



Orange Free State — Va-PoReg Country Report

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04/10/1854 Start Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy: The Orange Free State was established by Boers who left the Cape Colony in the late 1830s. It is located across the Orange River from the Cape Colony and shares borders with British Basutoland, Natal, Transvaal, and Griqualand West. The republic declared its independence on 02/23/1854, and adopted a constitution on 04/10/1854 (Keltie 1898, Meredith/Shaw 2007). From 03/29/1854 until 05/31/1902 it was called the Republic of Orange Free State. From 1899 until 1902 Orange Free State (and the Transvaal) was occupied in the Second Anglo-Boer-War. In the Boer War, Britain invested heavily in resources and personnel, ultimately gaining the upper hand by June 1900 (Evans et al. 2003, Meredith/Shaw 2007). The British government declared the official annexation of the full territory of the Orange Free State on 10/06/1900, even though they had not yet occupied the full territory, nor defeated the Free State forces.¹ In the elections only the minority of white male settlers were allowed to vote (Skovsholm 1999: 237-238).² Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. For this time competitive elections are scored (LIED). LIED identifies political liberties as absent in this timeframe. Based on Polity5's assessment, during this period, the executive was either equal to or subordinate to other institutions, demonstrating strong constraints on decision-making authority.

05/31/1902 End Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy/Start Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of United Kingdom, Electoral Oligarchy]: On this date the Treaty of Vereeniging was signed, which was the result of the peace talks in April 1902. Alfred Milner was eager to end the war for Britain. However, a major issue was the lack of political rights for Africans in the new British colonies of Transvaal and Orange River Colony. The Boer leaders refused to include a Black franchise in the peace deal. To achieve peace, Milner abandoned African political rights. The Treaty of Vereeniging stated in Article 8 that the decision on granting franchise to natives would be deferred until after self-government was established (Evans et al. 2003). LIED indicates that during the colonial time there were no legislative elections. LIED identifies political liberties as absent.

11/27/1907 End Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of United Kingdom, Electoral Oligarchy]/Start Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy [semi-sovereign, external affairs under United Kingdom, Electoral Oligarchy]: The British government decided to grant self-government to their Boer colonies in 1907, hoping to resolve their differences and merge into a single South African nation. The two colonies were governed by defeated Boer generals who had signed the terms of surrender five years prior (Meredith/Shaw 2007). Again, in the elections only the small minority of white male settlers were allowed to vote (Skovsholm 1999: 237-238).³ Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period. Since 1907 LIED no longer lists the country. LIED does not treat Orange Free State in its data after 1907.

05/31/1910 End Orange Free State [Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy]: On this date the Orange Free State became part of the Union of South Africa, which was an independent, white-ruled state within the British Empire. Alfred Milner, the High Commissioner and administrator of the former Boer republics, played a significant role in the British political control of South Africa during the early 1900 (Guelke 2005). FH and V-Dem do not register Orange Free State in its data.

For the time after 05/31/1910, see South Africa.

Qualitative Sources: (Tylden 1939)

Notes

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orange_River_Colony

² <https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/index.php/site/q/03lv01538/04lv01646/05lv01703.htm>

³ <https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/index.php/site/q/03lv01538/04lv01646/05lv01703.htm>

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