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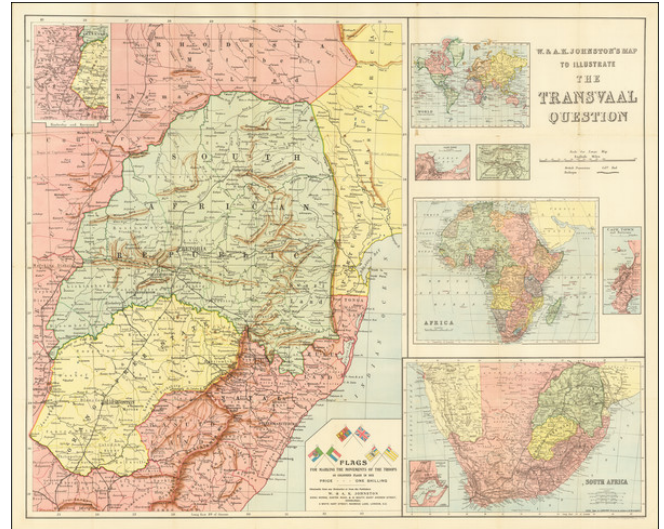
W. & A.K. Johnston's Map To Illustrate The Transvaal Question

Stock#: 74710
Map Maker: Johnston

Date: 1899
Place: Edinburgh
Color: Color
Condition: VG+
Size: 33 x 26.5 inches

Price: SOLD

Description:

Tracking The Transvaal Question at Home In Britain

Large separately published map of South Africa and regions, intended for home use to allow users to keep track of the progress of the war in South Africa.

As noted in the lower right corner of the main map, the map was intended to be used with a set of "50 coloured flags in box", which would allow the user to follow troop movements in the Transvaal.

The main map is a detailed map of all of South Africa, with smaller inset maps of Cape Town, the Johannesburg environs, South Africa, Africa and the World, intended to spotlight the issues associated with the so-called Transvaal Question, more specifically, the political tensions between the Transvaal region of South Africa and British Colonial Rule, following the discovery of Gold in 1886 and culminating in the Second Boer War.

This edition of the map is the first to incorporate the flags and illustrate the 6 flags of the combatants on the map.

The Transvaal Question

Traditionally the Cape Town area was the economic and political heart of South Africa. The discovery of diamonds in Kimberley in 1870. reinforced this dominance. However, the entire balance of power in South Africa was to change in 1886 when vast gold fields were discovered in the Transvaal, near Witwatersrand.

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The Transvaal changed from being the most rural, backward, and impoverished state of South Africa to being the provider of 25% of the world's gold.

The discovery of diamonds in the Cape had led to a vast inflow of investor capital. Railways were built, opening the country up, and migrants flooded in. With the Transvaal boom, this kind of development was strongly resisted. President Paul Kruger was concerned that the religious and moral character of the Transvaal would change with the growth of the mines. Towns such as Johannesburg had already transformed from quiet villages into vast mining camps, filled with prostitution and drunkenness, which deeply offended the Calvinist Afrikaners.

These migrants, or uitlanders as they were called in Afrikans, had the potential to change the Transvaal forever. By 1895 the Transvaal government estimated there to be 30,000 Afrikaner voters, versus, to 60,000 uitlanders. President Kruger made every effort to keep the balance of power firmly in favor of the locals. Initially, from the time of the first gold discoveries to 1890, uitlanders could obtain the right to vote after five years residence. In 1890, as the extent of foreign immigration became clear, this residency requirement was increased to fourteen years, combined with a stipulation that applicants must be over forty years old.

In an attempt to compensate a new body, the Second Volksraad was created with limited competence in designated legislative areas, all subject to the ratification of the Volksraad. Uitlanders could gain the right to vote for this body after two years residence and the right to stand for election to it after four years. Even with this system, the uitlander mineworkers were denied any effective say in government.

Kruger was also fighting against external forces that he saw as threatening the Transvaal's independence. Kruger, who as a twelve-year-old boy had participated in the Great Trek, was profoundly distrustful of British regional power. He had played a key part in resisting the British annexation of 1877, which had resulted in the 1881 Pretoria Convention and the 1884 London Convention, which guaranteed the Transvaal's independence subject only to Britain's right to exercise control over certain areas of policy, principally over the Transvaal's foreign relations. Kruger was determined to prevent any further British encroachment, either militarily, economically or politically.

The Transvaal refused to consider a proposed Southern Africa customs union and strongly resisted further development of rail links to the Cape. Far from acting as a unifying force, the question of railways and economics led to a trade war in 1894. With the growth of the vital gold industry, the land-locked Transvaal was dependent on the ports of the Cape and Natal, both under British control.

Kruger was intent on removing this potential economic stranglehold. He looked to the east, beginning negotiations with the Portuguese colonial authorities. The Transvaal secured from Portugal the right to

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construct a railway line to the port of Delagoa Bay, a line which was completed in 1894. Kruger then drastically increased customs rates on south-bound cargoes, in an attempt to force the mining companies off the Cape and Natal lines, on to the new route. The situation rapidly escalated, culminating in the Transvaal prohibiting all imports coming in via the Cape. The issue was only resolved when Britain informed the Transvaal government that their actions were a breach of the London convention and that unless the restrictions were removed the British government would be obliged to intervene.

There was notable political opposition to Kruger within the Transvaal, not merely from the largely pro-British uitlanders, but from many locals. However, while Kruger retained a majority and remained in power, there was little chance of the necessary rapprochement emerging that would lead to participation in an economic, much less political union.

Detailed Condition: