THE EARLY HISTORY OF SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY CHAPLAINCY: A CASE STUDY OF THE VARIANCE BETWEEN BRITISH IMPERIALISM AND AFRIKANER NATIONALISM, C.1914-1973

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Abstract

Global socio-political and economic forces often determine the histories of countries and nations, but internal historical identities, values and sentiments modify and combine with these forces to create a distinct local societal character and ethos, which are often mirrored in local institutions and organizations. In South Africa this is illustrated in the history of South African military chaplaincy. It was established in 1914 at a time when most other countries accorded their military chaplaincies with a reasonable degree of professionalism, but it was only acknowledged as an autonomous support service of the South African armed forces in 1973; this, despite the important role of religion in the South African society and the influence of British customs since 1806. The roots for this belated acknowledgement are found in the clash between the international force of imperialism and the local sentiments of Afrikaner nationalism. It influenced the establishment, functioning and ethos of South African military chaplaincy, turning the latter into a representation of the identities and sentiments elicited in the South African society by the global forces active within the historic context.

1. INTRODUCTION

Military chaplaincy evolved in Europe as a Christian enterprise and the predominant role of the church in western political history secured the ministry to soldiers as an obligation of the state enterprise. The role and duties of military chaplains changed over time, but by the end of the First World War (1914-1918) a reasonable degree of professionalism was accorded to chaplains and their ministry in the western

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world.[3] In South Africa, however, the formal institution of military chaplaincy was only established in 1914, and it was not acknowledged as an autonomous, integral part of the South African armed forces before 1973. This belated recognition of South African chaplaincy services can be attributed to different viewpoints of the Afrikaans and English communities in South Africa regarding spiritual ministry to the armed forces, and an animosity to accommodate each other due to the clash between British imperialism and Afrikaner nationalism.

Military chaplaincy is a social institution and, similar to other social institutions, it has a defined membership and particular social activities which serve to regulate human society.[4] The character and ethos of all social institutions are determined by its membership. Members carry their values, beliefs and prejudice into social institutions, transforming these into mirrors of the culture[5] of the membership group and society. Culture is shaped by local circumstances, but it also portrays reactions to the global forces active within a specific historic timeframe. Delineating the history of social institutions will therefore also reflect the history and sentiments of the membership group and of the society from which they stem. In line with Arnold J Toynbee's observation that the historian studies societies in their relationships, determining the way they operate under the influence of global forces,[6] this article will trace the early history of South African military chaplaincy until it became an autonomous support service of the South African armed forces as a representation of the clash between British imperialism and Afrikaner nationalism. This clash is best reflected in the functioning and the efficiency of the institution of military chaplaincy during the two world wars, but it also determined the ethos and the nature of military chaplaincy when the institution received acknowledgement as an independent, autonomous branch of the South African armed forces in 1973.

To fully understand how imperialism influenced South African military chaplaincy as a formal institution, a brief outline is given of the character of British imperialism in South Africa and of the local response of Afrikaner nationalism.[7] The effects of these forces on the functioning of South African military chaplaincy

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3   Wessels and I Bredenkamp, "The development of military chaplaincy, with special reference to South Africa (up to 1966)", *Journal for Contemporary History* 34(1), February 2009, pp. 301-304.

4   J Fulcher and J Scott, *Sociology* (3rd ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 11.

5   In this article, culture is interpreted as the practices, the way of life and the collection of values, norms and habits learned, shared and transmitted within or across social classes in a society in a unique way which constructs social meanings and definitions. See M Haralambos and M Holborn. *Sociology: themes and perspective* (6th ed., London: Collins, 2004), p. viii; L du Raan, *Die invloed van eksterne en interne faktore op die vorming van studentekultuur aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch 1918-1930* (MA, Stellenbosch University, 1998), pp. 13-14; Fulcher and Scott, p. 14.

6   H Meyerhoff (ed.), *The philosophy of history in our time: an anthology* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959), pp. 104, 114.

7   Despite the appointment on 1 October 1976 of the first coloured chaplain, Rev. PJJ Williams, and the first Muslim chaplain, Mawlana AK Aziz, and of the first black chaplain, Rev. LS Booysen, on

are then traced until 1973. Historical interpretation often elicits controversy,[8] but it is hoped that, in delineating the socio-political trends relevant to this particular historical context, a better understanding of the often complex kaleidoscope of South Africa is enabled.

2.   IMPERIALISM

2.1   The nature of imperialism

WR Keylor identifies imperialism as the most salient feature of international relations at the beginning of the twentieth century.[9] The term "imperialism" was coined during the latter half of the nineteenth century,[10] but a perusal of literature on imperialism reveals that a definition of the concept is quite problematic. Winfried Baumgart describes the term as a "vague and imprecise catchword"[11] and Wolfgang Mommsen refers to a medley of standpoints and opinions on the concept.[12] Some historians even suggest that the term should be evaded in academic discussions.[13]

Theories of imperialism were developed to explain and to interpret the meaning and the patterns of imperialism as it manifested itself in history. These theories are based on the motivational forces behind imperialism, with economic factors and capitalism as the most prominent. Other motives include vested/strategic interests, militarism, political dominance, psychological motives and social motives. After the First World War the term was equalised with the drive for overseas colonies. According to Norman Etherington this blurred the broader interpretations of imperialism and resulted in misrepresentations, which were perpetuated with the commencement of the Cold War and events like the Vietnamese War.[14]

Most writers agree that the phenomenon is complex and multi-facetted and that the diverse interpretations and perceptions may give rise to confusion.

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1 January 1979, black viewpoints only started to take effect in South African military chaplaincy during the 1990s, placing Black Nationalism outside the scope of this article.

8   As noted in a *Burger* article on 13 September 2008, the historian, Leopold Scholtz, compares the interpretation of South African history to a minefield, due to the different cultures and viewpoints in the country.

9   WR Keylor, *The twentieth century world: an international history* (2nd ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 3.

10   W Baumgart, *Imperialism: the idea and reality of British and French colonial expansion, 1880-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 2. Translated by Baumgart with the assistance of Ben V Mast.

11   *Ibid.*, p. 1.

12   WJ Mommsen, *Theories of imperialism* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), p. v. Translated by PS Falla.

13   N Etherington, *Theories of imperialism: war, conquest and capital* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), pp. 2-3.

14   *Ibid.*, pp. 176, 264-266.

Baumgart ranges the diversity of meaning from a limited definition of the term to a limitless inclusion of all types of domination and control throughout the history of mankind. He recommends that each historical occurrence of imperialism should be defined on its own accord by placing a qualifying adjective before the term.[15]

Although Baumgart's recommendation is followed by most writers on imperialism today, there is one common element in all references to the phenomenon: all carry the hallmark of domination. Etherington writes, "The subject then is power, a subject […] central to historical studies".[16] The interpretation given to imperialism in this article coincides with the definition of PJ Cain and AG Hopkins, namely of a power which has the will and capacity to shape the affairs of another by imposing on it. This implies a relationship of inequality and, as in South Africa, of powerful ideological connotations.[17]

2.2 British imperialism

James Fulcher and John Scott link the nineteenth century status of great powers to the possession of overseas empires[18] and history accorded Britain an exceptional position in other parts of the world. Writers like Baumgart, Cain and Hopkins trace the origins of the British Empire to the late 1700s. Although they emphasize its continuity until the twentieth century, a break in the nineteenth century is suggested, with the establishment of nation-states on the continent as major turning points.[19]

Most authors on British imperialism refer to the fact that the acquisition of empire status was not a consciously purposeful drive, but rather a mixture of chance and contingency initiated by officials, colonists, merchants, pioneers and adventurers. They cite the British historian, John Robert Seeley, who stated that the British Empire was created in a fit of absent-mindedness.[20] The almost haphazard way in which the British Empire expanded involved various dynamic and motivational forces, each depending on the region and the timeframe in question. It falls outside the scope of this article to detail the history of the British Empire,[21] but the following is of importance.

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15   Baumgart, pp. 178, 185.
16   Etherington, p. 5.
17   PJ Cain and AG Hopkins, *British imperialism: innovation and expansion 1688-1914* (London: Longman, 1993), p. 43.
18   Fulcher and Scott, pp. 628-630.
19   Baumgart, pp. 178-179; PJ Cain and AG Hopkins, *British imperialism: crisis and deconstruction 1914-1990* (London: Longman, 1993), pp. 300-301.
20   See H Münkler, *Empires: The logic of world domination from ancient Rome to the United States* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), p. 8. Translated from German by Patrick Camiller; Baumgart, p. 50; Etherington, p. 209.
21   See WR Louis (ed.) *The Oxford History of the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998-1999), 5 volumes.

Cain and Hopkins observe that one of the unintended legacies of British Empire building was the "sense of patriotism founded on the principles of godliness, social discipline and loyalty to the crown",[22] while Baumgart states that the most conspicuous elements of the British Empire were a sense of togetherness, nationalism and pride.[23] In line with Herfried Münkler's observation that all empires which lasted for any length of time acquire an imperial mission with undertones of ideology and a transformation of "self-legitimation into self-sacralization",[24] pride in the British Empire resulted in notions of superiority and inferiority and a solemn responsibility amongst adherents of the Empire to provide the world with the fruits of the British superior culture.[25] It was this element of British imperial history which influenced events in South Africa most.

Works on the imperial history of Britain often define it in terms of Asian and black societies where the final phase of British imperialism was characterised by conflict between imperial ideals and expressions of local nationalism.[26] In South Africa, it was not the black population groups, but the white community which, similar to Ireland,[27] was perceived as a persistent threat to imperial authority and which Britain proved incapable of subduing. In both the Irish and the South African cases, this was due to an upsurge of nationalism, where the local society took the resolution to retain its own distinct culture and to challenge all measures aimed at bringing about anglicisation and subordination to Britain.[28] In South Africa, it culminated in the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902),[29] an event which, according to Etherington, ceded a new meaning to imperialism, namely of the deliberate use of state power, including military power, to further alleged national economic interests in the world at large. Etherington quotes Richard Koebner who stated that the Anglo-Boer War became the basis of all subsequent theories of imperialism, grounding the meaning of "British Empire" in the more sinister connotations of imperialism.[30] Baumgart, too, states that the concept of the British Empire was

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22   Cain and Hopkins, *British imperialism: Crisis*, p. 302.
23   Baumgart, p. 51.
24   Münkler, pp. 84-85.
25   Keylor, p. 6; Baumgart, pp. 50-51; Münkler, pp. vii, 92. Herfried Münkler indicates that empires were justified through statements on missionary outreaches, the spread of civilization, the establishment of social order, and/or the promotion of human rights and democracy.
26   SC Smith, *British imperialism 1750-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 1.
27   In contrast to Ireland, the South African population has always been heterogeneous, with diverse language and cultural groups in both the white and the black societies. Amongst those from European descent, the Afrikaners account for approximately 60 per cent.
28   Smith, pp. 84-85.
29   Also referred to as the Second War of Independence or the South African War. For more information, see LS Amery (ed.), *The Times history of the war in South Africa 1899-1902* (London: Sampson Law, Marston and Company, Ltd, 1900-1909), 7 volumes.
30   Etherington, pp. 6, 84-86.

not synonymous to imperialism during the 1850s, but that the two terms became confused by the end of the century. He regards pride in the Empire as the growing medium for later manifestations of a British nationalistic imperialism, which, according to him, turned into xenophobia during the 1890s, first directed against France and Russia and then against the Boers (Afrikaners) in South Africa.[31] Münkler uses the Anglo-Boer War as an example where an imperial power, in using military measures to stamp out anti-imperialism, loses credibility and the cited advantages of imperialism become mere ideology.[32]

2.3 The clash between British imperialism and Afrikaner nationalism

Twentieth-century historical events in Africa often reflected a reaction to the forces that emanated from Europe, and European imperialism impacted strongly on the shaping of African identities. Many South African historians regard British imperialism as the single most important contributor to twentieth-century Afrikaner identity.[33] The scope of this article does not allow for a detailed discussion of the historical events which furthered the animosity between the Afrikaners and the Britons, but to fully understand the extent of the influence these sentiments had on the functioning of military chaplaincy in South Africa, some background information is necessary.

The Afrikaners evolved as a new ethnic group at the Cape, a colony established by the Dutch chartered company, the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC), during the seventeenth century.[34] Their language, Afrikaans, developed as a dialect of Dutch, and the paramount position of Dutch traditions at the Cape is reflected in their culture. Most were members of the Calvinist orientated Dutch Reformed Church (DRC); the only church permitted in Dutch overseas possessions. The strong religious undertones in Afrikaner identity aided in bringing about cultural solidarity and Afrikaners are often described as conservative and fundamentalist Calvinistic in their outlook on life.[35] Authors like LM Thompson and DW Krüger ascribed the

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31   Baumgart, p. 51.

32   Münkler, pp. 127-128.

33   See, amongst others, AM Grundlingh, "Prelude to the Anglo-Boer War, 1881-1899", p. 184 and SB Spies, "Reconstruction and unification", p. 220, in T Cameron, *An illustrated history of South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1986); H Giliomee, "Afrikanernasionalisme, 1875-1899", in F Pretorius (ed.), *Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika: van voortye tot vandag* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2012), p. 275; R de Villiers, "Afrikaner nationalism", in M Wilson and L Thompson (eds), *The Oxford history of South Africa* II: *South Africa 1870-1966* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 367.

34   For more information on this era, see M Boucher, "The age of exploration", pp. 55-60 and M Boucher, "The Cape under the Dutch East India Company", pp. 61-74, in Cameron (ed.).

35   W Bird, *State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822* (Cape Town: C. Struik (Pty) Ltd, 1966), p. 61; H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: biography of a people* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2003), pp. 5, 21, 51, 269; De Villiers, pp. 370-373. De Villiers remarks that Calvinism "tailor-fitted" Afrikaner

rapid revival of Afrikaner nationalism after the Anglo-Boer War and the opposition it formed for British imperialism to Calvinism and the influence of the DRC.[36] Although many individuals may never have been committed in their personal beliefs, the conformity imposed by public opinion strongly influenced Afrikaner social behaviour[37] and it was also reflected in the character and ethos of the institution of military chaplaincy after 1973.

The Afrikaner's viewpoint on military chaplaincy originated from the VOC period when the spiritual welfare of the military was the responsibility of the congregational ministry. DRC ministers were officials of the VOC and they were ordained to serve the community at large, with the garrison as the largest congregational component. In 1670 DRC membership numbers constituted approximately 300 soldiers, 70 officials and 64 ordinary citizens.[38] At this time, military chaplaincy was an established career in Britain.[39] When Britain occupied the Cape Colony for strategic reasons during the reolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, first in 1795 and, on a more permanent basis, again in 1806,[40] chaplains accompanied the British occupational forces to the Cape.[41] The British occupation familiarized the Cape community with the concept of military chaplaincy as a social institution, but no local structures were created. Throughout the nineteenth century, imperial and colonial chaplains responsible for the spiritual well-being of

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nationalism in later years, and that the DRC became Afrikaner nationalism in prayer. As late as 1982, Rev. J Daines, Anglican chaplain at Voortrekkerhoogte, declared in *The Sowetan* of 25 November that Afrikaans chaplains were "Biblical fundamentalist Calvinists".

36   LM Thompson, *The unification of South Africa 1902-1910* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), pp. 17-19; DW Krüger, *The making of a nation: a history of the Union of South Africa, 1910-1961* (Johannesburg: Macmillan, 1969), p. 187.

37   Fulcher and Scott, pp. 420-421. Fulcher and Scott define the creation of a common cultural framework for the society at large as "civil religion". Much of what they identify as the sacred character of America where God is almost regarded as an American, is also true for the Afrikaners.

38   A Moorrees, *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika, 1652-1873* (Cape Town: Nasionale Pers, Bpk., 1937), pp. 11-12, 27, 52-53.

39   JF Potgieter, *Die militêre kapelaan: die ontstaan en ontwikkeling van die amp, taak en organisasie van militêre kapelane in die geskiedenis van die Christelike kerk, met besondere verwysing na Suid-Afrika* (DD, University of Pretoria, 1971), pp. 75-76, 81; Padre John, "The chaplain", *Commando* 15(6), June 1964, p. 47. Military chaplains are mentioned in sources on 13th century British history and the institution of an Army Chaplain's Department (AChD) under a Chaplain General was known since 1796. In 1919 King George V officially honoured the work that had been done by the AChD during World War I by changing the name to the Royal Army Chaplains' Department (RAChD).

40   See BA le Cordeur, "The occupations of the Cape, 1795-1854", pp. 75-81, in Cameron (ed.).

41   H Giliomee, *Die Kaap tydens die eerste Britse bewind 1795-1803* (Cape Town: H.A.U.M., 1975), pp. 223-227. Care was taken that the occupational force did not intrude on civilian rights and when a British military chaplain, Rev. T Tringham, baptised civilians, he was reprimanded by the Governor.

the colonial garrisons and the military deployed to South Africa served within the framework of the British Army Chaplain's Department (AChD).[42]

British officials appraised the Cape inhabitants and their circumstances in the light of the liberal reforming ideas of British imperialism, which were prevalent in Britain at the time. SC Smith remarks that British imperialism aimed to create people who, while retaining their own nationality, would be English in taste, opinion, morals and intellect, thus enjoying the benefits of an enlightened civilisation and of the British superior culture.[43] With an unfortunate attitude of haughtiness, British officials implemented a policy of anglicisation that was brought to bear on all aspects of Cape society, and in 1824 English became the official language of the Cape Colony.[44]

Anglicisation kindled Afrikaner nationalism and English became a symbol of forced assimilation into an alien culture and of the elimination of an own identity.[45] Commenting on the Afrikaner's intense and exclusive perceptions of a national identity, both CD Dalcanton and R de Villiers ascribe it to the measures Afrikaners had to take to survive in a hostile environment. De Villiers wrote, "From their earliest days the Afrikaner people have felt themselves threatened, from inside their borders and from without, to a degree few other nations or groups have experienced".[46] Ensuing historical events resulted in a desire to be free from British rule and it culminated in the establishment of two independent Afrikaner republics in the interior.[47] The conflict between Afrikaner and Briton was, however, not first and foremost about independent political systems. It was about identity and a difference in world perspectives. This was also reflected in the divergent military systems of these two cultures. The Boer republics had no standing armies and made use of civilian forces in the form of commandos (a citizen army). Unlike the British custom of military chaplaincy, they followed the Dutch tradition of spiritual ministry to the military. Local ministers, called "veldpredikers", ministered to the

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42 Potgieter, pp. 138, 161-162.

43 Smith, p. 1.

44 Le Cordeur, pp. 86-87; Giliomee, *Afrikaners*, pp. 197-214; M Streak, *The Afrikaner as viewed by the English, 1795-1854* (Cape Town: C. Struik (Pty) Ltd., 1974), *passim*; W Nasson, "Tommy Atkins in South Africa", in P Warwick (ed.), *The South African War: the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902* (Harlow: Longman, 1980), p. 124. The official British attitude did not change throughout the nineteenth century. During the Anglo-Boer War, British soldiers were reassured of the general genetic inferiority of the Afrikaners in comparison with the Anglo-Saxon stock.

45 CD Dalcanton, *The Afrikaners of South Africa: a case study of identity formation and change* (PhD, University of Pittsburgh, 1973), pp. 47-48.

46 *Ibid.*, pp. 5-8; De Villiers, p. 365.

47 The Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (South African Republic; the Transvaal; which comprised the current provinces of Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Limpopo and parts of North-West) received British recognition in 1852 and the Republic of the Orange Free State (presently the Free State) in 1854.

commandos.[48] Much in line with the American "fighting padre" of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these ministers could also serve as active combatants. An example during the Anglo-Boer War was when Rev. PH Roux served as a military commander in the field before surrendering to the British forces.[49]

The nineteenth-century discovery of minerals in the interior of South Africa revived British strategic interests with regard to the continental powers and added an economic determinism to British imperialism. Prompted by magnates such as Cecil John Rhodes, British attitudes with regard to the independence of the two Afrikaner republics changed.[50] The annexation of the most northern republic in 1877 and the ensuing Transvaal War of Independence (1880-1881) united Afrikaners throughout Southern Africa in a new political consciousness and consolidated the content and the character of Afrikaner nationalism.[51] The subsequent Anglo-Boer War extended British sovereignty over the whole of Southern Africa, but the methods used by the British to end the war made a lasting impression on the Afrikaner psyche and aggravated the bitterness and animosity on the part of many Afrikaners towards everything British or English for decades to come.[52]

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48   EM Meyers, "Voorgeskiedenis tot die stigting van 'n Unieverdedigingsmag", *Militaria* 12(2), 1982, pp. 1-3; Potgieter, pp. 146, 149; JH Lourens, "Veldpredikers van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog: 1899-1902", *Commando* 15(10), October 1964, pp. 40-41, 45. The term "veldprediker" (field preacher) is a Dutch term used since the seventeenth century to indicate military preachers. If a local minister was not available to the Boer commandos, the spiritual care became the responsibility of the commandant, who may have appointed a respected citizen to fulfill the task.

49   Potgieter, p. 148.

50   Smith, p. 1; Cain and Hopkins, *British imperialism: innovation*, pp. 370-391; Keylor, p. 6; Etherington, p. 55; Giliomee, "Afrikanernasionalisme", p. 231. Smith, Cain and Hopkins link British imperialism to economic practices and Keylor states that ideological justifications for imperialism barely disguised the fact that Britain depended on the Empire for her economic prosperity, if not for her national survival. Viewpoints also prevailed that the Boers were incompetent in managing the mineral riches of South Africa and that they might become more of a threat to Britain.

51   De Villiers, p. 366; Giliomee, "Afrikanernasionalisme", pp. 222-223. For information on the war, see JH Lehman, *The First Boer War* (London: Cape, 1972), *passim*.

52   See F Pretorius (ed.), *Scorched earth* (Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, 2001), *passim*; F Pretorius, "Almal se oorlog: Die Anglo-Boereoorlog (1899-1902)", in F Pretorius (ed.) *Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika: van voortye tot vandag* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2012), pp. 253-254; A Wessels, *The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902: white man's war, black man's war, traumatic war* (Bloemfontein: Sun Press, 2011), p. 78. The British burnt down houses and crops and killed farm animals to prevent the Boers from obtaining provisions to sustain them during the guerrilla phase of the war. Women and children were taken to internment/concentration camps, where at least 27 927 died during the last eighteen months of the war.

3. A CASE STUDY: BRITISH IMPERIALISM AND AFRIKANER NATIONALISM

3.1 The Union Defence Force and South African military chaplaincy

South African history between 1902 and 1910 was characterised by an uneasy political compromise between Afrikaner liberties and British sovereignty. Historically mainly agrarians, many Afrikaners lost everything during the Anglo-Boer War as a result of the British Army's "scorched earth" policy. This resulted in poverty and urbanisation. Although they formed the majority of the white population in South Africa, urban employment prospects for Afrikaners were bleak. Most economic aspects, such as finance, commerce and mining, were in British hands and the majority of civil servants were English-speaking.[53] Leonard Thompson notes that when the High Commissioner for South Africa, Lord Alfred Milner, embarked on an aggressive imperialist policy in the post-war years, it kindled an Afrikaner nationalism more bitterly anti-British than anything that had existed before the war.[54]

On 31 May 1910 the British colonies in South Africa united in the Union of South Africa. Unification did not unite the Afrikaans and English-speaking communities, nor did it heal the deep rifts within Afrikaner ranks regarding viewpoints on the relationship between these two communities. In the aftermath of unification these divisions played itself out between those who supported a policy of reconciliation (the official government policy) and those who favoured an exclusive Afrikaner nationalism.[55]

Except for troops stationed in places like Cape Town and Potchefstroom, Britain retained a garrison in South Africa with headquarters at Roberts Heights Military Base, Pretoria (later called Voortrekkerhoogte, today Thaba Tswane). After unification, South African military matters resorted under the Imperial government, but a decision was taken at the Imperial Conference of 1911 that the Union should take responsibility for its own defence. Defence Act 13 of 1912 combined the colonial military forces into one centralised force, the Union Defence Forces (UDF).[56] From the onset, the clash between British imperialism and Afrikaner nationalism affected the UDF. Bill Nasson refers to it as a "moody peacetime institution"; a troubled fusion between British colonial and Boer republican traditions which became an irritation for nationalist-minded Afrikaners due to the distinctly

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53 Cain and Hopkins, *British imperialism: crisis*, pp. 127, 134; Krüger, pp. 46-47; Thompson, pp. 4, 12; H Giliomee and B Mbenga (eds), *New history of South Africa* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2007), pp. 225-226.

54 Thompson, pp. 5-6, 16. Also see Pretorius, "Almal se oorlog", pp. 253-254; Giliomee, *Afrikaners*, pp. 233, 264-266. Lord Milner described himself as an imperialist to whom the mission of the British race was fundamental. For details on his viewpoints and policies, see Thompson, pp. 4-17.

55 Thompson, *passim*; SB Spies, "Unity and disunity, 1910-1924", in Cameron (ed.), pp. 231-233.

56 Krüger, p. 59.

British command culture and soldiering code.[57] Likewise, Albert Grundlingh and Sandra Swart comment on the friction caused by the difference between the British military traditions and the distinct Afrikaner republican traditions in which membership of the commando system not only served as a symbol of manliness, but also as a socializing force in Afrikaner identity.[58] Afrikaners had difficulty in identifying with military traditions which differed so vastly from the egalitarian code of the former Boer commandos. Efforts to enlist Afrikaners as staff officers met with little success and newspapers condemned government efforts at equalization between the two cultural groups as absurd. Anti-British sentiments were visible in the Afrikaner disapproval of the Permanent Force khaki uniform as reminiscent of the British uniform during the Anglo-Boer War, and of the Royal Army Ordinance that hair should be kept short and the chin and under lip should be shaved, since Boer veterans were identified by their beards.[59]

The clash between British and Afrikaner traditions also affected the spiritual ministry to the armed forces in South Africa. The UDF made no provision for military chaplains. The Afrikaner custom that the military should receive spiritual ministry from the local congregations within whose boundaries they resorted was followed, but it elicited a sharp reaction from the Anglican Church which deplored the government's apparent disregard for spiritual ministry to the military.[60]

3.2   World War I and South African military chaplaincy

With the outbreak of World War I (1914-1918) and South Africa's commitment on the side of the Allied forces,[61] various denominations requested the official appointment of military chaplains. On 16 August 1914, the Minister of Defence, Gen. JC Smuts, appointed four chaplains in a part-time capacity to the naval

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57   B Nasson, *Springboks on the Somme: South Africa in the Great War 1914-1918* (Johannesburg: Penguin Books, 2007) p. 3. It should be noted that the language composition of the staff officers of the UDF was carefully managed on a 50:50 basis into World War I. This, however, did not prevent the culture to be overwhelmingly British in character.

58   A Grundlingh and S Swart, *Radelose rebellie? Dinamika van die 1914-1915 Afrikanerrebellie* (Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis, 2009), pp. 44-45.

59   Giliomee, *Afrikaners*, p. 380; Nasson, *Springboks*, p. 17; Grundlingh and Swart, pp. 46-50. During the Anglo-Boer War, Afrikaners referred to the British soldiers as "Khaki's".'

60   AC Lillie, "The origin and development of the South African Army", *Militaria* 12(2), 1982, p. 7; SG van Niekerk, *The history, role and influence of the South African military chaplaincy: 1914-2002* (DTh, University of South Africa, 2002), pp. 2-3.

61   For South Africa's role during the war, see JJ Collyer, *The campaign in German South West Africa 1914-1915* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1937); JJ Collyer, *The South Africans with General Smuts in German East Africa 1916* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1939); J Buchan, *The history of the South African forces in France* (London: Nelson, 1920).

community of Simon's Town.[62] Their appointment is regarded as the official establishment of a military chaplaincy in the South African armed forces. Until 1994 South African military chaplains served in a denominational context, underscoring the difference between the liberal traditions of English denominations and the conservative character of Afrikaans denominations.[63]

The call for chaplains to serve in the war received an overwhelming response from the English denominations for whom participation seemed a matter of course. In the Afrikaans Reformed Churches,[64] however, a lack of support for the war effort prevailed. As Calvinists, Afrikaans ministers had moral reservations about serving in a military rank structure and becoming paid officials of the state,[65] but a more important reason for their reluctance to enlist as chaplains, was the strong anti-British sentiments harboured within the Afrikaans congregations. With the Anglo-Boer War still fresh in their memories, many Afrikaners had no intention to fight on the side of Britain. They supported the leader of the National Party, Gen. JBM Hertzog, who, as champion of the Afrikaner cause and culture, publicly denounced the war to be in the interest of the British Empire and not in the interest of South Africa, emphasizing South Africa's right to self-determination.[66]

The decision by the Prime Minister, Gen. Louis Botha, and Gen. Jan Smuts to adhere to a request of Britain to invade German South West Africa (GSWA)[67] brought them in conflict with Afrikaner nationalism. In line with the government's policy of reconciliation, Gen. Botha emphasised the idea of a single South African nation within the dominion system. He argued that South Africa should support the British war effort to defend the rights of small nations, such as Belgium, but this argument, and the British appeal to fight against German "barbarism", sounded ironic in the light of the Anglo-Boer War and the "scorched earth" policy. Esteemed leaders, such as former Pres. MT Steyn, denounced the proposed occupation of

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62   This was notwithstanding the fact that the Simon's Town Naval Base was under Royal Navy control until 1957.

63   Potgieter, pp. 182-183.

64   The three Afrikaans Reformed Churches constituted the Nederduitse-Gereformeerde Kerk (Dutch Reformed Church, DRC), the Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk (also translates as the Dutch Reformed Church) and the Gereformeerde Kerk (Reformed Church). The latter two were formed in the nineteenth century Afrikaner republics. Based on Calvinism and differing little in doctrine, they are referred to as "'sibling churches".

65   Potgieter, p. 188; *Anon.*, "Rank of the chaplain", *Paratus* 23(3), March 1991, p. 81; Van Niekerk, p. 38. The Calvinist viewpoint that ministers of religion were all equal before God also prevented the DRC from appointing Senior Chaplains while serving under the structure of the AChD (where Senior Chaplains reported to a Principal Chaplain) in East Africa and in France.

66   R Davenport and C Saunders, *South Africa: a modern history* (5th ed., London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 2000), pp. 268-269; Giliomee, "Afrikanernasionalisme", pp. 280-282; Giliomee and Mbenga, pp. 233-234.

67   After being conquered by South Africa, it became known as South West Africa (SWA). Today it is known as Namibia.

GSWA as controversial in the light of Germany's sympathy with the cause of the Afrikaner republics during the nineteenth century. There were also those Afrikaners who saw in the war an opportunity to regain republican independence.[68] Generals Botha and Smuts underestimated the extent of the anti-British emotions and the opposition to the GSWA campaign. The resentment erupted with the Afrikaner Rebellion of 1914-1915.[69]

Amongst those who joined the Rebellion were also ministers of religion, and they were sent to prison for high treason when caught. The intensity of emotions is illustrated by the fact that both the DRC chaplains serving the Southern Forces in GSWA left when the Rebellion broke out, leaving the Wesleyan chaplain to serve all Protestant troops. Ministers of religion who joined the UDF as chaplains were branded as traitors by many of their fellow-Afrikaners. Rev. JJ Kuhn of Lichtenburg, who served during the GSWA campaign, was asked to resign on his return to his congregation. Afrikaner sentiments also resulted in English chaplains questioning the loyalty of Afrikaans chaplains to the British monarchy.[70]

The shortage of Afrikaans chaplains compelled Gen. Botha to ask Rev. John Murray, a missionary, to minister to the Afrikaans troops in GSWA. At a later stage, Rev. Murray also ministered to the Afrikaans troops in East Africa on request of Gen. Smuts. Despite his dedication, he experienced difficulty in attending to all the needs and he often requested the appointment of more Afrikaans chaplains. Although the church leadership realised the need for chaplains, the anti-war and anti-British sentiments amongst ministers of religion created a situation where the DRC ratio of chaplain to troops was 1:1480, while the ratio for the Anglican Church was 1:747.[71]

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68   The historian, GD Scholtz, remarks that, after 1902, the dream of an independent Afrikaner republic lived in the hearts of the majority of the Dutch-speaking community, but it was never mentioned in public. He quotes Gen. JBM Hertzog who declared before the Commission of Inquiry on the Rebellion of 1914-1915, "The question of independence is one that has been, I suppose, in the minds of the people since peace, […] I do not think there is one man in South Africa who does not believe that eventually, […] we are going to have independence […] That I think, especially amongst the Dutch-speaking people of the Union, has always been, and is to-day, their hope […]." See GD Scholtz, *Die Rebellie 1914-15* (Johannesburg: Voortrekkerpers Beperk, 1942), pp. 14-16.

69   Spies, pp. 236-243; Giliomee, "Afrikanernasionalisme", pp. 287-288. For more information on the Rebellion, see, amongst others, Krüger, pp. 79-96; Scholtz, *passim.*; LJ Bothma, *Rebelspoor: die aanloop, verloop en afloop van die Boereopstand van 1914 tot 1915* (Bloemfontein: Self-publishing, 2014).

70   Van Niekerk, pp. 6-7, 11-12, 16, 34. The loyalty of Rev. J Pels, attached to the 5th SA Infantry and Rev. P Joubert, who worked in SWA from 1917 to 1920, were questioned, while Rev. Herman CM Fourie of Bronkhorstspruit and Rev. WP Steenkamp of Nieuwoudtsville joined the Rebellion.

71   PL Moolman, *Eerwaarde John Neethling Murray: sy bediening as pioniersendeling van die Waterberg en eerste permanente kapelaan van die Unieverdedigingsmag, 1894-1931* (MTh, Stellenbosch University, 1977), pp. 137-140; Van Niekerk, pp. 337, 340.

Ironically, the lack of experience in chaplaincy matters forced the Ministry of Defence to follow British customs and this legacy of the British Empire resulted in the institution building of a South African chaplaincy in the 1970s. South African chaplains were appointed in the Active Citizen Force for the duration of hostilities and they resorted directly under the Ministry of Defence. The latter still adhered to Afrikaans traditions and did not regard military chaplaincy as a permanent feature of the armed forces or as an integral part of the war effort. No formal chaplaincy structures were created.[72] Approximately 150 South African chaplains served as noncombatants in military camps in the Union, in GSWA, East Africa, the Middle East, and in Europe. Most South African Christian denominations and the Jewish faith were represented. South African chaplains were allocated to units and their ministry was similar to that of other chaplains of the Allied forces.[73]

At the conclusion of hostilities, chaplains were demobilised with the rest of the Active Citizen Force. By April 1919, only the DRC and Anglican chaplain posts at Roberts Heights were retained. A request by the Anglican Church for an official full-time chaplaincy institution was declined. In May 1920, with the conclusion of the demobilisation process, the Minister of Defence decided to terminate the last two chaplaincy positions. Faced with the prospect of having no chaplains to minister to the soldiers stationed at Roberts Heights, the Officer Commanding requested the Minister of Defence to retain these two positions. On 9 October 1920, Rev. Murray and Rev. A Roberts (Anglican Church) were appointed as the first full-time chaplains in the Active Citizen Force of the UDF. Part-time chaplains served at other military bases.[74]

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72 Potgieter, p. 186; SW Burger, "Veldpredikers in die S.A. Weermag", *Commando* 15(10), October 1964, p. 37; Van Niekerk, pp. 43-44, 106. Disregard for chaplaincy services was demonstrated when no Anglican chaplains were appointed to the South African forces during the East African campaign. The three DRC chaplains, who were bilingual, were expected to minister to both the Afrikaans and the English-speaking soldiers. This decision was met with indignation by the Anglican Church. The Bishop of Pretoria enlisted priests into the South African Medical Corps (SAMC) to serve unofficially as chaplains and an Imperial Chaplain was appointed to the 1st Mounted Brigade.

73 Potgieter, pp. 184-185, 193; Van Niekerk, pp. 3-5, 103-104. The Christian denominations were the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Wesleyan, Presbyterian, Baptist (Non-Conformist), and the Dutch Reformed Churches. During World War I, the Secretary of Defence informed denominations of vacancies, who supplied the Ministry of Defence with the names of candidates. Letters of appointment were sent out and a written acceptance was regarded as an employment contract. For details on the names of chaplains and their ministry, see Van Niekerk, pp. 3-107; Potgieter, pp. 181-194.

74 Potgieter, pp. 194, 196-197; Moolman, pp. 143-145; Van Niekerk, pp. 108-110. There were 331 Afrikaans-speaking and 314 English-speaking troops at Roberts Heights who needed spiritual ministry.

3.3   The inter-war years

Afrikaner history during the inter-war period was characterised by political divisions, new alliances and the establishment of an own Afrikaner identity in the South African political and economic order. The financial restraints of this period made Afrikaner nationalism, which linked economic autonomy with political independence, more attractive. In 1924 Gen. Hertzog came to power. His cabinet was less willing to collaborate with Britain and they demanded greater local autonomy. Although some Afrikaners still envisaged a return to Afrikaner freedom and republicanism, sentiments were focused, first and foremost, on loyalty to South Africa. English-speaking South Africans were accused of favouring the King and the Empire, thereby sacrificing their South African identity. Until 1931, with the Statute of Westminster, the constitutional relations between Britain and the dominions eclipsed most other political questions in South Africa.[75]

The rise of Afrikaner nationalism and of a new generation of urban Afrikaners went hand in hand with a revival of Afrikaans culture and the establishment of Afrikaans economic institutions. In 1925 Afrikaans was acknowledged as an official language next to English and debates, such as the flag debate (1926-1928), were dominated by questions on cultural identity. In 1938 the Great Trek centenary festivities strengthened Afrikaner solidarity and patriotism, and English geographical names were changed to Afrikaans names; in this way "Roberts Heights" became "Voortrekkerhoogte" during December 1938.[76]

Although military chaplains became a feature of this period, the authorities still regarded military chaplains as superfluous. This mindset, coupled with financial restraints, inhibited developments within the institution of military chaplaincy. When Rev. Murray's successor, Rev. J Adler, resigned in August 1929, eight months elapsed before the appointment of Rev. AGO Coertse as DRC chaplain at Roberts Heights. Rev. Coertse's ministry was characterised by endeavours to improve the standing of chaplains within the UDF and, as a result, the DRC and Anglican chaplains at Roberts Heights received full Permanent Force status in September 1938. Despite the rise of Afrikaner nationalism, British customs prevailed in the military throughout this period. In 1935 the new chaplains' sign,

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75   Cain and Hopkins, *British imperialism: crisis*, pp. 128, 130; BK Murray and AW Stadler. "From the Pact to the advent of apartheid", in Cameron (ed.), pp. 248-250; Davenport and Saunders, pp. 300-304; DM Scher, "Naoorlogse rasseverhoudings, 1902-1948", in Pretorius (ed.), pp. 261-264. As late as 1978, an editorial review in *Die Burger*, 8 July, accused English-speaking South Africans of relying on their British passports, that they were not committed to South Africa and that they had never shed their imperialistic haughtiness.

76   Giliomee and Mbenga (eds), pp. 252-253; Krüger, pp. 111-112, 140, 189-193; Murray and Stadler, pp. 250, 258-260. For more information on the Voortrekkers, see, for instance, M Nathan, *The Voortrekkers of South Africa from the earliest times to the foundation of the republics* (London: Gordon and Gotch, Central News Agency, 1937).

designed for the RAChD, was also made applicable to South African chaplains, although the suggestion by Rev. Coertse that the institutional system of the RAChD should be imitated was not heeded.[77] When Rev. Coertse retired on 12 June 1947, he remarked to Gen. Smuts, "Had I but served my God as I have served my king".[78]

On the eve of World War II (1939-1945), Afrikaner nationalism gained further momentum in the debate on South Africa's right to exercise full international sovereignty by favouring a policy of neutrality during the war. During a special session of Parliament on 4 September 1939, Gen. Smuts narrowly won an amendment to support the Allied cause. Gen. Hertzog resigned as Prime Minister and Gen. Smuts was called to form a new cabinet. He took South Africa into the war. The intensity of anti-British sentiments was tempered in a new generation and open rebellion, such as that of 1914, did not occur, but the South African society was deeply divided on the question of South African sovereignty and participation in the war.[79]

3.4   World War II and South African military chaplaincy

Enlistment during World War II was voluntary, but the Africa Oath of loyalty to the British Crown was compulsory for all soldiers serving in Africa outside the borders of the Union. These soldiers were identified by a red tab on the shoulder strap, seen by some as a sign of loyalty to the ideals of the dominions and by others as a sign of the betrayal of the Afrikaner heritage. Government regulations to prevent anti-war activities soon increased bitterness at the home front. Those in the armed forces who refused to take the All-Africa Oath were compelled to resign, but, on resignation, they found themselves barred from other civil service positions. The handing in of all rifles in private possession and the promotion of English-speaking officials to the detriment of Afrikaans-speaking officials only served to inflame Afrikaner nationalism. Many Afrikaans members of the South African society complained that they were victimized and treated as second-class citizens. The greatest resentment was caused by internment camps without recourse to courts of

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77   Lillie, pp. 11-15; L Brits, "The Chaplain-General", *Militaria* 12(2), 1982, p. 76; Potgieter, pp. 199, 205-206; Van Niekerk, pp. 114-116, 120.

78   Potgieter, pp. 208, 226.

79   Davenport and Saunders, pp. 342-343; Giliomee and Mbenga (eds), pp. 293-294. Dr DF Malan supported Gen. Hertzog, stating that if South Africa participated in every British war, there can be much talk about freedom, but, in reality, South Africa would be nothing more than a land of slaves. With the death of Gen. Hertzog in November 1942, Dr Malan became the champion of Afrikaner nationalism. For more information on South Africa's participation in World War II, see N Orpen, *East African and Abyssinian campaigns* (Cape Town: Purnell, 1968); N Orpen, *War in the desert* (Cape Town: Purnell, *s.a*); J Kros, *War in Italy: with the South Africans from Taranto to the Alps* (Rivonia: Ashanti, 1992).

law. It was used on a large scale against Afrikaner nationalists, but ordinary people were often lumped together with extremists. Reports by the Department of Military Intelligence were also used against the National Party.[80]

South African chaplaincy was ill-prepared to meet the demands of the war. A Chaplains' Office was set up at Voortrekkerhoogte under the command of the Adjutant General of the UDF. The three Permanent Force positions[81] formed the pivot of chaplaincy services and, on request of the churches in South Africa, more appointments were made. The official viewpoint on military chaplaincy is reflected in a remark by the Adjutant General in 1942 that chaplains were only of sentimental value. British customs prevailed and, in North Africa and in Europe, South African chaplains served under the command of the RAChD. A Senior (later Principal) Chaplain was appointed to each of the five major denominations,[82] but, in line with official viewpoints, they had little executive power. Management of religious issues was mostly reactive, often as a result of pressure by the denominations, with the Anglican Church taking the lead. Endeavours to retain the balance between the different denominations and an unwillingness to share, led to duplication at a time when manpower and resources were scarce and ministry to the troops inadequate.[83]

As in the case of World War I, Afrikaner anti-war sentiments resulted in a shortage of chaplains to troops from the Afrikaans denominations. In August 1941, the Ministry of Defence expressed concern regarding the situation to Rev. Coertse, who served as the DRC Principal Chaplain. In October 1942 only seven of the 59 chaplains in the Middle East were from the DRC and Rev. W Nicol, Moderator of the DRC Transvaal Synod, and Dr AJ van der Merwe, minister of the DRC Groote Kerk in Cape Town, who visited the area in December 1943, confirmed the problematic situation. Ministers from the Full Gospel Church and Jews were compelled to aid in ministering to Afrikaans denominational members, and the lack of ordainment of some Afrikaans chaplains who had just completed their studies seriously hampered administration of sacraments. An example of the tension between South African pro-war and anti-war elements can be seen in the attitude of the Department of Military Intelligence towards Rev. Nicol and Dr Van der Merwe. The Director of Military Intelligence, Lt Col EG Malherbe, regarded their suggestion that ministers should be approached personally and asked to volunteer, as dangerous, and he advised that DRC applications should be secretly vetted. In

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80   Giliomee, *Afrikaners*, pp. 439-443; Krüger, pp. 202, 204-205, 211-212.
81   In 1938 a third chaplaincy position was created at Tempe Military Camp, Bloemfontein. See Van Niekerk, p. 120.
82   The major denominations were the Anglican Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the DRC, the Free Churches and the Jewish faith. The United Board of Free Churches combined the resources of the Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist and Congregational Churches.
83   Van Niekerk, pp. 123, 135-136, 144, 169. For details on the participation of chaplains during World War II, see Potgieter, pp. 211-224; Van Niekerk, pp. 123-169.

May 1944, the Department of Defence rejected an application of 16 DRC ministers to serve as chaplains. In December 1943, the wife of Lt Col Malherbe (pseudonym "Afrikaner Rooilussie") highlighted the influence of anti-war sentiments in Afrikaans denominations in a letter to the newspaper, *Die Volkstem*. She accussed the DRC of doing nothing to support the soldiers fighting in the north and stated that soldiers in uniform were barred from taking communion and that church choir members were prohibited to wear uniforms during performances.[84]

The deployment of approximately 60 000 South African troops in Egypt in 1941 necessitated a revision of chaplaincy services in the Middle East. In September 1941, Rev. GR van Rooijen accepted a position as Principal Chaplain: Middle East, but he resigned shortly afterwards. His successor, Rev. C Runge, worked closely with the RAChD and successfully restructured South African chaplaincy services in line with RAChD standards. Chaplains were not appointed to units as in World War I, but were rotated, with the main base at Helwan in North Africa. In April 1944, the 6th SA Division became part of the 8th Army in Italy, and in September they amalgamated with the American 5th Army.[85] One of the chaplains of this Division, Rev. MDV Cloete (nicknamed "Doempie"), became a legend as a result of his bravery. He was awarded the Military Cross for his assistance in evacuating the wounded during the Battle of Monte Stanco on 13 October 1944. A total of 283 war-time chaplains, including 15 black chaplains, served the South African forces during the war.[86]

The ending of hostilities in 1945 brought a new world order. Countries like France and Britain experienced a decline as world powers in favour of the two superpowers, the United States of America (USA) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). This also meant the demise of the European colonial empires.[87] In South Africa, the post-war years were characterised by the triumph of Afrikaner nationalism, and in 1948 the National Party under Dr DF Malan came to power as the first government to consist almost exclusively of Afrikaners.[88]

3.5 The South African Chaplain Service (SACHS)

With demobilisation in 1945 only one Permanent Force chaplain, Rev. RF Strathern of the Anglican Church, remained, but by January 1947 12 Permanent Force chaplain positions were filled. The greater number of chaplains necessitated a

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84 Van Niekerk, pp. 339-346.
85 Brits, p. 76; Van Niekerk, pp. 146, 148, 157, 159.
86 Van Niekerk, pp. 159-160, 163; MDV Cloete, "Met die manne in die veld: Oktober 1944 tot April 1945", *Commando* 15(11), November 1964, p. 19. After the war, Rev. Cloete joined the Permanent Force and later became the Chaplain-General of the South African Police Force.
87 Cain and Hopkins, *British imperialism: Crisis*, p. 285.
88 Giliomee, *Afrikaners*, pp. 487-488.

chaplaincy structure and, by virtue of South African Government Proclamation 204 of 18 October 1946, the South African Corps of Chaplains was established. Although military chaplaincy was now officially recognised as part of the South African military scenario, it was not on a sound footing. A general shortage of chaplains prevailed and no provision was made for a proper command structure. In June 1949 the Minister of Defence, Advocate FC Erasmus, appointed a committee of inquiry into matters related to chaplaincy. A recommendation regarding the appointment of a Chaplain General was not heeded, and this impacted on the effective functioning of chaplaincy services. In an effort to resolve matters, Senator (Rev.) CF Miles-Cadman OBE took up a position as Deputy Chaplain General in December 1949. Under his guidance, chaplaincy was divided into separate contingents to serve the three UDF branches of land, air and sea forces. When he retired on 31 May 1954, 14 Permanent Force chaplains served in the UDF.[89]

Over time, the ruling National Party became more committed to republicanism. Events such as the unveiling of the Voortrekker Monument on 16 December 1949 strengthened Afrikaner nationalism. Although Dr Malan realised that a complete break with the Commonwealth was not desirable, ties with Britain were severed one by one. Most of the British systems, symbols and names were replaced with ones distinctly South African. The adjustments made to chaplaincy services during the 1950s and 1960s placed military chaplaincy on a sounder footing, but it also tipped the scale towards an Afrikaner identity. On a national level the South African Citizenship Bill of 1949 eliminated the advantages enjoyed by British subjects and in 1957 the South African flag and anthem (which remained in place until 1994) replaced the Union Jack and God Save the Queen. The British character of the UDF with regard to uniforms, ranks, medals and correspondence was reversed by the Minister of Defence, FC Erasmus, a staunch supporter of Afrikaner nationalism. By 1956 more than half of the recruits were Afrikaners and bilingualism became a precondition for promotion. In 1957, the name of the UDF was changed to the South African Defence Force (SADF). The term "South Africa" indicated greater sovereignty, while "Union" was reminiscent of British control. In the same year British control of the naval base, Simon's Town, came to an end – symbolically underscoring the fact that the military establishment had changed its image from a British to a South African (Afrikaner) identity.[90] During a Chaplains' Conference on 16 April 1957, chaplains received new symbols which replaced the crown with the South African Protea. The predominant role of the DRC in the

89   Brits, p. 76; Potgieter, pp. 225, 227-228; JA van Zyl, "Die Kapelaansdiens in die SA Weermag", *Paratus* 25(2), February 1974, pp. 2-3.

90   Dalcantan, pp. 131-133; Giliomee, *Afrikaners*, pp. 491-494; H Giliomee, "'n 'Gesuiwerde' nasionalisme, 1924-1948", in Pretorius (ed.), pp. 293-304; Krüger, pp. 250-251, 260.

ensuing years changed the character and ethos of South African military chaplaincy to an Afrikaans Calvinist ministry.[91]

To many Afrikaners, the establishment of the Republic of South Africa and South Africa's withdrawal from the Commonwealth in 1961 comprised a reversal of the outcome of the Anglo-Boer War and the final elimination of British imperialism.[92] In 1966, the Namibian War of Independence (also known as the Border War) commenced.[93] Although the SADF only became involved on a large scale in 1974, several alterations were made to restructure the military in 1966. Chaplaincy was placed under the newly-created Directorate: Physical and Spiritual Welfare, with Rev. JA van Zyl from the DRC as Senior Staff Officer: Chaplains and Welfare. In the ensuing years, Rev. Van Zyl played a vital role in the accreditation of military chaplaincy as a professional support service of the SADF. Chaplains received a distinctive badge consisting of the Christ monogram. They were entitled to the conditions of service of Colonels, but were addressed by their respective religious titles.[94]

The implementation of a system of compulsory military service in 1967 necessitated the expansion of chaplaincy services. Rev. Van Zyl successfully petitioned the Minister of Defence to separate chaplaincy and welfare services. On 5 January 1968 Rev. Van Zyl was appointed Director of Chaplains with the rank of Brigadier. A Senior Staff Officer (SSO) was allocated to his office at Voortrekkerhoogte, with a second SSO being added in 1970, handling matters related to Afrikaans and English chaplaincy respectively.[95] This indicates that the estrangement between the two language groups was so real that it became institutionalised.

On 1 July 1970, Rev. Van Zyl wrote a memorandum to the Commandant General on the role of the church in the SADF. As a result, the Corps of Chaplains was renamed the South African Chaplain Service (SACHS) and Rev. Van Zyl's designation changed to that of Chaplain General. The SACHS attained its own administration and the right to liaise directly with other sections. Rev. Van Zyl was entitled to attend Supreme Command meetings in an advisory capacity when

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91 Van Niekerk, pp. 357, 381. In 1990, 85 out of a total of 122 chaplains represented the DRC.

92 BJ Liebenberg, "Die Nasionale Party aan bewind, 1948-1961", in CFJ Muller (ed.), *500 Jaar Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis* (3rd, revised edition, Pretoria: Academica, 1984), pp. 517-518.

93 For more information on the war, which lasted till 1989, see W Steenkamp, *South Africa's Border War* (Gibraltar: Ashanti, 1989); *Journal for Contemporary History* 31(3), December 2006 and 34(1), February 2009. These are special editions dedicated exclusively to the conflict in Namibia.

94 Brits, pp. 76-77; Potgieter, pp. 229, 231-234; Van Niekerk, pp. 180-181; Kapelaansvroue SAW. *Die Kapelaansvrou* (Pretoria: Daan Retief Uitgewers, 1982), pp. 111, 133. The new badge underscored the Calvinist view that all ministers of religion were equal. It also ensured that there would be no barriers between the chaplain and the soldiers, and that unit commanders could not use chaplains as regimental officers.

95 Brits, pp. 76-77; Van Zyl, p. 3; Potgieter, pp. 233-236; Van Niekerk, p. 181.

matters related to chaplaincy were on the agenda. On 1 April 1973, his position was upgraded to that of Major General. A Deputy Chaplain General was appointed and the two existing SSO posts were discarded and five new ones were created, namely Chaplain Service, Training, Army, Air Force and Navy. Military chaplaincy finally took up its rightful position in the SADF.[96] This, however, did not guarantee cultural brotherhood. Afrikaans and English chaplains still functioned on separate levels.[97]

4.   CONCLUDING PERSPECTIVES

South African history was shaped, to a large degree, by the relationship between different cultural groups. The relation of inequality suggested by British imperialism with its notions of a superior culture fuelled the Afrikaners' struggle during the twentieth century to regain complete sovereignty from British control. Afrikaner nationalism became the most important driving force in South African politics, culminating in the establishment of the Republic of South Africa in 1961. Sentiments arising from the clash between British imperialism and Afrikaner nationalism in the course of the nineteenth century dominated the timeframe in which military chaplaincy in South Africa was established and it strongly influenced the measure of ministry during the two world wars. The establishment of the Republic of South Africa in 1961 was seen by many Afrikaners as the undoing of the wrongs of the Anglo-Boer War. This coincided with a worldwide confrontation between imperialism and nationalism, which eventually resulted in the decline of the British Empire. The reduction of the threat of imperialism brought about a more accommodating attitude in the relations between the English and Afrikaans communities, although it did not eradicate the separatist tendencies altogether, as was evident from the separate SSO appointments for English and Afrikaans incumbents.

Like most human institutions, South African military chaplaincy did not escape the socio-political forces active during the first decades of the twentieth century. Its early history reflects the local response of Afrikaner nationalism to British imperialism and it culminated in the establishment of an Afrikaner military ethos; little realizing that two decades later transformation to Black Nationalism would continue the historical process.

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96   Van Niekerk, pp. 185-187; Brits, p. 77; Van Zyl, p. 3; Potgieter, pp. 236-237.

97   For more information regarding the influence of Afrikaans and English cultural differences in military chaplaincy, see I Bredenkamp and A Wessels, "Cultural identity and military chaplaincy, with special reference to the Namibian War of Independence, 1966-1989," *South African Journal of Cultural History* 24(1), June 2010, pp. 1-18.