the House of the Second Volksraad, I myself presiding. All parties were represented. In my opening speech, I asked them to look upon me, not as the State President, but as a brother and fellow-Christian, anxious to do my share to put an end to the unhappy state of things by removing the cause of quarrel. I tried hard to restore the union, thinking that, by doing so, I should succeed in healing the breach. But it soon became obvious that my attempts were doomed to failure, and I accordingly passed on to the question of the right of property. But here, too, all my efforts to reconcile their differences proved fruitless.

The conference closed without any satisfactory solution of the vexed question having been arrived at.

Although I really instituted this conference with the best intentions, it was nevertheless employed as a weapon against me by my enemies. I was reproached at the next presidential election with being an autocrat and with wishing to interfere in everything, even in church matters.

This new presidential election was due in the following year. This time, there were three candidates in the field: myself, Joubert and Chief Justice Kotze ; and it proved the most violent electoral

struggle through which the Republic ever passed. I was accused by the Opposition of being autocratic, of squandering the national money, of giving away all rights and privileges in the form of concessions and of awarding all the offices of state to the Hollanders.

Reproaches upon reproaches were also hurled against the Opposition. It is far from pleasant to carry back one's thoughts to that time, when the two chief men in the Republic were painted so black that, if only the tenth part of the accusations flung at us had been based upon truth, neither of us would have been worthy to enjoy the confidence of the people for another hour.

Source: [http://www.politicsweb.co.za/politicsweb/view/politicsweb/en/page72308?oid=648143&sn=Marketingweb+detail&pid=90389&utm\\_source=Po](http://www.politicsweb.co.za/politicsweb/view/politicsweb/en/page72308?oid=648143&sn=Marketingweb+detail&pid=90389&utm_source=Po)