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Cecil Rhodes: Emblem of the White Man, Entrepreneur and Politician in the Colonialist Panorama of the 1800's

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INTRODUCTION:

In the last twenty years, people started to understand the impact of racism on the past and present society by analysing, studying and confronting the reality of history. Obviously, with modern times, came a critic point of view, where inclusivity and the fight against discriminations in any form were addressed and condemned.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the figure of Cecil Rhodes, an accomplished entrepreneur in the gold and diamond industry of South Africa that wanted to fulfil his dreams of colonizing the African Continent, but his greediness was fatal to realize his projects. As many other white men during the 1800's, Cecil Rhodes was racist and believed in the white supremacy over black and indigenous people, even though papers written by his contemporaries said otherwise. After he passed away, his fortune flew into the funding of the Rhodes Trust and Scholarships, a programme born to give exceptional students the possibility to study abroad and open their mind to become greater leaders of the future.

The motivations behind the analysis of this particular historical figure are mainly two. The interest over the subject of South Africa and its history was born some years ago, after doing personal research over the topic: I founded interesting the fusion of multiple cultures in such a restricted area, the relationships between the cultures and the process that lead to Apartheid in the 1990's. My intention was to better understand the historical steps that caused the hatred white people had towards black populations, when Afrikaners and other Dutch descendants suffered the same hate years prior. I wanted to learn from the past's mistake in order to have a voice against racism in the future society.

The second reason stands in the duality of how people perceive Cecil Rhodes: some praised him as the best entrepreneur of his time; others cannot pass over the racist aura that is over his figure. I wanted to have my own opinion over a controversial person that had a major impact in history, so major that caused protests among students in every part of England to take down memorials about him. This dual perception of Rhodes extends throughout the thesis, in all the chapters, but a conclusion is marked at last.

The purpose of the thesis is to analyse a common pattern of the 1800's: rich white men coming from industrialized countries and going to poorer areas with the goal of colonizing the territories and accumulating wealth, at the expenses of the indigenous people living there. This historical pattern is recognizable in people coming from Great

Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, industrialized states with imperialistic governmental ambitions.

The chosen disciplines used for the thesis are economic and modern history: the paper retraces the life of Cecil Rhodes, from his arrival to South Africa to his death, while analysing his business decisions, specifically in the diamond and gold industries, and his political career in the late 1800's. The work is based on multiple resources: some praising the work of Rhodes, like *Cecil Rhodes; A Biography and Appreciation By Imperialist With Personal R eminiscences By Dr. Jameson* by J. Rochfort Maguire; others pointing out the problematic behaviour of the entrepreneur, like *Cecil Rhodes - Man and Empire-Maker* by Princess Catherine Radziwill. Other sources of information explain the panorama where Cecil Rhodes worked and his dreams born, for example *The British South Africa Company and the Jameson Raid* by J. S. Galbraith or *The 1875 Black Flag Revolt on the Kimberley Diamond Fields* by R. Turrell.

The written process of the paper is based majorly on information on the topic gathered in newspaper articles, books, reviews of books on the subject's work and official websites talking about Rhodes life and businesses projects. After understanding the general panorama relating to Cecil Rhodes, the data gathered was divided into three major topics of interest: economic, political and cultural influences of Rhodes in South Africa history. After the analysis, the conclusive chapter reflects on the immortality process involving Cecil Rhodes and the controversies born around a divisive person like him.

The work is structured in three chapters: the first one concerns the economic choices made by Rhodes and his associates. It explores the diamond industry, the gold industry, the businesses work and the miners' condition regarding salaries, living accommodation and health problems.

The second chapter analyse the political career of Cecil Rhodes, his strategies, the laws he supported that, later on, were the Apartheid base and his involvement in the Jameson Raid, that cause his political decline.

The third chapter explores the years following Rhodes death, his racist legacy in politics, the foundation of the Rhodes Trust and Scholarships, the process of selection of Rhodes scholars and some controversies regarding black and white students.

The conclusive chapter summarize and further explores the controversies relating to Rhodes, while having a look on the anti-racism movement born in the last years.

What is important to contextualize those historical figures into the past, when beliefs and life were different from nowadays. It is essential to remember that these controversial individuals still exist to this day: exploitation of indigenous people, women and children is sadly common in the business industry. Holding accountable past figures by removing everything that can be offensive to someone could be a good idea, but it is important to fight the same system perpetuated to this day with the same energy, otherwise we are fighting a past war while allowing people to make the same mistakes.

Chapter 1. POWERFUL ECONOMICAL DREAMS: from a Cotton Farm to digging for Diamonds and Gold

On 1 September 1870, Cecil Rhodes was 17 years old when he arrived in South Africa, a promising land full of hope and opportunities for him. He was there to cure his ill lungs and to visit his brother Herbert, who had recently immigrated to Natal, one of the various areas where entrepreneurs were going to make profits. For this reason, Rhodes' aunt gave him three thousand pounds to invest in diamond diggings in Kimberley, and here his empire was born¹.

After a brief stay in Pietermaritzburg, Cecil arrived at his brother's cotton farm, but Herbert was at the diamond fields in Kimberley. Left on his own, Cecil began to work at the farm, growing and selling his brother's cotton, proving himself as an astute salesperson despite being so young and unexperienced. He, then, followed Herbert on the fields where he supervised the claim and speculated on his brother's behalf².

1.1 De Beers Mining Company LTD and Goldfields of South Africa LTD

During the 1870's, there was a rapid concentration of industrial and financial expertise at Kimberley: after the initial discoveries along the banks of the Harts and Vaal rivers, the diamond mining industry focused on the exploitation of four open-cast diamond pipes – Kimberley, De Beers, Dutoitspan and Bultfontein – resulting in over 30 million carats worth £40 million. Around these claims, thousands of black and white diggers and workers camped out tents, tin roofs, stores, offices and they created a highly organized mining agglomeration: this fast organization was very helpful for those who were interested in the goldfields in late 1880's, where a similar technology and investment was employed³.

After discovering the mines, the legislation ruling the diamond market had implemented to ensure a rightful ownership and exploitation of the resources: claimholders encountered various difficulties with drainage of water and disposal of waste, so they organized their work to form companies with other miners to provide

¹ www.sahistory.org.za/people/cecil-john-rhodes

² Ivi.

³ C. Newbury, "Technology, Capital and Consolidation: The Performance of De Beers Mining Company Limited, 1880-1889", *The Business History Review*, 61 : 1, (1987), p. 1.

financial and technological resources. It is important to remember that, initially, claims in Kimberley and De Beers' area were titles bought and sold freely, while in Dutoitspan and Bultfontein the "London & South African Exploration Company" leased them. From the mid-1870's, with the introduction of partially elected mining boards, workers of Kimberley's and De Beers' were provided of organization and services for machinery, sanitation, reef removal and everything they needed. Gradually, these mining boards 'took over many of the functions of local government in the Mining Area and prepared the way for the legislative consolidation'⁴. These boards ran by influential people with political, legal and financial experience eventually controlled the diamond market in its entirety. As Colin Newbury said in his article, 'this influence in local government was reinforced by need to control illegal diamond buying and to protect the interests of licensed buyers who also doubled as share brokers and company investors'⁵, so in 1881 it was formed a Board for the Protection of Mining Interests in order to do it. The protective board also campaigned to introduce the Diamond Trading Act of 1882, a law that laid down the buyers' license fees system, license registration's terms and the offenders' punishment. Thanks to the regulation of the market, the diamond production doubled in less than ten years and South Africa's economy prospered greatly, with enormous capitals provided by local merchant firms, five Cape banks and land and diamond dealers⁶.

In 1871, Cecil Rhodes realized that the law regulating the excavation of diamonds would progressively force small businesses out of the market, leaving only larger companies able to operate in the mines. He decided with his partner C. D. Rudd, a former associate of Herbert Rhodes, to enlarge their possessions and gather other excavation points in order to have a chance to grow financially in the diamond market, so they bought a costly claim in the "Old Rush" area from Johannes Nicolaas and Diederik Arnoldus De Beer. Throughout the ages, they acquired most of the diamond mines of South Africa, allowing them to form "De Beers Mining Company LTD" in 1880. A month after the establishment of the company, Cecil Rhodes wrote an euphoric letter to his colleague John Merriman praising himself and his investing abilities regarding the De Beers mining

⁴ C. Newbury, "Technology, Capital and Consolidation: The Performance of De Beers Mining Company Limited, 1880-1889", *The Business History Review*, 61 : 1, (1987), p. 4.

⁵ Ivi, p. 4.

⁶ Ivi, p. 5.

area. He wrote that ‘De Beers was almost abandoned in your time [1874] and yet now is valued at nearly a million [...] this is now the richest community in the world [...] The present proved depths of our miles alone would take our present rate of working a 100 years to work out’⁷. This optimism certainly have been dictated by Rhodes’ euphoria, even though there was a brief recession that caused a decline of shares and claims values a few years later; however, his initial confidence proved him right in the long term, when his company established an influential monopoly of diamond production in South Africa⁸.

Rhodes’ success helped him make business partners, like Alfred Beit, also known as the German king of the diamond market, but Cecil had some rivals too, like Barney Barnato. In 1874, Barnato founded with his brother the “Barnato Brothers Dealers in Diamonds and Brokers in Mining Property” and they bought some claims in the Kimberley area, an attractive zone where Rhodes was expanding his dominion. In 1887, Cecil wanted to acquire the “Kimberley Central Diamond Mining Company LTD”, mainly controlled by Barnato, and this situation ended up to a furious competition for commercial dominance in the Kimberley diamond fields. They both bought every claim and share available, trying to outproduce each other, but they flooded the market, causing prices to drop. The only possible solution to this problem was to merge the two companies into a new one: on the 12th of March 1888, the “De Beers Consolidated Mines LTD” was established. Unfortunately, several minor shareholders of Barnato’s company were not happy of the amalgamation with Rhodes’ company and a courthouse ruled against the merge, so the two executives tried to work around the ruling: they liquidated “Kimberley Central Diamond Mining Company LTD” and then “De Beers Consolidated Mines LTD” purchased Kimberley’s assets for more than £5 million. With this project in Rhodes’ mind, his tenacity and patience, he merged the diamond mines in order to build a strict monopoly instead of a cutthroat competition: this scheme completed after twenty years of a great deal of labour. This virtual monopoly “enabled [...] Mr. Rhodes to limit the output so as exactly to supply the world’s demand for diamonds each year, and thus to regulate and maintain the price”⁹.

⁷C. Newbury, “Technology, Capital and Consolidation: The Performance of De Beers Mining Company Limited, 1880-1889”, *The Business History Review*, 61 : 1, (1987), p. 6.

⁸ Ivi, p. 6-7.

⁹J. Rochfort Maguire, *Cecil Rhodes; A Biography and Appreciation By Imperialist With Personal Reminiscences By Dr. Jameson*, s.l., Forgotten Books, 2012, p. 8 [I ed. London, Chapman & Hall, 1897].

In order to avoid the same price dropping that he and Barney Barnato caused, Rhodes decided to take control of the world diamond distribution by creating in 1892 the “London Diamond Syndicate”. This organization had a very strict policy regarding the offer and demand of diamonds: by keeping the diamonds prices as high as possible, they could restrict the extractions and put on the market only the right amount permitting them to dictate the final price. Another very important aspect of the Diamond Syndicate’s activity is ‘the purchase of the largest batches that arrive on the market legally from outsiders and illegally through smuggling’¹⁰. By the middle of the 1890’s, Cecil Rhodes owned 90% of the world’s production of diamonds and controlled every aspect of the market¹¹.

The reason behind De Beers Mining Company Ltd had success is the business’ management. All the firms born during the 1870’s and 1880’s shared a common heritage of ‘relatively autonomous management of local government within the mining area, the conditions of labour recruitment, the partial suppression of illegal diamond buying absence of heavy taxation, and access to Cape government to favour railway construction’¹². Another common feature of the diamond market was the lack of specialized workers: company directors were diamond dealers, but also land jobbers, diggers, diamond sorters, general traders or share brokers, so there were many carriers but a very few of these workers were highly specialized (for example technicians or engineers). What stood out about De Beers was their ‘flexibility in taking decisions that fully employed the skills of the diamond merchants with their useful financial connections in the City in combination with the merger techniques’¹³: the most important decision was building a diamond monopoly that is still working efficiently to this day. We also need to emphasize that Rhodes or Rudd did not run this business alone, sure enough there were corporate decisions to make and they needed their shareholders to back up for them. Another fundamental point to remember is the relationship between this new emerging market and banks or financial corporations: loans and public funding were crucial for diamond diggers in order to have capital and resources for new devices, specialized

¹⁰ M. G. Dikanskii, www.encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Diamond+Syndicate+Ltd.

¹¹ Ivi.

¹² C. Newbury, “Technology, Capital and Consolidation: The Performance of De Beers Mining Company Limited, 1880-1889”, *The Business History Review*, 61 : 1, (1987), p. 37.

¹³ Ivi, p. 38.

technicians and so on. Personalities like Rhodes, Rudd and Barnato were important, but would have been worthless without institutional support¹⁴.

It is important to remember that the industry was born thanks to European migrations and exploitation of natives and their territories. The discovery of diamonds laid the foundations to create an industrial capitalist class that accumulated a large sum of money that were invested into the gold industry. Most of the entrepreneurs were white men that were favoured by politicians to conquer the industry, while the black and native components of the society were progressively marginalized¹⁵.

Another market that interested Cecil Rhodes was the one of gold fields: in the early 1880's gold has been discovered in the Transvaal area, at Barberton, and then in the Witwatersrand area, one of the most important site discovered on Earth. The discovery had worldwide consequences: prior to this event, silver was the exchange value for trades, but the expansion of global trading pushed all nations to adopt a new single international currency system; thanks to the increase of gold production, this valuable metal became the exchange standard between industrialized countries. As we already said, the Witwatersrand's gold fields were the largest mine of the world, and Cecil obviously wanted to participate in the so-called "mineral revolution"¹⁶ of South Africa. The finding of gold in South Africa preceded the discovery of one of the largest diamond mines in Kimberley and by the discovery of coalmines in Natal, so they all contributed to a drastic economic and political transformation of the South African society. The Encyclopaedia Britannica stated that 'by 1899, the gold industry attracted investment worth £75 million, produced almost three-tenths of the world's gold, and employed more than 100.000 people'¹⁷. Sure enough, this newly born industry had to face some political issues, as we can see on this passage written by Peter Richardson and Jean-Jaques van Helten:

As a major cause of these changes, the gold-mining industry found itself at the centre of successive controversies involving the South African Republic and British

¹⁴ C. Newbury, "Technology, Capital and Consolidation: The Performance of De Beers Mining Company Limited, 1880-1889", *The Business History Review*, 61 : 1, (1987), p. 37-40.

¹⁵ R. Turrell, "The 1875 Black Flag Revolt on the Kimberley Diamond Fields", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Taylor & Francis, Ltd, 7 : 2, (1981), p. 201.

¹⁶ P. Richardson and J. J. van Helten, "The Development of the South African Gold-Mining Industry, 1895-1918", *The Economic History Review*, 37 : 3, (1984), p. 321.

¹⁷ www.britannica.com/place/South-Africa/Diamonds-gold-and-imperialist-intervention-1870-1902

imperial authorities, culminating in the Jameson Raid of 1895 and the Anglo-Boer war in 1899. The industry itself was described by contemporaries as monopolistic and politically partial in these disputes, an opinion which has been repeated by historians on many subsequent occasions.¹⁸

Initially, the gold industry's miners used two different methods of excavation for the precious metal: outcrop and deep-level mining. The first one consists in a bedrock being exposed or in an old superficial deposit on the Earth's surface, covered in soil or vegetation and it is founded in mountain ridges, riverbanks or steep hillsides. The deep-level mining, instead, exploits underground deposits under 1.5 km or more and there are different techniques to extract minerals and metals. There was a time where a large number of miners preferred the outcrop method of excavation, but after the Anglo-Boer war and the exhaustion of outcrop-claims, gold finders decided to mix the two techniques to maximize the production. These areas were really difficult to work and needed capital and advanced technology to obtain the larger amount of gold, so around 100 businesses gathered in holding companies to reduce labour competition and keep costs on the low side, just like diamond diggers did before.

Another issue was the labour recruitment of mines workers: in the industry there were white and black entrepreneurs running their businesses, but the major problem was the minimum wage. The differences in labour payment were impressive: there were cases where miners doing the same job were paid 1/9 less if they were black labourers. Approximately at the same time Cecil Rhodes arrived in South Africa, the diamond mining industry was starting to grow and it was an interesting field to look into. Some years went by and the racism of the industry started to show. During 1870 and 1871, there was a restriction imposed on the number of claims that put small businesses out of business, so the English entrepreneur that came to have a piece of the new industry could grow undisturbed. These restrictions caused a rebellion between African and native diggers that was suppressed in favour of white claimholders. Stanley Trapido explained it as follows:

¹⁸ P. Richardson and J. J. van Helten, "The Development of the South African Gold-Mining Industry, 1895-1918", *The Economic History Review*, 37 : 3, (1984), p. 321.

Liberalism failed to make a bridgehead in the Cape outside of the eastern districts of the colony and the port towns and Kimberley. Where a bridgehead was established, merchants, missionaries, editors, and administrators inhibited the progress of coercive methods of state control and the diminution of civil liberties. This earned them the ambiguous title of 'friends of the natives'. This 'friendship' undoubtedly arose out of their beliefs derived from other societies, and it would be mechanistic to assert that "ideas once called into being have no life of their own". But equally, the autonomous life of these ideas would have been significantly shorter if these 'friends' had not had a material and political interest in the survival of the peasantry¹⁹.

Trapido affirmed that, with liberalism, there was the intention to involve part of the African and native community into the political panorama, but after the arrival of English settlers to the country for gold and diamonds, these intentions crushed with the idea of liberalism. One of the most obvious example was the Kimberley area, where the struggle between liberalism and racism was an everyday quest. John Merriman, a Cape parliamentary in 1886, also spoke about the situation in regards to Rhodes' politics:

I remember when Rhodes used to propose to maintain British influence by using the native vote - now he descants on the theme of the integral race difference between black and white and I should not be surprised to find him an ardent advocate for the restriction of the franchise²⁰.

This particular change of Rhodes' mind will be further explained later on, but he did indeed had a change in his initial political claims and desires that lead to the approval of the infamous Glen Grey Act of 1884, a law that will be the base of Apartheid and racial segregation. Rhodes did not think of himself as a racist man, but his actions spoke volumes.²¹

¹⁹ S. Trapido, "'The friends of the natives': merchants, peasants and the political and ideological structure of liberalism in the Cape", 1854-1910", (1980), quoted by R. Turrell, "The 1875 Black Flag Revolt on the Kimberley Diamond Fields", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Taylor & Francis, Ltd, 7:2, (1981), p.196.

²⁰ P. Lewsen, "Selections from the Correspondence of J. X. Merriman vol. 1 (Cape Town, 1960), J. X. Merriman to Agnes Merriman", (1886), p.205, quoted by R. Turrell, "The 1875 Black Flag Revolt on the Kimberley Diamond Fields", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Taylor & Francis, Ltd, 7:2, (1981), p.196.

²¹ www.sahistory.org.za/people/cecil-john-rhodes

During the 1870's, there were a great amount of black skilled or semi-skilled men coming from the Cape, Batusoland and Natal that were running diamond mines: there were mechanics, carpenters, cart-drivers, but also women worked at mines as bakers or sewers. They permanently resided at the mines and there were from three thousands to four thousand people. Europeans working in the same industries, however, were paid more than their black peers were. The biggest problem rose up in 1875: with the spread of stolen diamond buying, white claim holders and workers thought that the master and servant relation with black men was deteriorating. Dr. Matthews, a digger, doctor and member of the Parliament, discussed about the question in his book regarding the experience in the diamond fields:

A great deal of animosity towards the natives existed about this period. Part of this feeling was originated, I think, from many white men not possessed of claims being jealous of their black brethren digging at Dutoitspan and Bultfontein, while the facility for dealing in diamonds, afforded by their possessing a digger's licence, was also a factor in the ill-will felt and expressed²².

At that moment, black workers asked for a higher wage from their white employers, but they refused. Conflicts piled up and in March 1875 the Diggers Protection Association published a manifesto where they announced the intentions to assume police functions in Kimberley, taking discipline in their own hands. The result was also using murder to justify their cause. Even though there was some evidence of a black and white partnership to rob neighbours mines of their diamonds, this wasn't enough to pursue them. It is clear that black men were considered the responsible ones of the theft, so white workers were protected by the State just because of their skin colour²³.

²² I. Yami, (London, 1887), p.209 quoted by R. Turrell, "The 1875 Black Flag Revolt on the Kimberley Diamond Fields", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Taylor & Francis, Ltd, 7 : 2, (1981), p. 204.

²³ R. Turrell, "The 1875 Black Flag Revolt on the Kimberley Diamond Fields", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Taylor & Francis, Ltd, 7 : 2, (1981), p.208.

1.2 British South Africa Company LTD

In 1887, Cecil Rhodes was interested in doing business in the gold industry and one of the deposit he was most interested in was in the Limpopo River area. Rhodes and Rudd founded “Gold Fields of South Africa” and this new company was another successful business. In late October of 1888, Rhodes obtained from the King of Matabeleland Lobelunga ‘a concession that granted him for an indefinite period the right of search for mineral wealth [...] for the monthly payment of a small sum of money and the delivery of 1000 rifles’²⁴. The entrepreneur spent months trying to convince the King to give him a concession that everybody thought was impossible to obtain, but he did it anyway. Rhodes then had another obstacle on his way: Eduard Lippert, a cousin of his great friend Alfred Beit, possessed the digging rights on the Matabeleland and the same king signed a trading authorization with a hundred-years validity. Cecil Rhodes tried any legal and illegal ways to take that concession from Lippert’s hands, but the gold findings of the area were not great, so he decided to move to other areas. Even though he was not successful, his concession helped him build the British South Africa Company Ltd, a mercantile company that exercised commercial and administrative rights in south and central Africa²⁵. Its primary function was to extend the modern capitalist infrastructure under Britain’s control, especially the railway system from Cape to Cairo, one of Rhodes’ dreams. Although it was a commercial business, the British Government permitted the rent out land, receiving royalties and other fees, but also the establishment of a political administration and paramilitary police to manage certain areas of interest. Britain essentially supported everything the BSAC was doing, even military actions towards European’s rivals and local rebellions, like the infamous Jameson Raid. From 1890 to 1895, the BSAC invaded, attacked and acquired various kingdoms and territories in order to form a new state called Rhodesia, in honour of Cecil Rhodes: they acquired Mashonaland, Matabeleland and Katanga (now Zimbabwe and Zambia). They also tried to acquire parts of Mozambique, Portugal’s property, and Bechuanaland Protectorate (now Botswana), but they failed. The worst unsuccessful participation on a military action was the one organized by Dr. Jameson, one of many Rhodes’ friends and this event

²⁴ H. Albrecht, *Alfred Beit: The Hamburg Diamond King*, s.l., Hamburg University Press, 2012, p. 59.

²⁵ www.britannica.com/topic/British-South-Africa-Company

‘produced a review of the BSAC’s charter, but it was permitted to continue’²⁶ as if nothing happened. The company then encouraged white immigrants to settle in South Africa, a land full of gold and diamond deposits, but quickly these claims were proved to be over exaggerated, so they tried to push people to be farmers there. The BSAC operated until 1965, after it was stripped gradually of their commercial and mining rights and, finally, merged with two other companies into Charter Consolidated Ltd.²⁷

Rhodes had great ideas and his investments made him one of the richest people of his time, but he did not really care that much: as James Rochfort Maguire said, “he never cared for money for itself, to hoard it, or to spend it in luxury or ostentation. His wants remained perfectly simple, and the possession of riches did not make him change his mode of life, or spend more upon himself”.²⁸ His solid ventures were backed up by careful finance planning and they rewarded him with wonderful results.

Needless is to say that he was an extremely rich man, but he wanted something else: power. The relationship between money and power is one of the strongest of all and Cecil wanted to be the most powerful man alive with his dream project of expanding the United Kingdom’s dominion in South Africa’s soil, a perfect place in his eyes.

²⁶ www.britannica.com/topic/British-South-Africa-Company

²⁷ Ivi.

²⁸ J. Rochfort Maguire, *Cecil Rhodes; A Biography and Appreciation By Imperialist With Personal Reminiscences By Dr. Jameson*, s.l., Forgotten Books, 2012, p. 13 [1 ed. London, Chapman & Hall, 1897].

Chapter 2. AN IMPERIALISTIC DREAM: the Political Steps of a Money-maker

Cecil Rhodes was a strong promoter of the British colonialization of Africa. It is unclear when he began to envision his imperialistic plan, but contemporaries were sure he ruminated on his ideas for years and the English imperialist government fuelled his visions. To carry on the African annexation, Rhodes needed money and the power over people, two necessary instruments to realize the Empire of the North²⁹. Even though Rhodes' imperialist's plans were not achieved in the end, he was an important figure even on the politics field: he was elected Prime Minister in 1890 and his political campaign focused primarily on the creation of a South African Federation dominated by the British Empire. To do so, there was an issue to solve that rose up between the others: the South African society was intrinsically racist in every aspect of life³⁰. Rhodes did not solve these problems at all: he promoted a plan to legalize racism by playing a major role in regards to the implementation of the Glen Grey Act of 1894, a law that was the origin of Apartheid³¹. J. Rochfort Maguire painted Rhodes in his book as the perfect entrepreneur, a kind human being that did not had a real interest in wealth, when in reality all he ever wanted was power and money. Rhodes' racism, aggressiveness and temper ultimately lead him to ruin his career as a politician and he was forced to resign as Prime Minister in 1896, after his involvement in the infamous Jameson Raid³².

1.3 The Dream of a Federated South Africa and the Jameson Raid

In the late Nineteenth century, the mining industry exploded globally and experts quantified that the investments on this field for the British government was “about one third of new British investments”³³ during the New Imperialism era (1875 – 1914). The

²⁹ J. Rochfort Maguire, *Cecil Rhodes; A Biography and Appreciation By Imperialist With Personal Reminiscences By Dr. Jameson*, s.l., Forgotten Books, 2012, p. 6 [I ed. London, Chapman & Hall, 1897].

³⁰ www.sahistory.org.za/people/cecil-john-rhodes

³¹ Ivi.

³² Ivi.

³³ C.Youe, review of “Mining Capital and Colonialism in Africa”, review of “Mining Tycoons in the Age of Empire, 1870-1945: Entrepreneurship, High Finance, Politics and Territorial Expansion” by R. Dumett; “A Failed Eldorado: Colonial Capitalism, Rural Industrialization, African Land Rights in Kenya, and the Kakamega Gold Rush, 1930-1952” by P. M. Shilaro, *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue*

main aim of this era was to consolidate claimed territories by entering colonist of the Continent and regulating indigenous populations with laws, and then acquire new territories just in a second moment. Great Britain's economic predominance in international trade, manufacturing and finance were crucial to consolidate their annexations, but when other Western states entered the colonialization competition, the English Crown renewed its priority on building the greatest empire in the world. In addition to colonial rules imposed by white colonists, other tools of dominance were the influence and subordination that the colonizing country imposed on these colonized nations, particularly by using special commercial treaties³⁴.

The South African territories were fascinating to Western civilizations for a long time: after the Portuguese occupied these territories in the late fifteenth century, the Dutch crown was interested in the same area and, ultimately, they gained the property over it in 1652. The Dutch East India Company established their presence and, at the end of the seventeenth century, there was a clear imprint of the Dutch colonialism over South Africa. People that migrated from the Netherlands to Cape Colony were mostly farmers and they were referred as "Boers" or "Afrikaners": they formed the white part of the South African society and the majority of modern Afrikaners descended from these migrants. They were also responsible for the economic growth that these African territories experienced. Between the 1770 and 1870 the region expanded into the world capitalist economy and in 1806, after the Napoleonic Wars, Britain acquired the property over Cape Colony. Initially, it was seen as a strategic base for the English Empire to control the developing empire of India but, after a few years, it became a source for raw materials, an emerging market and an emigration outlet for Britain³⁵.

The 1878 Conference of Berlin was a unique event in the history of political science. It was a diplomatic but also economic conference concerning Africa and the subdivision of its territories between Western states including Britain. Initially, Africa was the Portuguese ground of discoveries and these territories were contended with firstly with Spain, then with Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, USA, France and Germany. They all had interests over these flourishing territories and wanted a piece of that. These

Canadienne des Études Africaines, Taylor & Francis, Ltd. on behalf of the Canadian Association of African Studies, 44 : 1, (2010), p. 180.

³⁴ www.britannica.com/place/South-Africa/Growth-of-the-colonial-economy.

³⁵ Ivi.

states called a Conference to divide Africa in a diplomatic way, with the chairperson as Prince Bismarck of Germany³⁶. This Conference was also an important event for the economy: during the negotiation, states were dividing also their economic influence, like Britain that was interested in the Indian Ocean, or France and Portugal wanted some territories in the Atlantic coasts. The negotiation finished in 1885 without having major objections to the decisions made: Belgium gained Congo, Germany gained Camerun and so on. Britain acquired all the territories connecting Egypt to South Africa and there, some years later, born the North and South Rhodesia³⁷.

From 1800 to 1820, a large number of British settlers came to Cape Colony and the regional government progressively expelled many African populations by taking their land. While this event was happening, many Boers settlers tried to escape British policies by migrating on the north of the Orange River in 1834 and they penetrated in the Transvaal area in 1840's. Between 1840's and 50's, British migrants came to Natal and this was when a South African society was born, where Africans and Europeans lived (uneasily) together. This coexistence of multiple populations and culture was not peaceful at all: many internal conflicts developed during the 40's and 50's of the nineteenth century, so the British government gave independence to the Transvaal and Orange Free State in 1852 and 1854. Both Boers groups established parliaments and, even though a unification was not possible, these territories economically expanded³⁸.

Throughout the Nineteenth century, the British Crown military fought nearly all African populations living in the Cape Colony territory: it was common belief to think that, in order to have an easier political and economic integration; independent African kingdoms had to be tamed³⁹. As Rhodes said: "Nothing can be done with this uncivilized race [...] until we show them that we are masters"⁴⁰. These racial stereotypes fuelled the racism European businessmen felt towards the indigenous populations they encountered while visiting the occupied areas, they then proceeded on by taking advantage of the territories and people using abusive manners to 'tame' the uncivilized.

³⁶ D. D. Leon, "The Conference at Berlin on the West-African Question", *Political Science Quarterly*, The Academy of Political Science, 1 : 1, (1886), pp. 103-139.

³⁷ G. N. Uzoigwe, "Reflections On The Berlin West Africa Conference, 1884-1885", *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Historical Society of Nigeria, 12 : 3/4, (December 1984 – June 1985), pp. 9-22.

³⁸ www.britannica.com/place/South-Africa/Growth-of-the-colonial-economy.

³⁹ Ivi.

⁴⁰ Mnguni, J. Hosea, "Three Hundred Years", Apdusa, s.l., (1988), p.129.

Among the many British settlers coming to South Africa, there were the Rhodes brothers: Herbert was attracted by the various commercial possibilities this land had to offer and Cecil followed him some years later. Cecil Rhodes was given some money from a family member to invest in the newly discovered diamond mines and he quickly understood what he wanted to do in his life: acquire as much money and power as he could. By 1881, Cecil Rhodes gained a parliamentary seat in Barkly West, a Northern Cape constituency and, during the same time, the Afrikaner Bond came to prominence. This last political organisation was based rurally and represented the interests of Afrikaners farmers and soon Rhodes started an alliance with this group because of mutual interests. Cecil Rhodes had imperialist ambitions and wanted to use the Cape Colony “as a political base from which to extend northwards through Bechuanaland to the Rhodesias and beyond”⁴¹. With this aim in mind, Rhodes was able to connect to the colonial nationalist sentiment rising in the Afrikaner Bond: indeed, they were unhappy about the ongoing and wider Afrikaners diaspora in Boer’s republics, so the idea of gaining a sub-Imperial role in opening up a road to the north was appealing to them. After listening to the Afrikaners complaints, in 1886 Rhodes decided to support the Bond’s campaign to abolish the excise duty on Cape brandy, so he shifted his position on a native policy to accommodate the Bond and holding them close⁴². With political and economic power, Rhodes charmed the Bond and ensured they supported him in (nearly) every move he did⁴³.

In 1888, Rhodes’ fantasy was endangered by an agreement stipulated between the South African Republic and Matabele’s King Lobelunga, so Rhodes persuaded the High Commissioner of Cape Colony, Sir Hercules Robinson, to block the treaty and convince the King to sign another agreement where the exclusive influence of Great Britain was recognized. The next step was to ensure and develop the first treaty, so Rhodes, Rudd, Thompson and Maguire went to Lobelunga’s Kingdom to ask, and then gain, the exclusivity of all minerals and metals in and on the entire kingdom. On the other side, the

⁴¹ S. Dubow, review of “Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners: The Imperial Colossus and the Colonial Parish Pump” by M. Tamarkin, *African Affaires*, Oxford University Press on behalf of The Royal African Society, 96 : 384, (1997), p. 451.

⁴² Ivi.

⁴³ G. Cora, “Cecil Rhodes: Costruttore d’Impero”, *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali*, published by M. G. Melchionni, 21 : 2, (1954), p. 287.

King would receive a monthly check on £100, one thousand rifles, hundred thousand ammunitions and an armed steamboat on the Zambesi river⁴⁴.

After that, in 1889, Lobelunga comprehended that he made a mistake by signing away his mining rights and informed the Colonial Office and the Queen of England that Rhodes and Rudd deceived him into this agreement and that they did not have rights over his Kingdom. Rhodes was now in a position where he needed to do some damage control by finding a settlement between colonist and political figures of Cape Colony. With the Colonial Office in favour, the 29th of October 1889 the British South Africa Company (BSAC) was born. Their main goals were four:

1. To extend railroads and telegraphs up to the Zambesi;
2. To encourage emigration and colonialization;
3. To promote commercial exchanges;
4. To develop a powerful organization of claims in order to avoid conflicts and competitions.

The interested area of the BSAC comprehended all South Africa, from Cape Colony to the Transvaal, from Mozambique to Bechuanaland. Here the Company could stipulate contracts, promulgate laws, keep a peaceful situation with their own police force, obtain concessions, build streets and other public innovations and many more things, all in a legal manner. On the other hand, the BSAC had to protect natives' rights, commercial and religious freedom and respect previous concessions; otherwise, the Colony's State Secretary could revoke their powers. Rhodes was known for his impatience and he did not waste a second of time: he was already working on building the railroads and telegraphs but the slow bureaucracy and the lack of funds stopped him temporarily. As he did various times before, Rhodes used private funds to speed up the process and this money came from the Rothschilds, a very important Jewish family that owned one of the most valuable bank in London. This family decided to provide Rhodes with finances for his gold and diamond mining enterprises and they were concerned when they realized where their money was going⁴⁵.

After gaining the approval of the London political panorama, Rhodes needed support also from the South African society, especially from the Afrikaners. The

⁴⁴ G. Cora, "Cecil Rhodes: Costruttore d'Impero", *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali*, published by M. G. Melchionni, 21 : 2, (1954), p. 287.

⁴⁵ Ivi.

relationship between Rhodes and the Bond, as it was said before, was peaceful and Cecil wanted to include the Afrikaners in his actions as much as he could in order to have a stronger Dutch cooperation and gain more power. Rhodes was a candidate to become Prime Minister of Cape Colony and, thanks to the support of English and Afrikaners men, he eventually won the election in 1890. Hofmeyr, the leader of the Afrikaner Bond, favoured Rhodes ideas and signed an agreement to build the first part of the Kimberly's railroad, an essential piece for the North colonization. This railway was completed in the shortest time possible and the BSAC and the Bond benefited from it⁴⁶.

One of the hardest operation of the BSAC was to develop a plan to occupy as much territories they could so they could benefit from them; some of them were in the hands of King Lobelunga, the Matabeleland and the Mashonaland. The Matabele's were an elevated number of warriors, whereas the others were more peaceful, so Rhodes decided to begin the occupancy from there. On that occasion, in March 1890, there was the first encounter between Rhodes and Kruger, leader of the Boers, where Cecil obtained an agreement where the Boers's disinterest on Lobelunga's territories in exchange for the Transvaal fields near the sea. On the 27th of June 1890, the expedition to conquer Lobelunga's Kingdom begin with a group of soldiers and police officers lead by F. Johnson. After the initial victories, the group stopped and then founded Salisbury, the capital of South Rhodesia, and stayed there for a year with the growing dissatisfaction of the soldiers. To overcome a possible rebellion, Rhodes sent Dr. Jameson to control the situation and guide soldiers towards Lobelunga's Matabele men. The 4th of November 1893 marks the day of Matabeleland conquer, with many victories on field and a fugitive Lobelunga. After the annexation of the new territories, all of the areas under the BSAC control was recognized as Rhodesia⁴⁷.

Rhodes was at the peak of his career and his arrogant, authoritarian manners worsen day by day, and his general health was compromised after getting the flu in 1894. Rhodes now wanted to develop his long-life idea of creating a South African Union, but there were many issues to address: the relationship between English and Dutch people, the indigenous politics, but also the existence of the Transvaal and Orange State republics were a threat to Rhodes plan. In the Transvaal area, in particular, numerous gold deposits

⁴⁶G. Cora, "Cecil Rhodes: Costruttore d'Impero", *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali*, published by M. G. Melchionni, 21 : 2, (1954), p. 292.

⁴⁷Ivi, p. 298.

attracted investments and workforce mostly in the Johannesburg centre and nearby: approximately 80 thousand “uitlanders”, or immigrants, lived and worked there but Kruger impeded them to participate in anything political or administrative. Kruger was also favouring every non-English company that needed concessions or monopolies so that he could damage all the other English mining companies and acquire wealth for his people. This situation was economically harmful especially for Rhodes, his government and his associates; also, a majority of these uitlanders were tired of the difficulties and were ready to fight. Some contemporaries and historians affirmed that Rhodes and his administration tried to negotiate a solution with Kruger, but he decided it was not possible, so he began to fantasize about an armed uitlanders revolution: the idea of the Jameson Raid of 1895 was born⁴⁸. At that moment, it was clear that Rhodes was a greedy politician and that his very first priority was being the most powerful man in the South Africa panorama: he heavily financed the Jameson Raid with Alfred Beit and organized a conspiracy against a State that had normal relationships with Great Britain and Cape Colony government⁴⁹. The Jameson Raid articulated in phases: uitlanders organized a movement for the “reform” of laws that it was supposed to be the justification of the Raid, then they smuggled arms that were hidden into mine galleries; after that, Jameson would have guide 1500 volunteers and five thousand rifles were distributed to them. There were supporters also in London and they were helping the organizers to hold the uitlanders accountable for it. After the rebellion, the conspirators would take over Johannesburg, then the rebellious would conquer Pretoria’s fort and the group of Jameson would meet them there to end it. The secrecy and precision of the plan was essential, but something did not go as planned. The impetuosity of Jameson, the lack of rifles and men and many other problems compromised the Jameson Raid results⁵⁰. After months of preparation, not a single action was ready to be carried out because of many uncertainties, so Jameson telegraphed Rhodes that the night of the 29th of December 1895 he would go on the Raid alone with his mercenaries. Rhodes received the telegraph the morning of the same day the Raid and ordered Jameson not to do a single thing, but a number of circumstances came to play and that telegraph never got to Jameson. The Raid happened

⁴⁸ G. Cora, “Cecil Rhodes: Costruttore d’Impero”, *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali*, published by M. G. Melchionni, 21 : 2, (1954), pp. 299-300.

⁴⁹ Ivi, p. 300.

⁵⁰ Ivi, p. 300.

with a tremendous outcome and failed miserably. The major consequences of this were mostly political: Rhodes was a Prime Minister that orchestrated a conspiracy to attack a nearby State in peace. The plot stunned Afrikaners, English and Dutch people and a great deal of them lost respect and trust in Rhodes⁵¹.

After he was forced to resign as Prime Minister in 1896 and from the BSAC that he had put at risk for his greediness, Rhodes was not done yet. At the end of a brief time spent out of the public eye, Cecil Rhodes paid his debt contracted with the Reformist Committee and went to London to meet with Chamberlain, minister of the UK colonies. Chamberlain clearly explained to Rhodes that a parliamentary investigation was inevitable, so Rhodes then decided to come back to South Africa that was now led by Jameson. Rhodes then dealt with the consequences of the Raid: numerous indigenous people revolted against the Cape Colony government and they were exterminated. Even though the Raid was a disaster, there were people that trusted Rhodes and thought he was not aware of the conspiracy. In 1897, the investigative commission in London worked to demonstrate if Rhodes was implicated in the infamous Raid or if he was innocent as he claimed. Rhodes' legal attorney produced a lengthy list of documents to prove his innocence, although an alleged telegraph directed to Chamberlain was not presented, insinuating that he already knew about the Raid. The parliamentary commission in London and Cape Colony stated the obvious, that Rhodes had abused his position of power for personal gains. After the investigation ended, Rhodes' situation was not so bad and he came back into the politic field in a much more quiet way than before. In 1898 there were the Cape Colony elections and Rhodes run with a progressive party, but he was not elected. Rhodes personal health had worsened during the years, making him weaker as days went by⁵². Ultimately, Cecil Rhodes died the 26th of March 1902⁵³.

⁵¹ G. Cora, "Cecil Rhodes: Costruttore d'Impero", *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali*, published by M. G. Melchionni, 21 : 2, (1954), p. 303.

⁵² Ivi, p. 307.

⁵³ www.britannica.com/biography/Cecil-Rhodes

2.2 The Racist Path Towards Apartheid: the Glen Grey Act

During Rhodes' mandate as a Prime Minister, he supported and approved various laws and acts regarding agriculture and the mining industry, with the support of the British Government. Among these acts, the one worth mentioning is the Glen Grey Act of 1894, a law that became the base for the twentieth century Apartheid. Hofmeyr presented the Act as "a measure for the encouragement of native agricultural development"⁵⁴ and, instead, it drew labour off the land.

In his 100-minutes long speech to the Parliament, Rhodes opened a debate on the "Native Bill", the draft of the Glen Grey Act that he worked on for two years. Initially, the Act was intended as an administrative law to organise the overcrowded Eastern Cape district of Glen Grey, but Rhodes wanted it to make a bigger change. His intention now was to "force more Africans into the wage-labour market", a move that was beneficial also to Rhodes' enterprises. Rhodes may not had considered himself as racist or someone who was favouring white privilege, but it is clear nowadays that he was indeed. His speech begins like this:

There is, I think, a general feeling that the natives are a distinct source of trouble and loss to the country. Now, I take a different view. When I see the labour troubles that are occurring in the United States, and when I see the troubles that are going to occur with the English people in their own country on the social question and the labour question, I feel rather glad that the labour question here is connected with the native question⁵⁵.

He then followed on saying:

The proposition that I would wish to put to the House is this, that I do not feel that the fact of our having to live with the natives in this country is a reason for serious anxiety. In fact, I think the natives should be a source of great assistance to most of us. At any rate, if the whites maintain their position as the supreme race, the day may come when we shall all be thankful that we have the natives with us in their proper position..... I feel that I am responsible for about two millions of human beings. The question which has submitted itself to my mind with regard to the natives is this "" What is their present state?

⁵⁴ Mnguni, J. Hosea, "Three Hundred Years", Apdusa, s.l., (1988), p.135.

⁵⁵ www.sahistory.org.za/people/cecil-john-rhodes

I find that they are increasing enormously. I find that there are certain locations for them where, without any right or title to the land, they are herded together. They are multiplying to an enormous extent, and these locations are becoming too small.... The natives there are increasing at an enormous rate. The old diminutions by war and pestilence do not occur... We have given them no share in the government "" and I think rightly, too "" and no interest in the local development of their country. What one feels is that there are questions like bridges, roads, education, plantations of trees, and various local questions, to which the natives might devote themselves with good results. At present we give them nothing to do, because we have taken away their power of making war "" an excellent pursuit in its way "" which once employed their minds.... We do not teach them the dignity of labour, and they simply loaf about in sloth and laziness. They never go out and work. This is what we have failed to consider with reference to our native population... What I would like in regard to a native area is that there should be no white men in its midst. I hold that the natives should be apart from white men, and not mixed up with them... The Government looks upon them as living in a native reserve, and desires to make the transfer and alienation of land as simple as possible... We fail utterly when we put natives on an equality with ourselves. If we deal with them differently and say, " Yes, these people have their own ideas," and so on, then we are all right ; but when once we depart from that position and put them on an equality with ourselves, we may give the matter up... As to the question of voting, we say that the natives are in a sense citizens, but not altogether citizens, 'they are still children'....⁵⁶

The purpose of the Act was to strip Africans and Natives of their lands property and the possibility of owning fields, they could not own what was produced on the land, and they had to pay taxes if they had not a wage employment for at least three months in a year. Indigenous were forced to enter the migrant labour market and work in other fields, like the ones of diamonds or gold that Rhodes had. Another bad outcome of the Glen Grey Act was that black people had restrictions also on where they could live: because of the obstacle put on owning, selling, dividing and inheriting land, they had no choice but stay there. In 1913, after Rhodes death, his racial legacy continued with the approval of the Native Land Act, precursor of the racist laws of Apartheid⁵⁷.

Because of depriving black people of their land, the Glen Grey Act introduced a reduced voting franchise for natives in order to prevent people to fight for their rights and to accommodate the Bond's complaints about Africans. The requirements to be able to

⁵⁶ www.sahistory.org.za/people/cecil-john-rhodes

⁵⁷ Ivi.

vote for Africans were multiple, in particular they had to know how to write their name, address and occupation, even though there was still the chance that the government took that right from them, as it happened during the voting process for the annexation of Pondoland. Although the English government tenaciously opposed the Act, it went through and became law. With the adoption of this act, Rhodes persuaded the Parliament into abandoning the English ideal of the nineteenth century that recognized all people, irrespective of colour, were born equal in front of the law⁵⁸.

⁵⁸ www.sahistory.org.za/people/cecil-john-rhodes

Chapter 3. RHODES' INFLUENCE IN CULTURE AND EDUCATION: the Rhodes' Trust and Scholarships

As it was previously showed, after his death Cecil Rhodes left behind himself a legacy dictated by white men, racism, injustices, money and power. Even though some of his contemporaries, like Rochfort Maguire and Lord Elton, painted him as the most human man they knew, his figure did not corresponded to the reality^{59 60}.

The Glen Grey Act, for example, became the base where his successors built racist laws and regulations contributing to the creation of a state based on economic and social injustices, racism and white privilege, also known as Apartheid. The term "Apartheid" was born in 1917 of an idea of Jan Smuts, the future 1919's Prime Minister of South Africa: it meant "separation" and defined the racial superiority of Dutch colonizers over black people, a concept clearly inspired by the Nazi racial politics. This narrative went on and grew for years, to result in the formation of an Apartheid government, formed by white representatives in 1948, that adopted politics of racial segregation towards black people: they killed rebels and protesters, they formed residences of segregation where only black people could live, and they prohibited mixed marriages. Black people could not do some type of jobs nor be paid as their white peers, they were stripped of their right to vote, they could not even drink water from the same drinking fountain white people used. The Apartheid government died only in 1994, after years of battling and fighting for black people rights and, when the ANC, or African National Congress, won the elections, it was possible to dismantle the racist laws that caused so much damage to black citizens⁶¹.

In the educational area, Cecil Rhodes was undoubtedly an influential character of the South African panorama and he had ambitions for his legacy: one of his visions consisted in giving the opportunity to talented students to study abroad, travel and open their minds to new cultures. His ultimate goal was to train future intelligent leaders to guide the British Empire and made it more magnificent than ever before.

⁵⁹ J. Rochfort Maguire, *Cecil Rhodes; A Biography and Appreciation By Imperialist With Personal Reminiscences By Dr. Jameson*, s.l., Forgotten Books, 2012, [I ed. London, Chapman & Hall, 1897].

⁶⁰ L. Elton, "The Work of the Rhodes Trust", *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 95 : 4742, (1947), p. 395.

⁶¹ www.it.gariwo.net/educazione/approfondimenti/apartheid-9861.html

With this aim in his mind, Rhodes build a testament during twenty years and the 1899's will was the one that created the Rhodes Scholarships. They provided a financial assistance to 'those who have shown during school days that they have instincts to lead a new and take an interest in their school mates'⁶²: these were thought to be essential characteristics that made someone a good person and a future thoughtful leader of the society.

At his death in 1902, Cecil Rhodes net worth was around £3.3 million: even though it was not a great amount of money, they were invested in scholarships, projects and ventures and they lasted for a long time. In addition to this, it was built a new building in the Oxford College: the Rhodes House. It was a space originally intended to serve three functions: a library, an accommodation for the Trust Secretary and a meeting-space for scholars but its functions have been reconsidered multiple times⁶³.

The Rhodes Trust decided to build the Rhodes House in 1925 and opened in 1929, with a massive newspaper coverage during the process of building. This particular building had three key functions:

- A library for the study of the history and literature of the British Dominions and Colonies and for America;
- A Great Hall for the Rhodes Trust's annual dinners and university lectures;
- A centre for administration for the Rhodes Trust and a residence for its Oxford secretary.

The Rhodes House was the gift that the Trust gave to Oxford University to show appreciation for the support given to the organization and it was not a kind of clubhouse as someone portrayed it.⁶⁴

In an annual assembly held in 1946, Lord Elton, the Trust Secretary at the time, explained in his speech the basis of the Rhodes Trust and Scholarships. After praising the figure of Rhodes during the first part of the speech, he then proceeded to explain the writing process of Rhodes' testament. During a twenty-two year period of time, Rhodes

⁶² L. Elton, "The Work of the Rhodes Trust", *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 95 : 4742, (1947), p. 395.

⁶³ P. Maylam, review of "History of the Rhodes Trust of The History of the Rhodes Trust 1902-1999" by A. Kenny, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Taylor & Francis, Ltd., 29 : 4, (2003), p. 1005.

⁶⁴ Z. Laidlaw, "Briefing: Rhodes House and the Rhodes House Library: An Historical Survey of the Intentions of the Rhodes Trust, 1925-1929", *African Affairs*, Oxford University Press on behalf of The Royal African Society, 100 : 401, (2001), pp. 641-643.

meditated over his future and his wishes and his last draft of the testament was the one that founded the Scholarships. The first sketch of the will was initially intended to create a secret society, based on the Jesuits model, with the purpose of advancing and extending the British Empire, but then the goal changed. Rhodes had two objects for founding the scholarships, and both were related to enlarging the greatness of the British Empire. The cohesion of the empire was the first goal Rhodes wanted to achieve because he thought that “[...] we are the finest race in the world and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race”⁶⁵. According to Lord Elton, this phrase needed a modern day translation: the world urgently needed Anglo-Saxons men with their ideals of liberty, justice and toleration, something that was missing at that moment in time. Rhodes might have used another phraseology, but it was clear that, in saying this phrase, he had other intentions in mind, racist ones. The second object Cecil wanted to achieve was the association of the British Empire with the United States of America, a necessary connection between the two nations under the Anglo-Saxon race⁶⁶.

In his last will, Rhodes explained in detail how he wanted the scholarships to be organized. Cecil Rhodes was quite a character, tenacious and aggressive; he wasn't someone you could easily say no, so he wanted the same energy from his scholars. Rhodes wanted them to be selected for their character and intelligence and not by using any kind of examination. Students were to be chosen for their academic achievements, quality of character, sports results and societal participation⁶⁷. He wanted also to bring young men out in the world to open their minds and broaden their knowledge. Going back on the examination topic, Rhodes' plan was a bit unrealistic and it was introduced an examination method in order to choose the right candidate for the scholarship⁶⁸.

The scholarships were entitled to study at Oxford University for three years, with all tuition and living expenses paid. Originally, German and English speaking countries students were allowed to apply to the program, and then it was gradually extended to former British colonies and European countries. Another point of interest is that women

⁶⁵ L. Elton, “The Work of the Rhodes Trust”, *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 95 : 4742, (1947), p. 395.

⁶⁶ Ivi.

⁶⁷ M. Gasman, review of "Legacy: Cecil Rhodes, the Rhodes Trust and Rhodes Scholarships" by P. Ziegler, *History of Education Quarterly*, Cambridge University Press, 50, (2010), pp. 261-262.

⁶⁸ L. Elton, “The Work of the Rhodes Trust”, *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 95 : 4742, (1947), p. 396.

were not allowed to participate to the program until the 1970's. In 1972 the Women's Equity Action League in USA challenged the legality of the scholarship because of that and the criteria changed in 1976; a year after that, thirteen women were selected as new Rhodes Scholars and the first black woman becoming a Rhodes scholar was Karen Stevenson⁶⁹.

Students that won the Rhodes Scholarship and graduated became Oxford professors, lawyers, judges, astronomers, bishops, politician and prime ministers, like Bill Clinton⁷⁰. The only issue was the number of black students winning those scholarships. The question was briefly introduced during Lord Elton's speech but not really further explored⁷¹. The fact is that the great majority of the students gaining the scholarship, especially during the first years, were white, and this issue helped to speculate on Rhodes words when he said that the finest race should govern the world⁷². Even though Rhodes specifically said that students could not be turned away for religious or racial motives, he was not surely talking about black people. He was probably referring to Afrikaners applicants, despised by British people but intimately connected to Rhodes' heart⁷³.

It was clear that Rhodes and the people running the Trust preferred a white student candidate to apply for the scholarship. In hope to make the situation better, in 1907 Alan LeRoy Locke was the first black student winning a Rhodes Scholarship and he later graduated in Philosophy. After that, there were no more black students selected until 1960. It was obvious that white candidates had privileged priority over their black peers. Another point of interest could be that, prior to the 1960's, a very low number of black students attended the better universities in USA that were producing Rhodes' scholars, so they were directed towards black institutions. For example, Harvard and Brown universities were the greatest institutions at the time and had very few black students that attended their courses. In 1962, newspapers and magazines across the USA were talking about two black students selected to be the next Rhoades scholars. These were big news

⁶⁹ T. J. Schaeper and K. Schaeper, "The Black Trailblazers in the Rhodes Scholarship Program", *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, The JBHE Foundation, Inc., 22, (1998-1999), p. 115.

⁷⁰ S.n., "Three African Americans Selected for Rhodes Scholarships", *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, The JBHE Foundation, Inc., 23, (1999), p. 46.

⁷¹ L. Elton, "The Work of the Rhodes Trust", *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 95 : 4742, (1947), p. 396.

⁷² S.n., "Three African Americans Selected for Rhodes Scholarships", *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, The JBHE Foundation, Inc., 23, (1999), pp. 46-47.

⁷³ M. Gasman, review of "Legacy: Cecil Rhodes, the Rhodes Trust and Rhodes Scholarships" by P. Ziegler, *History of Education Quarterly*, Cambridge University Press, 50, (2010), p. 262.

because the Scholarship system was considered a “white man’s club” and finally Stanley Sanders and John Edgar Wideman won. They had all the characteristics that Cecil Rhodes wanted from his future scholars, with multiple academics and sports achievements⁷⁴.

Randall Kennedy, a professor at Harvard Law School and a Rhodes Scholar, on talking about how a black man wins a Rhodes scholarship had this to say:

"All of us black Rhodes Scholars attended predominantly white colleges, where we were schooled in the ways of 'cultured' white folks. The likelihood is remote of a black winning a Rhodes Scholarship who cannot adapt reflexively to the tribal mores of white upper-middle-class society. Moreover, he must prune the argot of the black community from his conversation at least while talking with whites and replace it with the clipped, preppie glibness appreciated by the sort of men and women who sit on the Rhodes Scholarship selection committees. It is, then, only a certain kind of black who succeeds or probably even attempts to succeed in winning a Rhodes: the black who is middle class in ethos if not in income, and who wants to 'make it' even if that entails playing ball by rules he opposes but hopes to alter."⁷⁵

The question that many historians asked themselves is whether these students found troubling being associated to the historical figure that was Cecil Rhodes, during and after his life. There was just one case documented in the history of the Rhodes Scholarships program where a student from Stellenbosch Boys’ High School turned down the offer of the scholarship because he did not want to be associated with the name of the founder. It is true that Rhodes’ idea of founding the scholarships was a great one because it created these study opportunities to future students and kept his name alive for years, even though multiple accusations were attached to his figure, but these controversies seemed to not have bothered many students of the recent years. Rhodes’ historical figure was not being questioned as much as the business one⁷⁶.

One of the students that accepted the scholarship with a critic eye was Gretchen Rohr, the only 1998 African American student selected for the Rhodes program. She

⁷⁴ T. J. Schaeper and K. Schaeper, “The Black Trailblazers in the Rhodes Scholarship Program”, *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, The JBHE Foundation, Inc., 22, (1998-1999), pp. 114-115.

⁷⁵ Ivi, p. 115.

⁷⁶ P. Maylam, review of “History of the Rhodes Trust of The History of the Rhodes Trust 1902-1999” by A. Kenny, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Taylor & Francis, Ltd., 29 : 4, (2003), p. 1005.

talked about accepting the offer in an article on “The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education” in 1999 in these terms:

Many in my work and academic circles assumed my social conscience wouldn't allow me to accept "blood money." It was presumed, most likely due to my pride in being a black woman, that my ancestral ties to the continent would make me more sensitive to the appalling practices Rhodes inflicted on southern Africa. I was supposed to know better. "Do you know who that man is?" inquisitive professors would ask, eager to provide details of Rhodes' legacy of brutality against black Africans. "Of course," would begin my scripted response, "I'm hoping he is rolling in his grave."⁷⁷

She, then, followed on by saying:

I adopted an approach contrary to that of the African- American poet Audre Lorde: I decided that you can destroy "the master's house" with "the master's tools." I put my aspirations to explore critical race theory temporarily on hold in order to pursue a mainstream educational avenue. This would presumably enhance my legal reasoning and study skills while assist my understanding of "the system" I have vowed to reform. [...] As much as I have always been willing to take on the responsibility that comes with privilege, I was not ready to face the possibility that there must be something within me or about me which was not only tolerable but admirable in the eyes of this powerful elite. I had to come to grips with the possibility that I am not as "progressively minded" as I pride myself on being. Or, possibly, the election of scholars is as unpredictable as I earlier presumed, something I simply stumbled upon and that no "stealthy recruitment" exists. In any event, I have come to realize that in my critiques of the intelligentsia I can no longer refer to those occupying the "ivory tower" as "them". [...] I do not want to be yet another scholarship recipient who flippantly rejects Rhodes' legacy while skipping to the bank to cash his stipend check. I need to awake to the reality that, bags unpacked and stipend check in hand, I am now a part of that legacy. As a Rhodes Scholar, I have a historical and financial link to southern Africa and therefore a responsibility to redress the effects of colonialism or support and contribute to the development in that region. Fortunately, I do not stand alone in this belief. During my first month at Oxford I joined a collection of students organized to promote social justice and opposition to discrimination. The Rhodes Scholars Southern Africa Forum was founded in the 1980s to address the particular issues of racism, apartheid, and colonialism in South Africa. Over the years the objectives have

⁷⁷ G. Rohr, “An African-American Rhodes Scholar Confronts the Ghost of Cecil Rhodes”, *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, The JBHE Foundation, Inc., 23,(1999), p. 102.

broadened and now, through rigorous fundraising, it provides small grants to nongovernmental organizations in order to assist the economic, political, and social development in the southern Africa region. The majority of these grants (approximately 4,000 distributed annually) are financed by Rhodes Scholars' voluntary stipend deductions. In addition, the forum works with the Rhodes Trust to finance a group of scholars to work summers in southern Africa with different grassroots organizations and agencies.”⁷⁸

She, then, concluded by saying:

“What I believe to be key in keeping a level head about everything I do here and afterwards is the understanding that, via Cecil Rhodes, the people and the natural resources of southern Africa have financed my education at Oxford. Therefore, anything I do to support the people and development of that region is not some arbitrary act of philanthropy but the actual repayment of a debt.”⁷⁹

Being a Rhodes Scholar was undoubtedly something to be proud of because, if you were one of the few selected candidates to win this opportunity, you gained the respect of your community and your family and it added prestige to your professional persona.

⁷⁸ G. Rohr, “An African-American Rhodes Scholar Confronts the Ghost of Cecil Rhodes”, *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, The JBHE Foundation, Inc., 23, (1999), pp. 102-103.

⁷⁹ *Ivi.*

CONCLUSION.

During the research for the paper, my opinion over the controversial figure of Cecil Rhodes changed as the topics went by. The study of the thesis is based on multiple historical sources that were helpful to draw a true picture of Rhodes: he was the typical Western-world white man, a racist entrepreneur with a power-obsessed plan to become the star-child of the English Empire. The common denominator of the research is racism and is declined in every aspect of the South African society of the 1800's: the differences in salary of black and white miners, the Glen Grey Act, the preference in choosing white students for the Rhodes Scholarships rather than black ones.

The first chapter presents the earliest steps of Rhodes as a racist entrepreneur in an African country. The diamond and gold mines he acquired had a high number of black workers that were paid 1/9 less than their white peers, a ridiculous amount of money for the dangerous situations these workers experienced everyday by working underground, without safety devices and breathing harmful chemicals or dust that caused them illnesses. An addition to that, indigenous people were progressively marginalized with the help of racist politician proposing and approving laws that alienated non-white people from being land owners, entrepreneurs and so on.

The second chapter shows the politic moves Rhodes decided to make in order to gain consensus from the society: he found that niche of society, the Afrikaners, that felt like their voice was not heard and he took their cause at heart, but he was no hero. He exploited them to gain power in the elections and, ultimately, win it. If he took the African cause at his heart, he could have become the hero his contemporaries wanted people to believe. Rhodes chose, instead, to marginalize black people that were considered the problem of the South African society, while their racism was the real issue that needed to change. He passed the Glen Grey Act, a law that was the base of Apartheid's segregation theory, so he immortalized himself in history consciously associating his name to something so tragic that South Africa is still processing to this day.

The third and final chapter explores the Rhodes Trust and the foundation of their Scholarships. This could have been a great opportunity for Rhodes and his associates running the Trust to be better and give an opportunity to life for exceptional students of all races and genders, but they chose to give again more chances to white male students

rather than rewarding their black peers. In addition to that, females were not allowed to apply for the scholarship until the 1970's, so they intentionally excluded a portion of society from a growing and learning opportunity because of their racism and misogyny.

After researching and understanding more about Cecil Rhodes' life, my opinion remained the same: he was undoubtedly a racist man blinded by a craving for money and power. His aggressiveness and temper were fatal to his career and, in my opinion, he regretted deeply some of his life decisions.

Something that I learned during my research is that, during a wave of student's protests under the "Rhodes Must Fall" slogan, people started to point out the racist aura surrounding these racist individuals like Rhodes that colonized parts of Africa and were the cause of problems people still suffer for. These colonizers, mostly white entrepreneurs and men, were painted as saviours for indigenous people from their uncivilized manners to become 'civilized' like them. Protesters were not happy with the display of these colonizers statues, monuments or with entire buildings erected to honour their memory in public places like universities, city halls, squares and so on, because they were offensive to all the victims colonizers caused and they stated that such individuals should not be acclaimed for their actions. A large number of students wanted to eliminate the monuments and substitute them with other statues of civil rights figures, others offered a different solution: they wanted the monuments to stay, but the statues had to have a contextualized plate installed to explain the background behind their past actions.

After thinking about these protests and their demands, my solution to the problem is as follows: the administration of those places where there are monuments or buildings erected to honour past racist and controversial figures should install explicative plates to contextualize history in a true manner, rather than just portraying them in the wrong way. This could allow people to have a better view over these far in time individuals and they could decide what to think about them. What I think it's important to remember is that these racist people were absolutely awful humans: preying on indigenous people's land to gain money and power, marginalizing black inhabitants by excluding them from being part of the society, committing horrible crimes just for a personal ambition. It is important to continue to hold them accountable for their past actions and for what their decision had created for future generations, but the same energy anti-racism protesters put on these old situation should be the same they put while protesting about present-day issues with

racism. February is the Black History Month, a month-long celebration of black excellence in a white-washed world, but it is also a period of the year when anti-racist people, from black individuals to allies of every kind, should protest and make themselves being heard. Racism is an issue that still to this day is very present in our society and we should move forward to end it, so we can all live in a more harmonious way. What is in the past time can only be remembered so together we will learn and be better in the future.

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ABSTRACT:

Negli ultimi vent'anni, le persone hanno cominciato a capire l'impatto del razzismo sulla società del passato e del presente attraverso l'analisi, lo studio e confrontandosi con la storia reale. Ovviamente, con l'arrivo dei tempi moderni, è nato anche un punto di vista più critico, dove l'inclusione e la lotta contro le discriminazioni di qualsiasi forma sono affrontate e condannate.

L'obiettivo di questa tesi è di analizzare la figura storica di Cecil Rhodes, un esperto imprenditore nell'industria dell'oro e dei diamanti in Sudafrica che voleva realizzare il suo sogno di colonizzare l'intero continente africano, ma la sua avidità gli fu fatale nella realizzazione dei suoi progetti. Come molti altri uomini bianchi durante l'800, Cecil Rhodes fu una persona razzista che credeva nella supremazia bianca sulle persone nere ed indigene, anche se i testi scritti da alcuni suoi contemporanei sostenevano l'esatto opposto. Dopo la sua morte, la fortuna che accumulò negli anni venne trasferita nei fondi per la fondazione della Rhodes Trust e delle omonime borse di studio, un programma nato per dare la possibilità a studenti con qualità eccezionali di studiare all'estero ed aprire le loro menti per diventare grandi guide per le società del futuro.

Le motivazioni che stanno dietro all'analisi di questa specifica figura storica sono principalmente due. L'interesse verso il Sudafrica e la sua storia è cominciato qualche anno fa, dopo aver condotto ricerche personali sull'argomento: ho trovato interessante come le culture presenti in quell'area si fossero fuse, come i rapporti poi si siano deteriorati ed abbiano portato alla nascita dell'Apartheid negli anni 90 del secolo scorso. La mia intenzione era quella di comprendere in modo più approfondito i passi storici che hanno fatto scaturire quell'odio profondo dei bianchi contro le popolazioni nere, quando gli Afrikaners ed altri discendenti olandesi avevano sofferto lo stesso odio anni prima. La mia volontà è quella di imparare dagli errori del passato per avere una voce contro il razzismo nella società del futuro.

La seconda motivazione riguarda la dualità in cui viene percepita la figura di Rhodes: alcuni lo elogiavano come il miglior imprenditore del suo tempo, altri non potevano essere indifferenti all'aura razzista che circondava, e continua a circondare, la sua persona. Volevo avere una mia opinione su di una persona molto controversa che ha avuto un impatto importante nella storia, così grande da causare proteste tra gli studenti

in tutta l'Inghilterra in quanto volevano che i suoi memoriali fossero abbattuti e sostituiti con personaggi storici che si sono battuti per ideali di libertà e fratellanza. Questa percezione duale di Cecil Rhodes si estende per tutta la durata della tesi, in tutti i capitoli, ma alla fine è possibile trarne una conclusione definitiva.

Le discipline scelte per la stesura della tesi sono state Storia Moderna e Storia Economica: il testo ripercorre la vita di Cecil Rhodes, dal suo arrivo in Sudafrica alla sua morte, mentre si analizzano le sue scelte di business, specificatamente nelle industrie di diamanti ed oro, e la sua carriera politica nella fine dell'800. Lo studio è basato su molteplici risorse: alcune elogiano il lavoro di Rhodes, come *Cecil Rhodes; A Biography and Appreciation By Imperialist With Personal Reminiscences By Dr. Jameson* di J. Rochfort Maguire; altre puntano il dito verso i comportamenti problematici dell'imprenditore, come *Cecil Rhodes - Man and Empire-Maker* di Princess Catherine Radziwill. Altre risorse di informazioni spiegano il panorama nel quale Cecil Rhodes lavorava e dove i suoi sogni sono nati e cresciuti, come *The British South Africa Company and the Jameson Raid* di J. S. Galbraith oppure *The 1875 Black Flag Revolt on the Kimberley Diamond Fields* di R. Turrell.

La tesi è strutturata in tre capitoli: il primo analizza le decisioni economiche prese da Rhodes ed i suoi associati, si esplorano l'industria dei diamanti, dell'oro, il lavoro delle imprese, la condizione dei minatori e dei lavoratori riguardo ai salari, agli alloggi e ai problemi di salute nati lavorando in posti pericolosi e privi di misure di sicurezza.

Il secondo capitolo analizza la carriera politica di Cecil Rhodes, le sue strategie, le leggi che supportò e che, più avanti, divennero la base delle leggi di segregazione razziale durante l'Apartheid ed, infine, il suo coinvolgimento nel Jameson Raid, che poi causò anche il suo declino politico.

Il terzo capitolo esplora gli anni successivi alla morte di Rhodes, la sua eredità razzista in politica, dopo la nascita della Rhodes Trust e le borse di studio a suo nome, il processo di selezione degli studenti idonei ed alcune controversie riguardanti gli studenti bianchi e neri.

La conclusione riassume ed esplora ulteriormente le controversie legate a Rhodes, mentre si accenna al movimento anti-razzista nato negli anni scorsi. Il mio pensiero sulla figura di Cecil Rhodes si arricchiva e mutava mentre scoprivo nuove informazioni sul suo conto. La tesi espone l'immagine reale di chi fu veramente Rhodes: era il classico uomo

bianco occidentale, un imprenditore razzista con un piano ossessivamente incentrato sull'acquisizione ed il mantenimento del potere per diventare una stella nel panorama dell'Impero Inglese ottocentesco. Il comune denominatore emerso dopo la ricerca è il razzismo e la sua declinazione in ogni aspetto della società sudafricana del 1800: la differenza di salario tra neri e bianchi, il Glen Grey Act, lo scegliere principalmente degli studenti bianchi come idonei alla borsa di studio. Tutto ciò ci porta a vedere come il razzismo sistemico fosse normale in quei tempi, anche se oggi resiste ancora fortemente la discriminazione per la pelle, la religione o la cultura diversa rispetto allo standard occidentale (standard che, comunque, è stato scelto da persone bianche e potenti).

Durante le mie ricerche, ho appreso che negli ultimi anni le proteste studentesche, alcune sotto lo slogan del "Rhodes Must Fall", sono aumentate a dismisura. Le ultime generazioni hanno capito ed evidenziato come vengano ancora elogiate alcune figure storiche, come Rhodes, quando la loro intera vita è stata basata sulla sofferenza altrui e sul guadagno personale. Questi colonizzatori, moltissimi dei quali furono uomini bianchi, vennero dipinti come i salvatori delle popolazioni indigene, le quali, non essendo civilizzate, avrebbero trovato la civiltà grazie all'uomo bianco occidentale. Le proteste si basano tutte sul come vengono ricordati questi colonizzatori, ovvero come salvatori ai quali è doveroso erigere statue, memoriali od addirittura interi edifici pubblici, quando non dovrebbero essere acclamati per aver reso le vite degli indigeni un vero inferno.

Ho trovato giusta la causa e le motivazioni che hanno spinto questi studenti a manifestare contro la rappresentazione, a volte, distorta che abbiamo della realtà passata. Mi trovo completamente d'accordo con l'opinione che si ha di questi personaggi e trovo giusto continuare a ritenerli responsabili delle loro azioni, ma credo sia giusto anche continuare a manifestare per le discriminazioni ed il razzismo che tutt'oggi affliggono la nostra società con la stessa energia che si mette per le questioni passate. Sfortunatamente, il passato non è più modificabile, ma ciò che possiamo controllare e migliorare è il nostro presente ed il futuro delle prossime generazioni. Nel mese di febbraio si festeggia il Black History Month, una celebrazione che dura un mese e dove si elogia l'eccellenza nera nei vari ambiti della società in un mondo ancora legato a stereotipi e discriminazioni razziali: anche in questo periodo sarebbe doveroso continuare a lottare e supportare la propria causa per farci sentire dai nostri governanti e per poter cambiare la società che verrà.