



Transvaal — Va-PoReg Country Report

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04/12/1877 Start Direct Rule Occupation Regime [by United Kingdom]: In 1852 the British Government recognized the independence of the Boer Republics of the Transvaal based on the ‘Thirty-Three Articles’ passed in 1849 and the ‘Grondwet’ or Fundamental Law of 02/13/1858 (Keltie 1894, Oliver/Anthony 2005). The Boers drafted a constitution in 1855. Transvaal was governed with a Volksraad of 24 elected members. Despite claiming a larger territory, the Boers authority was limited to southwestern Transvaal. The discovery of diamonds and gold deposits heightened British interest in gaining control of the region, while the Republic’s economy remained stagnant.¹ Subsequently on 04/12/1877² the Transvaal was occupied by the British, Sir Theophilus Shepstone annexed the financially bankrupt republic to Britain.³ This first annexation attempt, and the failed promise of internal self-governing by the United Kingdom led to a Boer uprising (Oliver/Anthony 2005). On 08/08/1881 the Transvaal territory was granted self-government by the Pretoria Convention, however, Britain remained the suzerain of the Transvaal Territory as it had the right to move troops through the Transvaal in time of war to control the external relations of the Transvaal including the conclusion of treaties and the conduct of diplomatic intercourse with foreign powers (De Villiers 1896). The Transvaal received greater autonomy after the British amended their suzerainty by the London Convention in 1884 (Evans et al. 2003).⁴ In 1899 a conflict broke out between the British and the Boer Republic (Transvaal and Orange Free State known as the Second Boer War) and by June 1900 the British had defeated the Boer armies, which surrendered to the United Kingdom.⁵ Political liberties were absent according to LIED. It is defined as occupation due to the British military presence, governance and control exercised over the region. The British interventions, annexation attempts and the establishment of colonial administration, indicates occupation rather than a protectorate with intern autonomy. According to LIED, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period. However, according to LIED, male suffrage was absent during this period. During the Second Boer War (1899–1902), British control was purely military. The Transvaal was governed through martial law, with large parts of the territory under Boer guerrilla control and no civilian institutions in place. The occupation was transitional by design, aimed at subduing the Boer Republic rather than establishing a lasting colonial administration.

05/31/1902 End Direct Rule Occupation Regime [by United Kingdom, Electoral Oligarchy]/Start Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of United Kingdom, Electoral Oligarchy]: On this date, the Treaty of Vereeniging, a peace treaty, ended the Second Boer War. In the aftermath the Transvaal (along with the Orange Free State) was annexed by Britain and became a British Crown colony (Kesner 1978: 28-53). The Responsible Government Association was formed in late 1904 and made up of a loose gathering of ex-colonial and ZAR officials. They called for the allowance of the colony to create its own policy and strive for self-government.⁶ LIED affirms that during this time no legislative or multiparty elections were held. Universal suffrage was not given. Political liberties were absent according to LIED.

12/12/1906 End Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of United Kingdom, Electoral Oligarchy]/Start Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy [under self-rule]: The pro-Boer Liberal Party in Britain came to power in 1906 with a new self-rule policy for the Boer colonies.⁷ The Transvaal Colony was granted responsible government in terms of self-rule on 12/12/1906. White people in the colony had the right to decide whether to grant franchise to Africans. However, when Britain granted self-government to the two territories in 1906 and 1907 political

power passed once again into Boer hands, and non-whites were permanently excluded from the vote (Oliver/Anthony 2005). Elections were held in the colony in 1907. Following the results of the elections Louis Botha became Prime Minister of the Transvaal Colony on 03/04/1907 leading the Het Volk Party winning 37 out of 69 seats (including three affiliated independents) to the Legislative Assembly ahead of the Progressive Party (21 seats), the National Association (16), Labour (3 seats) and two independents.⁸ The elections are considered as not competitive according to LIED. No political liberties were present (LIED). This period of self-governance clearly is to be distinguished from other periods of self-governance in other cases. In this case, only white people in the colony had the right to participate in the election of a government. V-Dem does not list Transvaal in its dataset. LIED considers Transvaal only until 1907.

05/31/1910 End Transvaal [Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy]: On this date the Transvaal Colony joined with three other provinces (Natal, the Orange Free State and Cape Colony) under a single administration as the Union of South Africa with the status as a self-governing colony (Leacock 1910).

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

Notes

¹ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Transvaal>

² <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/sir-theophilus-shepstone>

³ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Transvaal>

⁴ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Convention_\(1884\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Convention_(1884))

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transvaal_Colony

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transvaal_Colony

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transvaal_Colony

⁸ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cabinet_of_Louis_Botha_\(Transvaal_Colony\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cabinet_of_Louis_Botha_(Transvaal_Colony))

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