THE OXFORD HISTORY OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

EDITED BY

ANDREW PORTER

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❧

VOLUME III

The Nineteenth Century

❧

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FOREWORD

From the founding of the colonies in North America and the West Indies in the seventeenth century to the reversion of Hong Kong to China at the end of the twentieth, British imperialism was a catalyst for far-reaching change. British domination of indigenous peoples in North America, Asia, and Africa can now be seen more clearly as part of the larger and dynamic interaction of European and non-western societies. Though the subject remains ideologically charged, the passions aroused by British imperialism have so lessened that we are now better placed than ever before to see the course of the Empire steadily and to see it whole. At this distance in time the Empire's legacy from earlier centuries can be assessed, in ethics and economics as well as politics, with greater discrimination. At the close of the twentieth century, the interpretation of the dissolution of the Empire can benefit from evolving perspectives on, for example, the end of the cold war. In still larger sweep, the *Oxford History of the British Empire* as a comprehensive study helps to understand the end of the Empire in relation to its beginning, the meaning of British imperialism for the ruled as well as the rulers, and the significance of the British Empire as a theme in world history.

It is nearly half a century since the last volume in the large-scale *Cambridge History of the British Empire* was completed. In the meantime the British Empire has been dismantled and only fragments such as Gibraltar and the Falklands, Bermuda and Pitcairn, remain of an Empire that once stretched over a quarter of the earth's surface. The general understanding of the British imperial experience has been substantially widened in recent decades by the work of historians of Asia and Africa as well as Britain. Earlier histories, though by no means all, tended to trace the Empire's evolution and to concentrate on how it was governed. To many late-Victorian historians the story of the Empire meant the rise of worldwide dominion and Imperial rule, above all in India. Historians in the first half of the twentieth century tended to emphasize constitutional developments and the culmination of the Empire in the free association of the Commonwealth. The *Oxford History of the British Empire* takes a wider approach. It does not depict the history of the Empire as one of purposeful progress through four hundred years, nor does it concentrate narrowly on metropolitan authority and rule. It does attempt to explain how varying conditions in Britain interacted with those in many other parts of the world to create both a constantly changing territorial Empire and ever-shifting patterns of social and economic relations. The *Oxford History of the British Empire* thus deals with the impact of British imperialism on dependent peoples in a

broader sense than was usually attempted in earlier historical writings while it also takes into account the significance of the Empire for the Irish, the Scots, and the Welsh as well as the English.

Volume III of the *Oxford History of the British Empire*, as emphasized in the Preface, covers a period that was first and foremost 'Britain's Imperial century'. The territorial extent and the apparently unbounded power of the nineteenth-century Empire fired the imagination of contemporaries and later generations. Yet the Empire in the nineteenth century, though historically distinct, formed only part of the much longer pattern in British Imperial endeavour that can be traced through the four volumes of this *History*.

By the end of the eighteenth century, different interpretations of the meaning of the term British Empire were giving way to a single concept of a British Empire of rule over lands and peoples. This unifying definition would be standard usage throughout the nineteenth century. Yet the comprehensive term, British Empire, encompassed different systems of rule over a great diversity of peoples, as had already become clear in the late eighteenth century. The late-Victorian Empire included self-governing colonies with predominantly white populations, Crown Colonies and Protectorates with non-European subjects, and the British Raj in India as an Empire in its own right.

The nineteenth century also inherited from the earlier era a pattern of world-wide interests that extended far beyond territory under actual British rule. The network of British trade and commerce in areas such as Latin America, the Middle East, and China can be viewed analytically as constituting an 'informal empire' based on naval hegemony and economic power. This is a concept examined in several chapters in both the nineteenth- and twentieth-century volumes. The worldwide British economic system itself reflected an expansiveness brought about by a combination of population growth, industry, finance, technological advance, and the accumulation of scientific knowledge, all of which greatly extended Britain's lead over potential rivals at the end of the eighteenth century.

By the end of the nineteenth century this lead was disappearing. Rival navies as well as empires now challenged the Royal Navy and Britain's Empire. Within the Empire, the rise of nationalism in the colonies of white settlement, Ireland, and India coincided with an emerging sense of national assertiveness in Britain. Colonial nationalism reflected the development of national identities and lingering resentments towards the exploitation or neglect by the 'Mother Country'. These tensions seemed to threaten the structure of the Empire. At the end of the century the British had become more jingoistic, but an important part of the legacy to be carried over into the next century was a sense of vulnerability and insecurity dealt with in Volume IV.

The volumes in the *Oxford History of the British Empire* do not necessarily begin or end at the same point. Historical understanding benefits from an integration and overlap of complex chronology. *The Nineteenth Century*, for example, gives comprehensive treatment to events within the hundred years, but some chapters reach back into the earlier period just as others extend to the outbreak of the First World War. Similarly some developments that began in the late nineteenth century can best be understood in a later context, and some chapters in Volume IV, *The Twentieth Century*, begin in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

A special feature of the series is the Select Bibliography of key works at the end of each chapter. These are not intended to be a comprehensive bibliographical or historiographical guide (which will be found in Volume V) but rather they are lists of useful and informative works on the themes of each chapter.

Wm. Roger Louis

PREFACE

The years 1815 to 1902 were pre-eminently 'Britain's Imperial century', and they provide the core of traditionally triumphalist Imperial narratives. At both dates Britain emerged the victor from major wars. The peace treaties of 1814–15 not only acknowledged Britain's dominance in Europe; they confirmed her conquests made during the wars with France since 1793. Colonies everywhere were thus relieved from fears of attack, political upheaval, and financial loss, and new possessions were converted into fresh bridgeheads for British advance or keystones in the naval defence of Britain's trade. In 1902 the Treaty of Vereeniging, which ended the South African War, from another perspective also coincided with the final phase of Africa's partition. Although victory was bought at a high price, one indicative of future problems, for the moment at least it marked Britain's final emergence as the dominant power in the last colonized continent. Imperial co-operation was manifest in the colonial presence at Queen Victoria's funeral in 1901 and military contributions to the Transvaal's defeat.

However, there is also a 'long nineteenth century', bounded at one end by the events of the 1780s and at the other by those of 1902–14, revealing more of the uncertainties and fluctuations in Imperial fortunes. Peacemaking with a newly independent United States of America, and the reshaping of government for Quebec and British India, from 1782–91, were defensive measures against events which had seemed seriously threatening or uncontrollable. With hindsight, they can be seen as pointers to new connections and influence with both British settlers overseas and the peoples of Asia. Equally, the establishment of Freetown in 1787, of societies in London to promote African exploration and to end slavery, and a penal colony in New South Wales, heralded significant nineteenth-century developments. But resumption of war with France in 1793 left Britain's Imperial future still seriously threatened. Similarly, at the beginning of the twentieth century Britain's renewed sense of isolation and vulnerability to challenges from other imperial powers—Russia, America, Germany—coincided with problems of Imperial defence freshly exposed on India's frontiers and in South Africa; Britain's economic and administrative difficulties encountered nationalist demands in colonial territories. These conditions intensified earlier misgivings, and prompted a reconsideration of Imperial relations and colonial rule which not only anticipated but survived the war of 1914–18.

This, then, is a history integrally related to and overlapping that of the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. In organizing the volume, account has been taken

not only of these different chronological perspectives, but of both the enormous growth in recent years of writings on colonial issues, and a much longer tradition of Imperial historiography. Contributors have had to incorporate knowledge and insights accumulated by earlier generations with newer findings and perspectives. Only in this way has it been possible to bring together the British and the Asian, African, and other indigenous aspects of Empire. Although selection has been inescapable, and consolidation and assimilation would not always have been either possible or appropriate, the underlying aim is that of scholarly cross-fertilization and merger rather than segregation. Subjects currently attracting much attention—gender and empire, the role in expansion of 'imperial ideologies', the nature of colonial 'identities', the costs or benefits of Empire—have therefore been generally drawn into broader discussions, rather than isolated in chapters of their own. In this way the isolation or disappearance of important insights may be avoided and the mainstream of Imperial history be continually invigorated and sustained.

The Introduction highlights four themes running through the volume, and uses them to provide a general context for the chapters which follow. They embrace both the 'long' and 'short' centuries, and are divided by theme and territory. In Part I, thematic chapters take up developments underway in the 1790s. Crossing geographical and chronological divides, they discuss those fundamental dynamics of British expansion which encouraged or facilitated the contemplation and eventual exercise of significant influence, domination, and rule overseas. The opening chapters 2–5 illuminate the economic dimensions of British expansion and Empire, and consider continuing debates about the economics of empire. They are followed by three chapters on the nature of British influence and the idea of an 'informal empire' outside territories ruled by Britain. A further sequence explores the scientific, religious, humanitarian, and institutional frameworks which both shaped and were influenced by Imperial expansion. Two final chapters survey the particular difficulties met in maintaining the Empire, and end-of-the-century plans for its reorganization. In this Part too particular attention is given to the place of the Empire in British politics and society.

In Part II, regional chapters, grouped broadly by hemisphere or continent, focus on the main areas of colonial activity. Most begin at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, setting out the phases in the growth of colonial government and the political evolution of the territories concerned, and relating those developments to local social and economic changes. They assess how British preoccupations and rule shaped each region's history, and they pay particular attention to the responses of indigenous peoples to Empire. India has been allotted two chapters, divided chronologically at 1858–60 and each with a distinctive focus, in recognition of its central importance for the Empire. Later rather than contemporary usage has

sometimes been preferred—'Canada', rather than 'British North America' widely used before 1867, and 'South African' rather than 'Boer' War. Exceptions in favour of earlier starting dates have been made for South-East Asia (1786), Southern Africa (1795), and Ireland (1801) where continuity seemed to require it. The Irish chapter provides more than a study of the country's ambivalent position under the Union. Together with those on the evolution of colonial cultures in Africa and Asia, it offers an extended discussion of the opportunities opened to colonial subjects as well as the constraints they experienced under British rule.

Andrew Porter

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ABBREVIATIONS AND LOCATION OF MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

Public Record Office, London:

CAB	Cabinet Office
CO	Colonial Office
FO	Foreign Office
WO	War Office

All other abbreviations and manuscript sources will be found in the first reference in each chapter.

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1

Introduction: Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth Century

ANDREW PORTER

At the end of the eighteenth century Britain already stood alongside France, Russia, the Chinese and the Turkish empires, as one of the world's principal states. Thereafter the history of her Empire was bound up with her nineteenth-century record as an expanding Great Power. This was clear in various ways. First, the Empire, even if conceived simply in terms of territory and economic wealth, constantly interacted with the development of Britain's modern capitalist economy at home and overseas. Both grew enormously, but Britain's emergence as the world's richest nation rested on no simple causal relationship with Empire. Secondly, Empire exerted a major influence on Britain's international relations, with Imperial issues and foreign policy frequently inseparable from each other. Britain's possession of an Empire was felt to confirm her Great Power status; protection of that status and her growing presence overseas involved an increasing range of Imperial commitments in Asia, Africa, and the Pacific, which in their turn were as likely to create difficulties as they were to increase Britain's power. Thirdly, developments in Britain's position as a colonial ruler stimulated constitutional and political inventiveness among both rulers and ruled, and gave rise to a growing variety of governmental institutions and practice at home and abroad. Finally, the possession and expansion of an Empire also markedly influenced Britain's 'cultural'—that is, social, institutional, religious, and intellectual—development and her citizens' views of the outside world. It did the same for many of the settler societies and colonized peoples over whom she claimed authority. Imperial and colonial cultures and institutions constantly played upon each other. These four types of relationship provide this volume with its central themes.

In approaching Britain's nineteenth-century Empire, scholars now acknowledge both its complexity and its place in the broader history of indigenous societies outside Europe, as well as the history of international affairs and British domestic change. The nature of empire is no longer taken for granted, and historians show a better sense of proportion in assessing its significance.

Labels appearing on the map:

Hudson's Bay Company
Lower Canada
BRITISH NORTH AMERICA
Upper Canada
Newfoundland
New Brunswick
Nova Scotia
Prince Edward Island
Bermuda
UNITED KINGDOM
Ionian Is
Gibraltar
Malta
Ceded and Conquered Provinces
Bengal
Gujarat
INDIA
Orissa
Gambia
Sierra Leone
Gold Coast
Malabar
Carnatic
Ceylon
Penang
Bencoolen
St Helena
Mauritius
Cape of Good Hope
AUSTRALIA
Van Diemen's Land
New South Wales

Inset labels:

Bahamas
Belize
Jamaica
Leeward Is
Barbados
Windward Is
Trinidad
Essequibo
Demerara
Berbice

miles 500
km 500

Legend:

British territory

Territory claimed by Britain but not settled

MAP 1.1. The British Empire in 1815

Cyprus

Egypt

British Empire and
Commonwealth as of 1914

Ottoman territories under
British control
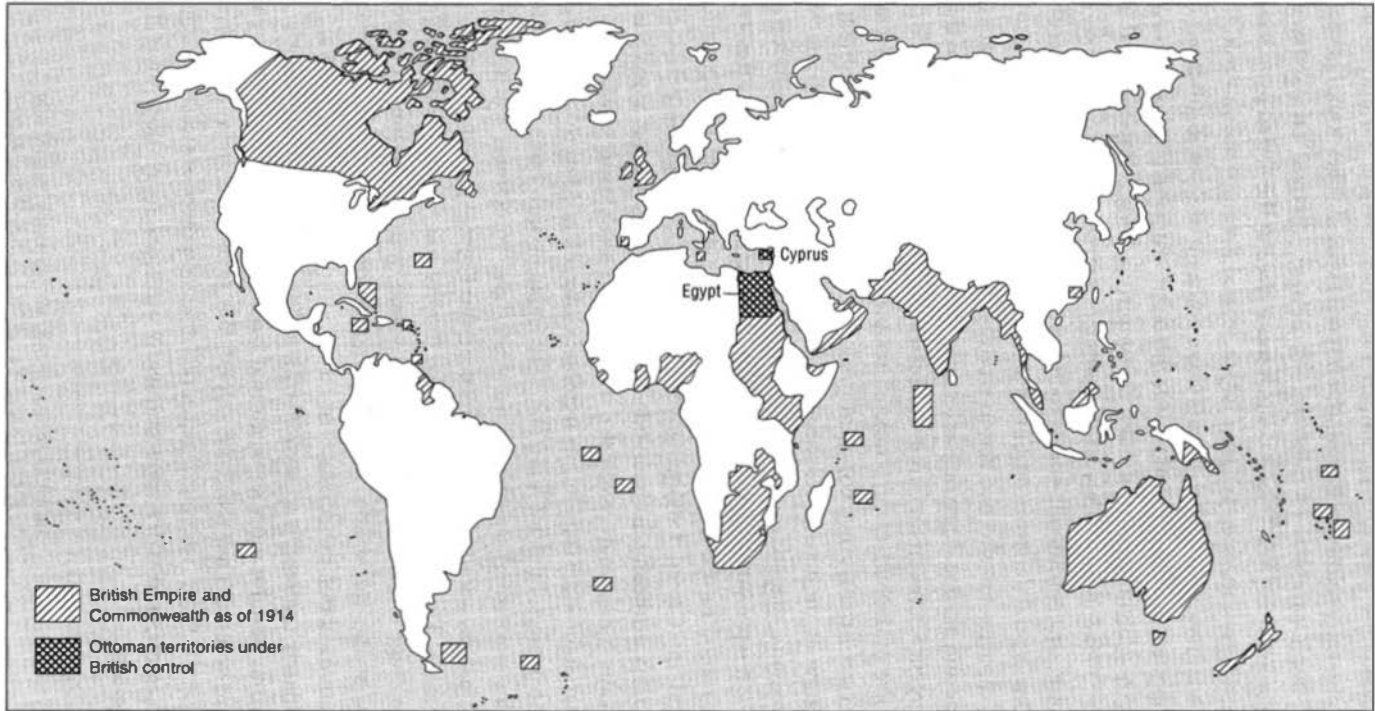
MAP 1.2. The British Empire in 1914

Consequently they have developed a keener awareness not only of the strengths but also the weaknesses of Britain's Imperial system. They no longer see in Empire the simple products of metropolitan designs imposed on comparatively inert indigenous peoples. They are much more alive to the varied processes of interaction, adaptation, and exchange which shaped the Imperial and colonial past.

The nineteenth-century Empire was made up of three distinct but overlapping components. An Empire of white settlement, truncated by losses in America, was already growing again by 1800; an Empire in India had expanded enormously since 1756; and an Empire of conquests or wartime acquisitions, the 'dependent empire', was continually added to between 1780 and 1914. These were overseen by no one central department, but by several, whose relative powers, responsibilities, and capacity for effective action steadily changed under the impact of events at home and abroad. A particular feature of this process after 1790 was the increasing divergence between the Empire of British subjects claiming rights abroad, and the Empire of dependent or protected people without such statutory claims. In the first case, Britain's own constitutional experience in which parliamentary authority grew at the Crown's expense, as well as North American and West Indian precedents, shaped from the Canada Act (1791) onwards the tradition and institutions of representative and responsible self-government.[1] The other tradition was that rooted in the Quebec Act (1774) which, applied to the dependent Empire, issued in 'Crown Colony' government and preserved Imperial and colonial executive authority in the hands of Imperial ministers and administrators.[2] This division increasingly paralleled the racial and cultural stereotyping central to Imperial life after 1850, but its inherent contradictions were constantly challenged by Afrikaners, French Canadians, and events in both India and Ireland.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, historians have sometimes reached contradictory conclusions about the importance of the Empire and the pervasiveness of its influence. This is partly because the Empire often merged imperceptibly into a wide range of global British interests which transcended any narrowly territorial view of the world and sources of power or wealth. It is also partly because questions about the 'impact' of either Empire or Britain's presence abroad are ultimately impossible to answer with either precision or confidence. These more cautious but also more sophisticated assessments of the Empire are characteristic of this volume. They represent a significant advance in the study of Britain's classic 'Imperialist' age where estimates of Imperial power are easily exaggerated, and gold, guns, and glory have frequently attracted more than their due share of attention.

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[1] In Vol. II, see pp. 345; 389 and see below, pp. 185–189.
[2] In Vol. II, see pp. 123; 378 and see below, pp. 185; 188.

The Empire and Expansion

Size, wealth, and population provide striking indicators of how the Empire changed between 1815 and 1914. Of the earlier North Atlantic colonies, the West Indian islands, including the recent wartime additions of Trinidad and what became British Guiana, were still contributing £15.4 million or 17.6 per cent of Britain's trade in 1815, but thereafter rapidly lost their relative importance. A century later their stagnant economies generated trade with Britain of only £6.6 million or 0.47 per cent (1913), even though their population, assisted by the inflow of Indian emigrant labourers, had increased from 877,000 to just over 2 million (1911).[3] Like the thirteen colonies before them, it was British North America that provided in white settlement a pattern for the most valuable expansion of Imperial possessions. With the westward extension of Canadian provinces to the Pacific, the emergence of six colonies in Australia and their political federation in 1901, expansion in Southern Africa and New Zealand, a new collection of white settlement colonies was created. In each, the violent dispossession of indigenous peoples, the spread of emigrants and local-born settlers, investment and economic development, transformed in due course insecure or restricted outliers into self-governing, self-confident 'settler capitalist' societies. A total white population in 1815 of perhaps 550,000 and a correspondingly limited trade were transformed into figures of 18.9 million (1911) and £175 million (1909–13).[4] Rates of growth in the Empire of white settlement compared favourably with those at home, and its component Dominions generated approximately 16.5 per cent of Britain's overseas trade.

Notwithstanding this transformation, India remained of paramount importance in any assessment of Imperial assets. By 1819 the Governors-General Wellesley and Hastings had between them brought together much of what was thereafter to constitute British India. Nevertheless, military conquest extended British control into the north-east (1824–26), north-westwards into Sind and the Punjab during the 1840s, and further into Burma in 1852 and 1885. Further annexations of Indian states were made by Lord Dalhousie (1848–56). Although Indian territorial changes were perhaps less striking than those elsewhere, consolidation of British control steadily increased access to India's immense resources and, especially after

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[3] Figures here and following are derived from: *Annual Statement of the Trade of the United Kingdom with Foreign Countries and British Possessions. 1913 Compared with Four Preceding Years*, P[arliamentary] P[apers] (1914), LXXXII, Cd. 7401, pp. 20–21, and LXXXIII Cd. 7585, Table 1; B. R. Mitchell, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, 1962), Tables 10–12; and *International Historical Statistics: Africa and Asia* (London, 1982), Table B.1; and his *International Historical Statistics: The Americas and Australasia* (London, 1983), Table B.1; Vol. II, p. 433; and see below, chap. by P. J. Cain.

[4] See chap. by B. R. Tomlinson.

1870, enhanced her contribution to the global balancing of Britain's international trade. By annexations and natural growth India's population rose from about 40 million to 303 million (1911). In 1815 her world trade stood at only £8 million but grew to £120 million with Britain alone by 1913. With this expansion there evolved other significant connections, through the financial relations of the Government of India with London, Imperial use of India's military forces, and private invest- ment. Although their value to metropolitan Britain is still hotly but inconclusively debated, at least some individuals or sections of British society benefited con- siderably from them via official employment, pensions, financial arrangements, shipping, and other services.[5] Few contemporaries would have disputed Sir Charles Dilke's assertion that 'from the larger British Imperial point of view the loss of India would be a crushing blow to our trade . . . It would constitute, more- over, so grave an encouragement to our enemies in all parts of the world, that we might expect a rapid growth of separatist feeling in Canada, South Africa, and Australasia, and a general break-up of the British power.'[6] Prestige, especially in India, joined economic ties as vital bulwarks to survival as a Great Power.

Other newly acquired Asian holdings never matched India's importance, but added to an emerging eastern Empire. Hong Kong, acquired in 1842 and extended in 1898 with the 99-year lease of the mainland 'New Territories', grew steadily both in population and as an entrepôt for the China trade (although rapidly over- shadowed by Shanghai). In similarly piecemeal fashion, Singapore, the Malayan mainland, and parts of Borneo (Sarawak, Labuan, and North Borneo) were all incorporated into the Empire's political and economic networks.[7]

In direct contrast to India, the nineteenth-century transformation of the Imperial presence in Africa was territorially immense but—with the exception of the Cape Colony and the Transvaal—economically insignificant. Britain's tiny coastal footholds of 1815 had hardly changed by 1865, Lagos alone being annexed in 1861. In the next fifty years, however, colonial expansion inland brought her territory in every quarter of the continent. By 1911 British Africa embraced 2.8 million square miles and a population estimated at nearly 40 million. By contrast, trade at £44 million (1909–13), of which the Union of South Africa provided some £30 million, accounted for a mere 3.8 per cent of British overseas trade, and only 13 per cent of the Empire's trade.[8]

This economic and territorial network was held together and enabled to func- tion by rapid advances in the means and reliability of communication, for

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[5] See chaps. by D. A. Washbrook and Robin J. Moore.

[6] Charles Dilke, *Problems of Greater Britain*, 2 vols. (London, 1890), II, p. 3.

[7] See chap. by A. J. Stockwell.

[8] See chap. by Colin Newbury.

instance, by the development of steamships, railways, postal services, and tele-graphs.[9] It was also aided by the spread of the English language, by improved business organization, notably in banking and joint-stock enterprise, by a measure of Imperial and colonial government subsidies for rapid and secure mails, and by the Suez Canal. In 1830 the time taken to travel from Liverpool to New York or from London to Calcutta or Sydney had changed little since the eighteenth century; by 1880 the enhanced frequency and relative cheapness of travel and transport had left that earlier world far behind (Tables 12.1–12.6). The combination of territory, capital, and technology turned migration, in part government-spon-sored but overwhelmingly voluntary in inspiration, into a fundamental feature of colonial economic life and social development. In place of the earlier movement of slaves and emigrants within a North Atlantic system, the nineteenth-century Empire developed as a world-wide arena for the vastly greater movement of British and Asian migrants.[10]

Expansion and the Limits of Empire

Notwithstanding the enlargement of Britain's colonial possessions and their commercial value, they were never capable of satisfying more than part of Britain's needs. Well before 1815 Britain's economy had outgrown its Empire, and the subsequent drive for access to new regions and for freer trade with all partners was widely seen as inevitable and necessary.[11] In many parts of the globe, therefore, British trade and investment underwent striking growth, contributing crucially to metropolitan Britain's wealth and well-being. The importance of these connec-tions was such that revived interest in Imperial Preference and protection, both in Britain and her colonies after 1885, was quite unable to alter them.[12]

The wealth and territorial extent of Britain's Empire was itself also far from an unequivocal source of strength. The integration of world trade, for example, meant that not only Britain but colonies and other commercial partners, hitherto often relatively self-contained, now became parts of more extensive economic systems. Far from offering each other partial protection against economic fluctua-tions, they began simultaneously to experience the same worldwide patterns of boom and slump.[13] Global competition also fed long-standing international rivalries, or spawned new ones. The tasks of defending overseas markets, supplies, extended trade routes, telegraphs, and coaling-stations, therefore became more

[9] See chap. by Robert Kubicek.
[10] See Vol. II, p. 13; see Map 12.1 for travel times; and chaps. by Marjory Harper and David Northrup.
[11] See chap. by P. J. Cain.
[12] For discussion of this issue see below, pp. 57–62; and chap. by E. H. H. Green.
[13] S. B. Saul, *Studies in British Overseas Trade, 1870–1914* (Liverpool, 1960).

onerous, even as growth itself held out the prospect of finding resources required
to mount such defences. Britain's inescapable dependence on her navy forced
governments after 1880 to accept the steady escalation of naval estimates, as the
defence of the Empire and of overseas trade once more became virtually insep-
arable.

Advanced capitalist societies, such as the United States and those of western
Europe, found mounting levels of British economic activity compatible with their
own unfettered political and economic independence. States in Asia, the Middle
East, and even Latin America found it more difficult to accommodate the demand
by British enterprise for commercial freedom and unfettered access. This led to
tensions which in some cases—notably Egypt—resulted in the imposition of
direct Imperial control. Other states maintained their independence but, like
China in 1839–42, 1856–60, and 1900, were at intervals subjected to the pressures
of war or military intervention and to 'unequal treaties' which limited their
economic and territorial sovereignty. Yet others, like Argentina, seemed to manage
the impact of British economic expansion well enough, even if they were careful to
maintain a complaisant attitude towards British interests.

In such cases, many historians have found inspiration in the concept of 'infor-
mal empire', accepting the argument that, at least 'for purposes of economic
analysis', it is 'unreal to define imperial history exclusively as the history of those
colonies coloured red on the map'.[14] As a result of conscious determination on the
part of successive Imperial governments, and of the normal workings of capitalist
commerce (the 'invisible hand' of the market), Britain found herself engaged in a
wide variety of political relationships with societies overseas. These ranged from
colonies where Britain exercised full and effective sovereignty to wholly independ-
ent states over whom Britain perhaps could not, but certainly neither needed nor
wished to exercise authority. These relations, of course, often changed, and no
territory necessarily remained throughout the century at the same point on the
spectrum. There was always, however, an intermediate category of territories,
some perhaps not yet colonies or possibly no longer so, where Britain nevertheless
both wanted and directly or indirectly exercised a dominant political and eco-
nomic influence. They were areas of control without responsibility, best described
as parts of a British 'informal empire', their subordinate position shaped by the
workings of 'the imperialism of free trade'.

The value of 'informal empire' for understanding Britain's nineteenth-century
global order is nevertheless disputed. Some historians feel the concept raises
peculiarly difficult questions. How, for example, does one decide whether or not

[14] John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', *Economic History Review*
(hereafter *EcHR*), VI, 1 (1953), p. 1.

an 'imperial' or 'colonial' relationship exists—by consulting contemporary observers or modern statisticians? What kind and degree of influence or control exercised by Britain qualifies a region for inclusion in her 'informal empire'? Some historians acknowledge the concept's value but doubt whether there was ever a systematic preference—official or unofficial—for informal empire, or indeed that it was consciously embodied in the policy of successive British governments.[15] The complexity of Britain's relationships with the extra-European world, and the persistence of this debate, are therefore addressed in several chapters below. The general overview offered in this book from a metropolitan perspective[16] highlights some of the concept's limitations; but it reaches conclusions quite different from those of two local regional studies. In Latin America the scale and impact of the British presence, even if seen as negligible from London, appears to have been often intense and all-pervasive, despite an absence of obvious local protest.[17] In East Asia, despite local success in circumscribing Britain's presence and intervention, deep cultural differences between British and Chinese and the resulting intense sense of humiliation produced a relationship which was seen by the Chinese as undeniably colonial and peculiarly oppressive, and provoked them on occasion to extreme violence.[18] The position in Siam was different again.[19]

The economic expansion which underpinned much of Britain's Empire-building, formal or informal, was such that in mid-century her merchants could confidently claim that 'this country is more than ever the entrepôt for the world'.[20] However, this welcome circumstance was far from simply the result of British initiative or dynamism, and many besides the British benefited from it. The resources of other countries or regions, the adaptability of their people and institutions, as well as their physical environments, combined to shape not only the emerging world economy and Britain's place within it, but also the evolution of her Empire.[21] The strength of local or regional economies was often such that British expansion was conditional on them. British trade was often conducted on others' terms, and frequently assumed only a modest role when compared with the volume of local economic activity. This was especially so in many parts of Asia, where, not only well before but particularly after 1870, intra-Asian trade had its

[15] John Darwin, 'Imperialism and the Victorians: The Dynamics of Territorial Expansion', *English Historical Review*, CXII (1997), pp. 614–42.

[16] See chap. by Martin Lynn.

[17] See chap. by Alan Knight.

[18] See chap. by Jürgen Osterhammel.

[19] See below, pp. 380–81, 383–84, 387–89.

[20] C. B. Skinner to C. H. Brown, 18 June 1863, Jardine Skinner Papers, Cambridge University Library.

[21] See chap. by B. R. Tomlinson.

own significant momentum, largely independent of British or other connections. The growth of a global economy in the nineteenth century was driven full-steam-ahead by many different engines. In the offer and export, for instance, of her extensive financial services (banking, insurance, organization of capital invest-ment), Britain was not only integrating new partners into her own expanding economy, but was herself being incorporated by others.[22]

The relationship of economic interest and the Empire was thus widely variable, and never pointed in a single direction. Failure to achieve significant economic growth, or the breakdown of conditions within which British interests could flourish, were variously offered as reasons for British withdrawal or for annexa-tion, as illustrated in parts of West Africa such as the Gambia or the Niger valley. In the British West Indies an unprecedented replacement of colonial self-government by direct rule was the consequence of economic decline and escalating class or racial tensions.[23] Conversely, economic promise contributed both to the assertion of Imperial political controls, as in parts of southern Africa in the 1870s, and to their relaxation, as was the case with the Australasian colonies in the 1850s.

Empire and International Relations

When compared with earlier and later periods, the nineteenth century is some-times viewed as remarkable for the absence of substantial international conflict. After 1815, only in the Crimean War (1854–56) did Britain go to war with another European power, Russia; for no more than brief spells (1842–45, 1896–98) did she come close to war with her ancient enemy France. By European standards it was a century of peace and 'small wars'. Even the South African War (1899–1902) remained essentially a colonial conflict: Britain's European critics muttered belli-gerently on the sidelines but officially refused to become directly involved. Never-theless, although encounters with major competitors were less destructive than those of the previous century,[24] Imperial rivalries shaped British foreign policy, and frequently encouraged territorial expansion on strategic grounds. India and the white colonies were too important for their communications and defence to be neglected.

If, until 1815, France was the power to be feared above all others,[25] after 1815 France, together with Russia, were the two imperial powers of whom Britain had

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[22] Shigeru Akita, 'British Informal Empire in East Asia, 1880s–1930s: A Japanese Perspective', in Janet Hunter, ed., *Japanese Perspectives on Imperialism in Asia* (London School of Economics Discussion Paper, 1995); B. R. Tomlinson, 'The Contraction of England: National Decline and Loss of Empire', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* (hereafter *JICH*), XI (1982), pp. 58–72.

[23] See chap. by Gad Heuman.

[24] In Vol. II, see esp. chaps. 7–9.

[25] In Vol. II, see p. 20.

most cause to be suspicious. Continuing uncertainty about French ambitions partly reflected the legacy of mistrust generated from before 1815. It was reinforced by recurrent French attempts to calm domestic discontent and to restore international prestige by overseas interventions or colonial expansion overseas.[26] Whether by accident or (as British observers, especially after 1870, suspected) design, French activity often seemed to threaten or pre-empt British interests. This was particularly true in the Mediterranean and North Africa, above all in Egypt, scene of Napoleon's strategic thrust towards India in 1798; in New Zealand and Polynesia in the 1830s and 1840s; periodically along the East African coasts from France's position in Réunion and the Comoro Islands (Natal in the 1840s; Zanzibar in 1862 and 1873–74; Madagascar from 1884/85); after 1879 in Senegal, other parts of West Africa, and the Sudan; and occasionally elsewhere, as in the Siam crisis of 1893 and in southern China.

Russia was also viewed with deep mistrust because of her size, the presumed power of her armed forces, and her lack of sympathy with the liberalism of which Britain saw herself as a prime representative. More serious, however, was Russia's territorial expansion, south-westwards to the Black Sea and Mediterranean, south through Central Asia towards Persia, and on the north-western approaches to India. By 1818 these were for British strategists the outer marches of India, to be defended against further external encroachment. No decade passed without serious crises in Anglo-Russian relations on one or other of these three westerly fronts.[27] Russian pressure on China built up in the 1860s and intensified in the 1890s.

Two additional considerations exacerbated British concern with these French and Russian 'threats'. The Franco-Russian alliance following the Treaty of Tilsit (1807) until 1812 provided a persistent reminder of Britain's vulnerability in both Asia and Europe should the two powers combine forces. Their renewed alliance in 1893–94, just as Germany was becoming more aggressively expansionist, brought Britain fifteen years of acute concern for the security of her Indian Empire, and the adequacy of Imperial defences from the North Sea to Hong Kong. As Robert Hart, then Inspector-General of the Chinese Maritime Customs, wrote to his Scottish colleague James Campbell: 'What I long feared is apparently coming: China, between Russia in the north and France in the south, is going to walk arm in arm with them: what will that lead to? Much trouble for England to begin with...'[28]

[26] C. M. Andrew and A. S. Kanya-Forstner, 'Centre and Periphery in the Making of the Second French Colonial Empire, 1815–1920', *JICH*, XVI, 3 (1988), pp. 9–34.

[27] David Gillard, *The Struggle for Asia, 1828–1914: A Study in British and Russian Imperialism* (London, 1977).

[28] 24 May 1896, in John King Fairbank, Katherine Frost Bruner, and Elizabeth Macleod Matheson, eds., *The I. G. in Peking: Letters of Robert Hart Chinese Maritime Customs, 1868–1907*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1975), II, p. 1,065.

The British were also alarmed by the fragility of the three non-European empires—Ottoman, Persian, and Chinese—which, together with Afghanistan, occupied so much of the central ground between the main Franco-Russian and British spheres of interest from the western Mediterranean to the China Sea. At best their rulers were regarded as 'inefficient', 'corrupt', often 'brutal' and 'untrustworthy', but 'amenable' both to grudging reform and to diplomatic co-operation in their own self-interest. Such confidence, however, generally waned after mid-century, along with earlier hopes of trade with Persia and Central Asia. Evidence of 'incompetence', 'crumbling central authority', and 'internal disorder' left few but the most visionary believing that ultimate collapse could be more than temporarily postponed by British diplomatic support, the provision of loans, and railway construction. In such volatile conditions, French or Russian interference might rapidly expand into pre-emptive occupation at the expense of British interests and Imperial security.

After the flurry of Russian conflicts with Turkey and Persia between 1826 and 1833, such fears—real or imagined—were never far from officials' minds in Britain and India. To Wellington, the then Prime Minister, Lord Ellenborough, President of the Board of Control, described his 'presentiment that, step by step as the Persian monarchy is broken up, [the Russians] will extend their influence and advance their troops...till, without quarrelling with us, they have crept on to Cabul, where they may at their leisure prepare a force for the invasion of India'.[29] Similar fears of French expansion played a part in Palmerston's determination during the Ottoman crisis of 1839–41 to uphold the Sultan's authority and check Muhammad Ali in Egypt, widely seen as France's client. They influenced the calculations which from 1875 led to Britain's occupation of Egypt in 1882 and her continued control thereafter.[30] Britain ensconced in Egypt gained not only local advantage over France and greater security for the Suez Canal route to India, but above all an important lever in negotiating with the Ottoman government to contain Russian expansion into Turkey and the eastern Mediterranean. Cyprus, acquired in 1878, strengthened her further. In 1892 Lord Salisbury, Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, made the position abundantly clear:

The protection of Constantinople from Russian conquest has been the turning point of the policy of this country for at least forty years, and to a certain extent for forty years before that... It is our principal, if not our only, interest in the Mediterranean Sea; for if Russia were mistress of Constantinople, and of the influence which Constantinople possesses in the Levant, the route to India through the Suez Canal would be so much exposed as not to be available except in times of the profoundest peace. I need not dwell upon the effect which

[29] 26 Sept. 1828, quoted in Gillard, *Struggle for Asia*, p. 31.
[30] See chap. by Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid-Marsot.

the Russian possession of Constantinople would have upon the Oriental mind, and upon our position in India, which is so largely dependent on prestige.[31]

Sensitive to Great Power concerns, sultans, khedives, shahs, amirs, khans, and kings skilfully played their hands in what became known as 'the Great Game', pitting one power against another in defence of their own independence. While sometimes unable to avoid war, they were frequently successful in holding their own, secure in the knowledge that should any power attempt to gain a dispropor-tionate advantage, other rivals would probably join forces in protest. Rarely did any Great Power thus wish to precipitate a European war. So the Ottoman Sultan was saved on several occasions by Great Power intervention from internal and external threats. In 1839–41, 1854–56, and 1877–78 the British preferred survival of the Sultan's authority to any likely alternative, and found other Great Powers who agreed with them. Occasions when the Great Powers achieved anything like a common front to force a non-European empire into line were few and short-lived, as was illustrated by the despatch of the international force to put down the Chinese Boxer Rebellion in 1901.

The triangular rivalry of Britain, France, and Russia was complicated after 1870 by mounting challenges from new claimants to colonial power. Italy's colonial ambitions in Tripolitania and the Horn of Africa pressed against British interest in the security of routes to India. Germany's developing territorial ambitions, chiefly in west, east, and south-west Africa, and the Pacific, were accommodated by Britain without much difficulty from 1884 to 1890, but subsequent initiatives were more worrisome. Germany's rapid commercial expansion, incursions into the Middle and Far East, her designs on the dilapidated Portuguese and Spanish empires, and above all her conspicuous naval expansion, caused serious alarm between 1895 and 1914. The United States was also becoming a major commercial rival, and her suspicion of Britain's presence in Latin America brought on the dispute over Venezuela's boundaries in 1895. America's naval ambitions in the Pacific became steadily clearer, and her expansionist goals were signalled by her seizure of Spanish territory in the Caribbean and Philippines (1898).

Anxious to avoid war and keen to defend their frontiers and communications along Eurasia's geopolitical fault-line, British governments in search of stability had three principal courses open to them: locally negotiated treaties of alliance, and support—often financial—for buffer states; Great Power diplomacy, perhaps leading to regional partition; or outright conquest. All were used at different times, sometimes singly, sometimes in combination. Afghanistan was a perpetual object of British concern, the focus of conflicting strategies variously advanced by

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[31] Quoted by C. J. Lowe, *The Reluctant Imperialists: British Foreign Policy, 1878–1902*, 2 vols. (London, 1967), II, p. 86.

Political Agents, Governor-Generals, and Viceroys in India, as well as politicians and their advisers in London. The search for an alliance, agreements in 1855 and 1857, the courting of rivals and offer of subsidies, and two wars (in 1839–42 and 1878–79), left the British little further forward. After 1880 Afghanistan only became less troublesome because Britain and Russia agreed on delimiting frontiers; when their attention shifted to other parts of India's northern frontier, confrontation and crises also moved—to Penjdeh in 1885, the Pamirs in 1891 and 1893–94. But any war likely to pit Britain against another European power was carefully avoided. The diplomacy of global partition was generally successful in delimiting spheres of interest and influence, for instance between Britain and Russia in Persia in 1907, and all the Great Powers in China *c*.1900. Within these spheres Britain imitated her rivals, seeking to consolidate political influence by informal support for selected banks, such as the Imperial Bank of Persia or the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, or through concessionaries, such as Sir Ernest Cassel.[32]

Similar alternatives were available in the power vacuum that was Africa. Until the 1860s, except in the far south, Britain only teetered on the edges of the continent.[33] European exploration and technological or medical advances only slowly overcame the geographical and environmental difficulties of access to the interior.[34] Economic interest and political pressures, even strategic interest in the Mediterranean and Cape routes to the East, were rarely sufficient to overcome the Imperial government's reservations about involvement far inland.

In West Africa, after abolition of the British slave trade in 1807, commercial activity was sparse, and control of Britain's few settlements passed to and fro between merchants and the Imperial government. Official commitment against the slave trade, expressed in the formalization of Sierra Leone as an official British colony for freed slaves in 1808 and the West African naval squadron to capture slavers, was weighed constantly against the pressures for withdrawal, arising from inadequate revenues, escalating costs, and appalling mortality. Despite the emergence of palm oil as an important trade staple from the late 1820s, the 1821 experiment with centralized administration of the settlements under the British Governor at Freetown lasted only until 1828, and subsequent hopes of organizing British possessions from Fernando Po died by 1834.[35] Mercantile control of the Gold Coast trading forts, surrendered in 1821, was reinstated in 1828 but again reclaimed for the Imperial government in 1843. Further rationalization was

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[32] David McLean, 'Finance and "Informal Empire" before the First World War', *EcHR*, XXIX (1976), pp. 291–305.

[33] See chaps. by T. C. McCaskie, and Christopher Saunders and Iain R. Smith.

[34] See below, pp. 306–07; *passim.*

[35] R. T. Brown, 'Fernando Po and the Anti- Sierra Leone Campaign, 1826–34', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, VI (1973), pp. 249–64.

attempted in 1850 with the purchase of the Danish forts and the re-establishment of a Governor separate from Sierra Leone.

Beyond the territorial remit of colonial Governors, the official approach of the early Victorians came to rely on a haphazard array of local treaties and a scattering of British Consuls. On the East African coast, the aims of checking the slave trade, protecting British Indian traders, and providing a counterweight to American and French influence were served by the appointment of a Consul at Zanzibar from 1840, diplomatic support for its Sultan, and a fitful naval presence. From the late 1840s until 1861, before the River Niger was established as the principal artery of trade, a series of British Vice-Consulates attended to the trans-Saharan trade routes between north and west Africa. Captain John Beecroft was appointed Consul for the Bights of Benin and Biafra in 1849, and a further Consul was sent to Lagos in 1853.[36] Nevertheless, despite these commitments, British withdrawal from all but Sierra Leone remained a possibility, as the parliamentary enquiry of 1865 clearly showed.

However, as in Asia and the Middle East so in sub-Saharan Africa, neither withdrawal nor neglect proved possible. Government inertia was overtaken from about 1870 by local conflicts arising from commercial fluctuations and heightened competition; problems of adaptation experienced by local societies; and the interplay of local politics with increasing Great Power rivalry. Again, partition and the exploitation of private business ambitions provided at least some temporary answers, with Britain's diplomatic compromises being gradually hammered into place by military conquest and pacification.[37] Britain's African territories were acquired quickly, in a predominantly reactive process at once unplanned and opportunistic. Contemporaries were more struck by the dramatic episodes of the Scramble, the heroics of Africa's explorers, and the exotic curiosities of its people, than impressed with the substance it brought to the Empire.

The Supervision of Empire

In Britain, no one agency was charged with managing the Empire. Global issues of Imperial rivalry, security, and economic competition were the responsibility in the first instance of the Foreign Office. Diplomacy was conducted through direct ambassadorial relations with a tiny number of capitals (Paris, St Petersburg, Constantinople), and through complex networks of British Ministers, Consuls,

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[36] A. Adu Boahen, *Britain, the Sahara and the Western Sudan, 1788–1861* (Oxford, 1964), chaps. 7–9; K. Onwuka Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830–1885* (Oxford, 1956).

[37] See chap. by Colin Newbury.

Political Agents, and other diplomatic officials, with lesser states.[38] To the high-political concerns of peace, war, and treaty negotiations were added commercial relations, slave trade diplomacy, issues of extraterritorial rights and jurisdiction, information gathering, and the supervision of Protectorates. Overseen from London, the East India Company and later the Government of India performed similar functions within their own steadily expanding geographical sphere. This took in not only British India's internal and immediate external neighbours (such as Afghanistan or Nepal), but, following British and Indian traders, the Persian Gulf and the further shores of the Indian Ocean. The British Agency established at Zanzibar in 1841 came under the Government of Bombay until 1873, as did ports such as Aden (1839) and Bushire; in the East, Calcutta oversaw relations with the Straits Settlements (1826–67) and with Burma.

Alongside the Foreign and India Offices were the Admiralty and the War Office, responsible for strategic planning and administering the resources available to defend Britain and its possessions abroad. The expansion of British colonies and trade increased demands for troops and ships, and technological changes had to be absorbed if weapons were not to become outdated and if rivals were to be denied any offensive advantage. However, domestic concerns to save money, colonial wishes that Britain should pay, and inter-service competition or professional *amour-propre*, meant that defence policies were normally the variable outcomes of political manœuvres and Imperial disunity rather than victories for long-term planning. London fell back with growing frequency on the use of Indian troops abroad. Effective co-ordination of her armed forces and their integration into broader defensive structures or processes of Imperial policy-making were very slow to develop, notwithstanding the creation of the Cabinet's Colonial Defence Committee in 1885.[39]

The bulk of colonial business, reduced by loss of the American colonies and reshaped by conquests during the French wars, was eventually brought together in 1801 under the Secretary of State for War and Colonies. There it remained until 1854, when responsibilities were clearly redistributed between separate War and Colonial Offices. Able ministers with decided views on how the Empire should be run, such as Earl Grey (1846–52), were rarely attracted to an Office which ranked low in political esteem, and few Secretaries of State stayed long. Capable junior ministers, such as W. E. Gladstone (1834–35), cut their teeth on colonial admin-istration; elderly colleagues—Lord Knutsford (1887–92) and Lord Ripon (1892–95)—passed directly into retirement. Only Joseph Chamberlain (1895–1903) was a household name and gave the Office real political weight. Despite extensive official

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[38] D. C. M. Platt, *The Cinderella Service: British Consuls since 1825* (Hamden, Conn., 1971).

[39] See chap. 15 by Peter Burroughs; and below pp. 442–43.

patronage, it was also difficult to recruit first-rate administrators or diplomats for colonial service.[40] As a result, colonial business was largely dominated by the Office's permanent officials.

Significant shifts in the Office's work occurred during the century. Administration of the conquered and Crown Colonies, and issues associated with slavery predominated until the 1840s; in the mid-century the problems of white settler colonies and the practice of self-government loomed large; later, the Colonial Office had to cope with the territorial consequences of African and Pacific partitions. Naturally the volume and variety of Colonial Office business (together with the attentions of external pressure groups) increased enormously, but it continued to be distributed among a limited number of inadequately staffed geographical departments. Despite the addition of a General Department in 1870, no officials after 1860 ever attained the wide-ranging mastery of colonial affairs demonstrated by Sir James Stephen as Permanent Under-Secretary (1836–47).[41] Yet even under Stephen, the pressure and diversity of business promoted pragmatism and expediency at the expense of long-term planning and principles. As he put it, 'there cannot be two opinions as to the folly and danger of a Government writing abstract and speculative doctrines—that is usurping the place of Professors and Men of Letters'.[42] The combination of political convenience and administrative practicalities produced a steady relaxation of the Office's supervision of the laws passed in white settler colonies, especially after the Colonial Laws Validity Act (1865). By contrast, in the Crown Colonies it relied increasingly on Orders-in-Council based on advice from the Law Officers of the Crown in London rather than on the consultation of local opinion.

Reactions to the management of colonial business varied widely. Self-government notwithstanding, white colonists continually criticized the Colonial Office, and sometimes other departments, for their intrusiveness, insensitivity, patronizing attitudes, inefficiency, and even, in the Crown Agents' raising of colonial government loans, corruption. The development of the Colonial and Imperial Conferences from 1887, and the creation in 1907 of a Dominions Division separate from those supervising Crown Colonies, involved not only administrative rationalization but concessions to the colonists' *amour propre* and their sense of racial superiority over non-white 'dependent' peoples. However, some colonial subjects were less anxious to escape Whitehall's supervision. Encouraged by Wesleyan

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[40] See chap. 9 by Peter Burroughs.

[41] D. M. Young, *The Colonial Office in the Early Nineteenth Century* (London, 1961); John W. Cell, *British Colonial Administration in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: The Policy-Making Process* (New Haven, 1970); Brian L. Blakeley, *The Colonial Office, 1868–92* (Durham, NC, 1972); Robert V. Kubicek, *Joseph Chamberlain and the Administration of Imperialism* (Durham, NC, 1969).

[42] Memorandum, 27 March 1845, C[olonial] O[ffice] 217/189.

missionaries, Tswana chiefs preferred its rule to that by the Cape or the British
South Africa Company:

> We came to England to ask the Government of the Great Queen to continue her protection
> over us. We have seen the justice and kindness with which the Great Queen seeks to govern
> us. We know that her officers sometimes make mistakes, because they are not of our race,
> and cannot think our thoughts or understand our customs. But there is no Government
> that we can trust as we trust that of the Great Queen...[43]

The Tswana were perhaps in the long term more satisfied than many supplicants
with the settlement of their claims, for it kept them politically outside the Union of
South Africa in 1910.[44] However, there were also those who rejected the niceties of
negotiation. Imperial reliance on collaboration with colonial élites coexisted with
an undercurrent of low-level violence and dissent, and was punctuated with
dramatic outbursts of large-scale protest.[45] The threats to Imperial prestige and
authority posed by the great Indian Mutiny and Rebellion of 1857, the Morant Bay
Rebellion of 1865, the Mahdist regime in the Sudan (1884–98), the Sierra Leone
Hut Tax War (1898), and the South African War (1899–1902), were such as to alter
the practices of Imperial rulers for decades afterwards.

These diverse colonial reactions had to be managed by the Imperial depart-
ments in London and by the local agents responsible for the day-to-day conduct of
Britain's colonial rule. The never-ending search for a sustainable balance of
interests was certainly a task that stretched their political inventiveness and
administrative ingenuity to the utmost.[46] Where possible they used control of
patronage, taxation, and public works to win support and consent. Constitutional
devices were tailored to local conditions: representative institutions, up to and
including responsible government in the colonies of white settlement; 'Crown
Colony' government; Protectorates; High Commissions; and chartered companies.
The circumstances in which they were adopted were equally varied. Sometimes
they opened up new political opportunities to colonial subjects. The reverse was
also to be found, not least in India and early colonial Africa. Rule, especially over
indigenous populations, was often unavoidably based on skewed or imperfect
knowledge of local societies, subject to individual caprice or ability, affected by
preoccupation with revenue, security, or prestige and so ill-devised or oppressive,
even if unwittingly. Protest and resistance were often the consequence of serious or

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[43] To Joseph Chamberlain, 24 Sept. 1895, Frederick Madden (with David Fieldhouse), eds., *Select
Documents on the Constitutional History of the British Empire and Commonwealth*, 7 vols. Vol. V, *The
Dependent Empire and Ireland, 1840–1900: Advance and Retreat in Representative Self-Government*
(London, 1991), V, p. 662.

[44] See below, pp. 620–22.

[45] See below, pp. 405–07, 413, 418–19, 454; 456; 461–67; 678–684.

[46] See, chap. 9 by Peter Burroughs; and Part II of this volume.

sustained British miscalculation; but much of the time a sufficient balance of interests was achieved for Britain's presence to be tolerated by those who carried most weight in colonial societies.

Imperial and Colonial Cultures

Alongside their long-standing preoccupation with the economics and government of Empire, historians have developed comparatively recently an interest in its cultures. By 'culture' is meant the ideas, values, social habits, and institutions which were felt to distinguish the British and their colonial subjects from each other, and which gave to both their sense of identity, purpose, and achievement. Understood in this way, 'culture' clearly influenced and was influenced by expansion, economic practice, and the nature of government; it was also shaped by the encounters of different peoples within the framework of Empire.

Overseas expansion in the nineteenth century continued as much a 'British' undertaking as it had been earlier.[47] In proportion to the size of the populations, Scottish and especially Irish emigration remained far greater than that of the English; their search for employment and opportunities abroad continued unabated.[48] This is of particular interest in the case of the Irish, the nature of whose relationships with Empire throws much light on both Imperial and colonial affairs.[49] However, the significance of Scots to Imperial expansion, and of Empire for Scotland, is hardly less. There has been a long tradition of writing setting out the Scottish contribution to British Imperial enterprise.[50] Among the Empire's migrants as well as its administrators and soldiers, Scots equalled the English in numbers. Everywhere they became steadily more prominent: in the East India Company; in the great trading firms, such as Jardine Matheson (Asia), Balfour Williamson (Latin America), and Mackinnon Mackenzie (Indian Ocean and East Africa); in organizing and manning shipping companies, such as the City, Clan, and Castle Lines, and the British India Steam Navigation Company, as well as in managing and equipping many lesser firms, such as the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company; and in Scottish missions, scattered across the globe.

Far from debilitating Scotland itself, these family and professional connections with Scots overseas invigorated the home economy and society in ways which supported its individuality or scope for manœuvre within the United Kingdom.[51]

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[47] In Vol. II, see pp. 9; 38–49; 272–74.
[48] See chap. by Marjory Harper.
[49] See chap. by David Fitzpatrick.
[50] See below, pp. 273–74, 289–90.
[51] John M. MacKenzie, 'On Scotland and the Empire', *International History Review*, XV (1993), pp. 714–39.

In a gesture dismissive of those who emphasized the narrowly chauvinist or exclusively Imperial character of missionary enterprise, and simultaneously assertive of Scotland's global role, the World Missionary Conference of 1910 was held in Edinburgh. The smaller Welsh diaspora, much of it from south Wales, has been much less investigated, but both inside and outside the Empire displayed similar characteristics. Local churches, legal institutions, scientific societies, and newspapers held expatriate groups together. St Andrew's Church in Calcutta and the Caledonian Society of Johannesburg had numerous parallels: the 2,000 or so Welsh in the Australian mining town of Ballarat in 1861 soon established their eisteddfod (local festival). For many Welsh and even more Scots and Irish, the Empire was the vehicle through which they expressed their own nationality and contributed to Britain's greatness.[52] Indeed, it can be argued that such particularisms exported overseas often helped strengthen the Empire. The Irish or Scottish backgrounds of some administrators, such as Sir Richard Bourke (Governor of New South Wales, 1831–38) and Sir William MacGregor (Governor of Lagos, 1899–1904), were associated with a flexible, liberal approach to their role, something as welcome to settlers or Lagosians as it was detested by conservative English expatriate officials.

In one sense the 'Britishness' of the Empire was inclusive, its colonies being conspicuously occupied and ruled by the British rather than merely the English. At the end of the century 'Britishness' was enhanced by improved communications and the relative decline of the United States as an emigrant destination. But the century also witnessed a growing insistence on difference, on the inevitable diversity of the Empire, and a more explicit acceptance of limits to its 'Britishness'. The white colonies shared many common features, especially their overwhelming dependence on agriculture and export trades in staple commodities or raw materials, despite the increasingly urban character and protectionist sentiments of many settlers. Their populations remained very youthful; 20 per cent of Canada's people were under the age of 14 in 1901, 34 per cent of Australia's under 15.[53] Such common characteristics, however, were perfectly compatible with the weakening of British influences. In all settler colonies, the numbers of local-born inhabitants rapidly increased, while the proportion of those with British ancestry fell. The enormous influx of immigrants to Canada between 1895 and 1914 contained large numbers of Ukrainians, Poles, Russians, Italians, and Scandinavians, many of them Jews. After about 1840 English-speaking migrants, French Canad-

[52] Ged Martin and Benjamin E. Kline, 'The Welsh and the Empire', in P. J. Marshall, ed., *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 265; Bob Reece, 'The Welsh in Australian Historical Writing', *Australian Studies*, IV (1990), pp. 88–104.

[53] J. M. Bumsted, *The Peoples of Canada: A Post-Confederation History* (Toronto, 1992), p. 484; Beverley Kingston, *The Oxford History of Australia, Volume 3, 1860–1900* (Melbourne, 1988), p. 116.

ians, and Afrikaners were increasingly left to govern themselves, to organize their own societies, and to work out their own political compromises. In white settler colonies by 1860, the wisdom of separating church and state, political anathema at home, was generally accepted, and controls over colonial trade or land policy had been reluctantly surrendered by London. Within broadly similar constitutional frameworks, the settler communities thus steadily diverged from each other as London's retreat and the working of responsible government gave expression to different constellations of social and economic interests.

Conventional interpretations of this process in the nineteenth-century history of white settler societies have charted a course from the original British settlements, moulded by immigration, economic development and integration, class formation, social diversification, and political evolution via responsible government, to new and distinct Dominions.[54] These were genuinely nation states, culturally emancipated, hankering after self-assertion on the global scene, but still linked to the British Empire by sentimental attachments and acceptable degrees of material dependence. It was a saga wrapped in the warm language of family ties, still studded with the contemporary imagery of mother and children, and reaching its immediate apogee in the mutual sacrifices of the First World War.

Elements of this traditional interpretation remain important, perhaps most evidently in New Zealand, where the white sense of local distinctiveness from Australia, and of domestic progressiveness on many fronts, including welfare and race relations, developed alongside a self-confident acceptance of unusually close Imperial ties. However, most of the chapters which follow might be said to reflect the late twentieth-century's less sanguine views of families as frequently divided if not dysfunctional institutions. The marginalization or worse of women and indigenous peoples in colonial societies, much-emphasized in recent historical research, has further qualified the optimistic perspectives of the older narratives.[55]

There is scant sense of maturity attained, for example, in a Canada showing by 1914 'no indication' of 'moving towards decolonization and full nationhood'. Evidence from Canada—where 'political union did little to overcome incoherent diversity'—of continuing internal disunity and unawareness of shared interests, highly selective and self-serving regard for Imperial solidarity or common principles, and limited capacity or willingness for self-defence, were nevertheless not unique.[56] The overarching sense of identity seems no less feeble in the federated Australia of the early 1900s. Where Canada was overshadowed by the United

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[54] A. R. M. Lower, *From Colony to Nation* (Toronto, 1946); Donald Creighton, *Dominion of the North* (New York, 1944).

[55] For New Zealand, see chap. by Raewyn Dalziel. In Vol. V, see chap. by James Belich.

[56] See chap. by Ged Martin, esp. pp. 522, 525.

States, many Australians—Queenslanders perhaps most of all—felt threatened by French, German, and American expansion in the western Pacific, and by a growing Japanese or Asian 'threat'. Exclusion and restraint—'white Australia, racial hierarchy, the domestication of women, and the taming of trade unions'—seem to have provided the cement of federation.[57] The same was true of South Africa, where consolidation, having failed in the Anglicized forms projected successively by Lord Carnarvon, Joseph Chamberlain, and Lord Milner, finally emerged from the divisions of English-speaking communities in the form of the Union in 1910 which entrenched the political and economic power of a white, Transvaal-dominated minority for the next eighty years.[58] Except when local crises necessitated appeals to Britain, there was a widespread colonial awareness of having ceased to be unequivocally British, but as yet no clear sense of something distinctive to put in its place.

Critical to ideas of white communal solidarity in these colonial societies, which combined egalitarian political institutions with growing sectional and class divisions, was often less the sense of nationality than the issue of race. At the levels both of Empire and colony, the definition of races (or in the words of Cecil Rhodes, 'civilized men') held enormous potential for justifying rule, generating unity, and for establishing practices of political or administrative exclusion. Some observers thought that racial ties rendered divergence among settler colonies insignificant. Of his tour of the English-speaking world, Greater Britain, in 1866–67, Charles Dilke noted: 'If I remarked that climate, soil, manners of life, that mixture with other peoples had modified the blood, I saw, too, that in essentials the race was always one.' Twenty-five years on, he felt no differently. 'The type of the Anglo-Saxon of the future, growing up in Canada, and in South Africa, and in Australia, may not be everywhere the same . . . but essentially the race continues everywhere to be ours.'[59] From his perspective, race consciousness bred optimism. He believed that the 'world's future . . . belongs to the Anglo-Saxon, to the Russian and the Chinese races; of whom the Chinese in their expansion across the seas tend to fall under the influence of India and the Crown Colonies of Great Britain'.[60]

Racial superiority, increasingly taken for granted from mid-century, thus gave grounds for pride and confidence that the Empire would hold together. This confidence was further strengthened by the frequently noted decline and the anticipated extinction of some indigenous peoples—Maoris, Aborigines, 'Hottentots', and Native Americans—and the existence of those 'dying nations' iden-

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[57] See chap. by Donald Denoon with Marivic Wyndham esp. p. 548.
[58] See below, pp. 606–07, 615–622.
[59] Charles Wentworth Dilke, *Greater Britain: A Record of Travel in English-Speaking Countries during 1866 and 1867*, 2 vols. (London, 1868), I, p. vii; *Problems of Greater Britain*, II, p. 579.
[60] Dilke, *Problems of Greater Britain*, II, p. 582.

tified by Lord Salisbury.[61] Race-consciousness, in other words, was from one angle both a source and reinforcement of the British character of the Empire. However, few expounded their racial credentials with the patrician detachment of Dilke, Salisbury, or Lord Curzon. Racial ideas encouraged aggressive assertions of difference by Imperial officials as much as colonial workers, by women no less than men, which accentuated the limits to both the Empire's 'Britishness' and heady ideas of common citizenship. Not for nothing did early Indian nationalists complain of the 'unBritishness of British rule' and growing racial discrimination in the administrative and judicial system. Beneath the umbrella of appeals to Britain's obligations and capacity for 'good government', racial feeling prompted an over-ready imposition of authority, exposed too blatantly the force underlying Imperial relationships, and so tended to undermine Empire.

As Governor of the Cape, Sir Alfred Milner, for example, was sensitive to every possible affront to the 'race patriotism' which served him as a religion. He therefore dismissed Transvaal Afrikaners' claims as the pretentions of a 'medieval race oligarchy', utterly inadmissible because involving 'the *permanent inferiority* of men of British race'.[62] The behaviour of white settlers and other expatriates led contemporaries to distinguish between the acceptable and unacceptable faces of race feeling. New Zealanders at war with Maoris provoked Lord Salisbury to observe that there 'is no sounder test of a high and true civilization than its dealings with a race of helpless savages. Its office is to rub off prejudices, and there is no prejudice so catlike in its vitality as the prejudice of race.'[63] That New Zealanders had failed the test, he had no doubt. Gladstone was similarly shocked and depressed by the outcry of Anglo-Indians in 1883 over the judicial reforms in the Ilbert Bill, and among others, Dilke commented at length on the development of racial conflict between white colonial and Asian labour.[64]

Late-nineteenth-century British concern about racialism was prompted by dislike of its crudity and accompanying violence, and by fears about the political dangers of overt discrimination. Only rarely were the underlying premises openly challenged. This reflected how British thinking about race had changed considerably in the course of the century. Humanitarians, religious reformers, and Imperial administrators had been disappointed in their expectations of the transformation and progress of indigenous peoples. Accounts of travel and exploration did little to relieve the gloom.[65] Struck by the slowness of change or

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[61] *The Times*, 5 May 1898, p. 7c; 10 Nov. 1898, p. 8f.

[62] Letters to Lord Selborne, 9 May 1898, 17 May 1899, Cecil Headlam, ed., *The Milner Papers: South Africa, 1897–1899*, 2 vols. (London, 1931), I, pp. 232–35, 384.

[63] 'The Story of New Zealand', *Saturday Review*, 7 Jan. 1860, IX, p. 19.

[64] Letter to Lord Northbrook, 15 Dec. 1883, H. C. G. Matthew, ed., *The Gladstone Diaries: Volume XI, July 1883–December 1886* (Oxford, 1990), p. 77; Dilke, *Problems of Greater Britain*, II, pp. 299–313.

[65] See below, pp. 213–14, 216–17; 294–319; 459–61; 491–92.

colonial populations' apparent rejection of much that they had offered, and usually insensitive to the extent of indigenous adaptation, the British gradually abandoned the late-eighteenth-century consensus that the hierarchy of human societies rested on *cultural* not racial differences. Assumptions that human nature was everywhere uniform, and that cultures could therefore be easily transformed, were slowly relinquished. Instead, there took hold a belief in the underlying reality of permanent *racial* divisions, and in the limits which this set to cultural change. The accumulating knowledge of the Asian and African worlds was widely held to support these views, as was the development of new scientific and evolutionary understandings of race. Stereotypes multiplied, and were widely popularized, often in arguments about the inevitability of social-Darwinist, interracial struggles for survival.[66] Expressed, for example, by Benjamin Kidd in terms of the superior 'social efficiency' of the Anglo-Saxon race, they made Imperial rule seem less hopeful and more necessary. This was memorably captured by Rudyard Kipling's exhortation in 1899 to those other Anglo-Saxons, the Americans, to join the British in taking up 'the White Man's burden' of rule over 'new-caught sullen peoples, half-devil and half-child'.[67] They reinforced administrative authoritarianism and reluctance to involve local peoples—especially the western-educated—in colonial government.

For the British, the explicit sense of racial distinctiveness that came to predominate in the second half of the century also had positive aspects. It helped to explain the Empire's growth and justify the costs and exertions to maintain it; it was held to excuse some of Empire's destructiveness and oppression. Contemporaries attributed many Imperial achievements to the progressive tendencies of their race—economic growth, law and order, good government, free institutions and civil liberties, an end to indigenous warfare, protection for the vulnerable, greater respect for women, and the spread of true religion. Such racial awareness, however, also produced its mirror images among the Empire's non-British peoples. In many of them, experience of Empire began to provoke a heightened sense of identity, an enhanced awareness of local potential, and an eagerness to bring out the best in their own societies by adopting the most attractive features of western ways and beliefs.

It is a fascinating, but perhaps ultimately unanswerable, question whether British India, given the range and intensity of the Imperial impact over more than two centuries, was more or less decisively reshaped by the experience of colonial rule than was, for instance, Southern Africa, refashioned in barely fifty

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[66] See chap. by Robert A. Stafford and chap. by John M. Mackenzie, esp. pp. 282–290.

[67] Benjamin Kidd, *Social Evolution* (London, 1895), esp. pp. 303–29; *A Choice of Kipling's Verse Selected with an Essay on Rudyard Kipling by T. S. Eliot* (London, 1963 edn.), p. 136.

years to the requirements of a modern, urban, and industrialized economy. Two chapters in particular address this encounter, from the African and Asian perspectives respectively.[68] What they reveal is the extent to which colonial peoples almost everywhere chose to select and adapt to their own needs features of British learning, ideas, religious belief, political and other habits, as well as technology and mechanical skills. Together with the worldwide spread of the English language, and the reform and revival of indigenous religions, these developments stimulated not only racial and ethnic consciousness, but the first stirrings of independent 'nationalist' organization.

These changes in colonial cultures meant that the terms on which colonial peoples were prepared to collaborate with the British thus began to change, first in Asia, later in Africa, and especially after 1880. This took place even as the technological gulf between Britain and her dependent peoples reached perhaps its widest extent at the end of the century, and suggests that the relative balance of power between colonizer and colonized can never be measured in material terms alone. As the twentieth century began, British nervousness about the challenge posed by the social and political mobilization of Asian peoples, outside as well as inside the Empire, revealed a sense of the fragility of Imperial control and the limitations of Imperial resources. That events were often seen through racial spectacles only made them less intelligible and more worrying, especially to Europeans in colonies where they were a clear minority. No straightforward evaluation of the consequences of colonial rule is possible, given the 'constantly shifting kaleidoscope of give and take' which characterized the process of cultural encounter and exchange.[69] However, the historian can at least help to give a better understanding of what it may have meant to many non-Europeans individually, and in the longer term to their societies, to have experienced British rule.

Nineteenth-Century Assessments

The variety of economic relationships, the diversity of Britain's presence overseas, the unpredictable patterns of international affairs, the opportunism of nineteenth-century territorial expansion, and the cultural consequences of Empire, all reflect the formative influence of local, peripheral, no less than metropolitan, circumstances. However, while debating endlessly the ethics of Empire, the political wisdom of acquisition, and the practicalities of rule, contemporaries also concerned themselves particularly with what they saw as the measurable assets, gains, and losses of Empire. They tried to offset the economic value of Imperial

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[68] See chaps. by T. C. McCaskie and Susan Bayly.
[69] See below, p. 665.

trade and investment against the costs of its government and defence, and to assess Empire's value relative to Britain's many other overseas interests. This overarching concern involved conceptual and statistical, as well as political arguments; it has embraced the analysis of economists from Adam Smith to J. A. Hobson, and has continued to intrigue twentieth-century scholars. It is a most fitting subject with which to conclude this volume.[70]

Between 1790 and 1914 there were two periods when these calculations attracted unusual attention. The first was the years 1830–50, which are sometimes held to have seen the end of Britain's *ancien régime*, and during which Britain's shift to free trade was finally confirmed.[71] The second period, approximately 1895–1911, witnessed a powerful challenge to that early Victorian consensus based on support for free trade, laissez-faire, and colonial self-government. International economic and political challenges to Britain had intensified, and the country was unable to sustain its pre-eminence of the 1860s. The case for preserving Britain's position by a programme of Imperial consolidation and colonial development became the centre of a fierce political debate.[72] After 1900 this was related to the many 'lessons' of the South African War, and renewed discussion as to whether Britain was preponderantly an overseas or a European, and therefore continental, Power.

At the heart of the arguments lay—as always—the position of the settler colonies.[73] Distinguished by metropolitan observers in the early 1840s for their social and political insignificance, after 1890 they took on for imperialists everywhere a new importance, in part by reason of their continued growth and prosperity but most of all because of mounting Imperial insecurity and over-extension. On this occasion, however, despite the ever-greater polarization of international politics between 1902 and 1914, there was to be no reordering of the Empire. The wish of the settler colonies to preserve control of their own affairs, the attractions of free trade to the British electorate in 1906, and the weight of the United Kingdom's extra-Imperial interests, were sufficient to defeat the Imperial consolidationists' onslaught.

This was perhaps just as well. Attempts at a new autarchic subordination of tropical colonies to metropolitan needs might have overwhelmed more constructive approaches to their administration; the evidence of local political mobilization in India and Egypt after 1900 suggests that it would also have provoked serious indigenous protest. Centralization at the visible expense of the Dominions before 1914 could have jeopardized those compromises which subsequently

[70]   See chap. by Avner Offer.

[71]   See below, pp. 38; 42; Bernard Semmel, *The Rise of Free Trade Imperialism: Classical Political Economy, the Empire of Free Trade and Imperialism, 1750–1850* (Cambridge, 1970).

[72]   See chap. by E. H. H. Green.

[73]   See chap. by Avner Offer, esp. pp. 703–10.

enabled co-operation to continue and the Dominions to make vital contributions to Imperial defence and welfare during the First World War. The temporary defeat of the 'constructive imperialists' before 1914 avoided trouble and encouraged more optimistic assessment of Imperial prospects. Future promise was symbolized in the rechristening of colonial Prime Ministers' gatherings at the Imperial Conference in 1911, and the profusion of Imperial architecture associated with Herbert Baker and Edwin Lutyens. Nevertheless, that same defeat reaffirmed the essentials of mid-Victorian approaches to Empire. To many, this particular form of triumphalism also held out little promise for the future, and contributed to a widespread pessimism equally characteristic of the Edwardian years.[74]

Since 1815 an insular people, accepting concepts of authority, exclusiveness, and inequality so essential to Empire, had also espoused a political and economic liberalism which simultaneously undermined those foundations. In a period when national identities were commonly tied to language and were being ever-more sharply defined, the spread of English as a *lingua franca*, like the movement of people and ideas which equally served Britain's Imperial expansion, also opened that Empire to the world. The essential ambiguity of the Empire survived the nineteenth century.

[74] In Vol. IV, see chap. 2 by Ronald Hyam.

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PART I

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2

Economics and Empire: The Metropolitan Context

P. J. CAIN

Despite the loss of the American colonies, Britain was still the greatest Imperial power in the world in the 1790s, a position emphatically confirmed by her victory in the Napoleonic Wars. In the following century the Empire expanded greatly in area on four continents. By 1914 it had become a global phenomenon of immense economic and cultural diversity and by far the largest, most populous and most prosperous of the European Imperial domains. Yet despite its impressive dimensions, the Empire never recaptured the position of importance in Britain's economic life it had held before 1776. Britain's overseas economic relations between 1790 and 1914 spanned the globe: in the latter part of the century around three-fifths of its trade was with extra-European partners, a proportion far greater than that of any other major industrializing power.[1] Imperial economic ties were never more than part of this broader pattern of trade and the associated movements of people and capital. In economic terms, the British Empire always exercised a far greater influence on the mother country than did the overseas possessions of France or Germany: but that influence was not great enough for Imperial considerations to dominate British international economic policy which became infected by the spirit of free-trade cosmopolitanism.

The expansion of trade with the American colonies had been one major reason for the rapid growth in importance of the Imperial element in overseas relations in the eighteenth century. The loss of the colonies in the 1770s converted about one-fifth of Britain's exports from Imperial to foreign trade at a stroke; and, since the emerging United States continued to provide one of Britain's most dynamic markets, growing dramatically as a source of supplies and providing the biggest single outlet for British migrants and capital in the nineteenth century, the rupture had an enduring influence. Moreover, the independence of the American colonies occurred precisely when, as a result of the industrial revolution, Britain's competitive advantage as an international trader was becoming marked in terms of both industry and services, spreading British economic influence across the whole

[1] Paul Bairoch, 'Geographical Structure and Trade Balances of European Foreign Trade from 1800 to 1970', *Journal of European Economic History* (hereafter *JEEcH*), III (1974), Tables 5 and 6.

world. In the early nineteenth century the most obvious sign of Britain's international competitiveness was the growth of the cotton industry. In the latter part of the period her industrial leadership was lost, but a global presence was retained by improving her comparative advantage as a seller of international services.[2] This enduring cosmopolitan success provided the context wherein Imperial economic policy was formulated throughout the century.

Building up a picture of the Empire's role in international trade before 1850 is difficult because of the limitations of the available statistics. Imports were recorded at 'official' rather than real values before 1854 and recent estimates of the latter do not allow the Empire's share to be precisely determined. It is clear that, despite upheavals caused by war and blockade, imports from the major developed markets of Europe, the United States, and Latin America accounted for a little over two-fifths of the total between the 1780s and the end of the Napoleonic Wars. Then, as the United States's significance grew, the developed markets increased their share of imports to 60 per cent by 1844–46. As for Imperial trade, assuming that India accounted for three-fifths of imports from Asia and that four-fifths of goods from the West Indies were from islands under British control, the Empire provided roughly 35–40 per cent of imports during the war period. After that the share of the Empire fell. India continued to provide about 10 per cent of total imports after 1815 but the increasing importance of British North America (BNA) and of Australia in British markets was more than offset by the drastic decline in the importance of the West Indies, whose share of imports fell from around 18 per cent to 6 per cent of the total between 1814–16 and 1844–46 as slave emancipation began to work its effects.[3]

The best way to evaluate the significance of Empire is to look at the chief imported commodities of the early nineteenth century and the Empire's contribution to their supply. Of the ten leading commodities imported into Britain in 1784–86, half came from Europe and, of the remainder, the Empire was a major supplier of only three: sugar, which came wholly from the West Indies; raw cotton, also mainly from the West Indies; and manufactured cottons and silks imported from India. Tea came mainly from China as did most of the raw silk imported. By 1834–36 the Empire led the way in only two of the leading commodities. The West Indies was still the first supplier of sugar, though its share had fallen to 80 per cent, and North

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[2] For overviews see: Phyllis Deane and W. A. Cole, *British Economic Growth, 1688–1959* (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 28–38; François Crouzet, 'Toward an Export Economy: British Exports during the Industrial Revolution', *Explorations in Economic History*, XVII, 1 (1980), pp. 48–93; Peter Mathias, *The First Industrial Nation: An Economic History of Britain, 1700–1914* (London, 1983), chap. 11.

[3] Ralph Davis, *The Industrial Revolution and British Overseas Trade* (Leicester, 1979), Table 40, pp. 92–93.

American timber had replaced European as market leader. Besides this, Australia was just emerging as an important supplier of wool and India's share of raw silk imports was rising (Table 2.1). Among lesser, though still significant, commodities of Imperial origin were indigo, the bulk of which came from India, and coffee.

To place the Empire's contribution in perspective, it must be remembered that, throughout the first half of the century, its position was boosted by the complex of tariffs and other forms of discrimination which made up what was called the 'Old Colonial System'. The two leading Imperial products of the 1830s, sugar and timber, as well as other important commodities such as coffee, owed their position in the British market to preferences which only began to be eroded seriously in the 1840s.[4] The North American timber trade is the best example of how much

TABLE 2.1. *Leading British imports and principal suppliers, 1784–1836*

Import	£000	1784–86 Supplier
Raw sugar	2,614	West Indies 2,614
Tea	2,587	Asia 2,587
Cotton	1,814	West Indies 890; NW Europe 456
Cotton & silk goods	1,344	Asia 1,344
Silk	1,218	Asia 568; S. Europe 531
Wine	964	S Europe 831
Timber	917	N Europe 671
Iron & ore	702	N Europe 700
Linen goods	672	NW Europe 417; N Europe 255
Flax	563	N Europe 466

Import	£000	1834–36 Supplier
Cotton	14,494	USA 11,332
Raw sugar	7,070	West Indies 5,779
Wool	6,718	NW Europe 3,864; Australia 923
Silk	4,383	NW Europe 1,466; Asia 1,223; China 871
Tea	3,846	China 3,696
Timber	3,832	BNA 2,586
Wine	2,757	S Europe 2,292
Flax	2,613	N Europe 1,754
Hides and skins	1,999	Latin America 724; NW Europe 353; N Europe 327
Tallow	1,962	N Europe 1,883

Source: Ralph Davis, *The Industrial Revolution and British Trade* (Leicester, 1979), Table 57, pp. 110–11, and Table 62, pp. 120–21. The figures for 1784–86 exclude trade with Ireland; China is included in Asia.

[4] On sugar, coffee, and timber preferences see Davis, *Industrial Revolution*, pp. 43–44, 47–49; Sarah Palmer, *Politics, Shipping and the Repeal of the Navigation Acts* (Manchester, 1990), pp. 57–58; Lucy Brown, *The Board of Trade and the Free Trade Movement, 1833–42* (Oxford, 1958), pp. 185–86.

Imperial commerce depended on political power. Fear of dependence upon Baltic
timber for naval supplies during the French wars led to high tariffs on foreign
wood big enough to allow the Canadian Maritime Provinces to overcome hitherto
forbidding transport costs. Canadian timber dominated the market after 1815 and
supplied two-thirds of British demand by the 1830s, a demand much increased by
rapid urbanization.[5] It only began to lose its position in 1842 when the duties on
foreign timber were sharply reduced. They were finally abolished in 1860, after
which Canada's share of imports fell steadily.[6]

There are no established statistics for the Empire's share in British exports
before 1815. Later data indicates that, although there were sharp annual fluctua-
tions, exports of home produce to British possessions until c.1850 averaged around
30 per cent of the total: but the remarkable stability of the global figure hides
striking changes in the geography of Imperial trade.[7] In 1815 the West Indies was by
far the biggest market for British goods followed by BNA and British Asia (mainly
India). By 1840 the West Indies had declined considerably in importance and
British North America had been overshadowed as a market by India and by
Australia. During the early part of the period cottons were the most rapidly
growing export, rising from 6–7 per cent of the total in 1784–86 to 42 per cent in
1814–16, and peaking at 48 per cent in the mid-1830s.[8] At the time of Waterloo,
most of these markets were found outside the Empire: Europe, the United States,
and Latin America then accounted for about 98 per cent of all exports of cotton
goods.[9] After that, rising tariffs in Europe and the United States forced cotton
exporters further afield and India became a prominent market for the first time.
Sales to India were responsible for three-tenths of the increase in cotton exports
between 1820 and 1850, by which date the subcontinent absorbed 18.5 per cent of all
cotton piece-goods sent abroad. India's share of all exports to the Empire rose
from a sixth to a third over the same period.[10] After 1815, however, the share of
underdeveloped countries within the Empire in British exports declined, partly
because of the demise of West Indian trade and partly because of the rapid growth
of the areas of white settlement. Especially notable was the rise of Australia, an
insignificant market in 1815 but one which was growing rapidly long before the
famous gold rushes of the 1850s (Table 2.2).

[5] J. H. Clapham, 'The Industrial Revolution and the Colonies, 1783–1822', in *Cambridge History of the British Empire*, II (1940), pp. 219–21.

[6] Robert Livingstone Schuyler, *The Fall of the Old Colonial System: A Study in British Free Trade, 1770–1870*. (New York, 1945), p. 149.

[7] Werner Schlote, *British Foreign Trade from 1700 to the 1930s* (Oxford, 1952), Table 20a, pp. 160–61.

[8] Davis, *Industrial Revolution*, Table 2, p. 15.

[9] Ibid., Table 3, p. 15.

[10] D. A. Farnie, *The English Cotton Industry and the World Market, 1815–96* (Oxford, 1979), chap. 3 and Tables 5 and 6, pp. 91, 98.

TABLE 2.2. *Exports of British produce to the Empire, 1814–1913* (yearly averages)

	1814–19 (£m)	1814–19 (%)	1854–57 (£m)	1854–57 (%)	1909–13 (£m)	1909–13 (%)
Australasia	0.03	0.2	9.94	30.5	39.78	24.7
South Africa	0.23	1.7	1.23	3.8	19.56	12.1
BNA (Canada)	2.61	19.9	4.33	13.3	21.23	13.2
Settlement Empire	2.86	21.8	15.50	47.6	80.57	50.0
India	2.29	17.4	10.32	31.7	53.95	33.5
British Asia	—	—	1.76	5.4	12.18	7.6
Africa	—	—	0.79	2.4	7.93	4.9
West Indies	5.93	45.2	2.14	6.6	3.43	2.1
British Europe	2.04	15.6	2.03	6.2	2.87	1.8
Other	—	—	—	—	0.23	0.1
Dependent Empire	10.26	78.2	17.05	52.4	80.60	50.0
All Empire	13.12	100.0	32.55	100.0	161.16	100.0
Empire % of all exports		30.0		30.3		35.4

Source: Werner Schlote, *British Foreign Trade from 1700 to the 1930s* (Oxford, 1952), Table 23, p. 169.

Note: BNA includes Newfoundland throughout. Figures may not add up precisely to totals because of rounding.

The re-export trade, which largely consisted of recycling extra-European imports to the Continent, was badly hit by the defection of America from the Imperial system and, despite a revival during the French wars, re-exports tended to fall as a percentage of imports throughout the early nineteenth century.[11] The Empire's contribution to re-exports may also have declined in so far as freer trade and Britain's industrialization made her the central market for raw materials from all parts of the world. But many of Britain's new acquisitions in the early nineteenth century, such as Hong Kong and Singapore, were collecting points for commodities sent on for re-export, and several Empire commodities figured prominently as re-exports, including Indian silks, West African palm-oil, and most famously, Australian wool.

There is no doubt that Imperial trade provided a large portion of Britain's so-called 'invisible' earnings even after the loss of the American colonies, though it is impossible to estimate these satisfactorily. Britain was already the world's leading provider of international services by 1780 and Empire territories were dependent on the use of sterling and the credit of British merchants in London, Liverpool, and Edinburgh.[12] Before 1850 virtually all Imperial trade was financed by short-

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[11] Davis, *Industrial Revolution*, pp. 31–35; Albert H. Imlah, *Economic Elements in the Pax Britannica* (Ithaca, NY, 1958), Table 13, p. 132.
[12] Davis, *Industrial Revolution*, pp. 58–61.

term credit originating in Britain, compared with only one-third of European trade.[13] In shipping, Britain was temporarily hit by the loss of the American colonies since one-third of the Imperial mercantile marine was American-built at the Revolution.[14] After the Revolution Britain continued to rely on a combination of preferential tariffs and the Navigation Acts, which confined Imperial trade to Imperial ships, to boost its shipping income.[15] Canadian timber and West Indian sugar were the principal commodities involved: no less than two-fifths of the tonnage of British ships in the early nineteenth century was engaged in the BNA and West Indian sector.[16] The development of Australian markets under the Navigation Acts also promoted British shipping and helped to forge valuable links with other Imperial and foreign trading posts in the Pacific and Indian Oceans.[17] In trade finance Britain was internationally competitive, but in shipping American and Scandinavian competition was keen and the growth of foreign tonnage entering British ports was very rapid after 1815.[18] Whether the Navigation Acts prevented a further erosion of Britain's position or whether they added to its difficulties by raising costs is a question with, at present, no clear answer.

Britain's economic links with the Imperial periphery also involved migrants from the motherland building up the populations of British North America and Australia and, to a much lesser extent, South Africa and New Zealand. Here again, however, this movement of population to the Empire has to be seen in the context of the counter-attraction provided by the largest and most dynamic newly settled country, the United States.

Approximately 150,000 people emigrated from England and Wales and perhaps a further 30,000–35,000 left Scotland between 1790 and 1815.[19] Revised figures for the period 1815–50 (which exclude Irish emigrants travelling from British ports) suggest that there were about 500,000 emigrants (net of returns) from England

[13] S. D. Chapman, 'The International Houses: The Continental Contribution to British Commerce, 1800–1860', *JEEcH*, XVII (1977), p. 45.

[14] The rapid increase in British-built tonnage soon made up the difference. Vincent T. Harlow, *The Founding of the Second British Empire*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1965), II, pp. 264–65.

[15] For the origins and development of the Navigation Acts see Vol. I, chap. by Nuala Zahedieh and Vol. II, chap. by Jacob M. Price.

[16] Palmer, *Politics, Shipping and the Navigation Acts*, Table 3, p. 7.

[17] Frank, J. A. Broeze, *Mr. Brooks and the Australian Trade: Imperial Business in the Nineteenth Century* (Melbourne, 1993).

[18] J. H. Clapham, 'The Last Years of the Navigation Acts', *English Historical Review*, XXV (1910), pp. 687–88, 705.

[19] A figure of 140,000 for English emigration is derived from B. R. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 76, with 10,000 added for Wales. The rough estimate for Scotland is mine based on Michael W. Flinn, ed., *Scottish Population History from the 17th Century to the 1930s* (Cambridge, 1977), p. 443, and Ian H. Adam and Meredyth Somerville, *Cargoes of Despair and Hope: Scottish Emigration to North America, 1603–1803* (Edinburgh, 1995), p. 4.

and Wales and that in excess of 100,000 emigrants left Scotland, representing roughly 7 and 11 per cent of the natural increase of the respective populations.[20] Emigration to BNA was encouraged by fares offered by returning timber ships even lower than those to the United States, a bounty made possible by preferential tariffs and the Navigation Acts.[21] Some effort was also made, both in Britain and on the periphery, to support colonial emigration directly. The attention paid by historians to forms of assisted migration has obscured the fact that only 7 per cent of emigrants received assistance: however, 23 per cent of the migrants to the Empire did need some direct support either from British or colonial sources, and those travelling to Australasia were particularly dependent on aid since the fare was four times that to the United States.[22] Despite these inducements, only one-fifth of emigrants went to the Imperial frontier and four-fifths to the United States, whose economic dynamism far outstripped anything possible in the colonies at the time.[23] The pull of the United States's economy was so strong that emigrants to BNA were often induced to transfer south: in 1841, for example, 20 per cent of immigrant arrivals in BNA went on to the republic.[24] Given the costs of passage and the working time foregone in travelling, the bulk of the migrants were, inevitably, skilled people with some capital behind them.[25] Assistance from British sources enabled some poor people to move, but this did not always meet with approval in the colonies.[26]

The data on British long-term capital invested abroad before 1850 is sparse and may be misleading. Rough estimates of British portfolio overseas investment (holdings of foreign securities by British nationals) in 1854 put the total at between £195m and £230m, and suggest, somewhat improbably, that the Empire's share was nil or negligible.[27] There are no global estimates of direct investments by British firms abroad, though investment of this kind in Imperial territory must have been

[20] Dudley Baines, *Migration in a Mature Economy: Emigration and Internal Migration in England and Wales, 1861–1900* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 58 and App. II, p. 299–300.

[21] Charlotte Erickson, *Leaving England: Essays in British Emigration in the Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca, NY, 1994), p. 174–75; Helen I. Cowan, *British Emigration to British North America: The First Hundred Years* (Toronto, 1961), p. 24; M. Gray, 'The Course of Scottish Emigration, 1750–1914', in T. M. Devine, ed., *Scottish Emigration and Scottish Society* (Edinburgh, 1992), p. 21.

[22] Baines, *Migration*, p. 72; Gray, 'The Course of Scottish Emigration', p. 33; Broeze, *Mr. Brooks and the Australian Trade*, p. 123.

[23] Baines, *Migration*, p. 58.

[24] Erickson, *Leaving England*, p. 170.

[25] Baines, *Migration*, pp. 67, 71; Cowan, *British Emigration to British North America*, pp. 28–39; Ian Donnachie, 'The Making of "Scots on the Make": Scottish Settlement and Enterprise in Australia', in Devine, *Scottish Emigration*, p. 146.

[26] For assisted migration, see chap. by Marjory Harper.

[27] See P. L. Cottrell, *British Overseas Investment in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 1975), Table I, p. 23; Elise S. Brezis, 'Foreign Capital Flows in the Century of Britain's Industrial Revolution: New

significant. For example, the Canada Company, a BNA land company, was set up with British funds; Scottish capital was invested directly in Australia; and British-based banking firms were beginning to spread through the Empire from the 1830s.[28] Also, in the 1850s British railway enterprise was just taking off in BNA and India.[29] Nonetheless, it is likely that in 1850 only a small portion of Britain's overseas assets were held in the Empire.

It has been argued that the loss of the American colonies revolutionized Imperial policy, ushering in an era of 'free trade imperialism', with the emphasis on 'informal' rather than formal control.[30] In reaction to this, other historians have pointed out that the preferential system lasted until the 1840s and that there was little pressure to change policies before that time.[31] Recent scholarship tells a more complex and confused story of policy evolution.[32] After some initial hesitation, the first reaction to American defection was simply to exclude her from the colonial system, as the Navigation Act of 1786 indicated. Moreover, William Pitt's moves to lower tariffs in treaties with France and Ireland were intended to increase revenues by rationalizing the tariff rather than to break up the colonial system, and businessmen in Britain were at that time more inclined to support increased protection than to demand freer trade.[33] Again, the wars with France after 1793, which resulted in the assertion of British naval dominance,[34] also encouraged some extension of protection, as witnessed by the Corn Laws of 1804 and 1815,[35] and of the preferential system. The shift to British North American timber was only the most spectacular attempt to use preferences to tap Empire sources for supplies in time of conflict.[36]

Estimates, Controlled Conjectures', *Economic History Review* (hereafter *EcHR*), XLVIII, 1 (1995), pp. 46–67.

[28] For an example, see Geoffrey Jones, *British Multinational Banking, 1830–1990* (Oxford, 1993), esp. pp. 18–22.

[29] Daniel Thorner, *Investment in Empire: British Railways and Steam Shipping Enterprise in India* (London, 1950); D. C. M. Platt and Jeremy Adelman, 'London Merchant Bankers in the First Phase of Heavy Borrowing: The Grand Trunk Railway of Canada', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* (hereafter *JICH*), XVIII, 2 (1990), pp. 208–27.

[30] Harlow, *Second British Empire*.

[31] See D. C. M. Platt, 'The National Economy and British Imperial Expansion before 1914', *JICH*, II, 1 (1973–74), pp. 3–14.

[32] For an overview see P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, 'The Political Economy of British Expansion Overseas, 1750–1914', *EcHR*, Second Series, XXXIII (1980), pp. 471–78.

[33] Harlow, *Second British Empire* I, pp. 519–20, 538–39, 592–616; John Ehrman, *The British Government and Commercial Negotiations with Europe, 1783–93* (Cambridge, 1962).

[34] A. D. Harvey, *Britain in the Early Nineteenth Century* (London, 1978), pp. 302–04.

[35] Ibid., pp. 318–19; Boyd Hilton, *Corn, Cash, Commerce: The Economic Policies of the Tory Governments, 1815–1830* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 15–30.

[36] Davis, *Industrial Revolution*, pp. 48–49; Harlow, *Second British Empire*, II, pp. 283, 286–87.

Simultaneously, however, the pressures for freer trade were also growing in some areas of British operations. The attempt to exclude the United States from the colonial system failed and the dependence of BNA and the West Indies on American shipping and trade was recognized in the Jay Treaty of 1794.[37] After the war of 1812 the British went further and, in 1815, agreed that the heavy duties placed on American shipping in British ports under the Navigation Acts should be reduced provided the United States offered reciprocal concessions. In the 1820s William Huskisson, the highly influential President of the Board of Trade, extended these concessions to a number of European powers, partly to curb the growing influence of American shipping in British ports which had followed the agreement of 1815. His successors acted similarly, and the Acts were continuously relaxed and amended, often under foreign pressure. By 1828, for example, the colonies were allowed to trade in their own ships and those of foreigners with whom they traded directly; and in 1825 and 1833 the list of enumerated goods was reduced.[38]

This shift to freer trade was also reinforced by the success of British industry and commerce during the French wars, which encouraged both governmental and business élites to believe that they would triumph in open competition.[39] This was complemented, in the 1820s, by the dawning perception amongst Tory government leaders that industrialization and population increase meant Britain could no long remain self-sufficient in foodstuffs. Freer trade was necessary to encourage imports which would come largely from Europe and the United States rather than the Empire. The 1822 and 1828 modifications of the Corn Laws were the result of this thinking as were the general reductions in tariffs of the mid-1820s.[40] Rapid growth also created an expanding host of trading interests in the provinces hostile to chartered company monopoly. As a result, the East India Company lost its exclusive hold over the Indian trade in 1813 and over the China trade twenty years later.[41] By the 1830s Britain's global network of trade and, in particular, her flourishing connection with her ex-colonies in America, seemed to give the lie to the traditional notion that trade could only be secured by the use of power.

Neither Huskisson nor his successors, however, had any intention of destroying the colonial system. Rather, all were concerned to make it work more efficiently within a competitive environment. The post-1815 depression, together with the

[37] D. L. Mackay, 'Direction and Purpose in British Imperial Policy, 1783–1801', *Historical Journal* (hereafter *HJ*), XVII, 3 (1974), pp. 487–501.
[38] Palmer, *Politics, Shipping and the Repeal of the Navigation Laws*, chap. 3.
[39] Hilton, *Corn, Cash, Commerce*, chap. 2.
[40] Ibid., chap. 4 and pp. 305–06.
[41] D. J. Moss, 'Birmingham and the Campaign against the Orders-in-Council and East of India Company Charter, 1812–13', *Canadian Journal of History*, XI, 2 (1976), pp. 173–88; Antony Webster, 'The

rising protectionism of both European and American rivals after 1820, reinforced the traditional idea that closed colonial markets were assets worth preserving, and these sentiments were strongly felt until the 1840s.[42] Even Robert Peel's tariff-cutting budgets of 1842 and 1845, which lowered some colonial preferences quite sharply, were still compatible with Huskisson's philosophy: as late as 1843 Peel offered the Canadian colonies a preference on wheat to encourage American mid-Western traffic to travel along the St Lawrence seaway.[43] Nor did Peel radically alter the Navigation Acts. Despite numerous modifications in the rules, the principle that Imperial traffic should be carried in British and colonial ships with British or colonial crews, and that the 'long trades' even with countries outside the Empire should be reserved for Imperial shipping, remained largely intact.[44]

Yet by 1860 the Acts had gone and all preferential arrangements with the Empire had been abolished. Why? The great turning-point was undoubtedly the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. Peel, like the Tories of the 1820s, became convinced that economic growth and the survival of the established order he represented depended on providing cheap food for the urban areas, and that the Corn Laws were a serious impediment to that.[45] But the timing of Repeal was influenced by the Irish famine and by the ferocious and growing hostility to the Laws demonstrated by the business classes. They resented agrarian dominance and had become convinced that cheap imported supplies of food and raw material were the key to international competitive success now that Europe and the United States were becoming serious industrial rivals.[46] No colonial preference system was compatible with that conviction and, once the Corn Laws were abolished, its days were numbered.[47]

The move to free trade provoked some agonized debates, particularly over the issue of exposing the sugar exports of the slave-emancipated West Indies to the competition of slave-grown sugar from Brazil and Cuba.[48] The most contentious issue, however, was the abolition of the Navigation Acts in 1849. Once commercial

Political Economy of Trade Liberalisation: The East India Company Charter Act of 1813', *EcHR*, Second Series, XLIII, 3 (1990), pp. 404–19.

[42] A. G. L. Shaw, 'British Attitudes to the Colonies, ca. 1820–1850', *Journal of British Studies*, IX, 1 (1969), pp. 71–95.

[43] Schuyler, *Fall of the Old Colonial System*, pp. 142–44.

[44] A Consolidating Act was passed as late as 1845. Clapham, 'The Last Years of the Navigation Acts', p. 692.

[45] Hilton, *Corn, Cash, Commerce*, pp. 303 ff.; S. Fairlie, 'The Nineteenth-Century Corn Law Reconsidered', *EcHR*, Second Series, XVIII, 3 (1965), pp. 562–75.

[46] For a useful summary, see Anthony Howe, *Free Trade and Liberal England, 1846–1946* (Oxford, 1997), chap. 1.

[47] For the legislative changes, see Schuyler, *Fall of the Old Colonial System*.

[48] C. Duncan Rice, ' "Humanity Sold for Sugar!": The British Abolitionist Response to Free-Trade in Slave-grown Sugar', *HJ*, XIII, 3 (1970), pp. 402–18. On the Caribbean see below, p. 483.

interests in British North America and the West Indies were clear that they would lose their tariff privileges they objected to the restrictions placed on them by the Acts. Governments were also strongly influenced by threats of retaliation against the Acts from the United States and the European countries which had more liberal shipping regimes. The fading link between naval strength and the mercantile marine also influenced the decision, and there was some concern in shipping circles that the Acts raised shipping costs and undermined the British position in non-Empire trade. In contrast to the Corn Law debate, however, there was no great surge of business support for abolition; shipping interests were divided on the issue, as was business opinion in general. In this delicate situation, the fact that Russell's Whig government depended for its survival on a Cobdenite radical faction which was ideologically committed to abolition may have been decisive.[49] There is no doubt that, in the early days after abolition, the severity of competition in the shipping market rose sharply: two-fifths of the tonnage entering British ports in the 1850s was foreign-owned, compared with three-tenths in the previous decade. After 1860, steam and iron gave the British an edge they had never quite achieved under the regime of wood and sail and the American Civil War undermined the transatlantic challenge. Without these contingencies the British might soon have been tempted to invoke the retaliation clauses which the opponents of reform had insisted be written into the abolition Acts.[50]

The move to free trade was a long drawn out affair which often bitterly divided the business community. The process was undoubtedly slowed considerably by the sluggish growth of British export values after 1815 when continental protection was becoming an alarming reality. By the 1840s, however, the ideological shift towards free trade amongst the political and business élites was unmistakable and the act of faith involved in abolishing the Navigation Acts was the best testament to that. Belief in the efficacy of an open economy also had its effects on emigration policy. By 1850, when gold discoveries were beginning to stimulate a more rapid emigrant flow, free trade sentiment was already undermining the idea of state aid, and officials and politicians were becoming increasingly convinced that their limited interventions merely diverted the stream rather than swelled it. Moreover, the concession of responsible government to the white settled colonies meant that control over land disposal became a local concern. From mid-century, save for some private philanthropy, assistance for emigration became almost entirely a colonial matter rather than a metropolitan one.[51]

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[49] Palmer, *Politics, Shipping and the Repeal of the Navigation Acts*. For colonial reaction, Schuyler, *Fall of the Old Colonial System*, pp. 177–93.

[50] Palmer, *Politics, Shipping and the Repeal of the Navigation Acts*, Table 11, p. 181 and p. 183.

[51] D. V. Glass and P. A. M. Taylor, *Population and Emigration* (Dublin, 1976) p. 84; Erickson, *Leaving England*, p. 204.

Responsible government in the white colonies was not an inevitable conse-
quence of free trade and was granted, from the late 1840s onwards, for quite
independent reasons. Even in the early 1850s it was still assumed by prominent
statesmen in Britain that free trade could be upheld in the colonies whatever
political changes might occur. Colonial demands for autonomy in the disposal of
land and, later, for freedom to impose tariffs were unintended outcomes of the
concession of political power to the white frontier and were accepted with
reluctance in Britain only because opposition to local claims would cause more
trouble than it was worth. In the dependent Empire, where there was no devolu-
tion of political control, free trade was actively imposed, most notably in India.[52]

Between 1800 and 1850 the volume of world trade grew by about two and a half
times; over the next sixty years it increased tenfold as a truly multilateral network
of world trade emerged for the first time.[53] The original impetus to this upward
spiral of growth was given by the gold discoveries of the 1850s in Australia and
America; but the long-term revolution in transportation was the strongest force
making for change. Shipping freights began to fall dramatically long before steam
and iron replaced sail and wood on the high seas, a transformation only decisively
completed after 1880.[54] In 1840 a mere 5,000 miles of railway had been built, most
of it in Britain: by 1920 a global network of 675,000 miles was in place, bringing vast
areas of hitherto inaccessible land in touch with the seaboard.[55] In these new
conditions the British Empire expanded rapidly in Africa, Asia, Australasia, and
North America: but the relative economic importance of British possessions did
not change in any fundamental way.

Changes in the nature of trade with the Empire reflected many of those taking
place elsewhere in the world.[56] In the mid-1850s the Empire was the leading
supplier of three of the ten most valuable imports—wool, where Australia was
now dominant, timber, and raw sugar. However, the West Indian share of raw
sugar imports was falling rapidly and, like Canadian timber, was just losing its
preferential position in the British market. Indeed, free trade led to a reduction in

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[52] P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914* (London, 1993), pp. 235, 336–37.

[53] Imlah, *Economic Elements in the Pax Britannica*, Table 27, p. 189; for a more British perspective see Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism*, I, chap. 5.

[54] Douglass C. North, 'Ocean Freight Rates and Economic Development, 1750–1913', *JEcH*, XVII, 4 (1958), pp. 537–55.

[55] William Woodruff, 'The Emergence of an International Economy, 1700–1914', in C. Cipolla, ed., *The Emergence of Industrial Societies*, 2 vols. (London, 1973), II, p. 690.

[56] François Crouzet, 'Trade and Empire: The British Experience from the Establishment of Free Trade until the First World War', in Barrie M. Ratcliffe, ed., *Great Britain and Her World: Essays in Honour of W. O. Henderson* (Manchester, 1975). For imports in the 1850s, Davis, *Industrial Revolution*, Table 64, pp. 124–25.

the Empire's share in imports; from the 1850s until the Great War, 1914–18, the contribution of Imperial possessions never rose above one-quarter of the total and sometimes fell to one-fifth. The fall in the Empire's share reflected the fact that, under free trade, Britain became a major importer of manufactured goods. By 1913 they accounted for 25 per cent of all imports and came mainly from Western Europe with the Empire supplying only £23.4m out of a total of £193.6m, or 12 per cent. This dramatic change obscured the Empire's growing contribution to food and raw material imports, which rose to just over 29 per cent in 1913. In that year, the Empire was a majority supplier of four of the ten leading primary imports: wool, still coming largely from Australasia; tea, since the British now preferred Indian and Celanese to Chinese; rubber, from the Malay states; and oil-seeds, in which the West African possessions had a prominent place. The Empire also took a significant slice of the new bulk trades such as wheat (Canada being the principal source), and was the chief supplier of two other key commodities, tin (Malaya) and jute (India) (Table 2.3). In geographical terms, the biggest shift was the rise of Australia and New Zealand, who provided meat and dairy produce as well as wool. In the dependent Empire, the West Indies shrivelled into insignificance as sugar declined in relative importance and foreigners took over the British market; but India's relative decline was offset by the rise of other British Asian territories supplying raw materials, especially Malaya (Table 2.4).

Another key feature of Empire trade after 1850 was the contribution to Britain's re-export business: 30 per cent of Imperial supplies were re-exported in 1913, comprising over one-half of all re-exports. In the case of Australian wool, more

TABLE 2.3. *Empire share in British imports of primary products, 1854 and 1913*

1854	Import (£m)	Empire share (%)	1913	Import (£m)	Empire share (%)
Grains	22.9	5.8	Grains	105.5	35.3
Cotton	20.2	8.4	Cotton	60.3	3.0
Timber	11.9	55.2	Meat	56.4	24.7
Sugar	9.6	64.7	Wool	34.2	80.2
Wool	6.4	70.6	Timber	33.8	16.2
Tea	5.5	0.7	Butter	24.1	19.0
Oilseeds	2.9	26.5	Rubber	20.5	57.2
Butter	2.2	1.5	Oilseeds	15.9	53.3
Meat	1.7	0.9	Tea	13.8	87.3
Indigo	1.7	95.7	Fruit, Nuts	11.6	14.3
Total imports	152.4	22.4	Total imports	768.7	24.9

Source: Schlote, *British Overseas Trade*, Table 21, pp. 164–65.

TABLE 2.4. *Britain's imports from the Empire, 1854–1913, by origin (yearly averages)*

	1854–57 (£m)	1854–57 (%)	1909–13 (£m)	1909–13 (%)
Australasia	5.12	13.1	56.33	32.6
South Africa	1.23	3.1	10.68	6.2
BNA (Canada)	6.29	16.0	27.26	15.8
Settlement Empire	12.64	32.2	94.27	54.6
India	14.81	37.7	44.84	26.0
British Asia	2.23	5.7	22.67	13.1
Africa	2.28	5.8	5.79	3.4
West Indies	6.45	16.4	2.87	1.7
Brit. Europe	0.82	2.1	1.82	1.1
Other	—	—	0.43	0.3
Dependent Empire	26.60	67.8	78.41	45.4
Total	39.24	100.0	172.68	100.0
Empire % of all imports		23.9		24.9

Source: Schlote, *British Foreign Trade*, Table 23, p. 168.

Note: BNA includes Newfoundland throughout. Figures may not add up precisely to totals because of rounding.

was re-exported than retained.[57] As for exports of British goods, the changes both in the nature of trade, and in the Empire's part in it, were fewer. In the third quarter of the century the Empire's share fluctuated between 26 per cent and one-third of the total: thereafter it stabilized at around 35 per cent. The balance between white colonial and other Imperial outlets underwent remarkably little change. The emergent Dominions took about one-half of exports throughout. Markets in Australia and New Zealand grew rapidly after 1850 but were badly affected by prolonged depression in their economies from the mid-1880s; the compensation came from South Africa, after the gold discoveries of the 1880s, and from British North America during the wheat boom after 1900. In the dependent Empire, India remained the major market for cotton goods and continued to take one-third of all Imperial exports. However, sales to the newly acquired parts of the Empire in Africa and Asia proved disappointing (Table 2.2). Overall, the Empire steadily became a more important market for staple commodities such as pig iron and iron goods, and also for cottons, taking just over half of each category by 1913. By then, India and the emerging Dominions absorbed £72m out of £186m of Britain's leading export, cotton textiles.[58]

[57] S. B. Saul, *Studies in British Overseas Trade, 1870–1914* (Liverpool, 1960), pp. 223–25. Re-exports were usually between 12 and 15% of imports by value: Imlah, *Economic Elements in the Pax Britannica*, Table 21, p. 170.

[58] Schlote, *British Overseas Trade*, Table 25, pp. 172–73. For India as a market for cotton goods, Farnie, *English Cotton Industry*, Tables 5 and 6, pp. 91, 98.

There is no doubt that the Empire provided an important shelter for British exports hit by European and US tariffs and suffering from competition with newly industrialized countries in the wider world. In the emerging Dominions, international trade per head of population was much greater than in comparable newly settled countries like the United States, Argentina, and Chile. Although there was some competition, institutional and cultural links with Britain gave the latter a powerful edge, an edge reinforced by the modest preferences given her in the twenty years before the War.[59] In Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, the British took the lion's share of the market for manufactures as well as dominating services. The crucial importance of the Imperial factor is evident from a brief comparison of Australia with Argentina in 1913. British imports from Argentina at £42.5m were higher than from Australia (£38.2), but exports to the former, in which foreign competition was intense, were only £23.4m compared with £37.8m for Australia.[60] Even in Canada, where the United States had geographical and cultural advantages, Britain's influence was sufficient to ensure that she supplied one-third of the Canadian imports in which she was directly competitive with the United States and other rivals in 1913.[61]

In the dependent Empire, trade levels were largely determined by British authority in everything from law to tariffs. Here, where the role of the state was much greater, British governments and officials saw to it that their purchases went to the mother country.[62] Apart from the Malay states and West Africa, the new territories added to the Empire after 1880 proved disappointing to British business: but had they remained independent, or been absorbed by another European power, they might have been even less valuable as markets. Britain's favourable position in Imperial markets may have had long-term disadvantages: some historians have argued that Britain's ability to offset European competition by relying on the Empire encouraged continued investment in old industries such as textiles and thus contributed to relative economic decline.[63] However, it is worth noting that, although the share of the Empire in exports increased sharply in the 1870s, it remained fairly stable thereafter when relative industrial decline was becoming marked.

As for emigration and capital exports, flows to the Empire increased rapidly after 1850 and became a larger component of the broad stream of international factor

[59] Saul, *British Overseas Trade*, pp. 215–26, 229; I. W. McLean, 'Anglo-American Engineering Competition: Some Third Market Evidence, 1870–1914', *EcHR*, Second Series, XXIX, 3 (1976), pp. 452–64.
[60] Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics*, p. 507.
[61] D. C. M. Platt, *Latin America and British Trade, 1806–1914* (London, 1972), pp. 105–14.
[62] W. Arthur Lewis, *Growth and Fluctuations, 1870–1913* (London, 1978), p. 121.
[63] Saul, *British Overseas Trade*, p. 220.

movement from Britain without ever becoming the dominant part of it. Falling freight rates, greater speeds, and more extensive international communication induced a rising share of the British population to emigrate. Increased mobility and greater information also made return migration much more feasible, with the result that something like 40 per cent of emigrants returned home.[64] Consequently, figures of outward passenger movement after 1850 are not accurate indicators of long-term emigration, but they are useful in giving a broad picture of emigrant destinations. Between 1853 and 1920 there were over 8 million outward passenger journeys from England and Wales and over 1.5 million from Scotland to extra-European destinations, with the Scots showing a greater tendency to emigrate than their neighbours.[65]

Of the grand total of 9.7m passengers, 4.3m (44.5 per cent) sailed for the United States, 2.4m for BNA (24.1 per cent), 1.7m for Australia and New Zealand (17.5 per cent), and 670,000 to South Africa (6.9 per cent). The United States took over 55 per cent of emigrants between 1860 and 1900 when the western frontier was unfolding, and a considerable number of emigrants to BNA at that time probably moved on to the republic later. But Australia was the favoured destination in the gold rush decade of the 1850s, and BNA became dominant after 1900 when the wheat frontier swept across the 49th parallel. South Africa also became a significant target for emigrants after 1870 when diamonds and gold were discovered (Table 2.5). Under the stimulus of the transportation revolution and Britain's growing demands for cheap foodstuffs and raw materials, the white Imperial frontier expanded very rapidly after 1850. Although in terms of wealth and population the burgeoning Dominions remained small in comparison with the United States, the ratio of British immigrants to total population was much greater there than in the republic. Particular regions in Britain also developed strong economic and cultural links with parts of the Empire which encouraged a steady stream of migrants: Cornwall's connection with Australia was a case in point, as was the Scottish tradition of emigrating to North America.[66] As before 1850, most emigrants left unassisted except for relatives' remittances but the natural attractions of Empire were supplemented to some degree. In Britain, emigrant funds were now raised only by a few charitable agencies, but migration to the white Empire was boosted by help from the periphery. Canadian governments used recruiting agents in Britain and about 100,000 people were assisted to

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[64] Baines, *Migration*, pp. 59–60, 77, 134–35.

[65] See Baines, *Migration*, Apps. 4 and 5, pp. 301–06. For causal factors, see the introductory essay in Devine, *Scottish Emigration and Scottish Society*.

[66] For an early study see Ross Duncan, 'Case Studies of Emigration: Cornwall, Gloucestershire and New South Wales, 1877–86', *EcHR*, Second Series, XVI (1963), pp. 272–89. See also the comments of Baines, *Migration*, pp. 159–60, 210–11.

TABLE 2.5. *Emigration (outward passenger movement) from England, Wales, and Scotland, by destination, 1853–1920* (000s)

	USA	BNA	Australasia	South Africa	Other	Total
1853–60	230.8	58.7	273.1	12.7	—	575.3
1861–70	441.8	90.2	184.4	12.1	24.9	753.4
1871–80	637.9	152.2	241.5	46.7	58.0	1,136.3
1881–90	1,087.4	257.4	317.3	76.1	86.0	1,824.2
1891–1900	718.7	176.4	116.2	160.0	110.6	1,281.9
1901–10	837.5	793.2	218.9	269.8	213.8	2,333.2
1911–20	379.3	822.0	352.6	94.1	180.8	1,828.8
1853–1920	4,333.4	2,350.1	1,704.0	671.5	674.1	9,733.1

Sources: Dudley Baines, *Migration in a Mature Economy: Emigration and Internal Migration in England and Wales* (Cambridge, 1985), Tables 3.3 and 3.4, pp. 63–64; N. H. Carrier and J. R. Jeffrey, *External Migration: A Study of the Available Statistics, 1815–1950* (London, 1953), pp. 99–100. Figures for South Africa include Irish emigrants before 1877, but the numbers involved are small.

emigrate as a result.[67] Australian governments were much more active in attracting migrants to offset the relatively high cost of passage. Of the gross figure of 800,000 migrants to Australia between 1860 and 1900, one-half were assisted and a similar proportion were aided in the boom of 1910–14.[68] The typical emigrant in the late nineteenth century was an urban dweller responding to the pull of economic opportunity abroad.[69]

One of the most notable features of British economic history after 1850 was the sustained outflow of capital. Although there is not a complete consensus, most experts agree that the amount of assets held by Britons abroad reached about £700m by 1870 and had risen to $4bn by 1914.[70] A considerable portion of the investors were the traditionally wealthy, with the bulk of the funds coming from London and the South-East of England: provincial industrialists usually kept their money at home, though Lancashire and South Scotland proved exceptions. The returns, conservatively estimated at £200m per annum by 1913, fertilized a growing service sector in South-East England which, with the City of London's financial and commercial businesses at its centre, became the most dynamic and innovative

[67] Baines, *Migration*, p. 86; Stephen Constantine, 'Empire Migration and Social Reform, 1880–1950', in Colin G. Pooley and Ian D. Whyte, eds., *Migrants, Emigrants and Immigrants: A Social History of Migration* (London, 1991), pp. 66–70.

[68] Baines, *Migration*, pp. 63–64, 86–87; C. M. H. Clark, *Select Documents on Australian History, 1850–1900* (Sydney, 1955), p. 257; David Pope, 'Empire Migration to Canada, Australia and New Zealand, 1910–29', *Australian Economic Papers*, VII (1968). For emigrants' motives, see chap. by Marjory Harper.

[69] Baines, *Migration*, pp. 82–84, 279–82.

[70] See Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism*, I, pp. 173–79 and references therein.

part of the British economy after 1850.[71] The finance raised for overseas purposes between 1865 and 1914 was largely lent to regions of new settlement, and financed the railways and other public utilities which opened up these areas to international trade.[72] The 37.6 per cent (£1.5bn) of foreign investment placed in the Empire was faithful to this pattern: three-fifths of it went to the white settled frontier in Australasia, Canada, and South Africa, and the bulk was spent on infrastructure. The Empire's share rose slightly after 1900, stimulated by the Colonial Stock Act of 1900 which gave trustees permission to invest in a range of Imperial concerns.[73] Between 1860 and 1890 the principal Imperial borrower was Australia, but financial collapse and depression in the 1890s reduced inflows to a trickle until just before the First World War. In Edwardian times the biggest Imperial outlet was British North America, its great wheat boom attracting about £250m of British capital. Of the remaining investment in Empire, 20 per cent went to India often to finance railway development in the early part of the period. Despite its vast extension in the nineteenth century, the rest of the dependent Empire was responsible for only 10 per cent of Imperial investment or 4 per cent of foreign investment as a whole (Table 2.6).

TABLE 2.6. *British overseas financial issues, 1865–1914* (Capital called up: 5 year totals: £m)

	Foreign	White settled Empire	India	Dependent colonies	All Empire	Total
1865–69	87	16	31	6	53	140
1870–74	131	31	13	2	46	177
1875–79	62	63	25	1	89	151
1880–84	224	91	24	7	123	347
1885–89	291	110	30	8	148	439
1890–94	219	82	24	7	113	332
1895–99	185	63	27	23	113	298
1900–04	216	129	25	25	179	395
1905–09	484	196	47	29	272	757
1910–14	559	263	42	47	352	911
1865–1914	2,458	1,045	287	156	1,488	3,946

Source: Davis and Huttenback, *Mammon and the Pursuit of Empire: The Political Economy of British Imperialism, 1860–1912* (Cambridge, 1986), Table 2.1, pp. 40–41. These are Davis and Huttenback's intermediate estimates.

[71] Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism* chaps. 3, 5 and 6; Lance E. Davis and Robert A. Huttenback, with assistance from Susan Gray Davis, *Mammon and the Pursuit of Empire: The Political Economy of British Imperialism* (Cambridge, 1986), chap. 7.

[72] Matthew Simon, 'The Enterprise and Industrial Composition of New British Portfolio Foreign Investment, 1865–1914', *Journal of Development Studies*, III, 3 (1967), pp. 280–92.

[73] David Jessop, 'The Colonial Stocks Act of 1900: A Symptom of the New Imperialism?', *JICH*, IV, 2 (1976), pp. 154–63.

Was capital pushed or pulled overseas? Judging by the Australian experience in the 1880s, capital from Britain was first pulled in to service the huge infrastructural boom of that decade for which home savings were inadequate. The same phenomenon occurred during the Canadian wheat boom after 1900: the boom began by using domestic resources but had to be supplemented by large drafts of British capital as it increased in intensity. However, at its peak the Australian boom of the 1880s attracted 'over-investment' financed by 'overly abundant' British savings; and a similar phenomenon took place in Canada before the First World War. A more pervasive 'push' factor was the steady decline in returns on safe British investments like government paper and railways which forced gentlemanly investors to look abroad after 1870.[74]

Flows of capital and of emigrants to the white settled Empire were closely correlated. In the Canadian boom after 1900, for example, the domestic economy soon ran up against shortages of both labour and capital, which were then attracted from abroad by higher returns.[75] The movements of factors of production also exhibited the so-called 'long swing', cycles of around twenty to twenty-five years from peak to peak. In Britain there were three huge foreign investment booms, accompanied by large outflows of emigrants, in the early 1870s, the late 1880s, and 1906–14, with corresponding downswings in the late 1870s and 1890s, when home investment replaced foreign and migrant flows fell to low levels.[76] Within the Empire the long swing was most evident in Australia, where the huge influx of population in the gold rush of the 1850s was 'echoed' in the early 1880s, triggering an investment boom which pulled in capital and labour from Britain and which set up a further echo in the upswing of 1910–14.[77] Similar long swings can be detected in Canadian growth. But the effects of the long swing in the Empire were somewhat blurred by British investors' tendency to shift funds there when other overseas markets failed them, as in the late 1870s.[78]

Assuming a 5 per cent average return on investments,[79] Imperial capital assets probably realized about £75m in return income for Britain in 1913. This 'invisible' income from investments was supplemented by other sources, notably shipping which was dominated by British firms, and by trade credits, insurance, and other

[74] Michael Edelstein, *Overseas Investment in the Age of High Imperialism: The United Kingdom, 1850–1914*, (London, 1982), chaps. 11 and 12.

[75] John Archibald Stovel, *Canada in the World Economy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), pp. 104–24.

[76] Cottrell, *British Overseas Investment in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 35–40, 57–65.

[77] A. C. Kelley, 'Demographic Growth and Economic Change in Australia, 1861–1911', *Explorations in Entrepreneurial History*, V (1967–68), pp. 207–77.

[78] Saul, *British Overseas Trade*, pp. 112–24.

[79] Imlah, *Economic Elements in the Pax Britannica*, p. 180.

services financed in the City of London and through the medium of sterling. Assuming that half of Britain's earnings in 'business services' came from Imperial trade, say £60m, then total invisible earnings from the Empire were around £135m in 1913. Taking into account a small surplus on the balance of trade, Britain thus had a huge balance-of-payments surplus with the Empire. This surplus played an important role in maintaining the viability of the system of multilateral trade and payments which emerged out of a complex of smaller trade groupings after 1870, with Britain at its centre and sterling as its monetary dynamic. In effect, Britain paid its growing debts in Europe and America with credits earned in the newly settled and underdeveloped world, a large part of which was within the Imperial domain. India's role in this complex web of transactions has been particularly noted, as has that of the Malay states and Australia: but, especially when invisible income is included, most parts of the Empire made some contribution.[80]

Throughout the 'long nineteenth century', Empire played a role in British international economic affairs which was far too big to ignore but never big enough to dominate either events or policy. The globalization of British trade and factor movements shattered the old colonial system inherited from previous centuries; it also stifled the possibility of replacing it with a new one after 1880, even though Britain's industrial leadership was now under threat. By then, recognition of the 'kith and kin' factor in the Dominions, and of the effects of political control in India and the dependencies, had convinced some ardent imperialists that Britain could meet the growing competition of Europe by abandoning free trade and creating a protectionist regime to encourage greater trade with the Empire and to induce more British migrants and capital to stay Imperial. However, the number and the diversity of the interests dependent on free trade after 1850 made any fundamental change in economic policy implausible before 1914. A new Imperial policy would only have been acceptable if the enthusiasts could have shown that the Empire connection was capable of far outstripping the foreign in importance. But this could only have happened if, collectively, the white settlements had been able to emulate the United States in population and wealth, and this was never more than a dream.[81] It is also arguable, with a certain degree of hindsight, that the stability of the international financial system rested upon Britain's continued loyalty to free trade before 1914. Sterling was the key currency of the whole of the international system, not merely the Imperial section, and making sterling universally available was essential to its success: free trade was a means of ensuring

    [80] Saul, *British Overseas Trade*, chap. 3.
    [81] See below, pp. 362–67; Peter J. Cain, 'The Economic Philosophy of Constructive Imperialism', in Cornelia Navari, ed., *British Politics and the Spirit of the Age: Political Concepts in Action* (Keele, 1996).

that debtors could always have access to the currency by selling in the British market.[82] However, while maintaining free trade, Britain might have improved its trading position by favouring the emergent Dominions in other ways. Given that white settlers were such good customers, it might have paid Britain to encourage more of its capital and labour to migrate to the colonies and to build up their population and wealth. Such was the hold of free-trade sentiment that this was never likely to appear on the political agenda. Despite widespread fears of 'over-population', unemployment, and social unrest in the late nineteenth century, governments of all shades of opinion refused to assist migration to the colonies;[83] and, apart from the minor diversions caused by the Colonial Stock Act and by Chamberlain's ability, when Colonial Secretary between 1895 and 1902, to wring a small amount out of the Treasury for Imperial development projects, interference with the capital market was avoided.[84]

The global nature of Britain's international relations and her centrality in the world's economic system provided the context in which the Empire, as an economic entity, was understood in this period. The cosmopolitan reach of her industry, commerce, and finance was also one of the fundamental reasons why the terms 'empire' and 'imperialism' were not necessarily synonymous in Britain between 1790 and 1914. Whether Britain added to her 'formal' Empire an 'informal' Empire of dominance exerted through economic strength is a matter of great dispute: but the dispute undoubtedly has its origins in the fact that the extent of British economic influence in the world in the nineteenth century always ranged far beyond the boundaries of sovereign control.

[82] Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism*, pp. 177–78; Saul, *British Overseas Trade*, pp. 220–21.
[83] Howard LeRoy Malchow, *Population Pressures: Emigration and Government in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Palo Alto, Calif., 1979), esp. chaps. 8 and 9.
[84] For Chamberlain see below, chap. by E. H. H. Green.

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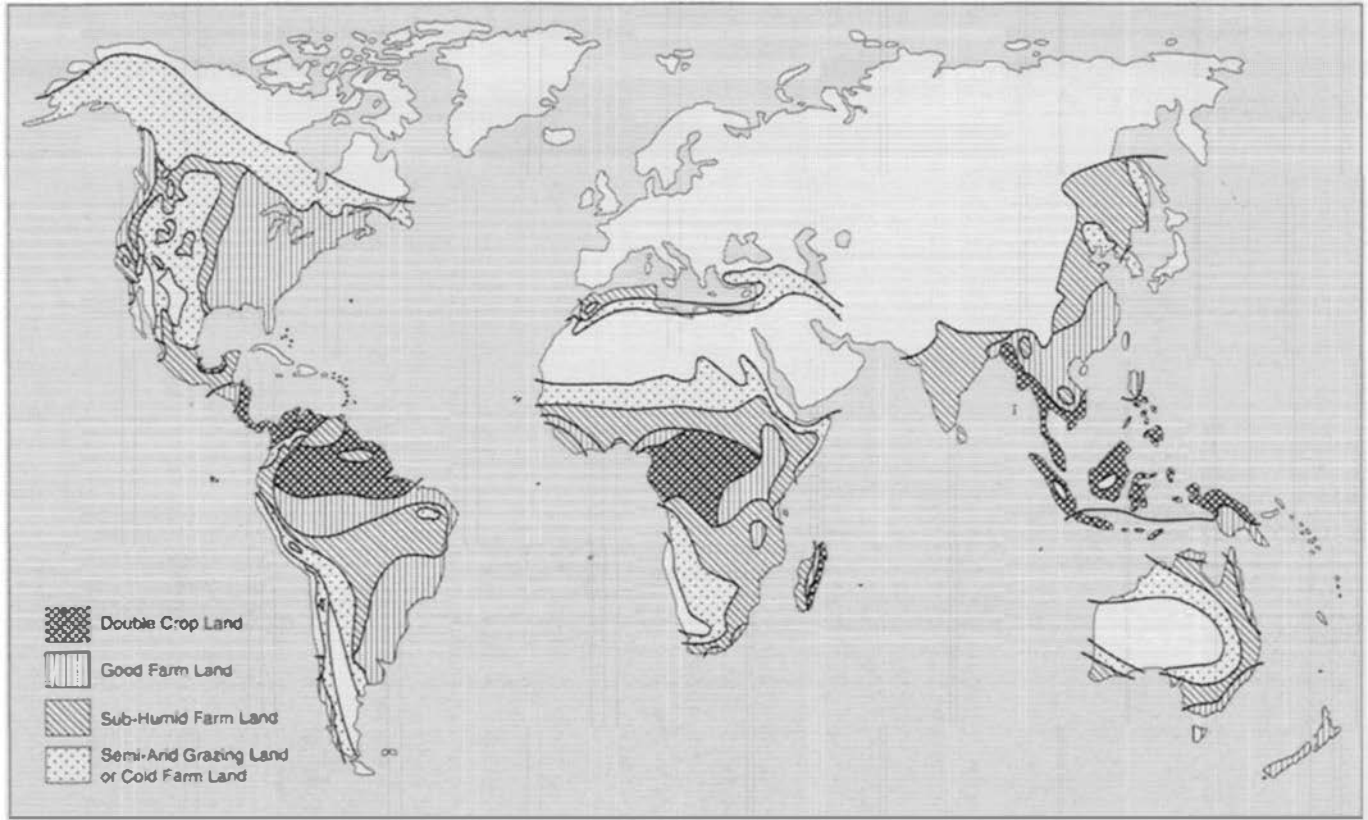
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3

Economics and Empire: The Periphery and the Imperial Economy

B. R. TOMLINSON

The terms 'core' and 'periphery' are widely, if rather loosely, used in the literature on the economic history of the Empire in the nineteenth century to distinguish the industrial economies of Europe, notably Britain, from the primary producing economies of other continents.[1] Such terms demonstrate the interdependence between the manufacture of industrial goods in Europe and the supply of food and raw materials from other parts of the world that became the dominant feature of the global economic system over the course of the nineteenth century. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Europe traded extensively with Asia, Africa, the Americas, and the Caribbean, exchanging manufactures and metals for exotic foodstuffs, textiles, slaves, and precious metals. By the 1870s, with a mature manufacturing economy established in Britain, with industrialization proceeding rapidly elsewhere in Europe and North America, the needs of the core economies changed fundamentally, and a new wave of expansion took place in the periphery as a result. Industrial Europe required new sources of staple foodstuffs for its urban populations and raw materials for its factories. Over the next forty years the process of economic change became the most intense that the world had known. To fuel this expansion, Europe's relations with overseas economies altered significantly, stimulating rapid territorial expansion and economic growth in those regions where European settlers, capital, and commodities could most easily be employed. The result was to change the physical characteristics of these areas, as well as their economic fortunes and human histories. As one recent survey of environmental history has pointed out, the two 'paramount' reasons for 'the transformation of the earth' in the modern period have been 'the explosive increase of European population and its movement overseas, and the rise of the

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[1] These terms also usually imply some imbalance in political and economic structures, with the 'core' being able to exert both economic and political power over the periphery. For these reasons, as well as because of their unusual economic structures, the United States and Japan straddle these categories during the period.

Legend:
- Double Crop Land
- Good Farm Land
- Sub-Humid Farm Land
- Semi-Arid Grazing Land or Cold Farm Land

MAP 3.1. World Climatic Regions and European Settlement

modern capitalist economy and its evolution into industrialism'.[2] Both these phenomena peaked during the second half of the nineteenth century, and both were closely linked to British Imperial expansion in the periphery.

Britain—the pre-eminent industrial and Imperial economy of the age—obtained her supplies of food and raw materials globally in the nineteenth century. In the periphery her suppliers can be divided into two broad categories, determined by their suitability for colonization by European organisms, technology, values, and production methods. These were the 'capitalist neo-Europes' of the empty lands of the western and southern hemispheres, and the 'tropical periphery' of Asia, Africa north of the Zambezi, the Caribbean, and much of Central and South America.[3] The neo-Europes were the temperate regions of the New World that European settlers had colonized since the sixteenth century, bringing with them the staple food crops, domestic animals, weeds, pests, and pathogens of Eurasia. These areas came to prominence in the international economy after 1850 as colonization, fuelled by the demand requirements and supply capacities of industrial Europe, imposed an alien ecology and alien patterns of land use in a process of ecological imperialism.[4]

The concept of ecological imperialism points up the intensity of the colonizing experience in the temperate zones of the Americas and Oceania (Australia and New Zealand). Conventional accounts of the economic history of the nineteenth century usually emphasize the autonomous role of the United States, and underplay events in other regions of recent settlement, except for the Cape. It is true that economic and political relations in these latter regions moved along fairly predictable and one-dimensional lines, yet in environmental terms the changes in

[2] Michael Williams, 'The Relations of Environmental History and Historical Geography', *Journal of Historical Geography*, XX (1994), p. 12.

[3] The term 'capitalist neo-Europes' is based on Crosby's concept of 'ecological imperialism': Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900–1900* (Cambridge, 1986) and also draws on Denoon's notion of 'settler capitalism': Donald Denoon, *Settler Capitalism: The Dynamics of Dependent Development in the Southern Hemispheres* (Oxford, 1983). The concept of the 'tropical periphery' is based on the work of Sir Arthur Lewis: see W. Arthur Lewis, *Growth and Fluctuations, 1870–1913* (London, 1978). The notion of a distinctive tropical periphery is also important in analyses of nineteenth-century imperialism such as Ronald Robinson's, see his, 'Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: A Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration', in Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe, eds., *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism* (London, 1972), pp. 117–40.

[4] 'Ecological imperialism' was certainly not 'natural' and was often not easy. European domestic animals thrived best with European plants to eat, but this required a wide range of small but far-reaching adaptations of the local environment—it took more than thirty years to establish adequate numbers of bumble-bees in New Zealand to pollinate the red clover that had been imported to improve the pasture, for example. In the 1880s successfully imported live bumble-bees could be sold in New Zealand for 9s. (45p) each: Bill Clark, 'Shipping Bees to Australia and New Zealand', *Cambridgeshire Bee Keeping Association Newsletter* (Spring, 1994), pp. 11–13.

these areas that followed colonization were more intense and far-reaching than anywhere else in the world. It was the speed and completeness of these changes that made possible both the rapid progress of European colonization, and the pattern of economic activity that resulted from it.

In the tropical periphery, by contrast, similar progress was impeded by an environment hostile to European settlers and technologies, in which dense settlement and ecological adaptation by other races and cultures had already taken place. Problems of Imperial political control and economic development in Asia and Africa gave rise to severe difficulties in the second half of the nineteenth century. Environmental problems that European technology was not able to solve—such as organizing intensive rice cultivation in monsoon Asia, or coping with a particularly vicious disease environment in parts of Africa—shaped the economic and social history of these regions.[5] To establish capitalism in such places required a strong local response that could modify, refine, and adapt European technologies and social relations of production. In the conditions of nineteenth-century imperialism, such a response was rare.[6]

The neo-European region of the nineteenth-century periphery was made up of the United States, British North America (Canada), Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile. These territories all enjoyed mainly temperate climates, and were 'empty' in the sense that the native peoples were ultimately unable to mount an effective resistance to capitalist colonization. The pre-European inhabitants of these lands were not necessarily 'primitive' or ecologically unbalanced. However, they certainly were not capitalist, and they did not, for the most part, employ the arable or pastoral farming techniques of Europeans. The exercise of Imperial power was an important element in the opening up of all of these territories, and force was used against both foreign rivals and recalcitrant natives. The neo-European economies all grew rapidly between 1790 and 1913, all had close ties to Britain during the nineteenth century, and all relied on overseas (largely British) exports of capital, manpower, and enterprise to expand their economies. In return they produced primary produce for export to the industrial countries, especially to Britain which was the industrialized country with the smallest food and raw-material supplying base, and the largest surplus of mobile capital and population. These exports were usually of commodities that were familiar to Europeans, being temperate food and raw material crops that replaced local supplies that had been exhausted or were now inadequate.

[5] For the conservationist response of colonial regimes to dramatic changes caused by economic expansion in many tropical areas by the 1830s, see Richard H. Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens, and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600–1860* (Cambridge, 1995).

[6] Japan is the obvious exception to this generalization, but she was the least colonized of the major Asian economies.

The United States was the most important economy outside Europe throughout the nineteenth century. The American economy was already a special case by the middle of the century, not least because of the rapid and distinctive growth that had resulted from the close links between the cotton-growing areas of the South and the Lancashire cotton industry.[7] With the re-establishment of an effective central political authority after the Civil War (1860–65), the United States could progress to her own manifest destiny of industrialization and overseas expansion, and her national economy broke free from dependence on supply-and-demand factors originating in Europe. As a result, a secondary semi-autonomous 'core' region of industrial capital and labour had developed in North America by the 1880s that provided an independent dynamic for an extended regional specialization within the domestic economy. By 1900, if not before, Canada was being pulled along in the wake of the United States, and relied heavily on inputs of American, as well as British, capital and commodities. The settler colonies of the southern hemisphere, especially South Africa and Australia, underwent some industrialization in processing primary produce and manufacturing consumer goods for domestic consumption, but when sustained growth boosted demand for investment goods and infrastructure, they were dependent on imported capital and machinery.[8] Despite their economic success, all the neo-European economies of the regions of recent settlement relied on London's role as a lender of last resort and a purchaser of distress goods in times of economic difficulty to overcome balance-of-payments and currency crises throughout our period. Thus when, as in 1890, 'Britain caught a cold, the periphery caught pneumonia', and the subsequent domestic recovery in Britain based on repatriated gold caused deep depressions elsewhere, even in the United States.[9]

The classification of Britain's trading partners into neo-European and tropical countries (Tables 3.1 and 3.2) reinforces the point that the process of industrialization tended to increase, in relative terms, the importance of the temperate zones of recent settlement to British external economic activity over the course of the nineteenth century. Table 3.3 demonstrates that British capital was mainly employed in the empty lands of the neo-European periphery in this period, while

[7] Robert O. Keohane, 'Associative American Development, 1776–1860: Economic Growth and Political Disintegration', in John Gerald Ruggie, ed., *The Antinomies of Interdependence: National Welfare and the International Division of Labor* (New York, 1983), pp. 43–90.

[8] For a useful chronological account of the pattern of investment and the business cycle in the neo-European periphery, Michael Edelstein, *Overseas Investment in the Age of High Imperialism: The United Kingdom, 1850–1914* (London, 1982), pp. 288–311.

[9] Brinley Thomas, *Migration and Economic Growth: A Study of Great Britain and the Atlantic Economy*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, 1973), chap. 15, esp. pp. 276–77.

TABLE 3.1. *Pattern of British exports by regions, 1789–1913* (%)

Annual averages	Europe	Neo-Europes	Tropics
1789–90	47	23	30
1797–98	30	31	38
1830–32	40	25	34
1845–47	44	23	33
1856–58	35	29	36
1871–73	46	23	31
1891–93	35	40	25
1911–13	35	41	24

TABLE 3.2. *Pattern of British imports by regions, 1789–1913* (%)

Annual averages	Europe	Neo-Europes	Tropics
1789–90	52	8	40
1797–98	42	8	49
1856–58	35	27	37
1871–73	41	34	26
1891–93	44	35	21
1911–13	41	35	24

Source: Calculated from B. R. Mitchell, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, 1962), Tables 10 and 11.

Notes: Europe includes Turkey. Neo-Europes = United States, British North America, Australasia, Argentina. Tropics = West Indies, Asia, Africa, Central and South America.

most analyses of the global pattern of migration suggest that emigrants from both Europe and Asia mainly went to the neo-European lands, with the United States by far the most-favoured destination.

The economic history of the tropical periphery during the nineteenth century was somewhat different from that of the neo-European colonies of settlement. Britain, like other European countries, had engaged in significant amounts of intercontinental trade in the late eighteenth century, largely from Asia and the Americas. In this period most of her imports consisted of finished consumer goods such as tobacco, furs, spices, sugar, coffee, tea, and manufactured fine textiles. Also important were supplies of precious metals, notably the gold and silver from South America that built up the war-chests of the eighteenth-century powers and provided the remittances to pay for Europe's trade deficit with Asia. Demand for luxury consumer goods rose in the late eighteenth century as a consequence of rising incomes and

TABLE 3.3. *Distribution of capital calls in London, by regions, 1865–1914*

	Total £m	%
Europe	349.7	12
Neo-Europes total	1,630.7	56
United States	679.2	23
Canada	141.8	5
Australia and New Zealand	362.3	12
South Africa	131.9	5
Latin America*	315.5	11
Tropics total	945.5	33
India	239.1	8
Rest of Asia	203.4	7
Rest of Pacific	9.2	1
Rest of Africa	178.3	6
Latin America*	315.5	11
Grand Total	2,925.8	100

Source: Calculated from Lance E. Davis and Robert A. Huttenback with the assistance of Susan Gray Davis, *Mammon and the Pursuit of Empire: The Political Economy of British Imperialism, 1860–1912* (Cambridge, 1986), Tables 2.9A and 2.9B

Notes: *Latin America total not broken down in source. Assigned half to neo-Europes (Argentina, Uruguay, Chile), and half to rest of Latin America and Caribbean. Sub-totals are rounded. Grand total and percentages calculated from unrounded totals.

consumption, and this may have provided a powerful motive for Imperial expansion in the pre-industrial era.[10]

At its peak, in the 'second British Empire' that attempted to centralize control and management of British overseas interests in Africa, Asia, and Oceania between 1780 and 1860, Imperial economic activities in tropical areas had provided a significant bolster to the economic and social power of the landed and business élites of Regency England. However, the extent of economic interdependence between Britain and the extra-European world in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries should not be exaggerated.[11] Such involvement was intense for particular groups of merchants and investors, such as those associated with the

[10] J. R. Ward, 'The Industrial Revolution and British Imperialism, 1750–1850', *Economic History Review* (henceforth *EcHR*), XLVII (1994), pp. 44–65.

[11] C. A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780–1830* (London, 1989). For a summary of the role of Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America in the world trading systems of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Michael Chisholm, 'The Increasing Separation of Production and Consumption', in B. L. Turner II and others, eds., *The Earth as Transformed by Human Action: Global and Regional Changes in the Biosphere over the Past 300 Years* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 87–112; see also in Vol. II chaps. by P. J. Marshall on Asia, J. R. Ward on the Caribbean, Jacob M. Price on the Imperial economy and David Richardson on the slave trade.

East India Company, with the Caribbean sugar economy, or with the American tobacco industry, but overall it was rather narrow in its penetration of both the metropolitan and the peripheral economies. The economic rationale of Britain's formal and informal Empire in the eighteenth century had been based heavily around the exploitation of tropical resources of goods that could not be found in Europe—largely luxury finished consumer goods such as sugar (West Indies and Indonesia), cotton manufactures (India), and silk and tea (China). In some areas these goods were produced directly by European investment and enterprise using local or imported labour—as in the sugar plantations of the Caribbean, for example—and in others European officials and merchants tried to command supplies from local artisans and peasants through control of access to land, credit, and trading networks. In much of Asia, however, Britain and other European powers secured their supplies of local goods, and the profits of their Imperial expansion, by 'service' activities—especially by playing an intermediate role in finance, transportation, and the political protection of inter-regional trade.

The industrialization of the British metropolitan economy built up direct links with tropical economies in the periphery, through the expansion of both plantations and peasant production backed up by imported capital and infrastructure, that were much stronger and more wide-ranging than anything that had gone before. The most important products imported from the tropics after 1860 were essential raw-material inputs into the industrialization process (rubber, vegetable oils, minerals), or formerly exotic foods (sugar, cocoa, tea) that had now become staples. With the exception of the export of cotton textiles to India, the flows of goods and capital from the core to the tropics went into roughly the same activities as in the neo-Europes—the supply of capital and equipment to facilitate the production of raw materials and minerals for export, chiefly through the construction of railways and other areas of infrastructure.

As in the neo-Europes, economic expansion in the tropics in the nineteenth century was chiefly based on movement of capital, goods, and people, and the opening up of frontier regions such as Assam, the outer islands of Indonesia, and eventually the Kenyan highlands. Japan, the wealthiest, most inventive, and most productive Asian economy at the end of the eighteenth century, was the only national economy outside the neo-European periphery that had emerged significantly out of a dependent status by 1913.[12] Elsewhere in Asia some regional specialization of economic activity took place, supplying non-European labour and food-grains (rice) to food- and labour-deficit areas producing industrial raw materials for export to Europe. The regional economy of South, East, and South-

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[12] Yet even she was the heaviest tropical borrower of British capital in the decade before the First World War.

East Asia centred on Malaysian rubber, Burmese and Thai rice, and Chinese and India capital and labour is a good example of this.[13]

One crucial difference in the tropics was that the new economic activities fostered by colonialism were dependent on supplies of local labour, not immigrants of European stock. Since Asian and African peasants expected standards of living and real wages that were much lower than those of European farmers and settlers, and the productivity of labour, land, and capital was lower in the tropics than in temperate zones, pressures to raise rates of economic growth and development were less intense in the tropics than in the neo-Europes. Arguably, these differences determined the pattern of tropical development until well into the twentieth century.[14]

By the mid-nineteenth century British investors, businessmen, and officials were trying to bolster economic activity in the tropics that would be complementary to that of the metropolis. Over the course of the nineteenth century as a whole, about half of Europe's imports from the tropics consisted of food products, and less than one-third of industrial raw materials.[15] In general, Britain and the other European powers set out to create a neo-European social, ecological, and economic setting in their tropical possessions, based on private property rights in land, settled agriculture, and primary product extraction, to encourage the manufacture and export of goods produced under the influence of capitalism. This, it was thought, would make populous local societies easier to rule, and would enable European powers to secure the economic rewards they sought from imperialism. However, the control of Europe-centred capitalists over the local economies in the tropics was never as complete as it was in the neo-Europes. There were few European settlers in the tropics. Agricultural production there was chiefly organized by local peasants, with some contribution from European planters—but these latter created a society very different from the settler-capitalism of the temperate zones. It remains true that the process of nineteenth-century economic expansion saw industrial capitalism engulf other systems of production and exchange in the tropical periphery, just as much as in the neo-Europes. However, the impact of this process was less intense in the tropics than in the regions of recent settlement,

[13] A brilliant sketch of this regional economy is given in Christopher J. Baker, 'Economic Reorganization and the Slump in South and Southeast Asia', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, XXIII (1981), pp. 324–46.

[14] One estimate is that the average yield per acre of grain in the tropics was 700 pounds per acre, as against 1,600 pounds per acre in Britain. To attract European immigrants the neo-Europes had to offer a standard of living (based on real wages or returns to agriculture) higher than that of the European urban working class; in the tropics, by contrast, expanding agricultural regions had only to offer a standard of living higher than that enjoyed by the most deprived of Indian or Chinese peasants. Lewis: *Growth and Fluctuations*, pp. 188–93.

[15] Paul Bairoch, *Economics and World History: Myths and Paradoxes* (London, 1993), chap. 5.

largely because there was much more resistance to be overcome, and because their environment was less responsive to European technology.

The British Empire, formal and informal, was never a hermetically sealed economic system. Therefore we cannot measure the extension of the British economy overseas simply by investigating the progress of production, trade, and investment in those territories which had become part of the formal Empire by 1913. Throughout the nineteenth century Britain was the world's richest single consumer market for food and raw materials. Chief among her imports were food-grains, especially wheat, other foodstuffs such as meat and dairy produce, animal and vegetable fats, sweets and stimulants, and industrial raw materials, notably fibres such as cotton, wool, and jute, as well as rubber, timber, hides and skins, some metal ores and specie. Former luxuries such as tea and sugar became common items of diet following the growth of urbanization and increase in working-class incomes in the last third of the nineteenth century, while wheat, the 'superior' food-grain of peasant agriculture, became the staple cereal of mass consumption.[16] In the 1870s such primary produce made up three-quarters of Britain's imports by value; although this proportion fell slightly thereafter, it was still about two-thirds in 1913.[17]

While Britain was thus a major driving force in expanding the international economy over the course of the nineteenth century, she was not alone in that role. The economic forces that determined expansion in territories under London's political control were equally important elsewhere in the world. Continental European economies supplied some of the men, money, and markets that were needed to transform economic relations in North and South America, Asia, and Africa during this period, as did some of the colonists and indigenous peoples of the periphery themselves. For Europe as a whole, the trade deficit in primary produce (Europe's share of world imports minus her share of world exports) was substantial in the 1870s, and diminished only slightly over the next forty years (Table 3.4). In the same period, the share of world exports of primary produce supplied from the peripheral economies outside the European core remained roughly constant. For these reasons, the world economy of the late nineteenth century became a system for the multilateral exchange of goods, services, and

[16]   Average weekly per capita consumption of sugar increased from 0.7 pounds in 1860 to 1.2 pounds in 1880, and remained at about that level until 1913; consumption of tea increased from 0.8 ounces in 1860 to 1.4 ounces in 1880, and then rose again to 2.1 ounces by 1913; consumption of wheat was between 6.2 pounds and 6.6 pounds over the period: Mary MacKinnon, 'Living Standards, 1870–1914' in Roderick Floud and Donald McCloskey, eds., *The Economic History of Britain Since 1700*, Vol. II *1860–1939*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, 1994), Table 11.6.

[17]   Avner Offer, *The First World War: An Agrarian Interpretation* (Oxford, 1989), Table 6.1.

TABLE 3.4. *Trade in primary products: regional shares, 1876–1913*

Region	1876–1895		1896–1900		1913	
	Imports %	Exports %	Imports %	Exports %	Imports %	Exports %
UK and Ireland	29.7	3.1	25.8	3.9	19.0	6.2
NW Europe*	39.3	22.6	45.0	27.6	43.1	25.2
Other Europe	11.2	20.2	10.4	18.1	12.3	14.7
USA and Canada	7.2	16.1	8.5	18.7	11.3	17.3
Rest of World	12.6	38.0	10.3	31.7	14.3	36.6

Source: A. G. Kenwood and A. L. Lougheed, *The Growth of the International Economy, 1820–1990*, 3rd edn. (London, 1992), Table 10a.

Notes: *Includes Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Austria.

capital that included both tropics and temperate zones. The networks that made up this system were not exclusively Imperial ones, and many areas of the world that were not part of any formal empire played a crucial role in them.

The process by which a multilateral balance-of-payments system was established after 1870 is well known: by the closing decades of the century Britain was able to earn payments surpluses with the tropical countries, which she used to meet, in part, her deficits with the rest of Europe and North America. Continental Europe, in turn, used surpluses with Britain to meet deficits with the 'great plains' economies of Canada, Argentina, and Australia, while these economies were in deficit with the United States, which was in turn a net importer from the tropics.[18] Less obvious, but more wide-reaching, were the multilateral flows of factors of production—capital, labour, skills—that enabled most parts of the world to take part in the expansion of the international economy after 1870. While the industrialized core supplied emigrants, capital, and capital goods to the periphery in return for primary produce and investment income, some areas of the periphery specialized in exports of food, raw materials, and surplus labour to each other as well as to the core. By this means some of the poorest, most land-scarce regions of the world, such as the coastal strip of south-eastern India and some parts of southern China, were able to import food by exporting labour to the new rice-growing areas and the mines and plantations of South-East Asia, which supplied remittances that enabled those left behind to supplement their income. Migration by 'target earners' or 'birds of passage', who intended to return home eventually, and whose earnings were remitted to support others, represented an important element in the labour market of the Atlantic economy, particularly among the

[18] S. B. Saul, *Studies in British Overseas Trade, 1870–1914* (Liverpool, 1960), chap. 3.

increasing numbers of migrants from southern Europe who crossed to North and South America in the late nineteenth century.[19]

The global reach of European capitalism, spearheaded by the expansive forces in the British economy in the mid- and late nineteenth century, is unquestioned. But is it much harder to identify and measure the nature and extent of the economic expansion that resulted from this process in the non-European periphery. Conventional assessments of national economic growth in the nineteenth century are heavily dependent on indicators of the spread of modern industrial capitalism such as railway mileage, coal production and consumption, and foreign trade.[20] However, such indicators are of limited use in measuring expansion in the periphery, since they are not appropriate for non-capitalist, non-industrial economies. They measure only one type of economic growth, and are based on assumptions about production and exchange not necessarily appropriate for measuring the performance of the systems in many parts of the world. In the nineteenth century colonial economies were usually imposed on other economic systems which had proved their effectiveness in meeting the needs of the local inhabitants, but which were not based on the principles and practices of industrial or financial capitalism.

To the extent that economic growth in tropical economies was fuelled by the escalating demand for food and raw materials from Britain and the rest of the industrial core, the standard indicators of the progress of trade, investment, migration, and infrastructure have some use. One recent summary has suggested that, with the volume of world trade in tropical exports growing at 3.6 per cent per year from 1883 to 1913, exports were the key to initiating 'intensive growth' even for colonial territories. According to these calculations, twenty-three non-European developing countries passed a decisive turning-point on the road to intensive growth, of whom twenty-one would be tropical countries by our definition.[21]

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[19] On Asian migration, Lewis, *Growth and Fluctuations*, pp. 181–88 and Baker, 'Economic Reorganization' *passim*; on the Atlantic economy, Dudley Baines, 'European Emigration, 1815–1930: Looking at the Emigration Decision Again', *EcHR* XLVII, 3 (1994), pp. 525–44.

[20] S. Kuznets, *Economic Growth and Structure* (London, 1965) and *Economic Growth of Nations* (Cambridge Mass., 1971). For data based on more recent research, Angus Maddison, *Phases of Capitalist Development* (Oxford, 1982).

[21] Lloyd G. Reynolds, *Economic Growth in the Third World, 1850–1980: An Introduction* (New Haven, 1985), pp. 31–35. The list of developing countries, with the approximate date of their turning points, is as follows: Chile (1840); Malaysia, Thailand (1850); Argentina (1860); Burma (1870); Mexico (1876); Algeria, Brazil, Japan, Peru, Sri Lanka (1880); Colombia (1885); Nigeria (1890); Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Taiwan (1895); Cuba, Philippines, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe (1900); Korea (1910). Reynolds follows Kuznets in distinguishing 'extensive' growth, in which population and output are growing at roughly the same rate, from 'intensive' growth, in which there is a rising trend of per capita output caused by increased productivity. For a rather different picture see W. Arthur Lewis, ed., *Tropical*

However, such optimistic assessments of tropical development before 1914 rest on a number of implausible assumptions. The linkages between foreign trade in primary produce and wage-levels and productivity elsewhere in such economies were often weak, with enclaves emerging to serve the export market that had little impact on the bulk of producers.[22]

It is therefore hardly surprising that rates of growth of output, productivity, and welfare were much lower in the tropics than in the regions of recent settlement.[23] The existence of a large pool of underemployed labour in tropical agriculture held down wage levels on plantations and in mines, while few of the profits of such operations were invested in peasant agriculture. Where peasant crops were exported directly, skewed institutions and interlinked markets often increased the risks and limited the rewards that small producers obtained from the system. Furthermore, export-led agricultural expansion in Asia and Africa often caused major political upheavals and exacerbated structural problems of employment and resource allocation, associated especially with de-industrialization of hand-powered textile manufacturing, and the clearance of forests for arable cultivation. The obvious example here is that of colonial South Asia, where the effect of British colonial control in the first half of the nineteenth century was to create a peasant-based, arable rural economy in place of a much more fluid economic system based around local states, armies, and centres of handicraft manufacture. During this process of economic 'expansion', settled agriculture was also imposed on forest areas and systems of common grazing rights, disrupting non-arable patterns of rural economic and social activity.[24]

The revolution in commodity demand which transformed the global economy in the nineteenth century required massive changes in land use throughout the world, and therefore calculating such changes by mapping the agricultural frontier is probably the best way to measure the process of economic expansion in the non-European periphery taken as a whole.[25] The expansion of agricultural settlement was undoubtedly the most important feature of this, since even mineral

Development, 1880–1913 (London, 1970), and J. R. Hanson, *Trade in Transition: Exports from the Third World, 1840–1900* (New York, 1980).

[22] The Japanese economy was an exception. S. Sugiyama, *Japan's Industrialization in the World Economy, 1859–1899* (London, 1988), chap. 4.

[23] In these regions, too, the development of neo-European economic systems had severely negative effects on many of the indigenous peoples.

[24] B. R. Tomlinson, *The Economy of Modern India, 1860–1970*, New Cambridge History of India, III. 3 (Cambridge, 1993), chap. 2 *passim*. On the impact of Imperial expansion on Indian forests in the nineteenth century, see Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha, *This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India* (Delhi, 1992) chaps. 4 and 5.

[25] This argument is based on John F. Richards, 'Land Transformation', in Turner and others, eds., *Earth Transformed*, pp. 163–78.

exploitation often depended o n prior land clearance for use as pasture o r arable.[26]
This expansion took many different forms in different parts of the world, from the
plantations of colonial Asia to the ranching systems of the New World, to
smallholder or peasant family farms in every continent that provided the basic
unit of grain production. The data available are unreliable, but some informed
guesses can be made. One estimate (Table 3.5) suggests that the world's croplands
increased by 376 million hectares between 1850 and 1920, a rise of 70 per cent in
seven decades. An alternative estimate (Table 3.6) involves an even steeper rise,
with the net land area converted into regular cropping increasing by 432.2 million
hectares between 1860 and 1919. Both these tables indicate, as we would expect,
that by far the largest absolute and relative increases in cropped land occurred in
the frontier regions of the periphery that were being opened up by European
enterprise in this period, notably in North America and the Russian steppes, with
some increases also in South America and Australasia. The figures in the second
column of Table 3.6, which shows land converted away from crop use, demon-
strate that there was very little urbanization outside Europe and, to a lesser extent,
North America. These tables also suggest that some expansion of agriculture was
taking place in the tropical regions of Africa and Asia, with a particular spurt in
South-East Asia in the second half of the nineteenth century. Any analysis of
economic expansion on the periphery must incorporate the opening up new lands
to plantation and peasant agriculture in countries such as Burma, Thailand, and
Malaysia, as well as the more usual story about European emigration and colon-
ization in the western and southern hemispheres.[27]

Map 3.1, which shows the classification of the world's climatic regions and
ecological zones as developed by the school of geographical determinists headed
by C. Warren Thornwaite and Ellsworth Huntington, illustrates this analysis of the
process of expansion into the periphery during the nineteenth century.[28] Thorn-
waite's categorization of the world's climatic regions suggested that the world's
ecology could be defined in terms of its suitability for various crops, with 'good
farm land' found only in Europe west of the Urals, central and southern China, the
temperate lands of Latin America, the south-eastern and south-western tips of
Australia, the Cape area of South Africa, the whole of New Zealand, and the

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[26] On links between expanding agricultural frontiers and gold discoveries in Australia, South Africa,
and the American West in the nineteenth century, G. Blainey, 'A Theory of Mineral Discovery: Australia
in the Nineteenth Century', *EcHR*, XXIII (1970), pp. 289–313 and Barry Eichengreen and Ian W. McLean,
'Supply of Gold under the Pre-1914 Gold Standard', *EcHR*, XLVII, 2 (1994), pp. 288–309.

[27] Anne Booth, 'The Economic Development of Southeast Asia: 1870–1985', *Australian Economic
History Review*, XXXI (1991), pp. 20–52.

[28] For a convenient set of maps of this type, Colin Clark, *Population Growth and Land Use* (London,
1967), pp. 144–47, Table IV.6 and Diagram IVA (i)–(iii). For a statement of the determinist argument,
see Ellsworth Huntington, *Mainsprings of Civilization* (New York, 1945).

TABLE 3.5. *Expansion of croplands in world regions, 1700–1920*

Regions	Area in million hectares %						% change	
	1700		1850		1920		1700–1850	1850–1920
Tropical Africa	44	(17)	57	(11)	88	(10)	25.9	54.4
North Africa/Middle East	20	(7)	27	(5)	43	(5)	35.0	59.3
North America	3	(1)	50	(9)	179	(20)	1,566.7	258.0
Latin America	7	(3)	18	(3)	45	(5)	157.1	150.0
China	29	(11)	75	(14)	95	(10)	158.6	26.7
South Asia	53	(20)	71	(13)	98	(11)	34.0	38.0
South-East Asia	4	(2)	7	(1)	21	(2)	75.0	200.0
Europe	67	(25)	132	(25)	147	(16)	97.0	11.4
Russia/USSR	33	(12)	94	(18)	178	(19)	184.8	89.4
Pacific developed countries	5	(2)	6	(1)	19	(2)	20.0	216.7
Total	265	(100)	537	(100)	913	(100)	102.6	70.0

Source: B. L. Turner II and others eds., *The Earth as Transformed by Human Action: Global and Regional Changes in the Biosphere over the Past 300 Years* (Cambridge, 1990), Table 10.1.

TABLE 3.6. *Land converted to regular cropping, 1860–1919* (millions of hectares)

Region	To crops	From crops*
Africa	15.9	—
North America	163.7	2.5
Central America and Caribbean	4.5	—
South America	35.4	—
Middle East	8.0	—
South Asia	49.9	—
South-East Asia	18.2	—
East Asia	15.6	0.2
Europe (excluding Russia)	26.6	6.0
Russia	88.0	—
Australia/New Zealand	15.1	—
TOTAL	440.9	8.7
NET AREA	432.2	

Source: Turner and others, eds., *Earth Transformed*, Table 10.2.

Note: * These estimates are based on the progress of urbanization; it is not possible to estimate what percentage of agricultural land went out of cultivation for other reasons.

regions of the United States and Canada east of the Mississippi and south of the Great Lakes, plus the Pacific coastal strip from California to Vancouver. Thus, the regions outside Eurasia which favoured dense settlement and intensive agriculture were identified as precisely those lands which European settlers, accompanied by emigrants from India and China and by African slaves, had colonized since the sixteenth century. The great migratory flows of the nineteenth century completed

this process, so that by 1914 the only favourable parts of the world that Europeans did not dominate were those parts of Asia that had already been densely populated before 1600.

The definition of 'good farm land' and 'favourable climates' used by that generation of geographical determinists undoubtedly has a strong Western cultural bias, but this only confirms the point of our argument.[29] 'Favourable' areas were defined as those that northern Europeans found most suitable, and in which the main food-plants and domestic animals of Eurasian agriculture could flourish. Such lands as were still 'empty' in 1800—largely those of the Russian steppes, North America, Australasia, southern Africa, and the southern cone of Latin America—provided the most fruitful ground for European economic expansion in the nineteenth century. The estimates we have for the world's population and its geographical distribution in the nineteenth century support this argument. As Table 3.7 makes clear, the increase of human population in these frontier regions between 1750 and 1900 meant that the percentage of the world's population of European descent (those living in North America, Central and South America, Europe, Russia, and Oceania) increased significantly, from around one-quarter to two-fifths of the total between 1750 and 1900. Only 4 per cent of ethnic Europeans were living outside Europe and Siberia around 1800; by 1914 this proportion was more than one-fifth.[30]

TABLE 3.7. *Estimates of world population, 1750 and 1900*

Region	1750		1900	
	millions	% of total	millions	% of total
Rest of Africa	50–80	(8)	90–120	(7)
North Africa/South-western Asia	35–50	(6)	93–100	(7)
North America	2–3	(0.3)	82–83	(6)
Central and Southern America	13–18	(2)	71–78	(5)
China	190–225	(27)	400–450	(30)
South Asia	160–200	(23)	285–295	(20)
Rest of Asia, including Japan	64–85	(10)	154–170	(11)
Europe	120–135	(17)	295–300	(21)
Russia	30–40	(5)	130–135	(9)
Oceania	2	(0.3)	6	(0.4)
TOTAL	735–805	(100)	1,165–1,710	(100)

Source: Turner and others, eds., *Earth Transformed*, Table 6.1.

[29] For summaries of more recent environmental history and its cultural concerns, see the special issue of *Journal of Historical Geography*, XX, 1 (1994) and Robert W. Kates, B. L. Turner II, and William C. Clark, 'The Great Transformation', in Turner and others eds., *Earth Transformed*, pp. 1–17.

[30] Dudley E. Baines, *Emigration from Europe, 1815–1930. Economic History Society, Studies in Economic and Social History* (Basingstoke, 1991), pp. 11–12.

For these reasons, it is easy to see why the economic forces that were unleashed by European expansion in the nineteenth century were so much more successful in transforming the economies and societies of the neo-European regions of recent settlement than they were in developing the tropical countries that had been central to the world economy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The available estimates of product and income in peripheral economies are very tentative, but the data suggest strongly that the inhabitants of North America and Oceania (Australia and New Zealand) enjoyed comparatively high per capita incomes during the last third of the nineteenth century, while the United States and Canada achieved the largest absolute and per capita growth rates in the world after 1870.[31]

Whatever the dimensions and consequences of increases of output of primary produce in the tropical periphery in the second half of the nineteenth century, little structural change had taken place in these economies by 1914. Measurements of industrialization in the periphery in this period are fraught with difficulties, but some orders of magnitude are suggested by Tables 3.8, 3.9, and 3.10. Table 3.8 shows the transformation that occurred in the distribution of world industrial production with the development of mechanization, and the supplanting of handicrafts

TABLE 3.8. *Percentage shares of different countries and regions in total world manufacturing output, 1750–1913*

	1750	1800	1830	1860	1880	1900	1913
Europe	23.1	28.0	34.1	53.6	62.0	63.0	57.8
UK	1.9	4.3	9.5	19.9	22.9	18.5	13.6
Germany	2.9	3.5	3.5	4.9	8.5	13.2	14.8
France	4.0	4.2	5.2	7.9	7.8	6.8	6.1
Italy	2.4	2.5	2.3	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.4
Russia	5.0	5.6	5.6	7.0	7.6	8.8	8.2
Neo-Europes	0.1	0.8	2.4	7.2	14.7	23.6	32.0
United States	0.1	0.8	2.4	7.2	14.7	23.6	32.0
Tropics	76.8	71.2	63.3	39.2	23.3	13.4	10.2
Japan	3.8	3.5	2.8	2.6	2.4	2.4	2.7
China	32.8	33.3	29.8	19.7	12.5	6.2	3.6
India	24.5	19.7	17.6	8.6	2.8	1.7	1.4

Source: Calculated from Turner and others, eds., *Earth Transformed*, Table 4.32.

Note: These figures include handicrafts as well as industrial manufacturing.

[31] It seems unlikely that any economy in Asia or Africa achieved an annual rate of growth exceeding 0.5% (except for Japan, where GDP per capita grew at just under 2% between 1870 and 1913). A. G. Kenwood and A. L. Lougheed, *The Growth of the International Economy, 1820–1990*, 3rd edn. (London, 1992), pp. 19–21. Per capita incomes rose rather more slowly in Australia and New Zealand than in the Americas, but this was because they were already so high in 1860.

TABLE 3.9. *Location of world cotton manufacturing industry, 1913* (%)

Country	Consumption of raw cotton	Location of spindles	Location of looms
Europe	49.7	69.1	66.5
United Kingdom	18.7	38.8	28.7
Germany	8.3	7.8	8.2
Russia	7.8	5.3	7.6
France	4.8	5.2	3.8
Neo-Europes	27.4	22.6	25.9
United States	26.9	22.0	24.8
Tropics	19.2	7.9	7.1
India	8.3	4.2	3.3
Japan	7.6	1.6	0.7
Brazil	2.4	0.8	1.8
Unclassified	3.7	0.4	0.5

TABLE 3.10. *Location of world steel industry, 1913* (%)

Country	Location of output of finished steel products
Europe	60.5
United Kingdom	12.5
Germany	30.3
France	6.0
Russia	5.4
Belgium	3.6
Neo-Europes	39.0
United States	39.0
Tropics	0.5
Japan	0.5

Source: W. S. Woytinsky and E. S. Woytinsky, *World Population and Production: Trends and Outlook* (New York, 1953), pp. 1,065–68 and Table 471.

as the dominant mode of manufacture. Table 3.9 confirms that while cotton textile manufacture was diffused somewhat through the tropics by 1913 (although not beyond the United States in the neo-European areas), no economy outside Europe, with the exception of the United States, had yet developed a steel industry significant in global terms.

Over the course of the nineteenth century a broadly based international economic system was created, based around the social, technical, intellectual, and moral structures generated in the core areas of European capitalism. The whole world

was opened up to western science and classificatory systems, which led the search for products to consume and spread capitalist concepts of utility worldwide, with arable land-systems being imposed on hunter-gatherers, notions of private property supplanting community entitlements, and law replacing custom. The imposition of control over territory—the establishment of 'territoriality' that facilitated the extraction and consumption of commodities in which Imperial economic expansion played a key role—was part of this process.[32] Economic imperialism may be defined as the use of power to determine relations between actors who are bound together mainly by political or economic institutions that have been imposed from outside, and who lack a common, internally generated sense of moral or cultural solidarity. The result may be to divert the economic choice of local people away from their perceived self-interest in a process of informal imperialism. Alternatively, by the exercise of formal control it may determine the economic institutions and policy of a colony, securing the interests of the metropolis, or providing favourable access to public goods for particular groups within local society who have an affinity with the Imperial power, such as settlers, expatriate businessmen and colonial officials, and their indigenous allies. The effect of such actions within the subordinate or colonized economy makes it easier to extract resources without providing payment for them in the form of social investment. The opportunity to do this is often given to favoured groups of nationals and outsiders, selected on the basis of their ethnic composition or political significance rather than their social need or economic potential.

The expansion of the British Imperial economy during the course of the nineteenth century illustrates the relationship between power structures and economic relationships in a number of important ways. Overall, it was no part of Britain's Empire but the United States which was the most important destination for European migrants and capital in this period, although her own development remained less dependent on foreign trade and international capital flows than most. Within the territories linked to London by political ties, the regions of recent settlement were the most rapidly growing and most important markets for trade, capital, and migrants, and their role increased steadily as Europe's need for food and raw material imports to fuel the process of industrialization intensified after 1870. By contrast, the economies of Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America played a relatively less important role in the Imperial enterprise. India and, to a lesser extent, China, Japan, and some parts of South-East Asia were the only major

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[32] For the concept of 'territoriality' and its importance to the formation of political and social concepts of space in the modern world, Robert David Sack, *Conception of Space in Social Thought: A Geographical Perspective* (London, 1980), p. 167. For the way such concepts have been used by political geographers, see Peter J. Taylor, *Political Geography: World-Economy, Nation State and Locality* (London, 1985), esp. chap. 4.

regions of the world other than those settled by Europeans that became heavily involved in the global system of industrial capitalism between 1860 and 1913. India's central place in the international economy was largely determined by her intense bilateral economic relationship with Britain, based on her capacity to import Lancashire cotton goods and other British manufactures, service heavy debts for civil and military expenditure, and supply European markets for tea, jute, cotton, wheat, and other primary products. The broader regional economy that developed to link parts of South, South-East, and East Asia together in the exchange of labour, capital, raw materials, and industrial goods, and that led to the opening up of new land for plantations, peasant agriculture, and mining, was also significantly dependent on the export of industrial raw materials to the West.[33]

The economic expansion of the periphery in the nineteenth-century Imperial system was largely driven by the resource needs of European industrial economies. Such resources were secured, in large part, by the export of crucial factors of production from the European core itself. Great Britain, especially Ireland and Scotland, was a major supplier of emigrants from the 1840s onwards, mostly to the United States, with smaller numbers in most decades bound for Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Capital exports from London financed much of the development of infrastructure in the regions of recent settlement, and firms based in London were also heavily involved in mining and other extractive processes in many parts of the periphery. British investors supplied a large share of the funds used to build houses, docks, and storage facilities, to buy machinery and equipment, and to develop transport networks (predominantly railways). In theory, peripheral economic expansion could have consisted of British investors buying equipment from British manufacturers to enable British migrants to grow crops and to extract primary produce to ship back to supply the British factories and their workforce. In practice, there were various leaks from this closed model, but it is true that, up to the 1880s at any rate, much of the supply of factors of production, as well as much of the demand for the goods produced in the peripheral economies, came from the industrial core and especially from Britain.

Since economic expansion in the periphery relied heavily on a narrow range of inputs from the core, variations in rates of growth can in part be explained by the particular technical and ecological contexts of different regions. The fertile and mineral-rich areas of the Americas and Oceania were especially suited to economic expansion under nineteenth-century conditions:

Apart from peoples' willingness and ability to move to these new lands, the key factors in opening them up included an increased knowledge of their natural resources—land,

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[33] For the business network that underpinned this regional economy, Rajeswary Ampalavanar Brown, *Capital and Entrepreneurship in South-East Asia* (London, 1994).

minerals, climate, and so on—and their economic accessibility, which largely depended on the availability of cheap and adequate transport. Also important was a sufficiency of capital to clear and work the land and exploit its mineral wealth. In all respects the Americas and Oceania were particularly fortunate, for they possessed a variety of natural resources, which, for the most part, were easily accessible and capable of development by known techniques requiring moderate amounts of capital. In Asia and tropical Africa, on the other hand, the opening up of new lands and the development of new sources of raw material was a much slower process than elsewhere. Climatic and topographical difficulties, inadequate knowledge, and institutional resistance to change provided the main obstacles to development in these regions.[34]

In general, the economies of Asia, Africa, and much of Latin America required very substantial inputs of investment to overcome institutional inadequacies and market imperfections—much larger than the core economies of nineteenth-century Europe could or would provide.

The fact that the industrial capitalism of western Europe provided the chief stimulus to the spread of international and inter-regional economic exchange during the second half of the nineteenth century does not mean that large areas of Asia, Africa, and Latin America had no economic history of their own. The local reaction and response to capitalist intrusion was vitally important in determining the eventual outcome of economic expansion in different parts of the periphery, and can be categorized in a similar way. While European emigrants to the western and southern hemispheres 'came to the new lands with "capitalism in their bones"',[35] the indigenous social, political, and economic systems of the tropical periphery could not adapt so easily to the requirements of industrial capitalism, especially where this was bundled up with the exercise of formal or informal imperialism, as for example in West Africa, and Egypt. Only in Meiji Japan were internal conditions favourable to rapid economic expansion and structural change, resulting in the establishment of a self-sustaining growth process reinforced by political independence.[36]

Two centuries after 1790 the most dynamic forces in the global economy are once again outside Europe and its hinterland in the New World, as several national economies in East and South-East Asia have followed Japan into rapid expansion with a global reach coupled to the growth policies of a 'developmental state'. The

[34] Kenwood and Lougheed, *Growth of the International Economy*, pp. 18–19.

[35] Paul Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth* (London, 1957), p. 273; Kenwood and Lougheed, *Growth of the International Economy*, pp. 18–19.

[36] On Japanese economic development in this period, P. Francks, *Japanese Economic Development: Theory and Practice* (London, 1992) and R. Minami, *The Economic Development of Japan: A Quantitative Study* (Basingstoke, 1986). Even here there was considerable political upheaval as a result of capitalist development, both before and after the Meiji Restoration of 1868.

pattern of international economic growth and integration established in the world before mechanized industrialization has begun to reassert itself, so that the distorting effect caused by the easy spread of industrial capitalism from Europe to the neo-European lands can be seen more clearly. In this sense, the nineteenth century (which would have to be extended to about 1950) was an exception to the normal balance of forces between European and non-European economies in the world. Today it is Asian capitalism, rather than that of industrial Europe and North America, that shows the developing countries of the world their future, and that points up the limitations of the economic expansion outside Europe wrought by nineteenth-century imperialism.

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4

British Migration and the Peopling of the Empire

MARJORY HARPER

'British emigrants do not as a body care whether they go to lands under or not under British rule, and cross the seas . . . at the prompting not of sentiment but of interest.'[1]

> If you leave the gloom of London and you seek a glowing land,
> Where all except the flag is strange and new,
> There's a bronzed and stalwart fellow who will grip you by the hand,
> And greet you with a welcome warm and true;
> For he's your younger brother, the one you sent away,
> Because there wasn't room for him at home;
> And now he's quite contented, and he's glad he didn't stay,
> And he's building Britain's greatness o'er the foam.[2]

The disparity between dismissive views of the relationship between emigration and Empire and portrayals of British migrants' umbilical attachment to their flag is one of many paradoxes in the complex mosaic of migration. Those who sponsored emigration not only walked the tightrope of promoting Imperial colonization while discouraging emigration to foreign destinations, notably the United States of America; they also wrestled with contradictory accusations, emanating from centre and periphery respectively, that they were stripping Britain of the brain and sinew of its population yet filling the colonies with paupers, social misfits, and political malcontents. Competing and overlapping theories and schemes of migration proliferated as new destinations were opened up, as British philanthropists and speculators filled the vacuum created by Colonial Office indecision and non-intervention, and as settler colonies acquired increasing control of their own immigration policies. But migration was much more than a subject of impersonal political debate for the 22.6 million individuals who left the British Isles between 1815 and 1914. Their life-changing decisions were shaped perhaps less by governments' and emigration societies' policies than by local

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[1] Charles Dilke, *Problems of Greater Britain*, 2 vols. (London, 1890), I, p. 26.
[2] 'The Younger Son', in *Collected Verse of Robert Service*, 2 vols. (London, 1960), I, p. 70.

circumstances and the private inducements they received from family, friends, and community through multiple regional networks. Nineteenth-century migration was thus the product of an extremely complex web of influences, which both created a restless, rootless population and also provided an outlet for it in an expanding world within and beyond the British Empire.

Emigration has been a subject of public and political debate since at least the mid-eighteenth century. Opposition then centred on the damaging repercussions for the nation's prosperity and security of depleting its economic and military manpower, particularly from the Scottish Highlands and Ireland, which were losing their most industrious, rather than their surplus, population across the Atlantic. By 1815, however, popular ideas of mercantilism were giving way to those of Malthusianism, as a rapidly rising population, reinforced by a tide of demobilized soldiers, threatened to create massive unemployment, disrupt poor relief, and provoke social conflict. Migration therefore came to be perceived in seventeenth-century terms, not as a threat but a safety valve which—if adequate state funding was forthcoming—would rid Britain of a redundant and potentially dangerous element in its population. Malthusian ideas remained in vogue until economic revival in the 1830s prompted a more positive attitude towards Empire settlement, the focus shifting from domestic problems to the need for systematic colonization of Britain's possessions. Edward Gibbon Wakefield, leading advocate of the new policy, vehemently opposed 'shovelling out the paupers', and the National Colonization Society, founded in 1830 to promote his views, devised a scheme whereby revenue from land sales in the Antipodean colonies would be used by those colonies to finance the passages of eligible settlers. For three decades Wakefield's theories influenced official attitudes towards Empire settlement without compromising the state's non-interventionist stance on emigration, but economic depression again in the 1870s brought renewed lobbying from groups which claimed that state-funded emigration would solve immediately the twin problems of overpopulation in Britain and labour shortage in the colonies. Although it was 1922 before the Empire Settlement Act reached the statute book, the combination of organized lobbying with growing concern for Imperial unity and opportunity ensured that the emigration debate remained as vibrant at the end of the nineteenth century as at its beginning.

Although particular migration policies were dominant at different periods, these were never unanimously endorsed, and disagreements continued to stimulate debate. Mercantilist concern at the 'epidemic desire of wandering'[3] in the late eighteenth century was fuelled by the successful recruitment campaigns of a

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[3] Samuel Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, ed. R. W. Chapman (Oxford, 1924), p. 87.

growing number of emigration agents, and by the British government's reluctance to condemn Imperial emigration wholeheartedly after losing the thirteen colonies, as it began to see some virtue in bolstering its vulnerable northern frontier against American aggrandizement. Malthusian policies were also criticized as expensive, ineffective, or from a different perspective, negative responses to Britain's socio-economic problems.[4] Colonial accusations of emigrants' unsuitability, and their refusal to accept Britain's unwanted population, became more strident with the growth of self-government and when Malthusian philosophies revived in the late Victorian depression. Wakefieldian orthodoxy was also attacked for promoting an exclusive policy which robbed Britain of the flower of its population while denying assistance to the most needy.[5] The government's consistent priority, as in all matters, was throughout to avoid positive intervention, while broadly sanctioning Imperial colonization and discouraging emigration to the United States. Legislation—either to impede or encourage an exodus—was infrequent and largely ineffective, particularly in respect of state-funded colonization, which remained a major bone of contention throughout the nineteenth century. Equally controversial were the six Passenger Acts which regulated the conditions of migrant shipping within the Empire. Passed between 1803 and 1855, they were designed to protect migrants from hazard and abuse in port and on the voyage. Unfortunately, the legislation was rendered largely ineffective by defective supervision and sanction on the part of the Colonial Office's overworked agents; improvements after 1850 were due less to legislation than to the combination of declining migration and the introduction of steamships.[6]

Despite the overwhelming popularity of the United States, reinforced by Irish and continental migration through Liverpool from mid-century, British emigrants played a prominent part in the peopling of Canada and the Antipodes. British North America—cheap, familiar, accessible, and too near the United States to warrant Imperial government-subsidized migration—attracted a steady flow of independent settlers, supplemented by the recipients of private and charitable assistance, and boosted from the 1890s by assiduous agency activity. The first significant flicker of interest in Australia in 1838 was due to a combination of the Canadian Rebellion, 1837, and the full implementation of bounties; gold discoveries in the 1850s and 1860s brought a more sustained influx to both Australia and New Zealand, reinforced by agency propaganda and the availability of assisted passages by nomination; and the Antipodes maintained their popularity until the

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[4] e.g., *Westminster Review*, VI (Oct. 1826), pp. 342–73; Charles Buller, 6 April 1843, *Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), col. 522.

[5] R. Torrens and others, 1 March 1870, *Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), cols. 1002–77.

[6] Oliver MacDonagh, *A Pattern of Government Growth, 1800–60: The Passenger Acts and their Enforcement* (London, 1961).

Canadian government launched its highly effective advertising campaign in the 1890s. Migration to the more distant Empire depended heavily on sponsorship as well as specific economic incentives. South Africa's fleeting popularity at the end of the century was due to mineral discoveries and assisted settlement after the South African War, while a smaller, steadier movement to the West and East Indies comprised mainly 'career migrants'—planters, administrators, and missionaries, with a notable upsurge of movement to India for about six years after the Mutiny.[7]

The multifaceted character of migration, as well as its extent and direction, was dictated largely by the diverse circumstances of the migrants. Some had no choice. Between 1788 and 1853 approximately 123,000 male and 25,000 female convicts were transported to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land (Map 24.1), many for persistent offences involving theft.[8] Over 88 per cent arrived after 1815, half being sent for seven years, and a quarter for life. Most came from England, where prison overcrowding was particularly acute, but of the quarter who came from Ireland, around a fifth were political and social rebels, and a quarter of all Irish transported were women. Only about one in twenty convicts was of Scottish origin, Scottish judges being more reluctant to impose sentences they believed savage and life-threatening.

Transportation, along with distance, cost, land speculation, and lack of precedent for European settlement impeded free migration to Australia, and in the 1820s convicts outnumbered free settlers by about three to one. During the 1830s that position was steadily reversed, as money from land sales was used to subsidize the passages first of women and then also of artisans and agricultural labourers under two bounty schemes introduced by the Colonial Office and the New South Wales government in 1832 and 1836 respectively. Government bounty migrants were chosen and despatched under the auspices of agents employed by the Colonial Office to disseminate information, protect migrants, and charter ships. From 1837 naval surgeons were employed as selecting agents, and T. F. Elliott was appointed Agent-General, overseeing both the surgeons and sub-agents based at ten major British ports. The reforms were intended to tackle colonial accusations that the Colonial Office's main interest was to relieve British pauperism, and that slack selection had led to an influx of dissolute women and too many men ignorant of the skills they professed. These accusations had provoked the parallel colonial bounty scheme, under which colonists bought bounty orders for specified categories of migrants, who were then selected by agents in Britain and brought

[7] For discussion of migration statistics see chap. by P. J. Cain.

[8] L. Robson, *The Convict Settlers of Australia* (Melbourne, 1981), p. 9. From 1850 to 1867 Western Australia, at its own request, received 9,668 male convicts in the teeth of opposition from eastern Australia, where the system was coming to an end.

out to Australia in privately engaged ships, the colonists obtaining a refund for their outlay if the migrants were approved on arrival.

Financial crisis in New South Wales led to the total suspension of assisted migration in 1842–43, and again in 1845–47. When assistance was renewed, temporarily in 1844 and more permanently in 1848, it was largely under the control of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commission in London. Appointed in 1840 to replace Elliott, the Commission administered migration on behalf of the overburdened Colonial Office, and curtailed colonial influence on bounties until its status was eroded by the attainment of responsible government. During the second half of the century migrants were assisted to the Antipodes under three complementary schemes: selection, nomination, and land order. About half were chosen by agents in Britain according to colonial labour requirements and were given assistance from the land fund according to their age and occupation. The appointment of Australian recruitment agents in Britain in the 1850s and 1860s spawned colonial policies of assisted passage and settlement based on nomination, particularly in Victoria and New South Wales, where many settlers took advantage of the scheme to be reunited with relatives and friends. Meanwhile Queensland, which pursued an active immigration policy after becoming a separate colony in 1859, favoured the granting of land orders to those who either paid their own passages or had them paid by friends or employers, and gave assisted passages to eligible migrants who subsequently qualified for land orders. New Zealand, in receipt of migrants since 1839, had by the late 1850s also developed a structure of subsidized passages and land grants, promoted by British-based provincial agents and co-ordinated after 1871 by an Agent-General, located in London. Farmers, agricultural labourers, and domestic servants were given particular encourgement, and migration made steady progress, notably in Otago and Canterbury (Map 25.1), where solid Scottish and English foundations had been laid by Free Church of Scotland and Anglican settlements respectively from 1848 and 1850.[9]

Assistance for migrants to British North America was spasmodic, small-scale, and stimulated by expulsive domestic factors rather than Canadian inducements. Imperial involvement was restricted largely to the decade after 1815, when, in order to strengthen the Canadian frontier, approximately 6,640 migrants, largely impoverished Irish farmers, Scottish handloom weavers, and discharged soldiers, were given free passages and land grants. However, by 1827 escalating costs, questionable results, and economic revival in Britain had overridden the recommendations of a Select Committee that state-funded migration should be formalized and

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[9] Assisted migration to the Antipodes is examined in Marjory Harper, *Emigration from North East Scotland*, Vol. I, *Willing Exiles* (Aberdeen, 1988), pp. 278–83.

extended.[10] Not until 1888 was the government again involved in sponsoring migration, when in a half-hearted response to the Napier Commission's assertion that state-directed migration was the only solution to Highland overpopulation and unrest it allocated £10,000 towards resettling 100 Hebridean crofting families in Canada.[11]

Assisted migration to Canada was organized primarily by individuals, commercial companies, and charitable societies. From 1803 to 1815 the Earl of Selkirk brought approximately 1,100 Highlanders, mainly victims of clearance, to Prince Edward Island, Upper Canada, and Red River, and between 1803 and 1823 Colonel Thomas Talbot settled 12,000 impecunious migrants on an extensive grant at Lake Erie (Map 23.1).[12] The government's experiments also involved an element of proprietorial colonization, particularly in the Breadalbane migration of 1819 and in Peter Robinson's settlements of 1823 and 1825. By the mid-1820s, however, commercial enterprises such as John Galt's Canada Company—followed a generation later by the railway companies—were beginning to eclipse private individuals as sponsors of migration. Meanwhile, those who could not afford commercial terms turned to philanthropic societies which mushroomed in response both to the new public confidence in migration as a remedy for domestic ills and the Imperial government's refusal to finance a regular removal of paupers. Over 15,000 destitute weavers in West-Central Scotland belonged to around thirty emigration societies in the 1820s, but although the Canadian immigration authorities reported substantial arrivals of pauper weavers, both then and when the societies re-emerged in the 1840s depression, they were the minority which had scraped together the fare from private donations, church collections, and their own meagre savings.[13]

Landlord-assisted migration became a common—and notorious—feature of the nineteenth-century transatlantic movement. Some, like the 500 paupers sent to Canada by the Earl of Egremont from his Sussex estates between 1832 and 1837, were well-supported and successful. For others, assistance was essentially a euphemism for compulsion, particularly in the Highlands, where landlords whose

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[10] *First Report from the Select Committee Appointed to Enquire into the Expediency of Encouraging Emigration from the United Kingdom. P[arliamentary] P[apers]* (1826) (404), IV, 1, pp. 3–4.

[11] *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Condition of Crofters and Cottars in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, PP* (1884) [C 3980], XXXII, pp. 97–108. See also Wayne Norton, *Help Us to a Better Land: Crofter Colonies in the Prairie West* (Regina, 1994).

[12] Talbot's initial 5,000-acre grant grew to 65,000 acres after he began to claim extra land in payment for each family he settled. *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Vol. VIII, *1851–60* (Toronto, 1985), pp. 857–62.

[13] Helen I. Cowan, *British Emigration to British North America: The First Hundred Years* (Toronto, 1961), pp. 44–45, 61–62, 132–33, 209; *Annual Reports of the Agents for Emigration in Canada for 1841, PP* (1842) (373), XXXI, pp. 6–7, 18.

hostility to migration evaporated when their estate development policies failed began to harness assisted emigration to clearance, in an attempt to reduce over-population on their properties. Their initiatives multiplied after the withdrawal of Australian bounty schemes in 1842 and when it became clear that the Imperial government intended to ignore a Select Committee's advice in 1841 that extensive state-aided emigration was a prerequisite for any permanent improvement in the Highland economy. After famine swept the region in the mid-1840s the roll-call of landlord-assisted migrants arriving at Quebec grew to over 10,000 in the decade 1846–56, with 4,048 arriving in 1851 alone,[14] but their settlement was punctuated by bitter complaints from Canadian sources about the deficient provision for reloca-tion made by several landlords. One of the worst offenders was John Gordon, proprietor of South Uist and Barra, nearly 2,000 of whose tenants were dependent on public assistance in Quebec in 1851, and whose widow and successor, Lady Emily Gordon Cathcart, was also to implement controversial Canadian coloniza-tion schemes in the 1880s and 1920s.[15]

Assisted migration after 1850 was nevertheless dominated by national and provincial charities and self-help groups—over sixty of them in 1886—which aimed to find colonial outlets for Britain's surplus female population, and dest-itute children, as well as the unemployed. Female migration to Australia had been promoted since the early 1830s, in order to redress gender imbalance, then in the 1840s Irish Poor Law Unions began to send women to Canada as well. In 1850 the London Female Emigration Society sent its first contingent of working women to Toronto, and between 1862 and 1892, as colonial conditions continued to improve, Maria Rye's Female Middle Class Emigration Society made interest-free loans to about 400 women, mainly teachers and governesses, bound for Canada, Austral-asia, and South Africa. After 1880 nearly all national and local societies came under the umbrella of the British Women's Emigration Association, although the pro-moters of South African colonization continued to work independently until the formation in 1919 of the Society for the Oversea Settlement of British Women. The familiar justification of female migration—that it 'civilized' the colonies while reducing the chronic surplus of women in Britain—was reinforced after 1880 by economic depression at home, eugenic arguments, and the upsurge of imperial-istic sentiment. Recruits were 'missionaries of Empire',[16] encouraged to migrate not only to find employment but, more importantly, to become wives of British settlers and mothers of a future British colonial generation.

[14] T. M. Devine, *The Great Highland Famine: Hunger, Emigration and the Scottish Highlands in the Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1988), p. 206.

[15] *Quebec Times*, 1851, quoted in J. Murray Gibbon, *Scots in Canada* (London, 1911), pp. 131–32; Norton, *Help Us to a Better Land*, pp. 3, 7, 17, 88.

[16] Ella Sykes, *A Home Help in Canada* (London, 1912), p. 304.

From 1869 the London feminist Maria Rye also pioneered juvenile migration, as did the Scots-born evangelical Annie Macpherson. Thereafter assisted migration was increasingly incorporated into the rescue and rehabilitation work of philanthropists concerned with child welfare, in the belief that it would solve practical and moral problems alike, and that their city-born recruits—once established in the morally restorative rural colonial environment—would become 'the bricks with which the Empire would be built'.[17] Between 1870 and 1914 the best-known operator, Thomas Barnardo, sent 31,031 children overseas, 28,689 to Canada and 2,342 to Australia, while William Quarrier and his successors despatched to Canada 35 per cent of the 20,000 children taken into the Orphan Homes of Scotland between 1870 and 1930. A further 10 per cent went from English workhouse schools, financed by parish guardians, and most 'home children', after a brief sojourn in a receiving home, were recruited into colonial households as cheap agricultural labourers and domestic servants.[18]

William Booth too shared the vision of an Empire populated with sound—if surplus—British stock, and assisted migration was incorporated into his tripartite scheme, launched in 1890, to rehabilitate the 'submerged tenth' of Britain's population.[19] Booth claimed that the international network of his Salvation Army made it ideally suited to supervise both the selection of colonists and their relocation, and although no overseas colony was established as intended, the Salvation Army soon became the largest emigration agency in the British Empire, promoting and administering the migration—almost exclusively to Canada—of 200,000 working-class men and women by 1930. Although most paid their own fares, a loan fund administered by the Army's Emigration Department assisted the impecunious to cross the Atlantic in specially chartered vessels. Labour bureaux operated during the voyages to secure work for the migrants before they landed, and the Army also arranged protected passages for the dependants of married men whom it had sent to Canada in advance of their families to prepare a new home.

It is not surprising that assisted migration was controversial. Australian bounties were offered to migrants whose skills would further the colonies' development, but the recipients included, for example, large numbers of destitute Highlanders fleeing from the 1836–38 famine, and the sometimes licentious female inmates of English and Irish workhouses. The removal of redundant women, destitute children, urban artisans, and ambitious agriculturists from late Victorian Britain was criticized in the Empire as a renewed evacuation of unadaptable paupers and misfits. At the same time, British employers bemoaned the loss of domestic and

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[17] Gillian Wagner, *Children of the Empire* (London, 1982), p. xv.

[18] See Marjory Harper, 'The Juvenile Immigrant: Halfway to Heaven, or Hell on Earth?', in C. Kerrigan, ed., *The Immigrant Experience* (Guelph, 1992), pp. 165–83.

[19] *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (London, 1890), pp. 146–55.

farm servants, and socialists challenged the ethics of exporting socio-economic problems instead of providing welfare at home. Disillusioned migrants complained about misleading promises of land, employment, or status offered by fraudulent agents. At the other end of the economic scale, colonial resentment of arrogant, ham-fisted remittance men, whose wealthy families had paid them to emigrate and subsidized them to stay overseas, was manifested primarily in verbal ridicule but sometimes in a refusal to entertain English migrants' employment applications.[20]

Voluntary migration—unimpeded by the regulations of governments and societies—demonstrates even more clearly the influence of migrants' circumstances and ambitions on the volume, direction, and character of the exodus. Private encouragement and practical assistance from family, friends, and community, transmitted primarily by letter and remittance but occasionally through visits home, were of inestimable and enduring importance in stimulating secondary migration and directing patterns of settlement. Pioneer sheepfarmers in Eastern Australia in the 1830s sometimes preferred to hire employees through family contacts, rather than the haphazard allocations of the bounty systems; managerial recruitment for sugar, coffee, and tea plantations in the West and East Indies was achieved through private networking rather than public advertisement; Canada's chief immigration agent frequently commented in mid-century on the large numbers who came out to join earlier arrivals, who 'in many cases have been enabled by their industry to acquire the means of paying the passage of remaining relatives'; and in 1857 James Adam, a Scottish pioneer migrant who revisited Britain as Otago's first provincial emigration agent, orchestrated an exodus of 4,000, of whom 800 were related to earlier settlers and often had their fares paid by the pioneers.[21]

The services of an agent could be a potent catalyst, particularly for migrants who lacked personal contacts overseas. Agents had been involved in the migration business since its inception, and in the first half of the nineteenth century the extensive importation of Canadian timber provided the opportunity for an army of shipowners to offer a wide choice of transatlantic passages to migrants at steerage prices of around £4 per head. As steam eclipsed sail and embarkation became centralized on a few large ports after 1850, provincial booking agents,

[20] Patrick Dunae, *Gentlemen Emigrants: From the British Public Schools to the Canadian Frontier* (Vancouver, 1981).

[21] Harper, *Willing Exiles*, pp. 288–97 and 330–39; Report of A. C. Buchanan for 1859: *Emigration (North American Colonies)*, PP (1860) (606), XLIV, p. 11. In his reports for 1843 and 1855 Buchanan noted that three-quarters of arrivals at Quebec had come out to join relatives. *Emigration, PP* (1844) (181), XXXV, p. 6 and *Emigration (North American Colonies)*, PP (1857) (14), X, Sess. 1, p. 14); James Adam, *Twenty-Five Years of Emigrant Life in the South of New Zealand* (Edinburgh, 1876), pp. 38–39.

representing the interests of major shipping companies, became the linchpins around whom migrant transportation revolved, not only arranging passages but also responding to pressures exerted by professional colonial agents to publicize assisted-passage and settlement schemes by arranging literature distribution, lectures, and interviews. Rival colonies tried to secure business by offering these part-time agents a commission of up to £1 per head on eligible recruits—generally agricultural workers and domestic servants—in an increasingly competitive race to populate the Empire with useful British stock.

While paid, professional agents were an integral part of Wakefieldian selection procedures from the 1830s, Canada did not launch a co-ordinated campaign to compete with Australasian—and American—propaganda until after Confederation. Canada's first official agent, English migrant Thomas Rolph, was appointed as a temporary itinerant lecturer from 1839 to 1842 to revive Canada's flagging reputation after the Rebellion, but it was 1854 before the newly created Bureau of Agriculture allocated any money to publicize migration. Five years later an information office was opened in Liverpool; following Confederation, resident and itinerant agents were strategically stationed across the British Isles to promote Canada and inspect departing migrants; and from 1872 these provincial agencies were supervised by a London office, headed by Canada's newly appointed High Commissioner from 1880 to 1899 and by a special Emigration Commissioner thereafter. Agents, who were expected to maintain an office and submit regular reports to headquarters, distribute written advertisements and government-sponsored publications, conduct illustrated lecture tours and personal interviews, counteract the activities of rivals, and supervise the work of booking agents, were carefully chosen with reference to local needs, connections, and knowledge of procedure. For instance, W. L. Griffith, sent from Manitoba to North Wales in 1897, was a Welsh-speaking native of Bangor, whose cousin controlled a syndicate of Welsh newspapers and was therefore a useful ally in the propaganda war; Thomas Grahame, appointed to Glasgow in the same year, had previously been a purser with a transatlantic shipping line; and John Maclennan, appointed in 1907 to cover northern Scotland, was a Gaelic-speaking Canadian of Highland descent.[22] A federal injection of 4 million dollars in the decade after 1896 gave agency activity an even higher profile, as the Canadian government and transcontinental railway companies became concerned to populate the vast western prairies for reasons of national unity and economic viability. It was a timely decision, for it coincided with an upsurge of enthusiasm for Canada and Dominion settlement in the British Isles.

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[22] National Archives of Canada, RG 76, C7302, vol. 146, file 34688; C4660, vol. 5, file 41, part 1; C10294–5, vol. 405, file 590687.

Agency activity did not go unopposed. In addition to the familiar, polarized claims, emanating from Britain and the colonies respectively, about the export of the élite and insufficiently rigorous selection procedures, there was intercolonial antagonism and even rivalry between federal and provincial representatives of the same countries. Apathetic or over-enthusiastic booking agents could create problems for the professional agents, who relied heavily on these shopkeepers and businessmen to overcome local conservatism, and make practical arrangements on their behalf. The frequency with which bonus claims were disputed reflects the temptation faced by booking agents to recruit indiscriminately, sacrificing quality to quantity for the sake of a commission, while more seriously, migrants sometimes fell victim to fraudulent promises. Yet for all their faults, agents—amateur and professional—increasingly became the cornerstone of Imperial migration, translating an unfocused restlessness into a concrete decision to migrate through their lectures, advertisements, and personal persuasion, and facilitating the migrant's removal by arranging the passage and perhaps securing land or employment in the new location.

By the close of the nineteenth century migration had been woven inextricably into the fabric of British life and public debate, and had made a significant demographic and cultural impact on both donor and receiver societies. The famine-induced exodus from Ireland relieved congestion and permitted consolidation of smallholdings into economically viable units, but left a legacy of ineradicable bitterness and continuing depopulation, also evident—to a lesser degree—in Highland Scotland. Scotland's loss of around 61 per cent of natural increase between 1853 and 1930 reinforced a well-established and self-conscious culture of diaspora. By the end of the century there was throughout Britain a trend away from the exodus of farming families and craftsmen towards the departure instead of young, unskilled urban adults, travelling alone, but increasingly as sojourners, whose temporary migration became more feasible as the steamship revolution shrank the world.[23] Yet a vital recurring feature in the kaleidoscopic history of migration was the determination of many migrants, despite their variable backgrounds, aspirations, and experiences, to recreate overseas a national or regional identity which could then be used to enhance economic opportunities, mitigate dislocation, and voice nostalgic, jingoistic—or occasionally revolutionary—sentiments. Through practising endogamy, forming religious and secular societies which reflected their origins, and patronizing ethnic hostels, as well as fostering chain migration supported by remittances, many English, Welsh,

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[23] Dudley Baines, *Migration in a Mature Economy* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 62, 88, 129; N. H. Carrier and J. R. Jeffery, *External Migration: A Study of the Available Statistics, 1815–1950* (London, 1953), pp. 19, 53. By 1914 around 70% of English and Scottish migrants were under 30, and in the half-century before 1914 inward passenger movement averaged around 45% of outflow.

Scottish, and Irish migrants successfully—and sometimes aggressively—implanted their individual national identities overseas, particularly within an Empire over which they often claimed proprietary rights.[24] Apart from Fenians, republicans, and others for whom migration represented revolt against Britain, the imperialism which was often a crucial component of migrants' national identity—particularly at the end of the century—may well have impeded their assimilation and the development of colonial nationalism. It also suggests that, whatever the domestic difficulties which impelled the migrants overseas, their destinations were often decided less by interest than sentiment, although they were probably less inspired than their British-based supporters with the vision of 'building Britain's greatness o'er the foam'.

[24] Ross McCormack, 'Cloth Caps and Jobs: The Ethnicity of English Immigrants in Canada, 1900–1914', in J. M. Bumsted, ed., *Interpreting Canada's Past*, 2 vols., Vol. II: *After Confederation* (Toronto, 1986), pp. 175–91.

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5

Migration from Africa, Asia, and the South Pacific

DAVID NORTHRUP

After the British Isles, the most important source of overseas emigrants within the nineteenth-century Empire was British India. In addition, substantial numbers of Africans, Chinese, and Pacific Islanders entered various parts of the Empire. Before 1860 nearly all of these migrations were to supplement former slave populations in tropical sugar plantation colonies, but thereafter a growing share went into plantation labour in colonies that had never known slavery as well as into mining and railway construction. Tropical migration was an integral part of the Empire's expansion, strongly linked to the development of new colonies and subsidized European emigration in the southern hemisphere.

Most Asian, African, and Pacific immigrants were recruited on long-term labour contracts. They either arrived at their destinations already tied to specific employers or were allocated to employers immediately after arrival. Some contracts were in the form of debt bondage, that is, a long-term obligation to a recruiter or employer to repay the cost of passage and advances by wage deductions. Many others entered into formal contracts of indenture, obliging them to work for a specified period of time (typically five years), although no formal debt was incurred. Unlike European indentured servants of earlier centuries, they received wages in addition to free passage overseas and often had the right to free return. Because indentured migrations were subject to close official supervision and to careful record-keeping, their details are better known than other tropical migrations.[1]

Once established the scale of indentured migration into the Empire remained quite stable at 150,000 or more per decade from 1841 until 1910 (Fig. 5.1). However, destinations changed markedly over time. Mauritius received most indentured labourers up until 1866, when it was surpassed by the British Caribbean colonies, principally British Guiana and Trinidad (Table 5.1). After 1890 most immigrants went to newer African and South Pacific colonies. British settlers in Natal began importing indentured labour from India in 1861. Queensland sugar growers

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[1] The principal discussions of tropical migration are listed in the Select Bibliography.
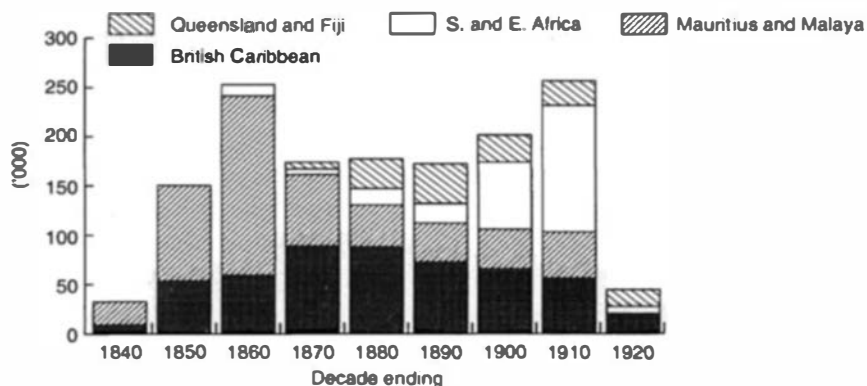
FIGURE 5.1. Destinations of indentured labourers within the Empire, 1831–1920, by decade

Source: David Northrup, *Indentured Labor in the Age of Imperialism, 1834–1922* (Cambridge, 1995), Table A.2.

TABLE 5.1. *Overseas indentured immigration to destinations in the British Empire, 1834–1920*

Destinations	Africans	Indians	Chinese	Pacific Islanders	Totals	%
Mauritius		451,786	816		452,602	31
Malaya		130,000			130,000	9
British Guiana	14,060	238,740	13,533		266,333	18
Trinidad	8,854	143,939	2,645		155,438	11
Jamaica	11,391	36,412	1,152		48,955	3
Other British West Indies	5,027	10,363	574		15,964	1
Natal		152,184			152,184	10
Transvaal			63,695		63,695	4
East Africa		39,437			39,437	3
Queensland			5,130	62,542	67,672	5
Fiji		56,000		26,460	82,460	6
Total	39,332	1,258,861	87,545	89,002	1,474,740	100
%	3	85	6	6		100

Source: Northrup, *Indentured Labor*, Table A.2; Walter Look Lai, *Indentured Labor, Caribbean Sugar; Chinese and Indian Migrants to the British West Indies* (Baltimore, 1993), Table 5.

recruited South Pacific Islanders from 1863. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company of Sydney first brought indentured labourers to Fiji from Pacific islands in 1864 and from India beginning in 1879 (Map 24.2). Other kinds of plantations and mines also tapped these labour sources. Ceylon coffee plantations and Burma rice plantations drew large numbers of Indians. Coffee, sugar, and rubber plantations

in the Malayan Straits Settlements attracted both Indians and Chinese. British East Africa imported Indian labour to build the Uganda railway. After the South African War (1899–1902) the Transvaal brought in Chinese for the gold mines.

Although the pull of overseas labour needs strongly dictated these migration patterns, the push of conditions in the source regions was also significant. Nearly all African emigrants were people displaced by the suppression of the Atlantic slave trade. The migration peak in 1851–60 (Fig. 5.1) reflected the exceptional exodus of Indians following the Indian Mutiny of 1857–58; the peak in 1901–10 was due to the unsettled conditions that drove nearly 64,000 Chinese to leave their country during the last years of the Ch'ing empire to work for low wages in the Transvaal gold mines. Despite their different origins, destinations, and forms of recruitment, tropical emigrants had much in common with emigrants from Britain in their aspirations, mode of transport, and permanent settlement abroad. The differences in the destinations and status of the two groups were due as much to Imperial policy as to inherent circumstances.

Tropical labour migration arose to meet slavery's decline. In the British Caribbean a labour shortage that developed when slavery was abolished in 1834 became acute after the end of the period of apprenticeship there in 1838.[2] Freed people either refused to work as long and as hard as they had been forced to do under slavery or, in the case of most women and many men, rejected plantation labour completely. Meanwhile, African 'recaptives' whom British patrols had rescued from slave ships were accumulating in liberation depots in the West African colony of Sierra Leone, on the mid-Atlantic island of St Helena, and at some Latin American locations. Until 1840 British officials opposed allowing these 'liberated Africans' to emigrate overseas from Sierra Leone, except as military recruits, lest such migrations be seen as a disguised revival of the slave trade. Thereafter that policy was reversed in order to alleviate the worsening labour shortages in the British Caribbean colonies and stem the mounting expense of maintaining the growing liberated population.

When recruitment efforts in the early 1840s produced few volunteers, Sierra Leone authorities adopted measures to stimulate emigration. They discontinued settling-in allowances in 1844, gave labour recruiters free access to newly arrived recaptives, whom they kept isolated from local residents who might describe conditions in the West Indies adversely. Under these circumstances, the number of emigrants from Sierra Leone to the West Indies rose to an annual average of 1,500 in the late 1840s. Even more were recruited from the depot on St Helena, which had insufficient land and water to accommodate liberated Africans perman-

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[2] For discussion of Apprenticeship system see below pp. 476–79.

ently. However, the supply of African recruits fell off rapidly as the Atlantic slave trade was brought to an end at mid-century.

Far larger and more enduring than the flow of free Africans was the migration of Indians that began to Mauritius and was later extended to more distant locations (see Table 5.2). After their African slaves were emancipated, Mauritian planters were confident that all future labour needs could be met from India. By the end of apprenticeship on Mauritius in March 1839, private recruiters had supplied a labour force of some 25,000 Indians, most newly arrived under five-year contracts of indenture. Planters in the British West Indian colonies also turned to India, one British Guiana planter organizing the transport of 396 Indians on two ships in 1838.

Imperial authorities, however, soon balked at continuing Indian immigration unless the conditions of recruitment, transport, and employment in the colonies improved. They suspended indentured migration to Mauritius in 1839, but the stickier issue was whether to permit further recruitment for the West Indies. Lord John Russell, Secretary of State for the Colonies, in February 1840 expressed his unwillingness to support 'any measure to favour the transfer of labourers from British India to Guiana...which may lead to a dreadful loss of life on the one hand, or on the other, to a new system of slavery'. The majority report of the investigators of the Mauritius trade, released in October 1840, concurred: 'We are convinced...if West Indian voyages be permitted, the waste of human life and

TABLE 5.2. *Indian overseas labour emigration, 1834–1924*

Principal Destinations	Indentured	Free of Indenture
Mauritius, 1834–1910	455,187	
Réunion, 1841–82	74,854	
British Guiana, 1838–1918	238,861	
Trinidad, 1845–1917	149,623	
Jamaica, 1845–1915	38,595	
Other British West Indies, 1838–1915	11,152	
French Caribbean, 1853–85	79,089	
Dutch Guiana, 1873–1916	34,503	
East Africa, 1895–1922	39,437	
Natal, 1860–1911	152,932	
Fiji, 1879–1916	61,015	
Burma, 1852–1924		1,164,000
Ceylon, 1843–1924		2,321,000
British Malaya, 1844–1910	130,000	1,624,000
TOTAL	1,465,248	5,109,000

Source: Northrup, *Indentured Labor,* Table A.1, Map 6.

misery that will fall on the Coolies under the name of free labourers will approach
to those inflicted on the negro in the middle passage by the slave trade.'[3]

Humanitarian opposition to Indian labour migration to the West Indies soon
crumbled in the face of stronger agendas, however, just as it had to liberated
African migration. The collapse of British plantations for lack of labour would
dash reformers' hopes of convincing French and American authorities that slave
emancipation was not the road to ruin. Moreover, it was difficult for Britain to
champion the virtues of free labour while denying Indians the right to sell their
labour overseas. Once Indian immigration was allowed to resume into Mauritius
in 1843 under government surveillance, its extension elsewhere soon followed. The
first shipload for the West Indies left Calcutta in January of 1845. Bans on
immigration into Natal and Réunion were lifted in 1860 and into the French
West Indies in 1865. Indentured Indian immigration was permitted into Dutch
Guiana in 1873, into Fiji in 1879, and into East Africa in 1895. Including less-closely
regulated immigration into Ceylon, Burma, and the Straits Settlements, the
annual emigration from India rose during the last quarter of the nineteenth
century from an average of 300,000 to over 425,000. This does not include the
considerable labour migration underway within the vast Indian Empire, including
indentured migration to the tea estates of Assam.

Yet acquiescence in overseas migration did not signify official disregard of the
conditions of their recruitment and of their treatment overseas—nor of their
transport, as is considered later. As the exodus from India grew, inspection and
supervision improved. At sub-depots where potential recruits were first collected,
magistrates verified that they understood and assented to the terms of the contract
before sending them on to the coastal depots in Calcutta or Madras. There the
recruits received medical examinations and were questioned again about their
agreement to the terms of the contract. One-third of those registered in a sub-
depot were eventually rejected as unfit or changed their minds before signing a
contract and sailing overseas. In British colonies, the welfare of indentured
labourers was supervised by Protectors of Immigrants and, as numbers grew, by
Agents-General of Immigration and various sub-agents. In foreign colonies,
British consular officials were charged with monitoring the welfare of Indian
immigrants. A series of commissions in the 1870s and afterwards investigated
shortcomings and recommended corrective measures.

The system was far from perfect, even allowing for the inevitable growing-pains
in so large an operation. Not all officials were of the highest character and many

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[3] Hugh Tinker, *New System of Slavery: The Export of Indian Labour Overseas, 1830–1920* (London,
1974), p. vi; *Report of the Committee appointed . . . to Inquire into the Abuses Alleged to Exist in Exporting
Bengal Hill Coolies and Indian Labourers*, P[arliamentary] P[apers] (1841), XVI (45), p. 295.

were compromised by conflicts of interest. Recruiters and medical personnel in India were under pressure to process large numbers of recruits quickly, which led to lapses and compromises. Protectors in the colonies could be worn down by the resistance of powerful employers and their allies in the colonial governments.

Yet some problems originated with the recruits, who, in their eagerness to be accepted, concealed illnesses and claimed to understand what they did not. Despite subsequent information to the contrary, many recruits seem to have clung to distorted or exaggerated visions of opportunities and conditions overseas that they heard from the Indian recruiters who scoured the markets, bazaars, and temples for likely candidates. Many seem to have passed through the screening process with vague or erroneous notions of where they were going and what they might expect there.

Such circumstances reflect the degree to which emigration was due to the strong push of social and economic misery. Most Indian emigrants came from two areas feeling strong demographic and economic pressure—the Gangetic Plain of northern India and the environs of Madras in South India. Although ambition motivated some, desperation best explains the emigration of many others. Population pressure, periodic famines, political upheavals, and changing economic conditions drove large numbers of Indians out of their ancestral villages and into the global labour market. The degree to which British rule was itself responsible for the rising tide of misery that drove Indians into overseas migration is a matter of some debate. While a simple delineation of the underlying causes of emigration may not be feasible, it is clear that some spurts of Indian overseas migration were due to specific political and ecological events. Besides the disruptions associated with the Indian Mutiny of 1857–58, periodic famines served to overcome resistance to long-term emigration. Not surprisingly, many emigrants were from the social and economic margins of Indian society, but during the peak decades of the trade emigrants represented a cross-section of rural India. Migrants to Fiji, for example, came from 260 identifiable social groups.

India supplied the greatest number of new labour recruits, but since the early nineteenth century some tropical British colonies had sought immigrants from China. Before mid-century most Chinese went to Singapore and other parts of South-East Asia, but the addition of Western ships and port facilities at Hong Kong from 1842 greatly increased the size and scope of Chinese emigration. Of the 550,000 Chinese who sailed from Hong Kong between 1854 and 1880 (see Table 5.3), nearly two-fifths went to the United States of America, a third to South-East Asia, and 22 per cent to Australia, mostly under a form of debt bondage known as the 'credit-ticket system'. Nearly 18,000 indentured Chinese labourers reached the British West Indies from various ports between 1853 and 1884, a modest number compared to the 240,000 that were indentured to Cuba and Peru during that

TABLE 5.3. *Chinese overseas emigration from Hong Kong, 1854–1880*

Principal Destinations	Indentured	Free of Indenture	Total
United States, 1854–80		224,355	224,355
Australia, 1854–80		118,543	118,543
South-East Asia, 1855–80	730	185,379	186,109
New Zealand, 1871–80		5,191	5,191
Canada, 1865–80		2,394	2,394
British Guiana, 1858–78	6,808		6,808
Cuba, 1856–58	4,991		4,991
Peru, 1869–70	763		763
Surinam, 1866–69	1,869		1,869
Hawaii, 1865–77	789	2,331	3,120
Tahiti, 1864–65	1,035		1,035
India, 1864, 1875	2,370	15	2,385
TOTAL	19,355	538,208	557,563

Source: Calculated from Arnold J. Meagher, 'Introduction of Chinese Laborers to Latin America: The "Coolie Trade", 1847–1874', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, California, Davis, 1975, p. 108A and Table 4.

period. Although emigration was illegal under Chinese law until 1860, Chinese brokers or 'crimps' combed the impoverished masses in the coastal ports for recruits to deliver to private Western firms. The many victims of deception, debt, and kidnapping among them were rarely detected by inspectors. Chinese and Western concern over gross irregularities sharply curtailed indentured immigration to the Americas after 1874, but 5.75 million Chinese immigrants poured into the Straits Settlements between 1881 and 1915[4] and, for a brief period from 1904 to 1907, the Transvaal recruited 64,000 northern Chinese for its gold mines.

The spread of plantation economies also brought the islands of the South Pacific into the labour trade in the early 1860s. As in China, Pacific Island recruitment initially involved a large amount of kidnapping and deceptive practices. However, as demand grew, the voluntariness of the labour recruitment was closely monitored by British colonial officials. In all, 89,000 Melanesians and Micronesians went to Queensland and Fiji, principally to cultivate sugar. Pacific Islanders experienced particularly appalling mortality in Australia and Fiji from being exposed to unfamiliar epidemiological conditions. For example, the death rate during the first year for those arriving in Fiji in 1880 was 145 per thousand. As they became acclimatized, mortality dropped to 42 per thousand in the second year and 27 in the third. Despite such chilling losses, the desire for Western goods and adventure continued to lure Pacific Island labourers to Queensland until the recruitment ended in 1904 and to Fiji until 1911.

[4] See below, pp. 384–86.

Admittedly different in their origins, destinations, and terms of recruitment, the tropical immigrants of the nineteenth century have also been dealt with separately from contemporary European immigrants for less defensible reasons.[5] One misleading proposition put forward by some modern historians is that the tropical migrations had more in common with the African slave trade than with free European migrations. This line of analysis accurately conveys the concerns of contemporary British officials and humanitarians: the undeniable fact that early indentured immigrants replaced or supplemented liberated slaves and performed the same kind of work under distressingly similar conditions. In addition, it highlights the deception or coercion used in the recruitment of many early African, Indian, Chinese, and Pacific Island labourers, practices captured in the crude nicknames used for such recruitment—'blackbirding' in the South Pacific, the 'pig trade' in China, and the 'coolie trade' in both China and India. However, most tropical migrants differed substantially from slaves in their willingness to emigrate as well as in the terms of their recruitment, transport, and working conditions overseas. Most tropical emigrants departed of their own free choice, hoping to achieve a better life abroad or at least to escape the painful circumstances at home. Although tropical labourers' lives overseas may have been harsher than those of European immigrants and filled with greater disappointments, theirs was less a new system of slavery than an old system of free labour revived to suit imperial needs in an industrial age. For these reasons, much greater understanding of tropical immigration comes from comparing it with contemporary European immigration.

The once-common distinction between tropical 'sojourners', who intended to return home at the end of their contracts, and European 'settlers', who were committed to permanent residence in a new land, is likewise greatly overstated. In fact, large proportions of both European and tropical immigrants initially dreamed of returning home after accumulating wealth abroad. Many in both groups did return home, whether wealthy or not, but where conditions permitted a similar proportion of both chose to settle abroad permanently. Not surprisingly, the rate of repatriation to India and China from nearby South-East Asian colonies was quite high. White-preference policies also forced the repatriation of most Pacific Islanders from Australia and of the Chinese from the Transvaal, but elsewhere in the Empire tropical immigrants settled permanently in large numbers. Virtually all indentured Africans stayed on in the West Indies and blended into the black population established there by the slave trade. Indians also stayed on in

[5] See Tinker, *New System of Slavery*; Johnson U. J. Asiegbu, *Slavery and the Politics of Liberation, 1787–1861: A Study of Liberated African Emigration and British Anti-Slavery Policy* (London, 1969). Adrian Graves, *Cane and Sugar: The Political Economy of the Queensland Sugar Industry, 1862–1905* (Edinburgh, 1993).

large numbers. By 1920 Indians had displaced Africans as the principal inhabitants of Mauritius, outnumbered Europeans in Natal, formed one-third of the population of Trinidad, and were two-fifths of the inhabitants of British Guiana and Fiji. Chinese established large communities, above all in parts of South-East Asia but also in North America. Despite Canadian restrictions on Chinese immigration after the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885, some 15,000 lived there in 1900.

The proportion of women also distinguishes most groups of tropical immigrants into British colonies from sojourners and increases their resemblance to European immigrants. British officials initially doubted that any circumstance would induce Asian women and families to emigrate, but regulations that required a minimum proportion of Indian women on voyages to the West Indies were in fact fulfilled. Without such a provision fewer men would have been willing to stay abroad for the ten years necessary to merit a free return passage, and many fewer Indians might have chosen to remain abroad. In 1853, at the instigation of the British Colonial Office, a minimum of one female for every three males was required among Indian immigrants to Mauritius. Three years later that proportion was extended to British Guiana. From 1868 the proportion of female immigrants was raised to 40 per 100 males (except for Mauritius which remained at 33.3 : 100) and was strictly enforced. Concerted efforts by British agents raised the proportion of women to 20 per 100 men among Chinese recruited for British Guiana. No specific effort was made to recruit women in the Pacific Islands, where only about 6 women per thousand men went to Queensland or to Fiji.[6]

It is now clear that differences in economic circumstances, geography, and Imperial policies were responsible for directing most European immigrants to other temperate destinations, while African, Asian, and Pacific Islanders went largely to tropical ones. By global standards nineteenth-century Britain was an area of high prevailing wages, so that its emigrants naturally chose destinations in developing parts of the world with even higher prevailing wage rates. In contrast, in Asia, Africa, and the South Pacific wages were either very low by global standards or were not even monetarized, making them attractive to plantation economies that could not hope to attract high-cost European labour. In addition, most British emigrants were within relatively easy reach of their preferred destinations in North America, whereas a large proportion of tropical migrants faced voyages of several months to reach a place willing to employ them. The cost of a

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[6] Tinker, *New System of Slavery*, p. 205; Pieter Emmer, 'The Great Escape: The Migration of Female Indentured Servants from British India to Surinam', in Shula Marks and Peter Richardson, eds., *International Labour Migration: Historical Perspectives* (Hounslow, 1984), pp. 248, 250; Brij V. Lal, *Girmitiyas: The Origins of the Fiji Indians* (London, 1969), pp. 104–06.

passage across the Atlantic amounted to only half of the per capita annual income of European areas, whereas a passage to the West Indies cost 3 to 10 times the per capita annual income in East or South Asia. As a result, most tropical immigrants had no choice but to accept the free passage and low-wage contracts that distant plantations or mines were willing to offer.[7]

The effect of these practical differences was accentuated by policies that required tropical migrants to repay the costs of their passages while underwriting those of British emigrants. In the rare case of indentured European immigrants to the tropics, such as the famine-stricken Portuguese from Madeira, the conditions of servitude were customarily waived or eased. For example, in 1857 the Governor of British Guiana justified imposing no indenture on the Portuguese whose passage that colony's government paid, while simultaneously imposing one on Indian and Chinese immigrants, by his belief that the Portuguese did not require to be compelled to work.[8] Similarly, British immigrants to distant colonies in southern Africa, Australia, and New Zealand (or even to Canada) regularly received government-subsidized passages that had no onerous restrictions attached. Many countries and colonies also promoted European settlement to 'whiten' their populations under the guise of maintaining 'civilized' standards, while excluding or expelling non-European immigrants.

Attention to such politically constructed differences between the tropical and temperate immigrants needs to be balanced by attention to the politically constructed similarities between them with regard to maritime passenger travel. Both groups of voyagers benefited from the rapid growth in the size and speed of ocean vessels in the nineteenth century. Indeed, indentured tropical immigrants generally travelled in ships that were larger than the immigrant vessels of the North Atlantic. By the third quarter of the century vessels from India to the West Indies averaged nearly 1,000 tons and some were double that size. Chinese emigrants to the British West Indies sailed on vessels averaging 870 tons.[9] Although Europeans emigrating to North America were much more likely to travel on steamships than were tropical emigrants, this was largely due to the fact that steam vessels did not become efficient enough to compete with large sailing ships on long runs across

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[7] This analysis depends on Stanley L. Engerman, 'Coerced and Free Labor: Property Rights and the Development of the Labor Force', *Explorations in Economic History*, XXIX (1992), pp. 1–29; David W. Galenson, 'The Rise and Fall of Indentured Servitude in the Americas: An Economic Analysis', *Journal of Economic History*, XLIV (1984), pp. 1–26; Colin Newbury, 'Labour Migration in the Imperial Phase: An Essay in Interpretation', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, III (1975), pp. 234–45; Teodor Shanin, 'The Peasants are Coming: Migrants Who Labour, Peasants Who Travel and Marxists Who Write', *Race and Class*, XIX (1978), pp. 277–88.

[8] Governor Wodehouse to H. Labouchere, 6 June 1857, *Papers Relating to Immigration to the West Indian Colonies*, PP (1859), XVI [1st Session 2452], p. 232.

[9] Northrup, *Indentured Labor in the Age of Imperialism, 1834–1922* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 80–103.

two oceans until the early twentieth century. But on shorter runs in the tropics this difference was less pronounced. For example, Indians made considerable use of the British India Steam Navigation Company established from Calcutta to Rangoon in 1861, and of other steamship lines that later served the Indian Ocean basin.

Another important change in sea travel shared by both sets of immigrants after 1828 was the development and implementation of strict regulations regarding crowding, sanitation, and accommodation on British maritime vessels. In 1840 ships from British possessions whose routes crossed the equator had to provide 15 square feet of berth space per passenger with headroom of at least 5.5 feet and no more than two tiers of berths. These rules applied to vessels carrying indentured Indians and Africans as well as to the Chinese shipped from Hong Kong. During its existence from 1840 to 1873 the Colonial Land and Emigration Commission supervised both British and indentured passenger movement, issuing detailed regulations to improve emigrants' health and safety and overseeing their enforcement. Spurred on by high passenger mortality associated with Irish famine victims and cholera epidemics in the British Isles, new Passenger Acts by 1855 required more headroom and reduced passenger densities to no more than fifty adults per 100 tons burthen. The application of these rules on British ships from China was regularly evaded in the early 1850s, but the Government of India saw to it that enforcement was quite strict on vessels from their ports. Conventions signed with France in 1860 and 1861 required French vessels to observe the same regulations as British carriers in return for allowing French colonies equal access to Indian labour.

Despite such regulations, passengers on long voyages through the tropics continued to suffer high rates of illness and death, for example, an average mortality of 20 per thousand per month among Indians travelling to the British Caribbean in the period 1851 to 1870. Although this was about one-third the mortality on nineteenth-century slave-trade voyages, it was substantially higher than losses on European immigrant vessels in that period. The difference had less to do with inferior sanitary facilities, food and water, and medical care, than with the presence of highly infectious diseases such as cholera which spread quickly under the crowded conditions of the long tropical immigration voyages. Before 1875 official efforts to control infection were frustrated by the logistics of processing large numbers of people, the emigrants' deliberate concealment of their illnesses, and the limitations of contemporary medical knowledge. However, stricter screening, increasingly detailed regulation of shipboard usages, and improvements in medical practice produced a steady decline in deaths at sea after 1875 to under 10 per thousand for Indian voyages to the West Indies and under 5 per thousand on Indian voyages to Mauritius, Natal,

and Fiji as well as on the voyages of Pacific Islanders and of Chinese to the Transvaal.[10]

Limited space prevents consideration of the conditions of labour in the various colonies. These were everywhere extremely arduous, although doubtless mitigated for non-European as for European migrants by the gradual formation of the new local communities and myriad forms of labour organization and resistance. Nevertheless, the view of several official investigating commissions was that, despite some regrettable lapses, indentured labour was free labour not slave labour. The last and broadest of these commissions reported emphatically in 1910: 'Our unhesitating opinion, after examining the best and most authoritative evidence that we could obtain on the subject, is that whatever abuses may have existed in the more remote past, no such charge can be substantiated against the system as it at present exists and has been in practice during the past 20 or 30 years.'[11] Yet within a decade the indentured labour system largely came to an end. In some colonies the number of new immigrants who took up permanent residence eliminated the need for further immigration. The decline in the sugar plantation economy in many places curtailed labour demands. Policies of white preference ended Pacific Islanders' immigration to Australia and restricted the entry of Indians and Chinese in southern Africa. Most fundamental was the decision of the Government of India to ban the remaining indentured labour trade from March 1916 in response to growing Indian nationalist protest.

[10] Fred H. Hitchins, *The Colonial Land and Emigration Commission* (Philadelphia, Pa., 1931), pp. 119–53; Ralph Shlomowitz and John McDonald, 'Mortality of Indian Labour on Ocean Voyages, 1843–1917', *Studies in History*, VI (1990): Table 16; David Eltis, 'Free and Coerced Transatlantic Migrations: Some Comparisons', *American Historical Review*, LXXXVIII (1993), pp. 271–72; Northrup, *Indentured Labor*, pp. 84–103.

[11] *Report of the Committee on Emigration from India to the Crown Colonies and Protectorates*, PP (1910), XXVII [Cd. 5192], p. 23.

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6

British Policy, Trade, and Informal Empire in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

MARTIN LYNN

To focus solely on colonial possessions in examining Britain's expansion overseas in the nineteenth century is to ignore the multifaceted nature of Britain's international position.[1] The increases in foreign trade, in the balance of credit abroad, and in the numbers of emigrants settling overseas in these years were but part of a wide-ranging expansion of British society that also took military, naval, religious, and cultural forms and spread far beyond the territorial holdings of Britain's Empire. The naval officer in the Atlantic, the missionary in Africa, and the trader in China were as much agents of potential British influence as the colonial administrator in India. Yet the nature and significance of this influence, its impact, and the British government's role in sustaining it remain elusive.

This chapter examines, from a metropolitan perspective, the government's approach to the expansion of British influence beyond the territorial Empire in the mid-nineteenth century and the nature of the relationship that developed between Britain and several regions where such expansion occurred. Its focus is primarily economic, not because other forms of British expansion—cultural, religious, demographic or political—were unimportant, but because commercial and financial intervention was recognized at the time as critical to reshaping such areas in Britain's interests, however those interests were ultimately defined. It offers a general assessment of both Britain's success in this reshaping and the degree to which, in these years, the British economy in practice asserted its influence over such regions outside the colonial Empire.

British expansion overseas between 1820 and 1880 was extensive, and its nature a major point of controversy at home. For contemporaries the question was how far expansion overseas should be welcomed, given its implications for domestic society and politics. Expense, economy, retrenchment, the 'condition of England',

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[1] John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', *Economic History Review* (hereafter *EcHR*), Second Series, VI (1953), pp. 1–15.

and corruption were but some of the issues tied up in this. While much of the argument focused on Britain's existing colonial holdings and reform of the relationship between these and Britain itself, discussion also addressed the nature of Britain's influence beyond the colonies and its impact on the British economy.[2]

What is striking about this debate is the way it was accompanied, at least from the middle decades of the century, by a sense of confidence within many parts of British society about the country's place in the world. Palmerston, the then Foreign Secretary, articulated this clearly in 1848 with his view that Britain led the march of civilization. 'I may say without any vain glorious boast...', he claimed, 'that we stand at the head of moral, social and political civilization. Our task is to lead the way and direct the march of other nations.'[3] Such confidence in Britain's place in the world reflected an optimism that the globe was being 'renovated' and 'improved', and that British interests were at the heart of this. The objective of the Empire, stressed a Commons' Committee report of 1837, was for Britain to afford the peoples of the world 'the opportunity of becoming partakers of that civilization, that innocent commerce, that knowledge and that faith with which it has pleased a gracious Providence to bless our own country'.[4]

Such sentiments came accompanied by numerous calls for the further expansion of British interests overseas. The ostensible aim was what Palmerston termed 'world bettering', yet intertwined with this were clear and acknowledged intentions to benefit British economic interests as well.[5] The nature of these geopolitical ambitions is perhaps best known in George Canning's renowned words of 1824, that 'Spanish America is free and if we do not mismanage our affairs sadly, she is English', a statement suggesting belief that the world was moving Britain's way and rightly so.[6] The expansive ambitions implicit in these attitudes were more broadly applied to the globe as a whole. The early nineteenth century saw calls to open up China to British economic interests; to search for a second India in Africa; and to expand British commerce in South-East Asia and the Middle East.

Free trade, defined in the broadest sense of allowing the free play of the market, was seen as central to this process of expansion. Free trade was the vehicle for 'world bettering' as well as for the expansion of British economic interests overseas. It was the means whereby Britain's role in the wider world could best be

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[2] Bernard Semmel, *The Rise of Free Trade Imperialism* (Cambridge, 1970).

[3] In 1848, quoted in W. Baring Pemberton, *Lord Palmerston* (London, 1954), p. 141.

[4] *Report from the Select Committee on Aborigines* (British Settlements) P[arliamentary] P[apers] (1837) (425), VII, p. 76.

[5] Donald Southgate, '*The Most English Minister*': *The Policies and Politics of Palmerston* (London, 1966), p. 147.

[6] Quoted in H. W. V. Temperley, 'The Later American Policy of George Canning', *American Historical Review*, XI (1906), p. 796.

shaped. Yet the value of this expansion overseas and the place of free trade in it remained controversial, particularly early in the century. In origin the debate about free trade was an argument about the nature of Britain's domestic society, the place within it of land, commerce, industry, and finance, and the role of the State in economic affairs. However, the overseas dimensions to this were clearly considerable. The benefits of free trade were seen as twofold. First, it would stimulate the growth of British manufacturing. It would help other countries to earn sterling through increased exports of food and raw materials to Britain and would enable them to buy more British manufactures. It would encourage the international division of labour, and enhance Britain's comparative advantage in the world economy. Free trade, in short, would enable Britain to become and remain 'the workshop of the world'.

Tightly coupled to this was a second idea, of capitalism as a moral force. Free trade would help civilize the world through the spread of enterprise and the work ethic. This was related to ideas of progress towards a moral goal, defined largely in terms of British cultural norms. The spread of British trade and investment overseas was thus seen as good in its own right; it brought with it enterprise, progress, and civilization. Free trade would encourage moral regeneration, allowing economically 'backward' nations to develop their resources and throw off outdated élites while encouraging the development of capitalist classes through the moral dimensions of industry and capital accumulation. This was seen as being to the benefit of the areas on the receiving end of British intervention, whether or not they realized it. That this might also be to the gain of British economic interests was regarded as incidental, since free trade, it was argued, was to the benefit of all. In this sense free trade became the quintessential characteristic of the early Victorian view of the world, combining moral commitment with material self-interest.

Free trade was thus a principle that involved British economic expansion overseas and implied an important role for the British government in the encouragement of this. The issue was more complex however. On another level, free trade was a philosophy that implied Britain needed neither colonies nor its government to be involved overseas at all. For some observers, indeed, it was associated with what are often labelled 'little Englander' ideas. Richard Cobden, the politician whose name, along with those of Adam Smith and *The Economist* (established in 1843 to promote free trade ideas), is virtually synonymous with free trade, criticized the holding of colonies. The sectional interests embedded in the 'old colonial system' were to Cobden as much part of the corruption and misgovernment of Britain as those embedded in the Corn Laws of 1815. Such figures argued that in a free-trade world colonies would be redundant. Countries would trade with or borrow from Britain because it was in their self-interest to do so, irrespective of

political ties. Colonies, therefore, far from benefiting Britain, were costly, wasteful, and above all unnecessary. Thus adherents of free trade supported moves to grant self-government to Britain's colonies of settlement while Cobden criticized Britain's role in India as a 'career of spoliation and wrong'; it would 'be a happy day when England has not an acre of territory in Continental Asia'.[7]

Advocates of free trade such as Cobden and John Bright further implied there was a very limited need for the government to intervene overseas at all. Free trade was 'God's diplomacy', said Cobden, arguing that war and international conflict would be redundant in a free trade world.[8] The mutual interdependency generated by commercial self-interest meant that free trade would ultimately eradicate the occasion of war and military intervention; war and preparation for war, argued Cobden, was part of that aristocratic misgovernment that had held Britain in thrall too long. Hence his criticisms of Britain's intervention to support the Ottoman empire against Russian designs in the 1830s, and of Britain's intervention in China in the late 1850s. Free trade was for Cobden, 'the only human means of effecting universal and permanent peace'; it was 'the grand panacea', bringing prosperity to all, encouraging an international division of labour to everyone's benefit, creating economic interdependence and rendering international conflict a thing of the past.[9]

Such views have led some to see in the triumph of free trade ideas after 1846 an attitude of 'anti-imperialism', critical of the Empire's existence, and of the costs and complications of British intervention overseas. Yet few in practice held such a position. Hardly any can be termed 'little Englanders' in this period with any accuracy, and certainly not Cobden; as Huskisson, the Colonial Secretary, stressed in 1828, 'England cannot afford to be little'.[10] All accepted the need to maintain Britain's interests overseas and that the State had a role in so doing; the issue was rather how best to do this. Few, for example, argued seriously for relinquishing colonies, not least because of their perceived role as a population safety-valve; Edward Gibbon Wakefield and the 'Colonial Reformers' pressed for a new relationship with colonial possessions, not their abandonment. Most accepted the need to maintain the colonial connection but argued that self-government was the more effective way to do this; self-government did not mean separation.

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[7] Richard Cobden to H. Richard, 21 May 1856, in J. A. Hobson, *Richard Cobden: The International Man* (London, 1919), p. 144; Richard Cobden to John Bright, 22 Sept. 1857, in John Morley, *The Life of Richard Cobden*, 2 vols. [1879], 2nd edn. (London, 1881), II, p. 213.

[8] Hobson, *Richard Cobden*, p. 246.

[9] Cobden to Henry Ashworth, 12 April 1842, in Morley, *Richard Cobden*, I, p. 230; quoted in Donald Read, *Cobden and Bright: A Victorian Partnership* (London, 1967), p. 110.

[10] Huskisson's Speech on the Civil Government of Canada, 2 May 1828, in William Huskisson, *Speeches*, 3 vols. (London, 1831), III, p. 287.

Criticisms of the costs and corruption seen in 'the old colonial system' were not the same as calls for withdrawal from colonies; rather, they were calls for a more effective relationship to maintain Britain's interests overseas. Similarly arguments for the abandonment of India were conspicuous by their rarity; even Cobden accepted the manipulation of Indian tariff policies in British interests.[11]

Thus the triumph of free trade ideas in the mid-nineteenth century did not in practice imply an end to government intervention overseas in defence of British economic interests. Rather, the issue was how best should such intervention be undertaken and how far, in practice, should the government go in its support of those interests. Certainly the gaining of free trade treaties to open up a region's commerce, encouragement for the spread of trade, and the general promotion of free trade principles were accepted as central government aims. Yet there were limits to the government's role, particularly when it came to supporting private interests. First, public duty should never become confused with private gain. In Palmerston's words, 'it is the business of the Government to open and to secure the roads for the merchant', but no more.[12] Indeed, one influential study of Foreign Office policy in this period suggests that *laissez-faire* and free trade were taken literally by a Foreign Office that defined its role in 'securing roads' before the 1880s very narrowly.[13] Hostile to supporting individual bondholders or traders, it was only prepared to intervene on behalf of British economic interests overseas where such interests reinforced existing British political concerns. Secondly, the free trade treaties the Foreign Office pushed for were restricted to 'equal favour and open competition' for all powers. Their function was to open up markets to outsiders, protect British traders and financiers under international law, and guarantee that British trade and finance would receive equal treatment with that of other European states. The 'Open Door' was open for everyone. There was no policy here of obtaining exclusive privileges for Britain.

British policy was less selfless, however, than might appear. The government did not need to go beyond the 'Open Door' to obtain exclusive privileges in this period; the British economy's success made it possible to entertain ambitions of dominating large areas of the globe almost by default. Given the favourable international situation and that Britain's industrial and financial lead was so great, opening an area to outside influences by treaty was often sufficient to ensure that British trade and finance, rather than any rival's, would be

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[11] A. G. L. Shaw, 'Introduction', in A. G. L. Shaw, ed., *Great Britain and the Colonies, 1815–65* (London, 1970), pp. 19–21.

[12] Palmerston to Auckland, 22 Jan. 1841, Broadlands Papers, University of Southampton Library. I am grateful to the Trustees of the Broadlands Papers and to Her Majesty's Stationary Office for permission to quote from this correspondence.

[13] D. C. M. Platt, *Finance, Trade and Politics in British Foreign Policy, 1815–1914* (Oxford, 1968).

paramount in that region. Opening economies to outside commerce by promoting free trade was *de facto* a policy of expanding British influence.

The assumptions implicit in this approach underlay much of British policy towards the wider world in the mid-nineteenth century. One can see this particularly in the career of Lord Palmerston, (Foreign Secretary 1830–34, 1835–41, 1846–51, and Prime Minister 1855–58 and 1859–65). Palmerston repeatedly used force to extend such principles overseas. He was not an ideological free trader—indeed, he was slow to accept repeal of the Corn Laws—and much of what he advocated came under fierce criticism, even to the extent of Commons motions of censure, from Cobdenites. Nor can his overseas policy be characterized as one simply designed to spread free trade principles. Nonetheless, Palmerston was strongly influenced by economists such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo and, like most of his time and class, he came to share the assumptions of the free trade advocates about Britain's place in the world and the government's role in sustaining it. More crucially perhaps, he was ready to exploit the influence of free trade supporters by appeals to the moral principles of free trade ideas.

Palmerston's primary interests as Foreign Secretary concerned Europe, but his actions extended far beyond that continent. 'The sun never sets upon the interests of this country', he stated in 1843.[14] He recognized too the changing shape of these interests. 'The rivalship of European manufacturers is fast excluding our productions from the markets of Europe and we must unremittingly endeavour to find in other parts of the world new vents for the produce of our industry... Abyssinia, Arabia, the countries on the Indus and the new markets in China, will at no distant period give a most important extension to the range of our foreign commerce.'[15]

There were inconsistencies in Palmerston's approach to the expansion of British influence in the wider world, and much of his apparent policy was simply rhetoric for domestic consumption. Yet underlying his interventions in regions as different as Africa and China was one consistent thread. What has been termed 'Palmerstonianism' represented, for the wider world, a policy of expanding British interests overseas by force wherever necessary, justified by appeals at home to moral imperatives.[16] In Palmerston's view, a universalist notion of progress based on British cultural norms, applicable to all societies across the globe, was tied to the need to hasten the march of civilization—defined by the principles of enterprise, capital accumulation, and individual property ownership—through the judicious use of force. That some societies were 'backward' was, in his view, a temporary

[14] Lord Palmerston, 1 March 1843, P[arliamentary] D[ebates] (Commons), col. 192.
[15] Palmerston to Auckland, 22 Jan. 1841, Broadlands Papers.
[16] R. J. Gavin, 'Palmerston's Policy Towards East and West Africa, 1830–1865', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge, 1959, p. 1.

phenomenon due to environmental circumstances. Decisive action was required to remove these barriers to progress, and it was Britain's role to lead the way in this.

This was a project for, in David Livingstone's words, the 'renovation of the world' which required, in effect, Anglicization.[17] Trade, Christianity, education, and constitutional principles were all vehicles whereby this was to be achieved, but trade, as even Livingstone admitted, was the primer. As trade flourished, so societies would come to see the benefits of capital accumulation and civilization and would respond to the opportunities thus created by commercial contact with Britain. 'Commerce is the best pioneer of civilization,' stressed Palmerston. Free trade would, in his view, lead 'civilization with one hand, and peace with the other, to render mankind happier, wiser, better'.[18] Thus the aim of British policy overseas was to facilitate trade and to develop markets by opening up a region to outside contact. That this would benefit Britain through facilitating British trade and investment and finding new sources of raw materials for the British economy was freely acknowledged. The campaign against the slave trade that Britain led was not just to remove a 'foul and detestable crime', said Palmerston: 'virtue carries with its own reward ... These slave trade treaties ... are indirectly treaties for the encouragement of commerce.' So he argued that Britain's pressure against Brazil over the slave trade was 'greatly advantageous to the Brazilians, not only by freeing them from a grievous crime, but by very much improving their general condition'.[19]

In practical terms this required mutually beneficial links between the commercial classes of Britain and the recipient society. Such linkages would best be established through the free trade treaty that opened up an area to what Palmerston saw as the civilizing effect of foreign trade and investment. Opening up was the aim, for this would ensure British influence and the development of the region along lines that suited British interests; for Palmerston colonial Empire was immaterial but influence was certainly the desired result. The free trade treaty was thus a major weapon in Palmerston's schemes. Yet the problem was, as he realized, that such ties were difficult to establish and would not readily develop on their own. In this sense his was a much more pragmatic view of the world, and the potentialities within it for British trade, than was Cobden's stress on free trade as 'God's diplomacy'. Not least of the blockages to free trade recognized by Palmerston were the recalcitrant élites of African, Asian, and Latin American societies which relied on what he saw as privilege, corruption, or superstition to hold down enterprising groups. This could be seen most obviously in the case of the slave

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[17] I. Schapera, ed., *Livingstone's African Journal, 1853–56*, 2 vols. (London, 1963), II, pp. 243–44.

[18] Lord Palmerston, 16 Feb. 1842, *PD* (Commons), col. 619.

[19] Lord Palmerston, 10 Aug. 1842, *PD* (Commons), cols. 1251–52; Palmerston to Crampton, 17 Feb. 1864, quoted in Harold Temperley and Lillian M. Penson, *Foundations of British Foreign Policy from Pitt to Salisbury* (1938; London, 1966), p. 304.

trade in Africa, where ruling élites used the traffic to preserve power and thus held back the economic potential of the continent. Such élites had to be reformed or removed, for both moral and practical reasons, and this might require forceful intervention or the threat of it. Once displaced, new groups could then be found to maintain connections with British trade through mutual self-interest.

Thus the British government had to use force, utilizing what Macgregor Laird, the West African traveller and shipping magnate, described as 'the moral power of the 24 pounder', to establish these links.[20] This was necessary to remove opponents and to open up such regions to the march of progress as expressed in the form of British trade and investment. Palmerston thus welcomed the use of naval power against China in 1846–47. 'These half-civilized governments such as those of China, Portugal, Spanish America, require a dressing every eight to ten years to keep them in order', he noted in 1850.[21]

Palmerston did not necessarily want annexations in order to reach his goals. Colonies had a role but were not important for their own sake; on the contrary, he felt, 'the value of such appendages is ... much over rated'.[22] Hence his rejection of a colony in Abyssinia in the 1840s: 'all we want is trade and land is not necessary for trade; we can carry on commerce very well on ground belonging to other people.'[23] Hence too his rejection of an occupation of Egypt in 1859, comparing it in a well-known passage to the estate owner in the north of England with a residence in the south who did not thereby need to own all the inns between the two: 'all he could want would have been that the inns should be well kept ... furnishing him with mutton chops and post horses.'[24]

None the less, commercial security could make intervention necessary. Britain did need, for example, to back up free trade treaties by establishing strategic bases to sustain British influence in a region. He was therefore willing to annex Aden in 1839 and Lagos in 1861. Not the least advantage of such bases was their role in relation to rival European powers. This was not because Palmerston felt their trade should be excluded from areas of British interest. On the contrary, provided it did not involve exclusive privileges, trade with other European powers was welcome as further encouragement of progress and 'world bettering': 'there is room

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[20] Quoted in Philip D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780–1850* (London, 1965), pp. 457–58.

[21] Minute by Palmerston, 29 Sept. 1850, on F[oreign] O[ffice] Memo of 26 Sept. 1850 on Consular Establishments at Foochowfoo and Ningpo, FO 17/173.

[22] Quoted in Kenneth Bourne, *Palmerston: The Early Years, 1784–1841* (London, 1982), p. 624.

[23] Minute by Palmerston, 30 Aug. 1847, on Plowden to FO, 28 Aug. 1847, FO 1/4.

[24] Palmerston to Cowley, 25 Nov. 1859, quoted in The Hon. Evelyn Ashley, *The Life of Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston, 1846–65*, 2 vols. (London, 1876), II, pp. 124–25.

enough...for...all the civilized nations of the rest of the world...[Britain] would see with pleasure every advance of commerce in Africa, provided that such commerce was not founded on monopoly.'[25] Thereafter the threat of force had to be kept ready to maintain the trade connections that had been created. The naval squadron sailing offshore was thus essential for the 'most exemplary drubbing' that Palmerston saw as occasionally necessary.[26] Similarly, Political Agents, such as Consul John Beecroft in the Niger Delta, Walter Plowden in Abyssinia, or Sir John Bowring in China, were necessary to monitor a region and facilitate British trade and investment.

The opening of a region through the free trade treaty—backed up by naval or consular force as required—in order to create economic linkages to the benefit of Britain, and the 'regeneration' of that region through the resultant trade and investment, were thus the twin aims of 'Palmerstonianism'. This policy of forceful intervention to spread market capitalism overseas received much criticism from Cobdenites and others who thought it reckless and unnecessary, but it clearly struck a chord with large sections of the British public. It was a policy that fitted the self-image of the commercial classes and indeed, more broadly, British perceptions of their place in the world. It resonated too with crude ideas of British patriotism, as the reaction to his 'Don Pacifico' speech of 1850, asserting British subjects' rights to protection overseas, showed. Palmerston's greatest skill lay in his ability to cast his overseas policy before the British public in terms of moral imperatives.

The centrality of free trade ideas in British ambitions for the wider world in these years can be seen in several regions outside the colonial Empire that were particularly the focus of British economic interest: Latin America, China, the Ottoman empire, and parts of Africa. British ambitions in Latin America were clear, at least before the 1860s: in Castlereagh's words, it was the 'opening to our manufactures of the markets of that great continent'.[27] The collapse of Spanish and Portuguese rule clearly offered possibilities to a power like Britain that could dominate South American waters and that had already been establishing an important presence in the region's commerce, but this required governmental action. Thus, it has been argued, between the 1830s and the 1860s the British government pursued an interventionist policy in Latin America designed to remove barriers to the intrusion of British trade and finance, to eradicate the slave trade, and to protect British

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[25] Minute by Palmerston, 20 Dec. 1850, on Colonial Office to FO, 15 Nov. 1850, FO 2/4.

[26] Palmerston to Davis, 9 Jan. 1847, quoted in (The) Rt. Hon. Sir Henry Lytton Bulwer (Lord Dalling), *The Life of Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston*, 3 vols. (London, 1870–74), III, pp. 376–78.

[27] Memorandum by Castlereagh, 1 May 1807, in Marquess of Londonderry, ed., *Correspondence, Despatches and Other Papers of Viscount Castlereagh*, 12 vols. (London, 1848–53), VII, p. 321.

economic interests.[28] Officials intervened on numerous occasions. For example, in 1845, as in 1806–07, British forces intervened in the River Plate. British forces were also used in the landing at Callao in 1839 and the Mexico intrusion of 1861–62. On other occasions the mere presence of the Royal Navy was sufficient to obtain compliance, as off Peru in 1857 on behalf of bondholders, and against Chile in 1863. British pressure helped the creation of Uruguay, while Palmerston used the navy to threaten Brazil over the slave trade in 1848–49. From the 1830s to the 1860s the government clearly showed its willingness to intervene assertively in Latin America to open 'the markets of that great continent'.[29]

The aim was not to seize colonies but rather to secure the institutional framework to keep markets open. Numerous free trade treaties with Latin American governments were signed by Britain to achieve precisely that. One such was in 1825 with Argentina; another in 1834 was used to insist on a reduction in Peruvian tariffs; one with Brazil in 1810 gave Britain preferential duties until 1844. Other pressures were exerted to open inland waterways to outside trade. These actions were generally successful in both opening up Latin America to free trade and to achieving economic benefits for Britain: by the 1850s Britain was well established as the main trading partner of the region. Latin America took around 10 per cent of total British exports between 1850 and 1913 and around 10 per cent of British imports, figures second only to India's in Britain's trade. Equally, British financial involvement in Latin America increased with British investment growing from some £30m in 1826 to around £81m by 1865. Overall, there was clearly a considerable British economic presence in the continent by the 1880s.[30]

Similarly in China, British ambitions were to open this potential market of a quarter of humankind to British economic intrusion. Again the hope was that 'world bettering' and British economic ambitions would go hand in hand. The British government's involvement in the region grew sharply, with repeated interventions between the 1830s and 1860s. Chinese reluctance to open their economy to the 'foreign devils' from the West clashed with Britain's ambitions for free trade and demands for recognition and equal status. Such clashes culminated in the so-called Opium War of 1839–42, the seizure of Hong Kong, and the attempt to open China's economy to western trade and finance through the Treaty of Nanking (Nanjing) in 1842. The resulting five 'treaty ports', the 'concessions', and the principle of extra-territoriality were central to British ambitions in China. A further assault on China was launched in 1847 and again, this time with French

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[28] Rory Miller, *Britain and Latin America in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London, 1993), pp. 67, 243–44.

[29] Memorandum by Castlereagh, 1 May 1807, in *Correspondence of Viscount Castlereagh*, VII, p. 321.

[30] See chap. by Alan Knight.

involvement, between 1856 and 1860, culminating in the establishment of further treaty ports and concessions.

These assaults were accompanied by an influx of western influences into China and the growth of British trade. British traders such as Jardine Matheson and Co. exploited the advantages gained in these treaties and took up important positions in the Chinese economy. Like other western enterprises, they operated with special privileges (such as exemptions from local taxes or extra-territorial legal rights), and the aid of compradors, or local merchants, that such firms employed at the interface with the local economy. British advisers took up positions within the Chinese administration, others helped construct arsenals and shipyards. Of most consequence was Robert Hart, who in 1863 became head of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs (IMC). The IMC collected the Chinese customs revenue and ostensibly, was an arm of the Ch'ing (Qing) government. In time, however, as these revenues became pledged to repay loans from western banks Ch'ing control over the customs became diluted; similar processes concerned the salt admin-istration. Perhaps most significantly, the existence of the IMC prevented the Ch'ing imposing protective tariffs. Thus Britain's ostensible policy of opening Ch'ing economy to western trade and finance through free trade masked a deeper commitment to the economic penetration of the country. And, for the British at least, it seemed to work. British trade (imports and exports combined) of around £4m in 1830 rose to nearly £15m by 1860. Palmerston expressed satisfaction in 1845, stating that 'a greater benefit to British manufactures could hardly be conceived'; Lord Elgin, British High Commissioner and envoy to China, was categorical following his actions in 1858: 'we have broken down the barriers' to China's economy.[31]

The Ottoman empire was a further region where Britain entertained political and economic ambitions. Leaving aside the Balkan provinces of the empire, two areas were of particular importance to Britain: Turkey itself and Egypt. The strategic importance of Turkey, primarily because of concerns about the route to India, can be seen in British involvement in its defence against Muhammad Ali, ruler of Egypt, in 1839 and against Russia in 1853–56 during the Crimean War. Britain's aim was to gain a breathing space whereby Ottoman administration, its army, and its economy could be reformed and its independence thereby preserved. It was, said Palmerston, of 'utmost importance' to Britain to keep the Ottoman empire an independent state.[32]

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[31] Quoted in Southgate, *The Most English Minister*, p. 146; Elgin to Shanghai Merchants, 18 Jan. 1859, *Correspondence Relative to the Earl of Elgin's Special Missions to China and Japan, 1857–1859*, c.2571, *PP* (1859) (Second Session), XXXIII, p. 458. See chap. by Jürgen Osterhammel.

[32] Lord Palmerston, 11 July 1833, *PD* (Commons), col. 579.

The ultimate aim may have been strategic, but economic penetration was the means to achieve this. In some ways Britain was successful. From the 1830s through to the 1880s Britain was establishing herself as the major external power in the region, aided by Stratford Canning as Ambassador (1825–29, 1842–58) in Constantinople. This can be seen most clearly in the free trade treaty of 1838, the Convention of Balta Liman, signed between the Ottomans and Britain and then extended to other powers. This treaty was designed to open up Turkey's economy to western, more particularly British, penetration and was recognized as a significant British success. Such penetration, it was believed, would regenerate the ossifying Ottoman empire, a process Palmerston believed would need just ten years of peace. The treaty established a tariff regime effectively outside Ottoman control, exempted foreign traders from internal customs duty, and eliminated state monopolies. By abolishing such monopolies it removed a major source of revenue from the government and forced it to consider foreign loans. When added to existing privileges under the 'Capitulations' for Europeans within the empire, which placed them effectively above the law and which were extended in 1867 to include rights to hold land, the thrust of British ambitions was clear.

Turkey's trade, particularly with Britain, grew considerably after 1838. There was a great increase in agricultural production, particularly wheat and cotton, for export, the other side of which was a sharp rise in cotton textile imports. This was particularly clear between 1840 and 1870, the decisive stage in foreign textile inroads into the Turkish economy. Britain's share of Ottoman imports and exports grew, doubling to nearly a third of the total between 1830–32 and 1870–72. British financial involvement with Turkey also mounted, especially from 1854. The first major loan to the Ottoman government came in that year, followed by thirteen other foreign loans over the next twenty years. Central to this process was the Ottoman Bank, established in London in 1856 and, from 1863 as the Imperial Ottoman Bank, responsible for the issuing of Ottoman currency. These loans came at a high price and increasingly were used to repay earlier debts. When this was not achieved, the Ottoman government was forced to raise funds from local merchants at high rates in order to repay its loans. The end result of this indebtedness came in the 1870s, with the Ottoman government going bankrupt in 1875.

As British ambitions to regenerate Turkey's economy through free trade ran into difficulties, Egypt grew in strategic and economic importance, particularly after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and as illustrated by Benjamin Disraeli's purchase of the Khedive's shares in the Canal company in 1875. Britain's aims were to counter French influence in Egypt by opening its economy to British enterprise. Thereby, felt the Earl of Clarendon, later Foreign Secretary, Britain could secure 'the overland communication with India . . . the progress of civilization and the

development of the commercial resources of the East'.[33] Under Muhammad Ali (1805–48), Egypt had experienced considerable economic growth. His modernization policies focused on protection and a strong state sector in the economy: government-run factories produced textiles, sugar, glass, and paper, while the state monopolized exports. With increased agricultural output, particularly in cotton, their centrepiece from the 1830s, these initially successful policies were undermined by the 1838 treaty: it seriously affected Muhammad Ali's state-run factories, and demolished state monopolies, compelling Egypt's rulers to rely increasingly on foreign loans. Large-scale borrowing ensued, particularly from British sources, accompanied by an influx of westerners protected under the Capitulations. As in China, indigenous jurisdictions were increasingly eroded under western pressures.

Britain gained from this by developing as Egypt's main foreign trade partner, particularly in the second half of the century. By the 1880s she took 80 per cent of Egypt's exports and provided 44 per cent of her imports. As the major lender to the Egyptian regime, by the early 1870s Britain held the chief share of the public debt. Much of these loans was spent on public works, particularly railways, to match the ambitions of Egypt's rulers; but much too was spent unproductively on repaying previous loans, and wasteful empire-building in the south. When revenue failed to increase fast enough to meet obligations, the result was bankruptcy in 1876. This watershed in Egypt's history witnessed the establishment of a financial administration under European control to organize Egypt's revenues and debt repayments. Although Britain occupied the country only in 1882, from 1876, with the establishment of outside financial control, Egypt effectively lost control of her affairs to foreigners.[34]

Tropical Africa too held an important place in the British government's designs. Here British commercial and political involvement grew markedly in these years. Again British aims centred on the spread of free trade—usually couched in terms of the moral imperatives of the anti-slave trade campaign—which became critical to ambitions of regenerating the continent and developing an important trading partner for British industry. This 'dream of tropical wealth' meant that particularly during the period from the 1840s to the 1860s, and notably under the impact of Palmerston, a growing British involvement on both sides of the continent—in areas as different as the Niger, Dahomey, Abyssinia, and Zanzibar—was encouraged.[35] Here consul and anti-slaving naval officer worked to support the British presence in the form of trader and missionary. Palmerston encouraged expeditions to the Niger in 1841 and 1857; the mission to Dahomey in 1850; the assault on

[33] Memorandum by Clarendon, 14 March 1840, in Rt. Hon. Sir Herbert Maxwell, *The Life and Letters of George William Frederick, Fourth Earl Clarendon*, 2 vols. (London, 1913), I, p. 190.

[34] See chap. by Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid-Marsot.

[35] Curtin, *Image of Africa*, p. 60.

Lagos in 1851 and its annexation ten years later; the creation of a Consulate at Massawa in 1847; and the actions against the Zanzibar slave trade in the early 1840s. The abolition of slave trading on both sides of the continent would be followed, it was hoped, by a surge in legitimate trade leading to economic rewards for Britain and the march of civilization for Africa.[36]

Between 1815 and 1880 British policy-makers intervened frequently in these four regions to support British political and economic interests. In all of them ideas of 'world bettering' and British economic benefits were tightly intertwined in the shape of market capitalism. The seizure of colonies was largely—though by no means entirely—eschewed and the emphasis was placed on establishing positions whereby British influence could be increased and the region's economy opened up to outside trade and investment via the free trade treaty. Where necessary this was undertaken by force, with the seizure of bases such as Hong Kong and the establishment of naval power like the anti-slaving squadrons off West and East Africa, used to maintain British leverage. From such points, Consuls and Political Agents could promote the provisions of free trade treaties and facilitate the spread of British trade and investment into their respective regions, thereby creating a burgeoning realm of British influence overseas.

In assessing the consequences of these actions, contemporary policy-makers and others certainly perceived the expansion of British influence across the globe to be immensely effective. For Herman Merivale, Professor of Political Economy at Oxford University, the British were 'masters of every sea and colonists of every shore, there is scarcely a nook which our industry has not rendered accessible', while for an observer such as W. S. Jevons in 1865, unfettered commerce had made 'the several quarters of the globe our willing tributaries'.[37] The optimism implicit in these views reflected the deeper belief that the spread of British trade and finance represented progress, improvement, and regeneration for the world. It reflected too a confidence that providence was on Britain's side and that the expansion of British influence overseas was right, inevitable, and pre-eminently beneficial to all parties.

Insistence on free trade principles to open regions of the world to British economic penetration undoubtedly worked, at least on one level. From Aden to Buenos Aires, from the Yangtze (Yangtzi) to Zanzibar, free trade principles were assiduously promoted by British officials, where necessary at the point of a gun-

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[36] See chap. by T. C. McCaskie.

[37] Herman Merivale, *Lectures on Colonization and Colonies* (London, 1861), quoted in Semmel, *Free Trade Imperialism*, p. 1; W. Stanley Jevons, *The Coal Question* [1865], 3rd edn. (London, 1906), p. 410; quoted in Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century, 1815–1914: A Study of Empire and Expansion*, 2nd edn. (London, 1993), p. 87.

boat. The resultant opening of local economies to Britain's merchants and financiers undoubtedly brought her benefits. Yet it is possible to see, in ways which contemporaries like Jevons did not, significant limits to the access Britain secured and the influence she established in these regions. In retrospect it is clear that, while Britain achieved much, confidence in the regeneration of so-called backward areas by tying their economies to the needs of Britain through free trade reflected far more the persistent over-optimism of early Victorian society rather than the developing realities of world politics.

The qualified impact of British economic influence can be seen in Latin America, the area where Britain might be said to have asserted her interests most effectively. Certainly the promotion of free trade encouraged Latin America along lines of economic development that suited Britain. Yet looked at from Britain the results of intervention in the region did not match Canning's ambitions, at least before the 1880s: 'South America was indeed free but she was not, in the mid-Victorian period, English.'[38] Although the view from parts of Latin America itself might have seemed very different, and while British economic interests in Latin America grew during these years, what is striking is the limits to this growth, and the limits to the leverage it gave: it did not, before 1880, make the region, as Jevons put it, a 'tributary' of the British economy. Indeed, rival merchants and financiers had begun to move into British Latin American markets with remarkable ease by the end of the century.

Limits to dependency on Britain arose from the fact that, while its value might seem impressive, the volume of British trade in the continent remained limited before the 1870s. Low population levels, restricted purchasing power, and a poor communication infrastructure meant that British trade did not have the impact often imagined: indigenous craft industries were not entirely destroyed by British imports in these years, nor did British traders replace local entrepreneurs in the regional economy. Equally, Britain's investments in Latin America grew significantly in this period, but this did not give an unqualified hold over Latin American economies. Countries could default, as Peru did on its loan of 1853 and Argentina on the 1824 loan. Similarly, British-owned railway firms and utilities might try to assert their powers in the market, but found local politicians adept at extracting concessions in turn; such bargains as were struck between British capital and local governments were never one-sided. The relationship between Britain and Latin America remained one where local regimes were well able to assert their own interests. Study of the Peruvian guano industry, the major supplier to British agriculture in the middle of the century, for example, shows

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[38] P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914* (London, 1993), p. 312.

just how restricted was the influence British interests could exert over prices against a determined government.[39] From the metropolitan point of view there were considerable limits to British political influence in the region before 1880. Military interventions were often 'fruitless' and the British learnt the lesson of 1845 of just how counter-productive these could be.[40] Likewise, the leverage Britain gained over tariffs was limited. In practice Latin American governments retained considerable tariff autonomy even at the high-tide of free trade in the mid-century, and undoubtedly remained 'the essential mediators' in the relationship with Britain.[41]

This was even more the case in China. British aggression never achieved the optimistic ambitions that Palmerston and Elgin entertained in the 1840s and 1850s. Britain failed successfully to impose its will on China in these years, a fact Palmerston recognized with his belief that repeated military assaults were necessary. The Chinese economy responded only weakly to these incursions: Britain gained only limited benefits from China in these years. Her trade grew, but remained very small as a proportion of both Britain's total world trade and the Chinese economy; indeed, in this sense the high point in British trade with China lay in the very early 1800s (see Table 2.1 p. 33). Thereafter, China occupied a declining place, failing to keep up with the broader growth of British trade overseas.

The reason for this again lay in market resistance to western inroads. In China, these remained largely limited to the relatively few treaty ports. Chinese firms stood up well to western competition. Being closer to the market, they had many advantages over their western competitors. They could stress 'buy Chinese' sentiments, enjoy better labour relations, and utilize their knowledge of local tastes while compradors exploited western merchants' weaknesses to their own advantage. No more than Latin America's, were Chinese crafts destroyed by western imports. Outside the treaty ports most Chinese relied, as they always had done, on local handicraft products. Foreigners continually complained about the difficulty of penetrating the Chinese market.[42]

Behind this lay the fact that the population had little disposable income; demand for western goods was small and foreign trade remained only a fraction of internal Chinese trade throughout this period. The high costs of transport were

[39] W. M. Mathew, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade: Peru, 1820–70', *EcHR*, Second Series, XXI (1968), pp. 562–79.

[40] Peter Winn, 'British Informal Empire in Uruguay in the 19th Century', *Past and Present*, LXXIII (1976), p. 108.

[41] Miller, *Britain and Latin America*, p. 243.

[42] Eugene Lubot, 'The Revisionist Perspective on Modern Chinese History', *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXXIII (1973), p. 96.

a further barrier. Even tax exemptions for Westerners were often ignored by local officials who could apply the 'squeeze' in other ways; Chinese competitors would, in any case, obtain similar exemptions. Important local trades like that in soybeans, for instance, remained beyond western penetration. There were, in short, major impediments in the Chinese market which western traders failed to break down in these years and which made it difficult to create an economy linked to the wider world as a producer of raw materials and purchaser of finished manufactures. The size and impenetrability of China were such that the hopes of Palmerston and Elgin proved grossly over-optimistic.

In the Ottoman empire, British economic inroads remained no less limited and Palmerston's aims to regenerate Turkey through free trade achieved little. Once again local resistance to external economic ambitions needs to be stressed for the period before the 1880s. The impact of the treaty of 1838 has been 'overstated'.[43] British trade with Turkey was something of a disappointment in the middle of the century, reaching only £3m out of a total of some £200m of British imports and exports in 1850. Indeed, the impact of foreign trade as a whole on Turkey remained limited, amounting only to some 6–8 per cent of total Ottoman production and only 12–15 per cent of agricultural production by the 1870s. Most of Anatolia was little affected by western trade before the 1850s; local crafts throughout the Empire were then still in a strong position. Similarly with finance. Foreign investment in the Empire remained limited before the 1870s, and it was hardly British financiers who benefited from the increased indebtedness of the Ottomans thereafter: 'French financiers . . . completely routed the British at Constantinople', at least before 1900.[44] British disappointment with the leverage it was able to establish over Turkey was as great as that felt over China.

It might be argued that the significance for Turkey of the period before the 1880s was that it saw the creation of linkages to the world economy which were of importance later. Yet Ottoman integration into the world economy was very slow, not least due to resistance by the central bureaucracy to the demands of outside powers and its capacity to play off one power against another. Intra-Ottoman internal trade grew, while such railways as were built were of restricted length and impact, and foreign trade remained of importance only in limited areas of Anatolia. Britain failed to make inroads into the Turkish economy sufficient to reverse the ossification which raised increasingly serious strategic concerns in Whitehall in the 1880s and 1890s.

Even in Egypt, which took on a new importance after 1869, it is easy to exaggerate Britain's success before 1885 in achieving its ends. Again, the economic arm of

[43] Sevket Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 19.
[44] Platt, *Finance, Trade and Politics*, p. 185.

British power found it difficult to break down local barriers. Despite western imports, village cloth production in Egypt survived right through the century, not least because population increase provided a growing domestic market. Khedive Ismail created state sugar factories in the 1870s that were more successful than critics allow. Intra-Ottoman trade provided expanding opportunities quickly seized by Egyptian merchants. There was no absolute diminution in local economic activity in the face of western penetration; imports largely satisfied the demands of the foreign population rather than eroding local manufacturing. With few exceptions, 'foreign competition had not, as yet, basically altered the structure of local production'.[45] This indeed, from the British point of view, was the problem, and the crisis of 1876–82 in Egypt marked the failure of the attempt to promote British interests in the country by regenerating its economy from a distance.

In tropical Africa too, the ambition to force open the economies of the region was of only limited success before the 1870s. Schemes to regenerate the continent through trade and investment ran aground with the various expeditions sent to the Niger. Here, as often on that continent, white dreams remained dependent on the realities of black Africa. Economically, British trade achieved few inroads into tropical Africa before the last decades of the century. Africa clearly did not wish to be 'regenerated' on British terms; slavery proved immensely difficult to root out. Politically, Britain found it difficult to impose its will on West and East Africa and its 'paramountcy' in these areas, if such it was, proved paper thin when challenged after 1885. Local societies retained their autonomy, and Britain's successes in asserting her influence remained dependent on local élites' willingness to tolerate the British presence, usually to suit their own agendas. Lord Salisbury may have felt confident in 1890 of British power in Africa surviving 'without . . . the inconvenience of protectorates or anything of that sort', but policy-makers had to move quickly to secure British interests once the Scramble began.[46]

In the mid-nineteenth century British economic and political influence overseas expanded considerably. Latin America, China, the Ottoman empire, and Africa experienced growing British involvement, economic, political, and military. The theme of these years is of a Britain attempting to negotiate relationships with such societies to her own benefit, with the free trade treaty playing a central role. At its simplest, the aim was thereby to increase British economic interests in that region, although in some cases this underpinned strategic ambitions. This aim was achieved, but the broader goal of 'regenerating' societies and thereby creating regions tied as 'tributaries' to British economic interests was not attained.

[45] Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800–1914* (London, 1981), p. 149.
[46] Lord Salisbury, 10 July 1890, *PD* (Lords), col. 1265.

This deeper ambition proved much more problematic, because the aim to reshape the world through free trade and its extension overseas owed more to the misplaced optimism of British policy-makers and their partial views of the world than to an understanding of the realities of the mid-nineteenth-century globe. In essence two problems remained unsolved. First, the volumes of trade and investment the British were able to generate with these regions remained limited before 1880. In the case of China, for example, the figures failed even to match the growth of British trade generally. In other regions, while British trade grew, its significance as a proportion of local economic activity remained restricted before the end of the century. This related to the second difficulty. Local economies and local regimes proved adept at restricting the reach of British trade and investment. Local impediments to foreign inroads, the inhabitants' low purchasing power, the resilience of local manufacturing, and the capabilities of local entrepreneurs meant that these areas effectively resisted British economic penetration, both before 1880 and long afterward. The result was that the links Britain achieved in these areas remained limited; large parts of the wider world did not wish to be 'regenerated' by British trade and investment.

This raises broader questions as to the exact nature of the relationship Britain established with these areas of the globe. For John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson the nineteenth century was a period in which they identified an 'imperialism of Free Trade', where British policy-makers were committed to the creation of an extensive, expanding, informal Empire, outside the boundaries of the formal colonies, in order to defend British interests overseas. 'By informal means if possible, or by formal annexations when necessary, British paramountcy was steadily upheld', they wrote in often-quoted words, stressing the continuity in British policy through the century.[47] For Gallagher and Robinson, the end result was indeed an informal empire under British control, with regions such as South America, China, Ottoman Turkey, and others under British sway. These regions became as much part of a British Empire as, say, the Australian colonies, where conversely the policy of reducing formal metropolitan controls reflected the same preferred reliance on 'informal means' of maintaining British paramountcy. Other historians, however, believe such ideas seriously exaggerate both the British government's willingness to intervene overseas before the 1880s, and its success in establishing more than a very superficial paramountcy over parts of the wider world.[48]

In the mid-nineteenth century such linkages with these regions as successive British governments did achieve through the promotion of free trade are less impressive, in retrospect, than they might initially appear. There are conceptual

[47] Gallagher and Robinson, 'Imperialism of Free Trade', p. 3.
[48] D. C. M. Platt is the most notable. See Platt, *Finance, Trade and Politics*.

limitations in using metaphors such as 'informal empire' or 'informal control' to understand Britain's relations with these areas. The metaphors not only distort what should be seen as a more ambiguous, fluid, and infinitely graded continuum of influence between Britain and the wider world. They are also unhelpful in implying—though this is moving beyond the scope of this chapter—that this influence simply reached one way, from Britain into the world outside. Relations between Britain and the wider world, in these years at least, need to be seen in a much more pluralistic and mutually permeable fashion.

It is far better to approach these regions in terms of the fluctuating degrees of British influence that was established in them, considerable or limited as it might be at different times, and the varying success Britain gained thereby in achieving her ambitions. In a country such as Egypt, for instance, British expansion and intervention led to inescapable territorial expansion rather than informal control. Elsewhere British paramountcy remained elusive. That Britain established a commercial or financial presence in a region did not mean, necessarily, that she gained either economic or political paramountcy over it. Only at the highest level of abstraction can Latin America, China, Ottoman Turkey, and Africa in the mid-nineteenth century be described as parts of a British informal empire.

After 1880 a much greater British and European presence overseas came into being. Britain's own economic penetration of the regions surveyed here was much more marked, and British policy much more determined in defence of its economic interests. However, Britain's limited inroads before that date had also helped open the way for powerful economic rivals between 1880 and 1914. Any continuing wish by policy-makers to create an informal empire was overshadowed by greater vulnerabilities in Britain's position, the heightened willingness of other powers to challenge British interests, and a far greater readiness on the part of all powers to assume direct governmental control. Changing circumstances led the British government to recognize that the ambitions of the mid-nineteenth century were based ultimately on over-optimistic views of the willingness of the wider world to respond to the British economy, and on over-confident assessments of Britain's capacity to bring that about. The gulf between intention and reality, even at the height of Britain's power, should not be forgotten.

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7

Britain and Latin America

ALAN KNIGHT

'Spanish America is free,' George Canning, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, exulted in 1824, 'and if we do not mismanage our affairs sadly, she is English.'[1] Now almost a cliché, the quote has regularly served to justify including Latin America within Britain's notional informal empire. Historians of empire, protagonists of dependency theory, and Marxist theorists from Lenin onwards, have all in their different ways seen the fall of formal Iberian imperialism in the New World as the prelude to British informal imperialism.[2]

How valid is this view? First, British *formal* imperialism, characterized by territorial possession, was not unknown in the Americas south of the 49th parallel. Bits of Central and South America were painted red, but almost by definition these were not bits of *Latin* America.[3] Tiny though they were compared to the great expanses of the continent or the British Empire, they generated local concerns, relating to security, frontiers, contraband, and they occasionally excited local ambitions, mild versions of the 'sub-imperialism' which powered British expansion elsewhere. Trinidad and British Guiana provoked conflicts with Venezuela and, indirectly, with the United States; British Honduras, whose existence galled Guatemala, was seen by visionary British officials as a pivot for naval and commercial power on the Central American isthmus.[4] In contrast, the Falkland Islands, seized by Britain in 1833, remained a diplomatic dead letter for nearly a century.[5]

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[1] Wendy Hinde, *George Canning* (London, 1973), p. 368.

[2] John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', *Economic History Review*, VI, 1 (1953), pp. 1–14; Philip J. O'Brien, 'Dependency Revisited', in Christopher Abel and Colin M. Lewis, eds., *Latin America, Economic Imperialism and the State* (London, 1985), pp. 40–69; Anthony Brewer, *Marxist Theories of Imperialism* (London, 1980), chap. 7.

[3] British Honduras and British Guiana, while part of the Central and South American mainland, were never effectively controlled by the Iberian empires; lacking the historical and cultural prerequisites of *Latin* America, they are conventionally bracketed with the Anglophone Caribbean.

[4] G. E. Carl, *First Among Equals: Great Britain and Venezuela, 1810–1910* (Syracuse, NY, 1980), pp. 93–97, 108; Joseph Smith, *Illusions of Conflict, Anglo-American Diplomacy toward Latin America, 1865–1896* (Pittsburgh, Pa., 1979), pp. 205–08.

[5] H. S. Ferns, *Britain and Argentina in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1960), pp. 227–33.

Apart from these limited, territorial possessions, the British sometimes entertained grander schemes of expansion, displaying (formal) imperialist motives which spurred policy even if they ultimately proved fruitless. But what schemes? Whose motives? British influence and policy emanated from various sources. Whitehall's concerns were not those of the men on the ground, or the men on the bridge. Local representatives—diplomats, consuls, businessmen, naval officers—saw things differently; they lacked the big picture, and responded to immediate local pressures. The Olympian detachment and budgetary caution of Foreign Secretaries such as Castlereagh or Salisbury were denied both to proconsular officials like Strangford in Brazil or Chatfield in Central America, deeply immersed in local politics, as well as naval commanders pitched into local civil wars, blockades, and revolutions. During the turbulent 1840s, Mandeville, British Minister at Buenos Aires, disobeyed Whitehall, and Purvis, commanding the British flotilla in the River Plate, disobeyed Mandeville.[6] Even companies had their local cowboys, practitioners of business 'sub-imperialism', like the British bankers who—demonstrating the timelessness of their trade—played the money market in Brazil in the 1880s: according to one historian, 'their home offices were dead set against exchange speculation, but the local managers sometimes indulged in this heady game'.[7]

Even where territorial possession—actual or potential—was absent, the pursuit of British interests could still involve local political meddling. Economic relations went beyond the dispassionate mediation of the market,[8] and diplomatic relations involved distinct hierarchies of power, in which the threat of coercion was present. For example, the economic imbalance characterizing Anglo-Uruguayan relations in the later nineteenth century might not, of itself, constitute 'imperialism' (consider, for example, Anglo-Danish relations). But British political and military efforts to establish Uruguay as an independent buffer state between the hostile republics of Argentina and Brazil, and thus to keep the Plate open to British commerce, would, by virtue of its coercive, interventionist, and political nature, constitute some sort of imperialism, even though the goal was not Uruguayan annexation but Uruguayan survival.[9] Similarly, British coercion of Mexico in the 1860s or Venezuela in the 1900s, though devoid of territorial ambition, might be

[6] David McLean, *War, Diplomacy and Informal Empire, Britain and the Republics of La Plata, 1836–53* (London, 1995), pp. 40–41, 46, 55.

[7] Richard Graham, *Britain and the Onset of Modernization in Brazil, 1850–1914* (Cambridge, 1968), p. 98.

[8] I do not pretend that 'the market' is a fair, open, and neutral arena, but wish to distinguish roughly between relations conducted within that arena and those involving a substantial degree of 'extra-economic coercion'.

[9] Peter Winn, 'British Informal Empire in Uruguay in the Nineteenth Century', *Past and Present*, LXXIII (1976), pp. 100–26.

termed 'imperialist' since it went beyond the pacific mediation of the market and involved a form of international 'extra-economic coercion'.

Furthermore, British involvement of this kind—political and coercive but non-territorial—was common, though concentrated in certain times and places. It responded to diverse motives and interests. Again, metropolitan caution often contrasted with peripheral aggression. Whitehall was generally reluctant to despatch gunboats. They were costly, unpredictable, and needed elsewhere. Gunboats could not coerce landlocked Andean republics, or even sprawling, self-sufficient prairies.[10] Nevertheless, local coercion and political involvement were common. Consuls, businessmen, and naval officers lobbied, lent weight to local factions, paid bribes, and influenced political outcomes: treaties, tariffs, even (it was said) wars and revolutions. Sometimes the very fact that the British were thought to mix in local politics had an impact, whether in reality they did or not; the fear of foreign intervention had a phenomenological effect in the periphery which Anglo-centric scholars, conning Foreign Office archives, may overlook.[11] Above all, British interests consistently sought out local 'collaborating élites', and some non-élites, who could serve their cause: generals and ministers; lawyers and native businessmen; judges, officials, and local political bosses; labour recruiters, fore-men, bandits, and revolutionaries.[12] Indeed, abstinence from formal political control placed a huge premium on such informal collaborative networks and encouraged, among other things, the resort to widespread corruption: the high-mindedness of the Indian Civil Service could not be replicated in self-governing republics, where graft was both a fact of life and a necessary lubricant of collaborative mechanisms. For this reason, 'informal empire' was a two-way street, a construction of peripheral as well as metropolitan interests.

But if collaboration was freely extended, if Latin Americans did business with the British not out of fear but choice, what is left of 'imperialism'? It is here that 'dependency' proves useful. 'Dependency' implies no *formal* subordination of satellite to metropolis. Subordination may arise from economic imbalance and—a possible corollary—ideological or cultural 'hegemony'. A monopsonistic buyer may not need to deploy 'extra-economic coercion' against an economic client: Britain, apparently, could manipulate Argentina because the British market was crucial for Argentina to an extent that the Argentine market was not crucial

[10] As José de San Martín, the liberator of South America, politely reminded the Foreign Office during the abortive coercion of Rosas: San Martín to Dickson, 28 Dec. 1846, F[oreign] O[ffice] 6/128.

[11] Rory Miller, *Britain and Latin America in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London, 1993), p. 48; Graham, *Britain and the Onset*, p. 103.

[12] David Rock, *Politics in Argentina, 1890–1930* (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 3, 6; Marshall C. Eakin, 'Business Imperialism and British Enterprise in Brazil: The St John d'El Rey Mining Company Ltd., 1830–1960', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, LXVI (1986), pp. 723, 727.

for Britain.[13] As the British Consul at Angostura asked in 1839, when a 'fool' Venezuelan suggested that a ban on British exports to his country would lead to riots in British industrial towns, 'what is all the trade of Venezuela? Not equal to the sale of many London shopkeepers.'[14] Similarly, a rich creditor could crack the financial whip over a weak debtor without resorting to coercion; in Argentina, 'a quiet word of advice where it mattered from a prominent [British] banker...was enough to influence proposed legislation'.[15] Certainly, considerations of credit-worthiness and business confidence could impose harsh constraints on Latin-American government; structuralists would go further and discern an enduring dependency created by the unequal terms of trade between periphery and metropolis.[16] Whether economic imbalance or cultural dependency qualify as 'imperialism' is a moot theoretical point, but clearly they coloured Anglo-Latin American relations throughout the nineteenth century and beyond.

For those relations were not purely political or economic. The British came bearing not only guns and gifts but also intangible ideas: economic liberalism, parliamentarism, monarchism, anti-slavery, Protestantism, sport, racism, perhaps even the 'gentlemanly' ethos which, some argue, was integral to British capitalism.[17] Indeed, as Adam Smith knew and the new 'institutional' economics rightly stresses, economic activity does not take place within an ethical and cultural vacuum; the market is neither amoral nor anomic. The British presence in Latin America, therefore, involved ideological and cultural proselytization; the dissemination, sometimes enduring, sometimes ephemeral, of British attitudes, ideas, and cultural practices. Indeed, the best way to create congenial collaborating élites was to convert them to the British way of life, especially with regard to business practices. Since immigration from Britain was scant, 'prefabricated' collaborators were in short supply. Latin Americans were not Canadians or Australians. But they could learn. The fall of the Argentine dictator Rosas in 1852 brought to power a new civilian political élite which, a British merchant observed, 'had [in exile] come into contact with a more advanced civilization and learned in adversity to appreciate constitutional order and industrial development. Henceforth...they predisposed large numbers of their countrymen to defer to...the intelligent portion of the foreign residents whose interests had been engrafted into those of

[13] Roger Gravil, *The Anglo-Argentine Connection, 1900–1939* (Boulder, 1985).

[14] Carl, *First Among Equals*, p. 38.

[15] Callum A. MacDonald, 'End of Empire: The Decline of the Anglo-Argentine Connection, 1918–1951', in Alistair Hennessy and John King, eds., *The Land That England Lost: Argentina and Britain, A Special Relationship* (London, 1992), p. 81.

[16] Winston Fritsch, *External Constraints on Economic Policy in Brazil, 1889–1930* (Basingstoke, 1988), pp. 31, 61; Gravil, *Anglo-Argentine Connection*, p. 95.

[17] P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914* (London, 1993), pp. 22–37 and *passim*.

the country.'[18] Such 'deference' and 'engraftment', where they could be achieved, offered the best way of wedding Latin American élites to British interests: it was more secure, durable, and decorous than either the crude coercion of the gunboat or the sordid strategem of the bribe.

Like nineteenth-century China, the Iberian empires of the eighteenth century were seen by British commercial interests as potentially valuable markets, ripe for exploitation but ringed by decaying imperial ramparts. If Portugal allowed a measure of legitimate trade—the British shipped slaves to Brazil in return for gold and cotton—Spain maintained and, from the 1770s, reinforced her mercantilist monopoly. But this reassertion of imperial power came to an end with the wars of the 1790s. Transatlantic communications were broken; foreign, especially British contraband, flooded into Spain's American colonies, and following Napoleon's invasion of the Iberian peninsula in 1808 insurgent movements challenged Spanish authority from Mexico to Buenos Aires. While British merchants took advantage of these opportunities—by 1810 Lima was glutted with contraband British goods—the British government pursued objectives that combined, not always comfortably, commercial self-interest and geopolitical advantage. Between 1796 and 1808, while Spain was allied with France against Britain, the latter pursued its traditional policy of carrying the war to the enemy's colonies. Buenos Aires and Montevideo were seized in 1806–07, and plans were afoot for a *coup de main* against Spain's prize colony, Mexico, when the Napoleonic invasion of Spain radically changed the strategic scene. Now the happy combination of colonial warfare and pacific commercial penetration had to change. Spain became an ally; official colonial subversion, which British conservatives had never liked, was curtailed; and dreams of imperialist expansion in the Americas were temporarily laid to rest. This did not end British involvement in the epic struggle for Latin American independence. If the British government remained ambivalent, British merchants trafficked in arms, freelance mercenaries flocked to the insurgent colours, and Lord Cochrane commanded the infant Chilean navy in its victories over the Spanish fleet. Unofficially, therefore, the British contributed to the continent's emancipation from Spanish rule, which was consummated in the early 1820s.

The British government now faced both a *fait accompli* and a tricky dilemma: commercial advantage and liberal sentiment argued for prompt recognition of the new republics; but monarchical and conservative sympathy for Spain dictated otherwise, since, as Canning put it, recognition 'sanctions ... a revolutionary principle [and] ... exposes [King George IV] to the risk of having a coconut-

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[18] William Latham, quoted by Charles A. Jones, 'British Capital in Argentine History: Structures, Rhetoric and Change', in Hennessy and King, *Land That England Lost*, pp. 70–71.

coloured minister to receive at his levee'.[19] Castlereagh and Canning opted for incremental commercial recognition—allowing Latin American ships into British ports, despatching Consuls to the new republics—but political recognition had to wait until the later 1820s, when fear of advancing French and US influence forced the British hand and overcame conservative scruples. In Brazil a different sequence unfolded. There was no mass insurrection, no bloody break with the imperial metropolis. Threatened by Napoleon, protected and prompted by Britain, the Braganza royal family fled to Brazil. Trade was liberalized and the British secured a highly favourable commercial treaty. In 1821–22 the Braganza dynasty bifurcated, when Pedro I proclaimed Brazil's independence, founding a new world empire which endured to 1889. Brazil thus won its independence by means of a peaceful, monarchical transition, aided and abetted by British diplomacy and maritime power; as a result, for the next generation Brazil displayed an unusual combination of political stability and successful British economic penetration.

With the collapse of Spanish mercantilism—and well before Britain recognized the new republics—British goods and investment began to flow to Latin America. By the mid-1820s British exports to Latin America totalled £5m (13 per cent of total British exports), of which textiles comprised about three-quarters. The chief recipients were Brazil, which alone took between a third and a half of British exports, and Argentina, where British goods swiftly percolated through the porous *porteño* economy: by 1820 church images were to be found 'dressed in coarse English cloth'.[20] The early 1820s, when commercial euphoria ran high, also saw a spate of investments, primarily government loans, as well as direct investment, particularly in mining. Cornish miners came to work the silver veins of Mexico's Real del Monte, where they left a legacy of blue-eyed children and a rare local delicacy, the *pastí*.[21] For a time, Latin America promised a bonanza: Disraeli wrote prospectuses and Palmerston dabbled in Peruvian stocks. But the balloon soon burst. Latin American markets were shallow, cities small, and the huge, underpopulated rural hinterland generated scant demand for imported manufactures. The Argentine gaucho was 'a person without wants', content to inhabit a filthy hut, consume fresh beef, and seat himself on a steer's skull.[22] Labour was shiftless and unreliable, transport slow and costly. It was cheaper to ship goods from Liverpool

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[19] Hinde, *George Canning*, p. 369.

[20] Francis Bond Head, *Journeys Across the Pampas and Among the Andes* (1826; reprinted, Carbondale Ill., 1967), pp. 16, 39. The extent of early British market penetration is much debated: Miller, *Britain and Latin America*, pp. 40–42, 74; Graham, *Britain and the Onset*, pp. 84–85; D. C. M. Platt, *Latin America and British Trade, 1806–1914* (London, 1972), pp. 12–22. 'Porteño' refers to Buenos Aires.

[21] Robert W. Randall, *Real del Monte: A British Mining Venture in Mexico* (Austin, Tex., 1972); the Cornish legacy is based on eyewitness accounts.

[22] Head, *Journeys Across the Pampas*, pp. 14–15.

to Buenos Aires than from Córdoba to Buenos Aires.[23] The lack of transport and capital made it difficult, though not impossible, to develop profitable exports, thus to acquire the foreign exchange needed for the purchase of foreign commodities. Only Brazil and, to a degree, Argentina proved capable of sustaining exports in the immediate post-independence period.

Political stability also proved elusive outside Brazil and Chile. The independence wars left a legacy of praetorian violence and local banditry; bloated military budgets swallowed up government loans; and entrepreneurs, foreign and domestic, were at the mercy of warring factions who taxed, fined, and extorted in response to Hobbesian political—rather than Weberian economic—imperatives.[24] In many regions, especially the old colonial heartlands of Mexico and Peru, the regulated corporate economy survived independence: free trade, espoused by minority urban and intellectual élites, was repudiated by artisans, local merchants, and backwoods traders, all of whom stood to suffer from cheap foreign imports. In Lima, Bogotá, and Puebla a loose protectionist coalition formed, hostile to free trade and foreign immigrants (especially Protestants), capable of influencing the shifting *caudillo* politics of the era towards a crude but effective economic nationalism, sometimes tinged with xenophobia.[25]

In such unpropritious circumstances British loans were soon exhausted, and the markets for British goods dried up. By the mid-1820s imported manufactures were piling up, unsold, in the warehouses of Buenos Aires, Lima, and Rio; at Rio a bulk consignment of ice-skates was handtooled into door latches—a triumph of Brazilian ingenuity over British ingenuousness.[26] Initial hopes were dashed. Although the volume of British exports to Latin America increased, their value remained static from the 1820s to the 1840s.[27] While Latin America, particularly Brazil, became a significant market, especially for cotton textiles, it was hardly a bonanza, and British mercantile capitalism, frustrated by topography, instability, and outright local opposition, proved incapable of reducing Latin America to 'dependency'.

It is no paradox to note, however, that this early period of relative economic inertia, roughly 1820–50, was also the heyday of British imperialism defined in terms of official pressures and interventions. Since peaceful commercial

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[23] Randall, *Real del Monte*, chap. 7, pp. 5–22, 56–57; H. S. Ferns, *Argentine Republic, 1516–1971* (Newton Abbot, 1973), pp. 32–33.
[24] Platt, *Latin America*, p. 58; Carl, *First Among Equals*, p. 16; Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, pp. 85, 168.
[25] Paul Gootenberg, *Between Silver and Guano Commercial Policy and the State in Postindependence Peru* (Princeton, 1989), chap. 3; Guy P. C. Thomson, 'Protectionism and Industrialization in Mexico, 1821–54: The Case of Puebla', in Abel and Lewis, *Latin America, Economic Imperialism and the State,* pp. 125–46.
[26] Desmond Gregory, *Brute New World: The Rediscovery of Latin America in the Early Nineteenth Century* (London, 1992), pp. 47, 157–58; Platt, *Latin America*, pp. 25, 47, 51.
[27] Miller, *Britain and Latin America*, p. 74.

penetration was slow, and collaborating élites were, at best, incipient, it fell to the British government, as Palmerston put it, to 'open and secure the roads for the merchants'.[28] This is not to say that British policy was coherent, concerted or, still less, successful.[29] Absence of mind characterized Britain's modest Latin American imperialism as it did its more grandiose efforts elsewhere. But the thrust of policy between independence and mid-century was, comparatively speaking, belligerent, interventionist, and meddlesome.

The evidence in regard to the British government is substantial, though contradictory. Policy-makers were wary of involvement in a remote area characterized by endemic political instability. While Castlereagh (1807) certainly favoured 'the opening to our manufactures of the markets of that great Continent', he considered territorial conquest a 'hopeless task' and feared that, by conniving at patriotic insurgency against Spain, Britain might 'in destroying a bad government, leave them without any government at all'.[30] But such cautious sentiments, though reinforced by the failure of the 1806–07 occupation of Buenos Aires, did not uniformly permeate the British 'official mind'. On the contrary, during the fifty years following the American Revolution Britain, far from espousing Cobdenite principles of pacific free trade, was fully prepared to flex its *ancien régime* muscles in pursuit of commercial and strategic advantage—aggressively opening up new markets, forestalling economic and military rivals, pursuing grand geopolitical designs, fostering a bullish patriotism at home and an 'imperial revolution in government' in the colonies, from Ireland to India.[31] Sometimes such 'forward' policy was sanctioned by London; sometimes it was the work of British representatives at the periphery. Either way, the result was a series of pressures and policies for which, as regards intention if not outcome, the adjective 'imperialist' seems appropriate.

Thus, in 1806 Commodore Sir Home Popham, fresh from his empire-building exploits at the Cape, sailed across the South Atlantic and seized Buenos Aires. 'Buenos Aires at this moment forms part of the British Empire', proclaimed *The Times*.[32] Montevideo fell in 1807 and plans were made for an attack on Chile.

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[28] Ibid., p. 49.

[29] McLean, *War, Diplomacy and Informal Empire*, p. 190, argues that the lack of either mercantile unanimity or clear government strategy invalidates the notion of British informal imperialism. However, interventionist, 'informal imperialist' actions speak louder than words, plans, or blueprints (which were not entirely lacking anyway); and it is in the nature of *informal* imperialism that it should be to a degree reactive and improvised. Gallagher and Robinson's famous dictum—'trade with informal control if possible; trade with rule when necessary' ('The Imperialism of Free Trade', p. 13)—I take to be an *ex post facto* historical induction, not an explicit guiding principle of British policy.

[30] Miller, *Britain and Latin America*, p. 35.

[31] C. A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780–1830* (London, 1989).

[32] Jonathan C. Brown, *A Socioeconomic History of Argentina, 1776–1860* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 48.

Popham, indeed, envisaged a seizure of 'all [the] prominent points' of South America, which would confound Britain's enemies, advance British trade, and confer 'popularity and stability [upon] any government that undertook it'.[33] Conquest did not presage an enlightened Cobdenite regime; while the conquerors respected local social hierarchies, they looted the city's bullion. In Britain's brief rule at the Plate, one historian has observed, 'we can discern more than a trace of the old Adam of mercantilist politico-economic methods'.[34] The failure of the Plate expeditions justified Castlereagh's caution, but did not end British aggression and interference. In the 1820s, when Argentina and Brazil fought for control of the Banda Oriental, Britain played midwife at the birth of the Republic of Uruguay. In 1833 Britain seized the Falklands. In 1843 Aberdeen despatched a fleet to the Plate as part of a clumsy Anglo-French coercion of the Argentine dictator Rosas, designed to ensure the independence of Uruguay and free navigation of the Paraná–Plate river system.[35] Such actions involved both metropolitan and, *a fortiori*, peripheral initiatives, the latter facilitated by slow and unsure transatlantic communications. During the Uruguayan imbroglios of the 1820s and 1840s British representatives at Rio and Buenos Aires regularly exceeded official instructions, displaying a contempt for both troublesome local natives and money-grubbing British merchants. Similar proconsular initiatives were evident during Frederick Chatfield's long residence in Guatemala (1834–52) and, intermittently throughout the century, in turbulent Venezuela.[36]

But the contrast between peripheral activism and metropolitan restraint should not be exaggerated. The British government clearly took advantage of its mentorship of the Braganzas to secure a privileged commercial treaty with Brazil; and similar treaties were concluded with most of the infant republics and subsequently maintained in the teeth of criticism.[37] The Brazilian treaty also embodied a commitment to end the slave trade, upon which Brazil's plantation economy depended. Thereafter, British efforts to curtail the trade vitiated Anglo-Brazilian relations for over forty years.[38] Whatever British motives—and the argument for altruistic or cultural, rather than instrumental or economic, motivation seems strong—the suppression of the slave trade, ultimately successful, involved regular interception of vessels plying the trade to Brazil and constant intervention in

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[33] Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, p. 19.

[34] Ibid., pp. 50–51.

[35] Ibid., pp. 250–80; McLean, *War, Diplomacy and Informal Empire*, p. 49 ff.

[36] Mario Rodriguez, *A Palmerstonian Diplomat in Central America: Frederick Chatfield Esq.* (Tucson, Ariz., 1964); Carl, *First Among Equals*, pp. 32, 106.

[37] Carl, *First Among Equals*, chap. 3; John Lynch, *Argentine Dictator: Juan Manual Rosas, 1829–1853* (London, 1981), pp. 67–68; Graham, *Britain and the Onset*, pp. 82, 107–08.

[38] Leslie Bethell, *The Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade* (Cambridge, 1970).

Brazilian political and judicial processes. To a lesser degree, the British exerted emancipationist pressure on the Spanish dependency of Cuba, where, in the 1840s, the outspoken Consul David Turnbull was blamed for incitement to slave rebellion.[39] However high-minded the goals, British methods were interventionist and hence, by certain criteria, imperialistic.

The aggressive policies of Britain's 'imperial meridian'—products of endemic instability at the periphery as well as great power conflict in Europe—long survived the Napoleonic Wars. Latin America's political travails and economic torpor irked the British, who readily dismissed its government as venal, its people as idle, mongrel, and priest-ridden: stereotypes which survived well into the twentieth century.[40] After the brief bonanza of the 1820s commercial hopes were disappointed, and tougher measures were entertained, both on paper and in practice. In a thorough Foreign Office review of 1841, the problems of instability were rehearsed, and the lost potential of the great Latin American market was lamented. Britain, it was concluded, had to promote order, thereby boosting trade and enhancing domestic—British—welfare (an early intimation of the logic of social imperialism already evident in Commodore Popham's reasoning).[41] Merchants could not go it alone: 'the Merchant thinks but of the time present . . . the Government of a country, on the other hand, looks not only to the present but to the future: how national interest can best be promoted permanently.' The solutions were bold: offensive and defensive alliances with Latin American states such as Uruguay; vigorous protection of British residents; the deployment of British naval power; the hypothecation of Latin American customs revenue to fund support for friendly governments; the consolidation of territorial footholds such as the Mosquito Coast of Nicaragua; and the acquisition of new footholds such as San Francisco (California) which, if purchased from Mexico, would 'secure to Great Britain all the advantages of the finest port in the Pacific for her Commercial Speculations in time of peace, and in war for more easily securing her maritime ascendancy'. San Francisco, of course, soon became a prize of United States continental imperialism rather than of British thalassocratic power. But the aggressive impulses of the 'official mind' of the 1840s were translated into official policy: with Aberdeen's blockade of the Plate, lesser interventions in Venezuela, and of course the assault on China, 'an obvious precedent' for Latin American policy.[42]

[39] Arthur F. Corwin, *Spain and the Abolition of Slavery in Cuba, 1817–1886* (Austin, Tex., 1967), pp. 77–81.

[40] Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, pp. 57, 270; Gregory, *Brute New World, passim*.

[41] 'Memorandum on British Trade', 31 Dec. 1841, in FO 97/284, usually cited as the Murray Memorandum. D. C. M. Platt, *Finance, Trade, and Politics in British Foreign Policy, 1815–1914* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 321–23, strives overmuch to minimize its typicality and importance.

[42] MacLean, *War, Diplomacy and Informal Empire*, pp. 198–99; Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, pp. 252–53, 272.

But there was more to British imperialism than the official mind. Private interests conducted 'forward' policies of their own, combating the hostile conditions they encountered on the ground. Ideally, this involved cultivating collaborating élites with whom they could do profitable business, and who would perform the necessary political spadework of establishing stable regimes conducive to trade and investment. Commercial treaties, pressed by the British government, were a start; but they were not sufficient—sometimes not even necessary—conditions for mercantile success.[43] Mutual self-interest, sometimes allied to cultural emulation of Britain, was the strongest cement of collaboration; where that was lacking, the British resorted to lobbying, bribery, and threats. On Mexico's west coast, where contraband was rife and commerce subject to the whims of petty officials ('of a very low and ignorant disposition'), British Consuls, usually merchants and necessarily political operators, chose to adopt 'a high and decided line of conduct', which involved threats, bribery, and naval back-up. As one put it, 'acting as a pioneer brought my authority to be respected', to the advantage of British commerce.[44] In war-torn Peru, British merchants and Consuls (*consules sin cañones*, 'cannonless consuls', as they ruefully called themselves) felt threatened by local mayhem and neglected by a distant Whitehall.[45] But they did not sit on their hands. On the contrary, they were politically active: they supported the free-trading Bolivarians in the 1820s, and, subsequently championed the short-lived union of Peru and Bolivia under Santa Cruz. They lobbied for free trade laws, skirmished with rival US representatives, and railed against Chilean influence, which was strong, protectionist, and anti-foreign. 'Overseas interests intervene[d] massively in Peruvian affairs in a push for free trade... British interventions in trade politics appear sporadic, yet most approximated a genuine neoimperial [*sic*] strategy.'[46]

But these efforts enjoyed scant success. In Peru, as in Mexico, Central America, and Venezuela, British interests could not overcome the formidable social, political, and geographical barriers of the time and place. Greater success was achieved, as the trade figures suggest, in Argentina and Brazil, which produced viable exports, earned the foreign exchange necessary to purchase British goods, and possessed political systems capable of sustaining commerce. In Brazil, a stable monarchy enjoyed Britain's blessing and sought to emulate British practice—a

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[43] Miller, *Britain and Latin America*, pp. 38, 61.
[44] E. Barron to C. O'Gorman, 1 Aug. 1830, FO 203/44; John Mayo, 'Consuls and Silver Contraband on Mexico's West Coast in the Era of Santa Anna', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, XIX, 2 (1987), pp. 402–03.
[45] B. H. Wilson to Aberdeen, 27 Aug. 1842, FO 97/284.
[46] Gootenberg, *Between Silver and Guano*, pp. 18–19.

two-party system, a constitutional monarch, and a taste for liberal progress in society, economy, and culture. Brazilian capitalism acquired a gentlemanly veneer, though the bedrock of the economic system, especially the crucial export sector, was the ungentlemanly institution of slavery, which British companies utilized, *faute de mieux*.[47] In Argentina British capitalism found its first durable collaborator in the dictator Rosas: a blonde, blue-eyed British gentleman in appearance, a quintessential ruthless Latin American *caudillo* in practice.[48] Even here, the incipient relationship was prejudiced by the clumsy intervention of the 1840s, which revealed that coercion could destroy commerce more surely than it could compel collaboration.[49]

Successful collaboration, these early examples suggest, was vital for British interests to prosper; but collaboration did not require regimes or practices modelled on metropolitan lines, whether in Latin America, West Africa, or the Malay states. British interests were politically blind: in Brazil they owned slaves in defiance of British abolitionism; at Buenos Aires they deplored metropolitan attempts to coerce Rosas, to the point where British volunteers manned Argentine shore batteries against the Royal Navy.[50] They asked no more than a functioning regime, of whatever political hue, capable of maintaining peace, order, and respect for basic capitalist principles of property and contract. The decorous monarchy of Brazil was preferable to the rough *caudillos* of Spanish America, but liberal scruples were expendable and *caudillos* a necessary evil: 'I dislike and condemn the System of Rosas, as all Liberal men must do,' wrote the British Chargé d'Affaires in Buenos Aires, 'but I conceive it would be a great Evil should he be vanquished, as this system gives protection to life and property, more particularly that of Foreigners, and it is based on Order.'[51] During the early nineteenth century these desiderata were rarely met, British commercial hopes faded, and British officials strove, usually with scant success, to remedy the deficiencies. Hence the recurrent treaties and blockades, threats and blandishment. Early Victorian imperialism involved strong-arm methods and may be rightly regarded as 'a sufficient political function of the function of integrating new regions into the expanding economy'; in short, it was a political reflex, tactical, variable, and opportunistic, of the underlying growth of the British industrial economy.[52] However, the success of informal imperialism was patchy: both political intervention and commercial penetration

[47] Graham, *Britain and the Onset.*
[48] Lynch, *Argentine Dictator,* p. 297.
[49] McLean, *War, Diplomacy and Informal Empire,* p. 188.
[50] Graham, *Britain and the Onset,* p. 184; Ferns, *Britain and Argentina,* pp. 269, 273–74.
[51] Gore to Palmerston, 4 Jan. 1852, quoted in Ferns, *Britain and Argentina,* p. 288.
[52] Gallagher and Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', p. 5.

were, as Platt argued, less thorough and effective than Robinson and Gallagher believed.[53]

With time, however, a sea-change took place. Latin American economies became more receptive to foreign trade and investment. The old vicious circle of political instability and economy stagnation gave way to a virtuous circle of stability and 'development'.[54] Rough *caudillos* were supplanted by more decorous dictators and, better still, by urbane civilian oligarchs linked to the export trade. When, in 1852, Barings sent a representative to Buenos Aires with a brace of pistols for the new president, he sold them to a British naval officer rather than offer them to the 'learned Doctors of Law and peaceful Civilians' who now held power; 'the era of the *caudillos* has passed away: thank God', he concluded.[55] Though premature, his comment was broadly correct. Increasingly through the later nineteenth century, collaboration did not need to be coerced; it was now freely given. British interests in Latin America now burgeoned, but in a relatively apolitical way, without needing the clumsy intervention of metropolitan governments to smooth their path. Their intrinsic economic assets, coupled with a more congenial sociopolitical climate, ensured at least a good chance of success. Thus, as British trade and investment grew, British interference and intervention declined. 'Business imperialism' or Latin American 'dependency' advanced, but the advance owed more to peripheral transformation than to metropolitan threats. The sequence fits very comfortably within Ronald Robinson's 'excentric' theory of informal imperialism: 'mutually attractive business transactions' supplanted 'the interference of the imperial state'; 'as a country's links with [the] international economy tightened, imperial intervention slackened'.[56]

The timing, sequence, and particular characteristics of this transition varied. But common patterns of the virtuous circle are clear: burgeoning exports generated foreign exchange and elicited foreign investment in infrastructure (ports, railways, telegraphs); economic growth encouraged urbanization and, with time, a domestic market and a more cosmopolitan and technocratic culture; governments could raise more revenue (and pocket more bribes), thus enhancing political stability and encouraging further trade and investment.[57] British interests, though crucial, were not the first movers. They contributed to, but did not engender, the

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[53]   Platt, *Finance, Trade and Politics*, chap. 6.

[54]   'Vice' and 'virtue' are, of course, highly subjective; this transformation was virtuous in terms of British interests, most Latin American élites, and conventional calculations of GDP. See chap. by B. R. Tomlinson.

[55]   Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, p. 283.

[56]   Ronald Robinson, 'The Excentric Idea of Imperialism, with or without Empire', in Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., *Imperialism and After: Continuities and Discontinuities* (London, 1986), p. 274.

[57]   Platt, *Latin America*, pp. 68–72; Miller, *Britain and Latin America*, pp. 67, 94, 97 ff.

transformation, whose speed, timing, and character were peripherally deter-
mined. Export growth was vital, as the pioneering cases of Brazil and Argentina
had demonstrated. Peru was carried from *caudillesque* chaos to civilian, free-
trading boom on a tide of stinking guano.[58] Chile enjoyed a short-lived boom in
cereals, followed by a more durable phase of export-led growth based on nitrates,
and later copper. Cuba, still under formal Spanish rule but receptive to British
trade and investment, was the last exemplar of the Antillean cycle of sugar booms.
Brazil became the world's greatest coffee producer, followed by Colombia, Venez-
uela, and Guatemala. Mexico, a prey to domestic conflict and foreign invasion,
developed late, with the railway and export boom of the Porfiriato (1876–1911).
And, the outstanding case, Argentina advanced through a series of export cycles
(wool, cereals, beef) which made it a pre-eminent export economy, with a per
capita income exceeding that of many European countries: a sort of South Amer-
ican Australia.

    Britain figured in this transformation as a market, trading partner, and source
of investment, both direct and indirect. British exports, stagnant at around £5m
per annum through the 1840s, rose to £14m in 1860 and £55m in 1913 (comprising
10 per cent of Britain's total exports). Textiles represented 70 per cent of exports in
1860, only 31 per cent in 1913. British imports from Latin America rose faster,
reaching £76m in 1913. The Brazilian trade, the old linchpin of British commerce,
grew absolutely but declined relatively; Mexico and Peru ceded ground to the
southern cone, especially Argentina, whose economic intimacy with Britain was
unique, paralleling that of the Dominions.[59] British investment rose from £81m in
1860 to £1,180m in 1913, with government bonds (76 per cent of the total in 1860, 38
per cent in 1913) giving way to direct investment in railways (34 per cent in 1913),
public utilities (12 per cent), and banking and insurance (8 per cent). By 1913
Argentina took 41 per cent of Britain's Latin American investment, compared to
Brazil's 22 per cent and Mexico's 11 per cent, making Argentina a recipient of
British capital roughly on a par with Australia and South Africa.[60] Swathes of the
Latin American economy now came under British control: the railways of Argen-
tina and central Mexico; the public utilities of Buenos Aires, Rio, and Recife; major
merchant houses in Chile, Venezuela, and Peru; mines in Brazil and Mexico, later

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[58] Gootenberg, *Between Silver and Guano*, pp. 80–91, 140–41.

[59] Miller, *Britain and Latin America*, pp. 75, 108, 111; Platt, *Latin America*, p. 111; S. B. Saul, *Studies in British Overseas Trade, 1870–1914* (Liverpool, 1960), p. 219. For the Argentina–Australia parallel and Latin American–Dominion comparisons, see Donald Denoon, *Settler Capitalism: The Dynamics of Settler Capitalism in the Southern Hemisphere* (Oxford, 1983).

[60] Miller, *Britain and Latin America*, pp. 120–24; Irving Stone, 'British Direct and Portfolio Investment in Latin America Before 1914', *Journal of Economic History*, XXXVII, 3 (Sept. 1977), pp. 690–722; Michael Edelstein, *Overseas Investment in the Age of High Imperialism* (London, 1982), pp. 39–40, 102–04.

petroleum in Mexico and Venezuela, and banks and insurance companies throughout the continent.[61]

The growth of British trade and investment carried social and cultural consequences. There was no mass migration to South America as there was to North; the biggest British community—Argentina's—numbered 40,000 in 1914, but in a foreign population of 2 million, half of them Italians.[62] Furthermore, while some British expatriates intermarried and naturalized (they included several major mercantile families—such as the Mexican Barrons, Chilean Edwards, or Venezuelan Boultons—who in the course of the nineteenth century effectively relinquished 'British' status), others remained resolutely British, preserving an Anglocentric lifestyle within the confines—sometimes the physical confines—of company towns (mines, nitrate *oficinas*, oilfields), which possessed their own clubs, churches, and cemeteries.[63] Indeed, as trade gave way to direct corporate investment, associated with such 'enclave' activities, as well as public utilities, so British assimilation tended to decline and local popular resentment to increase.[64]

Despite their scant numbers and cultural aloofness, however, the British managed to transmit ideas, words, customs, fashions, and games to the host society. As early as the 1820s Rio had its Red Lion and Jolly Tar pubs; fifty years later the diminutive railway serving Recife's sugar factories was grandiloquently styled the Great Western of Brazil.[65] Argentina's railway boom brought a spate of British names—another Great Western, a Great Southern—and British seamen and railway-builders introduced football to South America: if the Central Uruguay Railway Cricket Club left no permanent trace, its footballing counterpart, Peñarol, became one of Uruguay's great footballing dyarchy (Montevideo Wanderers enjoyed a less celebrated history), and erstwhile company teams, such as River Plate, flourished across the estuary in Argentina, where Englishisms (e.g. *el córner*) peppered sporting Spanish and the *Buenos Aires Herald* applauded this 'peaceful conquest of British customs'.[66] Several South American teams, such as Brazil's Fluminense, had distinctly élite origins, reflecting British influence among

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[61] D. C. M. Platt, *Business Imperialism, 1840–1930: An Inquiry Based on British Experience in Latin America* (Oxford, 1977), offers a good selection of cases.

[62] Andrew Graham-Yooll, *The Forgotten Colony: A History of the English-Speaking Communities in Argentina* (London, 1981).

[63] Miller, *Britain and Latin America*, p. 80; Carl, *First Among Equals*, pp. 68–73. See the argument between Eugene W. Ridings, 'Foreign Predominance Among Overseas Traders in Nineteenth-Century Latin America', and Carlos Marichal, 'Foreign Predominance Among Overseas Traders in Nineteenth-Century Latin America: A Comment', *Latin American Research Review*, XX, 2 (1985), pp. 3–27, and XXI, 3 (1986), pp. 145–50.

[64] Jones, 'British Capital', pp. 72–73. For a classic enclave, see Eakin, 'Business Imperialism'.

[65] Gregory, *Brute New World*, p. 170; Graham, *Britain and the Onset*, p. 70.

[66] Tony Mason, *Passion of the People? Football in South America* (London, 1995), chaps. 1, 2.

oligarchic and rising middle-class groups, some of whom, such as the Brazilian abolitionist Jaoquim Nabuco, confessed to a proud 'Anglomania' which no evidence of British drinking and brawling could apparently shake, and which was reflected in correspondence, lifestyle, and reading: Adam Smith, J. S. Mill, Samuel Smiles, Darwin, Spencer, Carlyle, and Sir Walter Scott. (The Argentine liberal Sarmiento spent half his salary on English lessons and claimed to have read sixty Scott novels in as many days.)[67] In Buenos Aires, above all, élite Argentines and Anglo-Argentines played polo, shopped at Harrods, employed English governesses, and were educated at Anglophone schools, if not at Eton itself.[68] Cultural ties thus paralleled, and no doubt reinforced, commercial relations, tightening the bonds of collaboration. While South America would not expend blood on behalf of the British Empire, it yielded treasure and, so long as liberal Anglophile oligarchs ruled, displayed an intangible politico-cultural sympathy which, by the 1900s, contributed to the 'Atlantic orientation' of Britain's grand strategy.[69]

The British economic presence in Latin America was therefore important for Britain and crucial for Latin America. Did this constitute 'imperialism'? The contrasting adjectives—'important' and 'crucial'—say something about the unequal relationship. The banking crisis at Baring Bros. in 1890 sent a frisson through the City but threatened to bankrupt Argentina; while Lord Salisbury could airily dismiss talk of official British 'regeneration of Argentine finance', President Pellegrini was struck to the quick: 'rather than suspend service on the debt,' he declared, 'I would renounce the presidency.'[70] Even if private bankers, rather than the British government, mounted financial rescues—the 'structural adjustment' programmes of the day, emanating from a 'London consensus'—they imposed tough terms on straitened creditors.[71] Peripheral Latin American economies were therefore more vulnerable than the richer and more diversified British metropolis. In particular, the fragility of export booms (Peruvian guano, Brazilian rubber) demonstrated the dangers of *desarrollo hacia afuera* (export-led development) which accompanied thorough immersion in global markets. Investment booms similarly revealed the dependency of Latin America: lending followed Eurocentric rhythms; and, since there were more borrowers than lenders, the latter enjoyed a tactical advantage.[72]

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[67] Graham, *Britain and the Onset*, pp. 107, 178, 196; John King, 'The Influence of British Culture in Argentina', in Hennessy and King, *Land That England Lost*, p. 160.

[68] Alistair Hennessy, 'Anglo-Argentines and Others', in Hennessy and King, *Land That England Lost*, pp. 11–12, 27.

[69] Avner Offer, *The First World War: An Agrarian Interpretation* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 136–37, 244 ff.

[70] Miller, *Britain and Latin America*, pp. 62–63, 154.

[71] Fritsch, *External Constraints*, p. 31; Graham, *Britain and the Onset*, pp. 103–06.

[72] Miller, *Britain and Latin America*, pp. 121–22; Carlos Marichal, *A Century of Debt Crises in Latin America, 1820–1930* (Princeton, 1989).

If, in broad, macroeconomic terms, Britain enjoyed, and Latin America suff-
ered, a skewed dependent relationship, this generalization demands infinite quali-
fication. First, there were British losers as well as winners. If a few mines and
railways, such as Brazil's St John d'El Rey and the San [sic] Paulo Railway Co., were
moneyspinners, many were failures. Of some 400 British mining enterprises in
Latin America, less than twenty made profits.[73] The first spurt of British mercan-
tile enterprise in Latin America brought 'immense profits for a few, but dis-
appointment and bankruptcy for most'.[74] Sporadic financial crises hit Latin
American governments, but they also resulted in losses for British creditors.
And, while the global division of labour differentially affected Latin Amer-
icans—peasants, Indians, artisans tended to lose; élites, landlords, and urban
bourgeoisies benefited—the same was true, to a lesser degree, in Britain where,
for example, British consumers enjoyed cheap Argentine beef and grain, but where
British farmers and farm labourers went to the wall; or where Cornish copper
mines were put out of business by Chilean competition.[75]

Moreover, British economic hegemony was contested. As a manufacturer and
exporter, Britain depended heavily on its pioneering textile industry, which
powered its initial thrust into Latin American markets. By the late nineteenth
century textiles had declined in importance, in part because of incipient import-
substitution industrialization in the major Latin American countries, and new
export lines had become more important: coal, steel, machinery, later electrical
goods, chemicals, and automobiles. Britain never enjoyed equivalent dominance
in the manufacture and export of these, the products of the second industrial
revolution. By 1914 both Germany and the United States had emerged as major
rivals in Latin American trade. Germany had overtaken British commerce in
Venezuela and was fast catching up in Chile; German merchants controlled 20
per cent of Brazil's coffee trade and 60 per cent of her rubber exports; German lager
had now supplanted English Bass.[76] The United States became commercially
dominant in Cuba, Mexico, and Colombia, took more of Brazil's exports (espe-
cially coffee) than Britain, and in terms of direct investment had a growing stake in
Venezuela (oil), Chile (copper), and Peru (oil and copper). Even in Argentina,
which most resembled the politically tied economies of the Dominions, US
interests controlled 43 per cent of the grain market (compared to Britain's 33 per

[73] J. Fred Rippy, *British Investments in Latin America, 1822–1949* (New York, 1977), p. 32.

[74] Miller, *Britain and Latin America*, p. 79.

[75] Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, pp. 488–89; Willam W. Culver and Cornel J. Reinhart, 'Capitalist
Dreams: Chile's Response to Nineteenth-Century World Copper Competition', *Comparative Studies in
Society and History*, XXXI (1989), pp. 722, 724, 730.

[76] Bill Albert, *South America and the First World War* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 20, 79; Graham, *Britain
and the Onset*, pp. 113, 301–04.

cent) and 60 per cent of the meat trade (to Britain's 31 per cent).[77] The First World War decisively accelerated this process of US market penetration and capital export.

Foreign competition alarmed the British government and prompted new trade-promotion initiatives. Some historians have therefore discerned a more interventionist, even 'imperialist', turn in British policy during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the age of the 'new imperialism'. Some talk of a 'scramble for Latin America'.[78] This seems semantically risky, confusing radically different forms of 'intervention' and 'imperialism'. During the early nineteenth century the British government intervened politically and even militarily in Latin America, trying to foster conditions congenial to British interests. Outside Brazil, success was limited. But during the later nineteenth century—and the timing varied from place to place—conditions improved, albeit little thanks to British government efforts. By now most Latin American states were open and welcoming to foreign trade and investment; increasingly, they were controlled by civilian and technocratic élites, such as Peru's Civilistas and Mexico's Porfiristas, who had supplanted the wayward warlords of earlier times and now happily collaborated with foreign capital.[79]

The perceived need for British intervention, for the exercise of imperialism as 'a sufficient political function of the process of integrating new regions into an expanding economy', diminished or disappeared altogether. Why send warships to the River Plate when President Pellegrini staked his high office on defending Argentina's credit? Intervention and intimidation did not cease altogether: a particularly recalcitrant tyrant such as Venezuela's Castro, a throwback, in part, to the *caudillos* of earlier times, might experience half-hearted chastisement at the hands of the British government.[80] But in general the British government—itself, since the 1840s, a champion of *laissez-faire* liberalism—preferred a hands-off policy. As Salisbury stated in 1891, at a time of political and financial crisis in South America, Her Majesty's Government was '[not] in the least disposed to encroach on the function of Providence', partly because Providence was, so far as Britain was concerned, working well enough in Latin America, partly because Britain was busily encroaching on its function elsewhere in Africa and Asia.[81]

Thus a review of British reactions to Latin American 'local crises' *c*.1860–1914 reveals that, *pace* certain conspiracy theorists, Britain tended *not* to intervene on

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[77] Albert, *South America*, pp. 14, 67.

[78] Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism*, pp. 285, 312–13.

[79] Gootenberg, *Between Silver and Guano*, pp. 84–85; Albert, *South America*, pp. 32–33; Alfred Tischendorf, *Great Britain and Mexico in the Era of Porfirio Díaz* (Durham, NC, 1961).

[80] D. C. M. Platt, 'The Allied Coercion of Venezuela, 1902–03: A Reassessment', *Inter-American Economic Affairs*, XV (1962), pp. 3–28.

[81] Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, p. 465.

behalf of bondholders and companies in the region: Britain withdrew swiftly from the allied coercion of Mexico in the 1860s; avoided involvement in the Paraguayan War (1865–70) and the War of the Pacific between Chile and Peru (1879–81); declined to intervene in the Chilean civil war of 1891 or the Brazilian rebellions of 1892–94; and avoided any serious *démarches* during the Mexican Revolution (1910–17).[82] This record of relative inactivity contrasts, of course, with Britain's forward policy elsewhere, notably in Africa, where local crises—such as Egypt, 1882—provoked direct intervention leading to occupation.

The contrast derives from two factors. First—a negative 'metropolitan' argument—Britain saw no major strategic interest in Latin America. Policy-makers no longer dreamed of securing San Francisco; US supremacy in the Caribbean area was accepted; the bipartisan approach to the question of a trans-Isthmian canal— evident in the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of 1850—had given way to a resigned acceptance of US hegemony, which was reinforced by the Venezuelan boundary dispute of 1895, the US occupation of Cuba in 1898, and the subsequent US interventions in Central America and revolutionary Mexico.[83] However much they might dislike US policy as crude, clumsy, aggressive, duplicitous, or hypocritical, the British could not bring themselves to jeopardize Anglo-American relations by captious opposition. Some local representatives such as Lionel Carden, Minister to Mexico in 1913–14, sought to stand up to the Yankees; but such attempts at emulating the 'sub-imperialist' policy of early-nineteenth-century Proconsuls like Strangford and Chatfield were naive, anachronistic, and abortive.[84] The geopolitical imperatives which fuelled British expansion in Africa were lacking in Latin America; when it came to defending vital sea-lanes and canals, it was the United States, obsessed with Caribbean security, which, *mutatis mutandis*, played the imperialist role in the western hemisphere.

The second—positive peripheral—argument reasserts the causal primacy of trends within Latin America. If, by the 1900s, most republics possessed viable governments, keen for foreign—but not necessarily British—trade and investment, there was little need for dramatic initiatives. In contrast with the early period, Latin America had now produced collaborating élites who, for reasons of

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[82] Miller, *Britain and Latin America*, pp. 63–67; Graham, *Britain and the Onset*, pp. 306–11; P. A. R. Calvert, *The Mexican Revolution, 1910–14: The Diplomacy of Anglo-American Conflict* (Cambridge, 1968). British interests on the ground—freelance entrepreneurs in Paraguay, nitrate interests in Chile, merchants in Brazil, oil companies in Mexico—possessed their own lively—but far from unanimous— political preferences; they often engaged in local politicking, and sometimes deplored British government policy; but they could determine neither what that policy would be, nor what outcome would ensue from these 'local crises'.

[83] Smith, *Illusions of Conflict*, chaps. 4, 7.

[84] Friedrich Katz, *The Secret War in Mexico: Europe, the United States and the Mexican Revolution* (Chicago, 1981), p. 189.

self-interest, economic rationality, and ideology, were willing and able to provide a congenial framework for British commercial interests. The 'internalization of British values', even the 'uncritical mimicry of European fashion', were now pervasive, at least among Latin American élites.[85] That did not, of course, produce carbon copies of Westminster democracy. The latter, like cricket, required decades of *formal* imperial rule, as in the British Caribbean or British India, for the rules to be learned, the institutions established, the benefits appreciated. Mutually beneficial economic collaboration required, instead, a lower cultural common denominator: a basic consensus on the values and practices of capitalism; respect for property and contracts; state intervention to bolster the market (transport, communications, tariff, fiscal, and currency reform); and the elimination of obstacles to capital accumulation (labour shortages, corporate village lands, nomadic Indians, bandits, and bushwhackers). These desiderata could be achieved with or, more commonly, without democracy, by 'gentlemanly' or, more commonly, 'ungentlemanly' methods. But they were major undertakings. They involved state-formation, since without a viable state there could be no sustained accumulation; and they required constant social control, especially of the dissolute lower orders—the 'dangerous classes' and 'lazy natives' who prejudiced the smooth workings of the market. Not surprisingly late-nineteenth-century Latin American élites, in collaboration with British capital, replicated many of the policies of contemporary colonial states: they recruited new professional armies and police forces; they repressed peasant and indigenous protest; they dragooned labour (Roger Casement exposed comparable atrocities in the Congo, then the Amazon); they taxed, enumerated, and, to a degree, educated; they moved immigrant labour across oceans and international boundaries; they built infrastructure (ports, railways, telegraphs) and introduced preventive medicine; and they did all this with frequent invocations of 'Progress' and frank references to racial stereotypes. These striking parallels should perhaps not surprise us; both colonial and independent Latin American states were, *grosso modo*, 'sufficient political function[s] of... integrating new regions into the expanding economy' (of course, they were much else besides). But whereas in Africa strategic and local conditions obliged the British to undertake the political spadework themselves, in Latin America a satisfactory division of labour was tacitly agreed: local élites ran the shop, while Britain supplied goods and credit.

In this light, the so-called 'scramble for Latin America' bears little resemblance to the 'scramble for Africa'. The latter involved a wholesale carve-up, annexation, and profound social, economic, and cultural transformation. In Latin America the equivalent transformation was a longer, slower process, involving four centuries of

[85] Fritsch, *External Constraints*, p. 124, referring to Brazilian mimicry of British financial orthodoxy.

Iberian colonization, followed by one of independent state-building. British commercial penetration, important though it was, capped half a millenium of colonialism—Iberian and later 'internal'—and could therefore afford the luxury of an increasingly apolitical and disinterested role, rather as in the case of the Dominions.[86] But, having renounced territorial annexation and direct rule, Britain had to rely on commercial and financial prowess in order to retain economic hegemony in the region. Latin America was therefore the key test of British international competitiveness.[87]

Financially, Britain survived tolerably well until 1914, although the United States was by then dominant in the Caribbean and challenging in northern South America. But commercially Britain was already in decline, losing market share to Germany and the United States, even in the old bastion of the southern cone. Of course this reflected a global reversal in industrial power, which subverted Britain's brief, unsustainable, mid-Victorian hegemony. But it also reflected Britain's inability to use political muscle and, loosely, imperialist methods, to offset commercial decline in Latin America, as she could in the formal Empire. The late Victorian Latin American 'scramble', therefore, involved for Britain worried reports on trade, enhanced commercial intelligence, sporadic missions to the continent, and attempts, of varying success, to tie trade to finance. Germany and the United States were, *mutatis mutandis*, involved in similar efforts. This was a pacific 'scramble' compared to the bloody partition of Africa; and it is a 'scramble' which, with rather different players, continues today, long after the dissolution of Britain's formal Empire.

The external challenge of commercial rivals was, by the turn of the century, also matched by domestic challenges mounted by dissident Latin Americans. If, in the formal Empire, state-building and market penetration elicited protest, so too, in independent countries undergoing comparable transformations, aggrieved groups targeted incumbent élites and their foreign collaborators; sometimes, those élites had to decide whether to continue collaborating or throw in their lot with nationalist and populist critics. Three main forms of protest stood out: that of roughly middle-class, educated, urban, white-collar groups (themselves products of capitalist development and state-building—Latin American 'babus', if you like); and that of popular groups, including first, artisans, peasants, and Indians prejudiced by commercialization (roughly, 'declining' groups), and second, the 'new' working classes, products, again, of capitalist development, who worked on the docks, railways, mines, factories, and plantations of the 'modern'

[86] Denoon, *Settler Capitalism*; H. S. Ferns, 'Argentina: Part of an Informal Empire?', in Hennessy and King, *Land That England Lost*, pp. 49–50, 55.
[87] Saul, *British Overseas Trade*, pp. 33–34, 38–39.

sector, and who by the 1900s were beginning to flex their organizational muscles. These patterns of protest, which can be loosely subsumed under a 'nationalist' label, varied greatly from country to country. Traditional protest concentrated in the Indian highland regions of Peru, Bolivia, and Mexico; here, the British presence was weak (native landowners were the dominant class) and popular uprisings, of which Mexico's Zapatista revolt was the most sustained and successful, rarely targeted British interests. 'Modern' protest, both middle class and popular, concentrated in areas of greater British presence, by both sector and country. In the cities, particularly those of the southern cone, consumers complained about British trains, trams, and public utilities; and a new, growing proletariat, incipiently unionized, toiled in British mines, steamships, and meat-packing plants. Indeed, foreign ownership of export industries—Chilean mines, Argentinian slaughterhouses, Venezuelan oilfields—arguably played a key role in early labour mobilization, which was sometimes spurred by the high-handed, arbitrary, and racist attitudes of British management.[88] Nationalist labour mobilization exploded in the post-war period; but by the 1900s there were early stirrings, for example, in Chile's nitrate fields, which tended to produce a common front of worried British employers and their no less worried élite collaborators.[89]

But middle-class nationalist critiques of foreign, usually British, penetration clearly antedated the war: with polemicists such as Bunge in Argentina and Encina in Chile; and, more important, with broadly based middle-class protest movements, which attained power in Uruguay (the Batlle administration, 1905–11) and in Argentina following the victory of Irigoyen's Radicals in the 1916 election. Batlle, in particular, implemented policies of social reform and economic nationalism which, while they did not rupture the old Anglo-Uruguayan nexus, questioned its tenets and earned him the cordial dislike of British businessmen and officials.[90] Even oligarchic élites had to take note. Railway regulation, which responded to domestic complaints, was established in Mexico and Argentina well before 1914; Brazil's coffee valorization programme represented a major state initiative to force up prices to the advantage of domestic producers.[91] The dragon of *dirigisme* was fitfully stirring after a slumber of several decades; the guns of August would guarantee his awakening.

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[88] Charles Bergquist, *Labor in Latin America* (Stanford, Calif., 1986).

[89] Michael Monteón, *Chile in the Nitrate Era* (Madison, 1982), pp. 95–107; Miller, *Britain and Latin America*, p. 173.

[90] M. H. J. Finch, 'British Imperialism in Uruguay: The Public Utility Companies and the *Batllista* State, 1900–30', in Abel and Lewis, *Latin America*, pp. 250–66.

[91] Winthrop R. Wright, *British-Owned Railways in Argentina* (Austin, Tex., 1974), pp. 76–88; Fritsch, *External Constraints*, pp. 13–16.

By 1914, therefore, Britain faced serious challenges to her established position in Latin America. Financially pre-eminent in most, though not all, of the continent, she now deferred geopolitically to the United States in the north, and was rapidly losing her commercial supremacy elsewhere. Having renounced political intervention, Britain had to compete in a relatively 'fair field with no favour', lacking the political privileges which were the rewards of formal Empire. In a sense, Britain's 'imperialist' role, if 'imperialist' it was, had run its course. Britain had helped, first, to batter down the walls of Spanish mercantilism, and then to erect new structures conducive to capitalist development, though not necessarily to gentlemanly—still less, democratic—politics. For several decades Britain was the chief foreign beneficiary of that process, but by the turn of the century other beneficiaries were clawing back her lead and Latin American élites were ready to play the foreign field. In Latin America, as in her domestic industrialization, Britain enjoyed the temporary advantages of forwardness; but, having helped make Latin America stable, capitalist, and productive, Britain had no political monopoly on the fruits of those advances—which, by 1914, were increasingly being contested by both vigorous foreign competitors and nascent Latin American nationalists.

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8

Britain and China, 1842–1914

JÜRGEN OSTERHAMMEL

Empire in the Far East was more than a metaphor for commercial supremacy in the China Seas. Ever since Henry Dundas dispatched Lord Macartney to the Court of the Emperor Qianlong in 1792, China figured in grand designs of market conquest and global influence. With the exception of emigration, the same forces of expansion at work elsewhere made their appearance in East Asia. Great hopes for mercantile gain, for the salvation of heathen souls, and for the spread of European-style modernity were pinned to the most populous country on earth. British soldiers and diplomats, merchants and bankers, missionaries and scholars were active in China as soon as the country became accessible as a result of two Anglo-Chinese wars: the Opium War of 1840–42 and the 'Arrow' War of 1856–60.[1] Step by step, a system of international treaties was established that turned large parts of China into an uncolonized extension of Empire (see Map 8.1). The treaties guaranteed rights of access to and of residence in a number of major Chinese cities (transformed into 'treaty ports'), personal security of foreign citizens from the alleged 'barbarity' of Chinese justice, a uniformly low tariff, and a privileged treatment of foreign goods in transit through the customs-ridden Chinese interior. They also opened up China's rivers and coastal waters to the unchecked activities of foreign shipping companies.

Moreover, China excited the British imagination. All sorts of orientalist clichés and racial stereotypes were projected upon China and the Chinese. Some of them, for example, the spectres of a 'yellow peril' and of Asiatic stagnation and decadence, emerged from contemplating the Middle Kingdom: a civilization once admired but increasingly feared and despised. From the mid-nineteenth century, China formed an integral part of the military, economic, and mental history of European and, in particular, of British imperialism.

As China was never turned into any Great Power's colony, its relations with Britain can be narrated in terms of conventional diplomatic history, emphasizing British

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[1] For China's foreign relations, Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, 5th edn. (New York, 1995).

Legend:

- Ports opened 1843-44
- □ Ports opened 1860-64
- • Ports opened 1876-1900s

Br British
F   French
G   German
R   Russian

Harbin 1909

Newchwang (Yingkow) 1864

Mukden 1903-7

Tientsin 1860

Sea of Japan

Port Arthur 1897 R

Wei-hai-wei 1898 Br

Chefoo 1863

Kiaochow Bay and Tsingtao 1897 G

Chinkiang 1861

Ichang 1876

Hankow 1861

Nanking 1899

Shanghai 1843

Chungking 1891

Kiukiang 1861

Ningpo 1844

Chang Jiang (Yangtze)

East China Sea

Foochow 1844

Tamsui 1863-95

Amoy 1843

Tengyueh 1902

Wuchow 1897

Canton 1860 1843

Swatow

Tainan 1863-95

Hong Kong Kowloon New Territories 1898 Br

Kwangchow Bay 1897 F

South China Sea

Hainan I.

MAP 8.1. China: Treaty Ports and Leased Territories

perceptions and strategies and the intergovernmental contacts between the two countries.[2] A different approach tells the story of China's entrance into the family of nations.[3] In this perspective, China was gradually forced to abandon its policy of Sinocentric isolationism and was taught to respect the conventions of international conduct as they had evolved in Europe since the Renaissance and were now expanding throughout the world. After 1860 the Ch'ing (Qing) court, weakened by the tremendous Taiping Rebellion (1850–64), accepted China's inferior international status and allowed Britain to lead in incorporating the country into the modern world's political and economic structures. Although Britain did not disguise its own interests and on numerous occasions clashed with what Chinese rulers perceived to be their own good and that of their country, the British presence, according to this view, in the end promoted China's early modernization. It is interesting to note that such an interpretation, until recently pilloried as blatant imperialist apologetics, is beginning to find favour with historians in the People's Republic of China. Some consequences of imperialism are now acknowledged as early contributions to economic development and to a realistic Chinese awareness of the wider world.

A third approach, preferred here, attempts to focus on the *local* British presence, its institutional context and its effects on indigenous society and economy. Two questions are especially worth examining: What was 'imperial' about Sino-British relations from the Opium War to the time of the 1911 Revolution and the beginning of the First World War? And did the material British presence in China in any way form an interconnected whole, a system that could be seen in parallel with systems of colonial rule? If given a precise meaning, the concept of 'informal empire', not sanctioned by universal scholarly consensus, can help to answer these questions. 'Informal empire' is defined here as a historical situation of some stability and permanence in which overt foreign rule is avoided while economic advantages are secured by 'unequal' legal and institutional arrangements, and also by the constant threat of political meddling and military coercion that would be intolerable in relations between fully sovereign states.[4] It is crucial to see that 'informal empire' implies more than economic asymmetry, cultural dependency, or the sporadic use of preponderant influence by a Great Power towards a weaker neighbour. 'Informal empire' rests on the three pillars of: (1) legal privilege for foreigners; (2) a free trade regime imposed from outside; and (3) the deployment

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[2] Peter Lowe, *Britain in the Far East: A Survey from 1819 to the Present* (London, 1981).

[3] Gerrit W. Gong, 'China's Entry into International Society', in Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, eds., *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 171–83.

[4] Elaborated in Jürgen Osterhammel, 'Semi-Colonialism and Informal Empire in Twentieth-Century China: Towards a Framework of Analysis', in Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., *Imperialism and After: Continuities and Discontinuities* (London, 1986), pp. 297–98.

of instruments of intervention such as the gunboat and the 'imperial' consul.[5] In China, some kind of British informal empire existed from the first treaty settlement of 1842 which concluded the Opium War, until the destruction of the treaty port system by the Japanese in December 1941. By that time, however, only the key legal privilege of extraterritoriality (foreign exemption from Chinese jurisdiction) continued to be of vital importance. Other features of informal empire had already disappeared or had attenuated during the preceding years.

In contrast to Japan, Britain was never a fully articulated colonial power on the East Asian mainland. Hong Kong, that bridge between South China and the Indo-Malayan world, came to be a minor ornament of Empire, but its transformation from a regional entrepôt into an economic centre of global importance occurred only after the suppression of capitalism in mainland China in 1949 and the following years. British rule over the Chinese, as in Hong Kong, in central Shanghai, and also Singapore, was confined to fluid, comparatively modern urban environments that had largely been created by the European invasion itself: frontier cities in zones of inter-cultural compromise. Only in Hong Kong's New Territories, acquired in 1898 with a population of some 80,000, and in the small leased territory of Wei-hai-wei with its 150,000 inhabitants, located on the northern coast of the Shantung promontory, did British administrators come in touch with the 'real' China, the settled world of the Chinese peasant. The man who left a strong imprint on both possessions, first as Colonial Secretary in Hong Kong and later as Civil Commissioner of Wei-hai-wei, James Stewart Lockhart (1858–1937), a Scottish scholar-mandarin and subtle practitioner of indirect rule, may well be regarded as a next-to-perfect embodiment of that exceptional thing: British colonialism in East Asia.[6]

Soon after the opening of the Middle Kingdom to free trade in 1842 it was felt not only that foreign merchants should enjoy extraterritoriality, but that special residential areas should be set aside for them in the major open ports. These 'Concessions' were areas leased from the Chinese government by a foreign power, which paid a trifling ground rent and sublet plots to its own nationals. The foreign Consul was the highest executive and jurisdictional authority. By 1878 the British had acquired such urban micro-colonies in six treaty ports. Their size ranged from 25 acres in the tea-exporting Yangtze port of Kiukiang (Jiujiang) to more than 1,000 acres in the North Chinese metropolis of Tientsin (Tianjin).[7] None of them,

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[5] For the legal aspects, N. A. Bootsma, 'Herstel van soevereine rechten. Semi-koloniale landen en Europese expansie in Azië, 1890–1945', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, CIV (1991), pp. 24–44.

[6] Shiona Airlie, *Thistle and Bamboo: The Life and Times of Sir James Stewart Lockhart* (Hong Kong, 1989).

[7] Fei Chenkang, *Zhongguo zujie shi* [History of the Foreign Concessionary Areas in China] (Shanghai, 1991), pp. 427–28. See also the detailed collective work *Lieqiang zai Zhongguo de zujie* [The Concessionary Areas of the Great Powers in China] (Peking, 1992).

not even the Concession at Tientsin, became really important as a bridgehead for the commercial penetration of the interior. In Tientsin, characteristically, there was twice as much British-owned land outside the Concession as in it. And the Concession at Hankow (Hankou), the great emporium on the middle Yangtze River, which boasted 'the finest Race and Recreation Club in the world',[8] was returned to China in 1927 without palpable losses for British business. Perhaps the strongest effect of the Concessions was the negative one of provoking Chinese indignation.

The British presence at Shanghai was of an entirely different order. At its quantitative peak in the early 1930s of 13,000 British residents in the entire Republic of China, 6,500 lived in the International Settlement, 2,500 in the neighbouring French Concession, and perhaps 1,000 in the Chinese-governed sector of Shanghai; at the same time the British population of Hong Kong amounted to more than 14,000. In contrast to Hong Kong, Shanghai had been a town of some commercial substance, especially in the cotton trade, when it was opened as a treaty port in 1843.[9] Nevertheless, its rise to the position of China's largest city, a crucible of economic and social modernization and the primary operating centre of Western economic interests in the Far East, was a direct consequence of the restructuring of China's foreign trade since the 1840s. Shanghai and Hong Kong partly rivalled and partly complemented each other. Hong Kong remained slightly more important than Shanghai as a destination for ocean-going traffic, and it continued to surpass Canton (Guangzhou), the old trading post of the pre-Opium War period, as the commercial magnet for South China. Still, in all other respects it was overshadowed by its rival in the North. The gap between the two cities widened even more after 1895, when the Sino-Japanese Treaty of Shimonoseki permitted foreign manufacturing industry in the treaty ports, thereby inaugurating Shanghai's industrialization, partly at the expense of Hong Kong. Only in the 1950s did Hong Kong regain the industrial momentum it had briefly attained in the 1880s. It has been estimated that in 1929 77 per cent of British direct investment in the whole of China was located in Shanghai, as against only 9 per cent in Hong Kong and 14 per cent elsewhere.[10]

Most of this wealth was concentrated in the International Settlement. This foreign enclave, after its final extension in 1899, occupied 8.66 square miles, about 6 per cent of the area of Greater Shanghai, at the heart of the city. It was never a colony in any technical sense, yet it can be regarded as something like the

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[8] H. G. W. Woodhead, *The Yangtsze and Its Problems* (Shanghai, 1931), p. 106.

[9] Linda Cooke Johnson, *Shanghai: From Market Town to Treaty Port, 1074–1858* (Stanford, Calif., 1995), chap. 6.

[10] C. F. Remer, *Foreign Investments in China* (New York, 1933), p. 395. No such estimates exist for earlier periods.

most important asset of British formal Empire in East Asia. Chinese sovereignty over the Settlement was never officially suspended; there was no treaty between Britain or any other foreign country and the Imperial Chinese government that confirmed the alienation of Chinese rights. Legally, the foreign presence in Shanghai rested on nothing but a generous interpretation of the principle of extraterritoriality and on an agreement (the original 'Land Regulations'), concluded in 1845 between the first British Consul and the local mandarin, to set aside a piece of land within which British subjects were permitted to buy or rent land from private Chinese owners. Since in theory all land was supposed to be held by the Chinese Emperor, the foreign owners obtained deeds of perpetual lease, for which they paid the Chinese government a minuscule land rent. The Chinese state did not profit in any way from the skyrocketing of land values that occurred from the 1880s onwards.

On this slender legal basis rose the edifice of foreign Shanghai. Its political system was unique.[11] Although the British Consul-General, with the Royal Navy behind him, may have been the most powerful man in Shanghai, he did not exercise the same executive functions as his colleagues at Tientsin or Hankow. The highest authority within the Settlement was the Shanghai Municipal Council (SMC). Its members were elected annually by those ratepayers who could meet the qualifications for the franchise: a small minority not only among the Settlement's entire population of 1.12 million (in the mid-1930s), but also among the 39,000 foreign residents.[12] The SMC was a virtually sovereign body, accountable to no outside authority. It promulgated its own laws ('bye-laws'), taxed foreigners and Chinese alike, maintained its own municipal bureaucracy and police force, and managed several profitable public utilities. Representatives of the wealthy Chinese bourgeoisie of merchants, bankers, and retired officials who ran large parts of the Settlement's economy and owned a substantial share of the land within its borders were admitted to the Council as late as 1928. From 1881 to 1928 the Chinese labouring masses were kept out of the Recreation Ground (now Huangpu Park)—a source of much nationalist indignation.[13] (In Hong Kong, special residential areas were reserved for Europeans until 1941.) The common people of Shanghai never came to benefit from even the rudiments of colonial paternalism and modern ideas of trusteeship. The considerable successes in urban modernization and medical improvement achieved during the second half of the nineteenth

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[11] F. C. Jones, *Shanghai and Tientsin: With Special Reference to British Interests* (London, 1940).

[12] Population figures from *Annual Report of the Shanghai Municipal Council, 1935* (Shanghai, 1935), pp. 50–51.

[13] Robert A. Bickers and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, 'Shanghai's "Dogs and Chinese Not Admitted" Sign: Legend, History and Contemporary Symbol', *China Quarterly*, CXLII (June 1995), pp. 445–46.

century did not entirely bypass the Chinese majority.[14] But they had been chiefly motivated, as many Chinese well understood, by the desire to create a tolerable environment for expatriate residents. In Shanghai, foreign big business succeeded where it failed in Hong Kong (and, after 1921, conceded defeat),[15] in achieving *de facto* self-government in a racially stratified society. The British predominated among the foreign oligarchy even after 1915, when the Japanese outnumbered them among the Settlement's foreign population. As late as the 1930s, six of the SMC's nine members were Britons. Almost all responsible positions within the municipal administration were occupied by British citizens. The Chinese could be forgiven for referring to the International Settlement, cosmopolitan as it was in its social composition and cultural outlook, as the 'English Concession' (*ying zujie*).

The rule of British private business, if not of British officialdom, over central Shanghai was built up by the gradual arrogation of governmental functions. The case of the International Settlement shows that not all British positions in China derived directly from the modern form of 'capitulations': the treaties Chinese nationalists came to call 'unequal' because only one party appeared to derive any benefit from them. There are numerous other examples of extra-treaty usurpations, especially in situations where the local authority of the Chinese government had broken down. British control of China's premier modern coal mine, the Kaiping colliery near Tientsin, came about in 1900, when foreign interests exploited the momentary financial weakness of the government-sponsored company and the unstable political conditions prevailing in North China at the height of the Boxer Rebellion.[16] No mining concession in the Kaiping area was ever granted to the British. Apart from the extraterritorial rights of its British and Belgian employees, no treaty privilege could be defended in connection with the Kaiping colliery. In 1912 it transformed itself into the Kailan Mining Administration (KMA), a British dominated Sino-foreign joint venture which accounted for about one-fifth of the coal production in China proper (that is, Manchuria excluded).

On the other hand, various advantages secured on paper were never enforced or utilized. Thus, several of the well-publicized concessions won by British firms and subjects during the international scramble for railway and mining rights around the turn of the century were never taken up. The reasons were lack of capital, insurmountable engineering difficulties, or resistance by the Chinese local élite

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[14] Kerrie L. Macpherson, *A Wilderness of Marshes: The Origins of Public Health in Shanghai, 1843–1893* (Hong Kong, 1987).

[15] G. B. Endacott, *Government and People in Hong Kong, 1841–1962* (Hong Kong, 1964), pp. 134–45.

[16] Ellsworth C. Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines, 1877–1912*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), pp. 57–74.

and its followers in the designated mining districts. Such concessions were only temporarily relevant as pawns in the diplomatic game. Part of Britain's informal empire existed only on paper.

There was thus a constant tension between legal privilege and its actual fulfillment. Sometimes public treaties and private agreements remained a dead letter. In other cases might, not right, accounted for British gains. Yet on the whole, the importance of the treaties stands beyond question. Until their negotiated abrogation in November 1943 they ensured that relations between Britain and China differed, at least formally, from normal patterns of modern international intercourse. China remained a country of impaired sovereignty. The treaties were the legal infrastructure of informal empire. They had three main effects: First, their most-favoured-nation clauses internationalized treaty privileges almost automatically and contributed to the working of the 'open door', that is, of equality of opportunity in the economic penetration of China. Secondly, the treaties conferred upon their beneficiaries advantages their indigenous competitors did not enjoy. The most important of these was non-economic: protection against the arbitrariness of the Chinese state. Thirdly, as soon as nationalist ideas and sentiments emerged in China, the treaties provided an ideal focus for anti-imperialist critique and agitation. Imperialism was not merely perceptible as the sum total of specific abuses. It could be pinned down as a theory and doctrine enshrined in glaringly unjust documents of international law. The revision and eventual abolition of the Unequal Treaties formed a point of consensus for schools of Chinese nationalism that otherwise quarrelled bitterly.

The treaty system stamped British presence in China with an overwhelming legalism. Even if the number of truly important treaties was much smaller than the 1,182 'unequal' agreements counted by Chinese historians,[17] by the turn of the century the treaty system had assumed an almost impenetrable complexity. Diplomats despaired of mastering the details, big foreign firms employed specialized legal advisers, and bright Chinese lawyers began to challenge the foreign powers on their own juridical ground. However, the basic outlines of the treaty system were clear enough. The original goal of the early Victorians had been to push forward the trading frontier in what was believed to be one of the world's most promising markets. The early treaties had been imposed on the Chinese empire in the aftermath of its military defeat between 1842 and 1860. Although they were flagrantly unequal in putting unilateral limits on Chinese sovereignty, in some respects they appealed to traditional Chinese practices of managing unruly strangers, for example, the preference for dealing with them collectively through

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[17] Zhang Zhenkun, 'Lun bupingdeng tiaoyue' [On Unequal Treaties], *Jindai shi yanjiu*, 1993, No. 2, p. 1. This enormous figure includes agreements with private foreign companies.

their headmen. Thus, the early treaty system expressed a certain convergence of interests between East and West. Above all, the British government and the Chinese state shared a common desire for regular trading procedures. Both wanted order and abhorred the turmoil created by smugglers, pirates, and unruly merchants. From the perspective of the British official mind, the treaty system was therefore no *carte blanche* for commercial freebooters. The treaties enshrined the sublime principle of Free Trade. They were meant to 'lift up' backward China and to accustom it to the 'standard of civilization' in international conduct.[18] Consequently, the right of access to the Manchu throne, the creation of a kind of foreign office (the Zongli Yamen), and the establishment of diplomatic relations were part and parcel of the treaty settlements. The treaties postulated 'the rule of law in the service of trade'.[19] Though of European origin and without a Chinese equivalent, this principle was double-edged in application. If necessary, respect would have to be demanded also from members of the foreign trading community.

The policy of introducing free trade by international treaty into a civilization where commerce had never enjoyed legal protection and where foreign merchants were not readily welcomed required the deployment of considerable instruments of intervention. They formed the second prong of informal empire. The treaties had to be upheld by a watchful and determined diplomacy and, in the final resort, to be backed up by force. They were the result of war and required the omnipresent threat of violence, however veiled in daily practice. Gunboat diplomacy, which can be defined as 'the use or threat of limited naval force, otherwise than as an act of war, in order to secure advantage, or to avert loss . . . against foreign nationals within the territory or the jurisdiction of their own state',[20] was the indispensable complement of legal privilege. The Royal Navy on the China Station stood by to protect British nationals from rebellious violence in one of the world's most turbulent countries. Between the naval operations against the Taiping Rebels in 1862 and the Boxer Intervention of 1900, most cases in which it went into action concerned the suppression of piracy, sometimes at the request of local Chinese officials. But the navy was also ready to put heavier kinds of pressure on the regional Chinese authorities within its reach. The last gunboat operation, causing considerable civilian losses, was conducted in July 1930 during the defence of Changsha, the capital of Hunan province, against the advancing Red Army.

Even more important than the naval commander in invigorating the informal empire was his civilian counterpart, the Consul. Calling in the navy was the

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[18] Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 130–63.

[19] Richard J. Smith, John K. Fairbank and Katherine F. Bruner, eds., *Robert Hart and China's Early Modernization: His Journals, 1863–1866* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991), p. 117.

[20] John Cable, *Gunboat Diplomacy*, 3rd edn. (Basingstoke, 1994), p. 14.

Consul's ultimate weapon. Normally, he was expected to master difficult situations with his own resources: skill and the magic of character. The early Consuls of the heroic period up to the end of the Taiping menace in 1864, men like the formidable Sir Rutherford Alcock (1809–97), were empire-builders, establishing a British presence in adventurous conditions and in the face of an often hostile Chinese environment. Their successors could settle down to the routine task of making the treaty regime work. Since the posting of a British Minister to Peking in 1861, unresolved local disputes were to be referred to the Legation, which would then hold the Imperial government responsible for the misconduct of provincial and local officials. Consular wars had to be avoided. Even so, the men on the spot enjoyed considerable discretion and, given the vastness of the country and its poor communications, local crisis-management continued to be indispensable.

Imperial Consuls were no mere registrars and purveyors of good offices. They were quasi-diplomatic operators within an increasingly disintegrating empire. Securing specific advantages for British business was among their less important duties. As a rule, at least until the 1890s, they tended to act 'like referees in a football match, trying impartially to ensure that Chinese authorities and British merchants observed the treaty rules for the commercial game'.[21] From the beginning of the British presence to its very end, merchants in the treaty ports accused the Foreign Office and its consular representatives of weakness and passivity. Reproaches of this kind were inevitable. The legalism of the treaty system placed the Consul in an awkward position between Chinese officials and British expatriates. On the one hand, it was his duty to punish British criminals, discipline unruly sailors, and rein in people who deliberately provoked the Chinese and then clamoured for consular support. Missionaries were especially unpopular with Consuls because they frequently disregarded treaty provisions and Chinese sensitivities. Many of them created disagreeable *faits accomplis* and expected the Consuls to bail them out.

On the other hand, Consuls were obliged to protest against Chinese infringements of the treaties even if no specific British interests had been harmed. This insistence on legal positions *in abstracto* often led to fruitless pedantry and unnecessary confrontations with Chinese authorities. A further consequence of legalism was the abuse of treaty privileges by a certain number of Chinese. British citizenship was harder to obtain than that of other treaty powers. There was no British parallel to the case of Du Yuesheng, the prince of the Shanghai underworld, who enjoyed extraterritoriality as a Portuguese subject. But it was almost impossible to prevent British (or Indian) stooges from lending their names to shady Chinese firms. Such *liehang* ('inferior firms') abounded in shipping. Difficult

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[21] P. D. Coates, *The China Consuls: British Consular Officers, 1843–1943* (Hong Kong, 1988), p. 171.

situations arose, for example, when Chinese vessels flying the British flag were attacked by pirates and claimed consular protection. It could not easily be refused.

The British consular network in China was the largest in the world, a direct consequence of a Foreign Office ruling of 1869 that a consulate ought to be established at every treaty port. Such an ambitious aim could not be entirely fulfilled, for by 1914 as many as ninety-two places had been opened to foreign trade, ten of them voluntarily by the Chinese government. Even so, a consulate was usually maintained wherever the Imperial Maritime Customs (IMC) stationed one of its commissioners. This was the case in about forty Chinese cities. Since the vast majority of them remained quite irrelevant for British trade, the ramified consular network was an expensive luxury.

The twin-like coupling with the IMC was no coincidence. Both the Customs and the Consulate were creatures of the crusade for Free Trade. A predecessor of the IMC had been set up in 1854 as a joint Sino-foreign undertaking. Its original purpose was to guarantee the regular collection of customs duties after rebels of the Small Sword Society (Xiaodashui) had destroyed the Shanghai custom house.[22] The IMC proper was a creation of (Sir) Robert Hart, its long-serving Inspector-General (1863–1908). Hart joined the Chinese consular service as a student interpreter in 1854. His organization of the IMC was internally patterned on the British consular service as well as on the Indian Civil Service. The IMC was a career bureaucracy under the autocratic direction of the Inspector-General, who was solely responsible to the Zongli Yamen. Although a Chinese government agency, in its higher echelons it was entirely staffed by lavishly paid foreigners. Of 1,382 non-Chinese (from nineteen nations) employed in 1906, 738 were Britons.[23]

Hart was undoubtedly the most influential foreigner in nineteenth-century China and the only one who ever obtained a high rank in the Chinese state bureaucracy. He considered himself at the same time a loyal servant of the Chinese Emperor, a patriotic Briton (he was born in Ulster), and chief guardian of the internationalist trade regime that had been installed by the treaties. Hart was sincere, when he confessed, 'I want to make China strong, and I want her to make England her best friend'.[24] He was impervious to complicity with individual

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[22] Katherine F. Bruner, John K. Fairbank, and Richard J. Smith, eds., *Entering China's Service: Robert Hart's Journals, 1854–1863* (Cambridge, Mass., 1986), pp. 161–68.

[23] Hosea Ballou Morse, *The Trade and Administration of the Chinese Empire* (Shanghai, 1908), pp. 363–64.

[24] Hart to J. D. Campbell, 16 Oct. 1881, in John K. Fairbank, Katherine F. Bruner, and Elizabeth M. Matheson, eds., *The I. G. in Peking: Letters of Robert Hart, Chinese Maritime Customs, 1868–1907* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975), I, p. 389.

British merchants whose typically ignorant disdain of things Chinese he utterly despised. Although he advised half-a-dozen British ministers in succession, he was careful not to take orders from the Legation. During his term of office the IMC restricted its activities to the assessment and collection of customs duties and did not interfere with the disposal of revenue. It did not collaborate with foreign banks and never exercised direct financial control over China. Hart's IMC did not form a proper part of the British or any other national informal empire in China. Nevertheless, there was no stronger support for the treaty system. The IMC stood for incorruptible propriety and the open door in the conduct of China's foreign economic relations. Through harbour engineering, improvement of shipping lanes, pilotage, and commercial intelligence of a very high standard it also provided vital logistic support for foreign traders. The main beneficiaries were those who controlled the lion's share of Chinese foreign trade: the British.

Resulting from administrative rationalization and the elimination of irregular exactions ('squeeze'), the IMC made available to the Chinese treasury a much larger amount of revenue than a continuation of the pre-1854 customs arrangements would have produced. It thus strengthened the Manchu dynasty, especially during the moderately reformist phase between 1862 and the Sino-French War of 1884–85. In this way, Hart's service contributed to one of the long-term objectives of Britain's grand policy towards China. This policy remained remarkably constant. After the dynasty had been humbled but preserved during the period from the Opium War to the Taiping Intervention, London wished to see in Peking, as Sir Edward Grey put it in 1911, 'a strong and stable government which would ensure conditions favourable to trade'.[25] Ideally, the regime in Peking would be amenable to British influence and guidance, but strong enough to ward off internal rebellion and chaos and to resist demands from other powers. As early as 1862, Sir Frederick Bruce, the first Minister to the Ch'ing court, had prophetically observed: 'The weakness of China, rather than her strength, is likely to create a fresh Eastern Question in these seas.'[26] The maintenance of informal empire required a central authority capable of transmitting pressure from the top downward through the hierarchy. Troubles had to be resolved with a minimum of British effort and cost and without risk of being drawn into territorial dominion. A second India had to be avoided under any circumstances. When in doubt, even the colonial interests of Hong Kong were subordinated to broader Imperial concerns. The British government, normally, was careful to keep a healthy distance from the less-than-gentlemanly traders on the China coast. Four larger concerns, above all, seemed worth defending in China: the lives and property of respectable British citizens, the

[25] Quoted in E. W. Edwards, *British Diplomacy and Finance in China, 1895–1914* (Oxford, 1987), p. 158.
[26] Quoted in J. S. Gregory, *Great Britain and the Taipings* (London, 1969), p. 112.

sanctity of the International Settlement at Shanghai, the prestige of Britain as China's senior self-appointed 'foreign friend', and the treaty-based internationalist free trade regime.

Ironically, the most visible group among the British in China was one that many Consuls tended to regard as a nuisance: the missionaries. Since all missionaries, by the very nature of their project, posed a revolutionary challenge to the traditional order, they provoked Chinese reactions of unusual bitterness. The Chinese local élite and the common people were perfectly capable of distinguishing between Roman Catholicism (*tianzhujiao*) and Protestant Christianity (*jidujiao*), but they usually missed the differences between British missionaries and those of other nationalities. The Sino-French Treaty of 1860 had removed almost all obstacles to missionary activities anywhere in China. By 1890 Protestant missionaries resided in all provinces of China. The missionary enterprise as a whole was, by and large, rejected by the Chinese people, especially by the educated élite.[27] It does not seem as if British missionaries behaved in a particularly offensive way. But they too challenged the local élite's monopoly of social leadership, interfered with traditional religious practices, and split village communities into minorities protected under the umbrella of a widely defined extraterritoriality and majorities who now had to shoulder a proportionally heavier burden of expenses for festivities and ceremonies and sometimes even of taxes. While the Protestant mission, in contrast to the centralized Roman Catholic Church, never became a veritable *imperium in imperio*, the link between the missionary presence and foreign coercion became apparent to non-Christians whenever they had to foot the bill for the local indemnities exacted following anti-Christian riots. Tensions exploded in the Boxer Uprising of 1900. During the 1880s many missionary societies stepped up their valuable philanthropic, medical, and educational work in the great cities. The British concentrated their efforts on Hong Kong, where a small group of Christian reformers rose to prominence among the well-to-do Chinese citizens. Elsewhere, the British never matched the commitment of the American Protestants. None of the major missionary universities in Peking and Shanghai was British, and British cultural influence on the westernized élite of the early twentieth century remained limited, strikingly out of proportion to Britain's economic stake in China.

Although the institutions of informal empire evolved to be more than mere instruments of commercial expansion, trade remained the *raison d'être* of the British presence in China, at least throughout the nineteenth century. In spite of a growing regional diversification of Chinese foreign trade, by 1914 Britain and the

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[27] Paul A. Cohen, 'Christian Missions and their Impact to 1900', in John K. Fairbank, ed., *The Cambridge History of China* (Cambridge, 1978), X, pp. 560–73.

British Empire (excluding Hong Kong) were still China's leading trading partners, if only by a slight margin over Japan. Simultaneously, Britain was the most important investor in the Republic of China, with about 38 per cent of total foreign investment.[28] Investment had assumed an important role after the epochal year of 1895, when China's military humiliation by Japan inaugurated a new stage of imperialism in East Asia.

To what extent can the British *economic* presence in China be regarded as an *imperial* presence? In what way was a natural economic asymmetry between the workshop and financial centre of the world and an agrarian country amplified by non-economic power differentials and the infrastructure of informal imperialism? What can be said about the impact of the British presence on the Chinese economy?

These questions can only be answered with some uncertainty. One reason for this is a lack of reliable statistical data. Even more important, the cosmopolitan character of the entire foreign establishment in China makes it difficult to isolate a particular British factor. This cosmopolitanism can be found on various levels. Except during periods of high international tension, the powers, represented by the Diplomatic Body in the capital and by its lower-level counterparts, the Consular Bodies in the treaty ports, frequently acted in unison to put pressure on the Chinese authorities. The joint intervention of the United States, Japan, and six European countries against the anti-foreign Yihetuan ('Boxer') movement in 1900 was a thoroughly co-operative venture, and the Draconian Boxer Protocol of 1901 was the dictate of an (internally less than harmonious) united front of the powers. Some of the principal imperialist institutions were British in their general cultural orientation, but international in composition. This is true for the IMC as well as for the International Settlement at Shanghai. Even the apparently national realms of control were less watertight than is often supposed. The spheres of interest demarcated around the turn of the century did not effectively exclude third-country competitors: German firms, for example, were very active in the 'British' Yangtze Valley, and the British government consented to French and Belgian participation in the financing of railways in Central China. At the outbreak of the European war in August 1914, the open secret that, at Tientsin, Germans owned land in the British Concession turned into a public embarrassment. At the same time, the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC), which had financed German firms almost since its foundation in 1864, lost four of its twelve directors because they were German.[29] And the largest Western manufacturing

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[28] Remer, *Foreign Investments*, p. 76.
[29] Frank H. H. King, *The Hongkong Bank in the Period of Imperialism and War, 1895–1918: Wayfoong, the Focus of Wealth* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 552.

enterprise on Chinese soil, the British-American Tobacco Corporation (BAT), shifted almost imperceptibly from American to British majority control by the mid-1920s.

The British profile is most clearly discernible during the earliest decades after the opening of China. Until the 1880s British business went almost unchallenged on the China coast. Its biggest success was the development of Shanghai. Shanghai was not only a funnel for goods into and out of Central China. It also became important as a market in itself. The growing foreign community created a demand for luxury imports and local services. This was supplemented by the purchasing power of Chinese businessmen, landowners, and retired officials who had withdrawn from the insecure interior to the safe haven on the coast. The Chinese in general were comparatively conservative in their tastes and consumption habits. They took more slowly to Western goods than the creole élites of Latin America or the Japanese during the Meiji era. Chinese wealth was traditionally invested in land. This now applied to Shanghai. The emergence of an urban real estate market in the International Settlement and land values that shot up from the 1880s on turned central Shanghai into one of the most valuable pieces of territory in Asia.[30]

Beyond the major territorial enclaves, the most spectacular British success story was shipping on the Yangtze and along the coast between Hong Kong and the South Manchurian ports. Before the age of the railway, steam shipping was the driving wedge in the Western penetration of China. The steamship made its first fateful appearance in China during the Opium War. In the 1860s American interests in civilian shipping were strong. Thereafter, the British flag predominated. The two leading steamship lines belonged to the major general-purpose China houses: Jardine Matheson & Co. ('Ewo') and Butterfield & Swire ('Taikoo'). Their combined share of the freight and passenger market was as high as 60 per cent in 1880 and dropped to around 35 per cent by 1937. Since 1873 competition was offered by the semi-governmental China Merchants Steam Navigation Co., and in the early twentieth century also by a number of smaller Chinese private lines. The British shipping companies were strong without ever obtaining a monopoly. Intense rate wars required stabilizing agreements on various occasions between 1877 and 1935.[31] The Ewo and Taikoo lines could only prosper because they attracted Chinese customers. They were thus more than mere auxiliaries of British import–export business. Much of their most lucrative business was transporting staple goods (rice, raw cotton, salt, etc.) within China. Some of the advantages enjoyed by foreign companies, for example, their superior capitalization and

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[30] Zhao Jin, 'Zujie yu Zhongguo jindai fangdi chanye de dansheng' [The Concessions and the Birth of Modern Real Estate Business in China], *Lishi yanjiu*, 1993, No. 6, pp. 97–108.

[31] Zhang Zhongli, Chen Cengnian, and Yao Xinrong, *Taigu jituan zai jiu Zhongguo* [The Taikoo Group in Old China] (Shanghai, 1991), pp. 63–64.

organization, were of no immediate 'imperial' nature. Still, extra-territorial protection should not be underestimated as an additional asset. Many Chinese passengers and shippers, especially in the early twentieth century, preferred security under foreign flags to the risk of having the ships they were using attacked by pirates or commandeered by local militarists.[32] Steam shipping did not destroy pre-industrial junk traffic. On the contrary, in many regions it stimulated traditional means of transport. It served as a vehicle of modernization and brought great benefits to the Chinese economy. However, it is difficult to see the positive effects of foreign ownership. Not even technology transfer and personnel training played a role. Up to the 1940s, the foreign shipping companies employed hardly any Chinese in senior positions on board.

British merchants found it difficult to gain footholds in the China market. Great expectations were constantly disappointed. Opium imports from India, mostly handled by British firms, peaked in 1879 at a quantity of 5,000 tons and declined thereafter due to massive import substitution.[33] Towards the end of the century the province of Szechwan alone was said to have produced 15,000 tons per annum. Cotton goods, chiefly piece-goods, superseded opium as the principal item of China's legal imports in 1885. They accounted for 66 per cent of direct British exports to China in 1852 and 57 per cent in 1912.[34] China was an important market, but not the El Dorado hoped for at the time of the Opium War. In 1896, an exceptionally good year, it absorbed 8 per cent of the exports of the British cotton industry, against 27 per cent for India and another 8 per cent for the rest of Asia.[35]

By the 1890s British merchants no longer participated in the distribution of their goods 'up-country'. The situation at Ningpo, one of the five original treaty ports, was symptomatic. As early as 1870, it was alleged that Chinese merchants had 'monopolized' the trade in cotton goods in the town and the surrounding province of Ghekiang and were able to offer the same British cloth at lower prices than British traders on the spot.[36] Thirty years later, not one British cotton importer remained active west of Shanghai. The entire trade had passed into the hands of country-wide indigenous merchant networks. The British importers in Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Tientsin had been reduced to the status of commission agents of the Chinese cotton guilds. They lacked immediate contact with their customers and had no control over retail prices. Above all, they could do nothing

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[32] Zhu Jianbang, *Yangzijiang hangye* [Shipping on the Yangtze] (Shanghai 1937), pp. 146–47.

[33] Hsiao Liang-lin, *China's Foreign Trade Statistics, 1864–1949* (Cambridge, Mass., 1974), p. 52, Table 2.

[34] E. Manico Gull, *British Economic Interests in the Far East* (London, 1943), p. 53.

[35] D. A. Farnie, *The English Cotton Industry and the World Market, 1815–1896* (Oxford, 1979), p. 91, Table 5.

[36] Inspectorate General of Customs, *Reports on Trade at the Treaty Ports in China for the Year 1870* (Shanghai, 1871), p. 59.

against the chains of brokers and middlemen typical of Chinese trade. When Japanese importers developed cost-cutting facilities for direct distribution, British products found themselves seriously disadvantaged. Freedom from the burdens of up-country distribution made life easy for the import houses on the coast. But it also made them dependent on the loyalty of the Chinese merchants, whom nobody could prevent from looking for supplies elsewhere.[37] The import agencies watched helplessly when British cotton exports to China contracted after the First World War and collapsed in the early 1930s. One of the main reasons for this disaster was import substitution. It began with the slow emergence of a Chinese cotton industry after 1890 and intensified with its rapid development from 1915 onwards. Early on, British firms participated in this movement: Jardine Matheson & Co. opened cotton mills in Shanghai in 1895, 1907, and 1914. Yet British investment was soon overtaken by the expansion of a cotton industry in Chinese and Japanese hands. In 1914, 24 per cent of all spindles in China were installed in British mills; by 1936 their share had dropped to 4 per cent.[38]

The abortive conquest of the Chinese cotton market highlights the limitations of informal empire. The treaties and all the consular and naval might behind them could not make the Chinese richer than they were and could not compel them to buy cloth that was expensive and often unsuited to their needs. Manchester exports never dislodged the home-woven product and finally lost in competition with the output of modern mills in the treaty ports. The treaty-stipulated exemption from certain transit duties and provincial taxes did not provide the expected edge over indigenous supplies. In many cases it could not be enforced at all. No Consul was able to keep track of the myriad ways in which British imports were spread all over China. The vicissitudes of the market slipped through the net of informal empire. On the whole, British (and, for that matter, any foreign) physical penetration of the Chinese interior remained strictly limited until the last decade of the nineteenth century.[39] The treaties opened the interior Chinese market for Western goods but not, in effect, for Western merchants. Trade expansion did not surpass the general tendencies of an age of world-wide commercial growth.

The rise of the coastal enclaves would have been unthinkable without the wars of 1840–60 and the resulting treaty system. Their internal development in the ensuing decades owed much to the initiatives of Chinese merchants and the exploita-

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[37] Arno S. Pearse, *The Cotton Industry of Japan and China: Being the Report of the Journey to Japan and China* (Manchester, 1929), p. 222.

[38] Chao Kang, *The Development of Cotton Textile Production in China* (Cambridge, Mass., 1977), pp. 301–02, Table 40.

[39] See the valid, if somewhat exaggerated, arguments in Rhoads Murphey, *The Outsiders: The Western Experience in India and China* (Ann Arbor, 1977), esp. chaps. 7, 9, 10.

tion of Chinese labour. A small class of Chinese in Shanghai and Hong Kong grew rich as compradors bridging the economic and cultural gap between the foreign establishment and its indigenous environment. They invested part of their profits in Western firms, availing themselves of extraterritorial protection. A kind of mixed Sino-foreign mercantile capitalism unfolded on the China coast.[40] There is a danger, however, that too much is made of such a symbiosis of different commercial civilizations. The worlds of Western and Chinese business met, at least until the 1880s, in a common penchant for short-lived speculation, without blending easily into solid structures. Business styles fused reluctantly. Western ideas of contract and Chinese, ideas of reciprocity and local solidarity did not merge. The widespread use of 'pidgin', a debased mixture of English and Chinese, symbolized the shallowness of the inter-cultural compromise. Both in the International Settlement and in Hong Kong, the emerging Chinese bourgeoisie was informally incorporated into the power structure, but for a long time was not admitted to formal participation.[41]

The Crown Colony differed from Shanghai in one essential point: its very existence as an urban community was due to British initiative. Hong Kong's early population was entirely composed of immigrants. For a long time Hong Kong essentially remained a community of temporary sojourners.[42] Many Chinese, however, arrived to stay and formed the nucleus of a slowly maturing social structure. A 'coolie class' grew in conjunction with expanding foreign trade, shipping, and the germs of industry. By the turn of the century it had evolved into a veritable proletariat that was learning to voice its own interests.[43] The Chinese Revolution of October 1911 inaugurated a period of intense labour protest that raised earlier forms of social unrest to higher levels of organization and was to last up to the late 1920s. From the 1880s on the pre-eminence of Hong Kong's first-generation notables and community leaders was challenged by younger businessmen, professionals, and members of a new intelligentsia who absorbed Western ideas and attitudes and took a keen interest in political events beyond the borders of the colony. National questions rather than local issues came to dominate public debates. Hong Kong's own political development had been arrested at an early stage. As early as 1855, Governor Sir John Bowring, a Philosophical Radical of Benthamite persuasion, had attempted to introduce an element of truly

[40]   Hao Yen-p'ing, *The Commercial Revolution in Nineteenth-Century China: The Rise of Sino-Western Mercantile Capitalism* (Berkeley, 1986).

[41]   For Hong Kong, see Chan Wai Kwan, *The Making of Hong Kong Society: Three Studies of Class Formation in Early Hong Kong* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 105–14.

[42]   H. J. Lethbridge, *Hong Kong: Stability and Change* (Hong Kong, 1978), p. 2.

[43]   Xu Shengwu, Liu Cunkuan, and others, *Shijiu shiji de Xianggang* [Hong Kong in the 19th Century] (Peking, 1994), pp. 393–405.

representative government into the colony's constitution. His proposal to have unofficial members of the Legislative Council directly elected by propertied voters irrespective of race was, however, repudiated by the home government.[44] Hong Kong politics remained as undemocratic and exclusive as the government of the International Settlement at Shanghai.

Both city-states encapsulated colonial societies in which racial hierarchies were superimposed upon patterns of social order owing little to direct foreign initiative. The junior British clerk was a sahib, the wealthy, respectable Chinese merchant or comprador was not. Power, status, and colour (the Chinese had not been considered 'yellow' until early in the nineteenth century) correlated in ways characteristic of colonialism all over the world. While *informal* empire was hardly perceptible for ordinary Chinese, apart from patriotically alerted members of the élite, *formal* Empire in Hong Kong and Shanghai was an experience shared by hundreds of thousands of colonial subjects. To the extent that the indigenous population derived economic benefits from the foreign presence, they were gained under the shadow of racial discrimination and cultural humiliation.

The equilibrium of the classic treaty system was upset around the turn of the century. The legalism of the preceding period was replaced by a more robust approach. Watching the activities of the Powers in their own country, Chinese intellectuals felt understandably attracted to a Social Darwinist view of the world. Three events underlined the weakness of the Chinese state and contributed to the foreigners' collective advantage: the defeat of 1895, the Boxer fiasco of 1900, and the collapse of the monarchy in 1911. After each of these major turning-points, China was further deprived of sovereign rights. The instruments of foreign intervention were strengthened. Garrisons were established to protect the Legation Quarter at Peking and other strategic spots in North China; 3,000 troops were stationed at Tientsin alone. In the International Settlement at Shanghai, the Mixed Court, yet another extra-treaty invention of the early 1860s, was taken over by the Consuls of the eighteen treaty powers. Henceforth, foreigners sat in judgement over Chinese cases in which no foreign defendants or plaintiffs were involved. The Court applied what it took to be the laws of China according to Western rules of procedure. Shanghai turned into a paradise for Western lawyers, since no case would be heard without foreign counsel.[45]

Most importantly, the IMC changed its character from an impartial duty-collecting agency to a tool of international financial control. From November

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[44] Frank Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong* (London, 1993), p. 216.

[45] Thomas B. Stephens, *Order and Discipline in China: The Shanghai Mixed Court, 1911–27* (Seattle, Wash., 1992), pp. 51, 109, 111.

1911 on, the customs revenues were transmitted to an international commission of bankers at Shanghai, who represented China's foreign creditors. Only after the ironically named Custodian Banks had satisfied their own demands was the Chinese government allowed to petition the Diplomatic Body for the gracious release of the 'customs surplus'.[46] Sir Robert Hart's achievement was thus turned upside down and the IMC, now renamed Chinese Maritime Customs (CMC), transformed into something like a *caisse de la dette* politically independent of the Chinese state, if administratively still its subordinate agency. Chinese governmental finances never came, as Egypt's did, under *complete* foreign financial control. But the important salt revenues too were administered under their own Custodian Bank system as a result of the international Consortium's Reorganization Loan to President Yuan Shih-k'ai (1913).[47] Security for foreign credit was now equated with a direct grip on the collateral.

In all this, the specifically British element is difficult to identify. The policy of the British government and the British banks can, of course, be studied separately and has been analysed in exhaustive detail.[48] But the rivalry between the powers must be seen within a wider systemic framework of Chinese subjugation. Financial imperialism was the most significant aspect of that subjugation in the 1895 to 1914 period. The London capital market led the world and the HSBC continued to be the *primus inter pares* among the foreign banks in Hong Kong and Shanghai. As a co-operative project under British leadership, financial imperialism has to be discussed in general terms.[49]

A foreign financial presence can be considered imperial if market superiority *vis-à-vis* a non-European country is secured through or strengthened by a general asymmetry in terms of political and military power. In China between 1895 and 1914 this was the case on five counts:

(1) The huge Boxer Indemnity (£67.5 million in gold at 4 per cent per annum, payable until 1940) and several other loans for financing war indemnities were the results of military conflict between China and the Great Powers.

(2) Under extraterritoriality and other treaty privileges, foreign banks in China operated beyond the reach of the host country's government. They were immune to Chinese financial policy.

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[46] Stanley F. Wright, *The Collection and Disposal of the Maritime Customs Revenue since the Revolution of 1911* (Shanghai, 1925), pp. 1–7. See chap. by Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid-Marsot.

[47] An excellent account of the Reorganization Loan is Boris Barth, *Die deutsche Hochfinanz und die Imperialismen: Banken und Außenpolitik vor 1914* (Stuttgart, 1995), pp. 386–409; S. A. M. Adshead, *The Modernization of the Chinese Salt Administration, 1900–1920* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), pp. 82–89.

[48] Above all, F. H. H. King, *History of the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation*, 4 vols. (Cambridge, 1987–91).

[49] Wolfgang J. Mommsen, 'Europäischer Finanzimperialismus vor 1914. Ein Beitrag zu einer pluralistischen Theorie des Imperialismus', *Historische Zeitschrift*, CCIV (1977), pp. 17–81.

(3) The big overseas banks acted in close collusion with their home governments in an intimacy unknown before 1895 and again after the First World War. The HSBC operated as the financial arm of the British government. The relationship between banks and governments was even closer in France, Germany, Japan, and Russia.

(4) Although groups and consortia of foreign banks never succeeded in completely excluding outsiders and thus obtaining a stranglehold on China's external finances, they came close to establishing an oligopoly which China found hard to evade. China possessed capital, but no modern domestic capital market to mobilize it, and so remained dependent on external capital supply. It was thus in a weak position to challenge the often-unfavourable loan conditions offered by the foreign banks.

(5) The seizure of securities such as customs and salt revenues and a few other indirect taxes would have been impossible under the rules and conventions of normal international relations. Before 1893 the Ch'ing dynasty had contracted a number of small loans. None of them had involved the pawning of government income. The loans after the Sino-Japanese War, however, came invariably in conjunction with political shackles such as the undertaking, linked to the Anglo-German 5 per cent Sterling Loan of 1896, to guarantee European dominance in the customs administration during the currency of the loan (thirty-six years).[50]

The largest part of foreign finance was used for railroad construction.[51] After several false starts, the age of the railway began in earnest in 1897. By 1914 9,568 kilometres of track had been laid.[52] Ten per cent of these were in undiminished Chinese ownership and had been constructed without foreign funds by Chinese engineers. Thirty-nine per cent were based on *colonial* concessions, financed, built, and operated by foreigners. Japan, Russia, France, and Germany constructed railways under such conditions. In Manchuria this form of railway building predominated. Britain possessed (from 1907) only the 36 kilometres of the Kowloon Railway from its southern terminal to the Chinese border: a trifling piece when compared to the 1,721 kilometres of Russia's Chinese Eastern Railway in Manchuria. Britain had no appreciable formal stake in Chinese railways.

The remaining 51 per cent of railway mileage was based on *financial* concessions. In these cases the lines remained Chinese property, and their revenues went to the Chinese government. The loan agreements, however, stipulated all kinds of

[50] J. V. A. MacMurray, ed., *Treaties and Agreements With and Concerning China, 1894–1912*, 2 vols. (New York, 1921), I, pp. 55–59.

[51] Clarence B. Davis, 'Railway Imperialism in China, 1895–1939', in Clarence B. Davis and Kenneth E. Wilburn, Jr., eds., *Railway Imperialism* (New York, 1991), pp. 155–73.

[52] All data are based on Mi Rucheng, *Diguozhuyi yu Zhongguo tielu, 1847–1949* [Imperialism and the Chinese Railways] (Shanghai, 1980), pp. 362–63, 670.

foreign control: pledging not only operating profits, but also other government revenues; access to mining rights; supply of construction materials and rolling stock by the creditors and their agents at above-market prices; appointment of foreigners to higher engineering and administrative positions; autocratic powers of the foreign engineers-in-chief, and so on. Until 1936 China was unable to obtain railway loans without such strings attached. Britain occupied the leading position in Chinese railway financing. By 1914 41 per cent of the credit sums disbursed to the Chinese government for railroads had originated from British sources.[53]

Railway financing offered greater scope for Chinese negotiators, some of whom were by now highly able diplomats with a sure mastery of detail, than did indemnities and big political loans. In 1908 Chinese diplomacy, supported by an increasingly vocal public opinion, scored a notable success in obtaining terms for the Tientsin–Pukow railway that restricted foreign interference to an extent unknown in the past.[54] But the older, much less favourable agreements remained in force. On the eve of the First World War an overwhelming proportion of China's state railways was still managed by British, French, and Belgian engineers and administrators. Most railways south of the Great Wall can be counted an addition to the informal empires of Britain and France: they were under some measure of foreign control without being outright colonial possessions. British beneficiaries of Chinese railway expansion included the banks, individual bondholders, expatriate staff, exporters of matériel, and the British collieries in China which found new customers. It is impossible to prove that British-financed railways facilitated British trade in China. If they did, their contribution must have been slight. British goods enjoyed no preferential treatment on these lines. None of them traversed a region that had not hitherto been served well by steamers and traditional means of transport. The railway conquered China only slowly. In 1936 freight traffic on China's railways amounted to 14.6 billion ton-kilometers as opposed to 33.5 billion ton-kilometers in India.[55] British involvement with Chinese railways reflected mainly financial and political considerations and not the old hopes of tapping a huge mass market. Railway financing, therefore, was characteristic of the intermediate and rather brief period of Europe-dominated high finance. After the First World War no effort succeeded in reviving the golden days of Chinese bonds.

The years 1911 and 1914 were dates of equal significance in the history of Britain's special position in China. The collapse of the *ancien régime* in the Revolution of

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[53] Chen Hui, *Zhongguo tielu wenti* [Problems of Chinese Railways], new edn. (Peking, 1955), p. 77; E-tu Zen Sun, *Chinese Railways and British Interests, 1898–1911* (New York, 1954).

[54] Lee En-han, *China's Quest for Railway Autonomy, 1904–1911: A Study of the Chinese Railway-Rights Recovery Movement* (Singapore, 1977), p. 181.

[55] Thomas G. Rawski, *Economic Growth in Prewar China* (Berkeley, 1989), p. 208.

1911, after a brief period of last-minute reforms, freed all foreigners from residual restraints and exposed the young Republic to unprecedented rapacity. Ever since the second treaty settlement of 1860, the Manchu rulers and their Chinese officials had proved their worth as reluctant, but reliable collaborators. If extravagant dreams of a boundless China market did not come true, it was not the Ch'ing dynasty's fault. Attempts to rebuild a Ch'ing-type collaborative relationship with Yuan Shih-k'ai, the strong man of the early Republic, failed when the dictator died in 1916. The erosion of the political centre after 1911 and especially after 1916 weakened or even removed the mechanisms of foreign pressure and Chinese compliance that had ensured the functioning of informal empire for more than half a century. Anarchy required different imperial strategies. The outbreak of the First World War did not immediately affect the British position in China, but had important indirect repercussions. It released the energies of Chinese industry and thus invigorated an important competitor. It also encouraged Japan to cast off her earlier inhibitions and to pretend to a hegemonic position on the East Asian mainland. The following period was to be marked by a boost in Chinese as well as Japanese assertiveness.

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9

Imperial Institutions and the Government of Empire

PETER BURROUGHS

Fundamentally, the British Empire was concerned with power. But power had to be converted into systems of authority, exercised by agents through bureaucratic structures. Not all these instruments of influence and control were arms of the state. In certain circumstances, commercial organizations and missionary societies could embody and uphold Imperial authority. Nevertheless, the management of a global empire required a network of governmental institutions at home and overseas, bureaucratic channels evolved to implement metropolitan directives and meet colonial challenges. Constantly obliged to adjust to circumstance and opportunity, pressures and constraints, Britain's governance of Empire involved dynamic processes, not static structures and inert constitutional frameworks, as some earlier imperial historians imagined. Even routine administration was a two-way process of communication and accommodation. Unlike the Spanish and the French, the British never attempted to rule colonies directly from the metropole; neither their resources nor their inclinations pointed towards centralized direction, and the colonists themselves, to varying degrees, encouraged a tradition of devolved authority and local systems of association. At the core of Imperial administration, therefore, lay a continuous interplay between mother country and colonial communities, between centre and periphery, a series of essentially bilateral relationships which entailed constant negotiation rather than the imposition of rule and the acceptance of subjection.

Another enduring characteristic of British administration was that it tended to be reactive rather than initiatory, with governmental authority lagging behind, not leading, overseas expansion. The familiar slogan, 'trade followed the flag', is misleading in the sense that the bureaucratic standard-bearers of British rule usually trailed in the wake of traders, missionaries, explorers, and settlers, and were charged, like firefighters or troubleshooters, with tidying up the chaos left by private entrepreneurs and trying to impose some order and regularity. Even with territories which the Crown formally acquired by conquest or cession, Governors trod in the footsteps of soldiers and diplomats, and often had to accommodate alien institutions as well as peoples inherited from France, Spain, or Holland. Only

in British settlement colonies might administrative arrangements occasionally precede or accompany the first migrants. In 1829, for example, the Colonial Office sanctioned a new colony on the Swan River in Western Australia, and a few years later agreed to a fatally flawed, hybrid form of government devised by the South Australia colonizers. Yet even when the British flag had been hoisted, the Imperial policy-makers' task of crisis management was exacerbated by the continued delegation of authority to local officials and the free range accorded independent agents which allowed crises to develop. These might easily saddle the Imperial government with fresh, unwelcome responsibilities unless the extension or consolidation of colonial control was resolutely withstood.

Because the assertion and discharge of Imperial authority tended to be reactive, with officials in London possessing only slight control over commitments forced on them by circumstance and the actions of distant subordinates, the scale and complexity of governing the Empire steadily increased during the nineteenth century. By the 1890s the Empire encompassed a quarter of the globe's land area and one-fifth of its population. Rather than constituting one empire, this conglomeration of large land masses and territorial fragments comprised several empires—pluralistic and singular in their individual dealings with Britain. Although collectively the Empire might embody a global economy and signify British world power, as a political entity it was loosely held together, despite the entanglements of redtape and the mesh of communications. Lord Milner was not alone in regretting its 'total want of any permanent binding force, or rational system'.[1] Enthusiasts periodically talked of turning it into something more tangible and firmly united, perhaps through the mechanism of federation, but the British dominions remained, as Adam Smith had described them in 1776, 'not an empire, but the project of an empire',[2] a unity and an aspiration lodged in the imaginations of Britons. F. S. Oliver complained in 1906 that the Empire was not 'a political fact, but only a phrase, an influence, or a sentiment'.[3]

Among the various objectives of Imperial policy-makers in managing the Empire's constituent territories, the prime imperative—and major anxiety—remained the preservation of security and loyalty. Many colonies faced actual or potential external threats from foreign rivals or ambitious neighbours; British ministers worried constantly about a Russian incursion into India and American designs on Canada. What materially enhanced the security of Britain's scattered possessions

[1] Milner to Sir Clinton Dawkins, 4 Jan. 1902, Cecil Headlam, ed., *The Milner Papers*, 3 vols. (London, 1933), II, p. 288.

[2] *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* [1776], R. H. Campbell and others, eds. (Oxford, 1976), II, pp. 946–47.

[3] *Alexander Hamilton: An Essay on American Union* (London, 1906), p. 481.

after 1815—and temporarily eased the pressures on Imperial administrators—was the relative peacefulness which afflicted international relations and the absence of any European nation strong enough to challenge the global superiority of the Royal Navy. This exceptional interlude faded in the 1870s with the rise of Continental powers harbouring colonial ambitions. Meanwhile, continuous threats to colonies' security arose from endemic instability on their frontiers and in adjacent border regions, most noticeably in Asia and southern Africa. Even more demanding, officials in London and overseas had to guard against internal subversion or disorder and cultivate the acquiescence of assorted populations in British rule, if not their collaboration with the authorities and loyalty to the Imperial connection. The use or threat of force by itself was insufficient permanently to overawe or pacify millions of subjects and, as discussed later, various strategies were devised to promote internal tranquillity. These did not, however, prevent frequent, unpredictable eruptions of unrest throughout the Empire, confronting administrators with an incessant stream of crises, emergencies, and small wars.

A second aim of Imperial rule was the promotion of colonial prosperity. Though disdainful of narrowly commercial priorities, British ministers acknowledged a responsibility for colonists' material well-being. 'Civilization', often defined by Victorians in terms of 'improvement', 'progress', and 'regeneration', had an economic dimension which infused the outlook of officials, who also recognized that flourishing economies would be better able to sustain financial independence of the British Treasury and taxpayer. While commercial activities were chiefly and ideally left to private enterprise without government interference or support, in certain respects and on some occasions the state strove to foster economic development. In addition to control of tariffs and currency, fiscal and monetary policies, government intervention embraced infrastructures, communications, and most prominently the management of land and labour. Championing the superior long-term interests of the wider community, future generations, and the Empire at large against those of the monopolist and the speculator, the state sought to regulate the acquisition of Crown lands in Australia, British North America, and elsewhere. Most ambitiously, the Colonial Office in 1831 adopted as part of Imperial practice the leading principles of Edward Gibbon Wakefield's theory of systematic colonization with respect to restrictive land scales and assisted emigration to Australia, in a bid to shape the colonies' patterns of land use, landownership, and economic development according to a doctrinaire blueprint. Colonial slavery and the transportation of convicts were discontinued in favour of both free and indentured labour.[4]

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[4] Peter Burroughs, *Britain and Australia, 1831–1855: A Study in Imperial Relations and Crown Lands Administration* (Oxford, 1967). See chaps. by Andrew Porter, Marjory Harper, and David Northrup.

Official temptations to intervene and regulate were greater in the institutional fields. Again, a sense of trusteeship reinforced the notion of good government, with its ideals of law and order, economy and efficiency, as well as settled expectations of how society ought to be organized. It might include private property rights, the rule of law, trial by jury, a free press, education in 'citizenship', arenas for public discourse, and some measure of popular consent to government, even if not representative institutions. More expansively, contemporaries associated Imperial rule with Britain's 'civilizing mission', to which the character of government was everywhere both fundamental and definitive. When it came to translating such worthy objectives into action, however, problems at once confronted policy-makers in London and their agents on the spot. At a time when the responsibilities and bureaucratic resources of the British state were limited, and advocates of *laissez-faire* wanted to reduce its role still further, it was no easy matter to determine either how far and in what ways government should regulate the lives of colonial subjects, or what forms of intervention would be appropriate and efficacious.

The paternalist stance—whether authoritarian or liberal in form—generally espoused by Imperial administrators involved both negative and positive initiatives. Colonial élites and those commanding local authority, though often valuable as collaborators, had to be prohibited or discouraged from pursuing oppressive or unduly selfish policies at the expense of the inhabitants at large. This was a varied and problematic remit which might necessitate executive intervention or merely advice and exhortation. Colonial Secretaries regularly claimed that the disadvantages of distance and imperfect local knowledge were more than offset by the Department's command of superior wisdom, accumulated experience, and impartial, panoramic views. Occasionally local legislation was disallowed; in a last resort Parliament might act. Whatever the chosen instrument, the Colonial Office thought it essential to be vigilant and ready to pounce in the case of Crown Colonies which lacked the supposed safeguards of representative institutions, and where Imperial officials stood *in loco parentis* for the interests of the wider community. They also felt a genuine humanitarian concern for indigenous peoples, who should not be left wholly at the mercy of exploiters, though uncertainty reigned in Whitehall about the fate awaiting aboriginal races and about the constructive part officials might play in assisting missionaries in the task of 'improvement'. In settler colonies, the Imperial authorities faced the dilemma of whether to retain an expensive obligation or rely on white inhabitants to administer 'native policy'. The Duke of Newcastle asserted that 'it was one of the paramount duties of a good Government, in carrying out colonization, to interfere as far as possible to prevent those cruelties and horrors that had been perpetrated in the early days of our Colonies where there were a number of

aborigines'.[5] Nevertheless, evidence from British North America, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa suggests that the necessity for Imperial intervention was only fitfully acknowledged and ineffectually exerted.[6]

In other circumstances, trusteeship and paternalist guidance might be more constructively asserted but involved a choice between two alternative prescriptions: assimilation or diversity. Were Britain's interests and duty best met by transplanting British institutions or by allowing colonial inhabitants to maintain traditional laws and customs and fashion their own arrangements? The question might be complicated by rival political and economic imperatives, as the practitioners of indirect rule in Africa discovered. Throughout the tropical colonies with non-European peoples, the dilemma of either preserving indigenous institutions in order to promote stability or Anglicizing those societies in order to modernize their activities had constantly to be confronted and was difficult to address. The emphasis given the competing principles of assimilation and pluralism therefore varied according to local circumstances; it also fluctuated over time as political ideas and cultural fashions changed within Britain itself. Was human nature intrinsically the same everywhere and were non-European societies therefore amenable to transformation by the workings of law, education, and free trade? Or did differences of history, culture, and race constitute enduring factors that administrators had to recognize and accommodate?

India provided a major arena for this contest. Because of the need of 'liberal' Britain to legitimate autocratic rule, the sense of trusteeship was more highly developed—and more agonizingly appraised—there than elsewhere in the Empire, though it produced diverse and incompatible responses. The strategies of governance for the Raj were also profoundly shaped by the coexistence of conflicting assumptions concerning the underlying similarity or enduring difference of British and Indian society. These impulses produced complex, varied, and constantly shifting patterns of administration, especially when combined with the military and fiscal exigencies of a garrison state. An early administrative respect and tolerance for what were understood to be traditional Indian customs, laws, and religion were subsequently somewhat modified by calls from assorted utilitarians, liberal reformers, and evangelicals for the wholesale Anglicization of society. After the shock of the Indian Mutiny in 1857, however, enthusiasm for rapid Westernization was officially replaced by a deliberate distancing of British authority from the regeneration of Indian society and by a more pronounced insistence on Indian 'difference'. Sir Charles Wood, Secretary of State for India,

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[5] 26 July 1858, P[arliamentary] D[ebates] (Lords), CLI, col. 2102.
[6] See chaps. by Donald Denoon, Raewyn Dalziel, Ged Martin, and Christopher Saunders and Iain R. Smith.

acknowledged that the 'mistake we fell into, under the influence of the most
benevolent feelings, and according to our notion of what was right and just, was
that of introducing a system foreign to the habits and wishes of the people'.
Henceforth, 'we ought to adopt and improve what we find in existence and avail
ourselves as far as possible of the existing institutions of the country'.[7]

Elsewhere, the urge to assimilate was still more sporadic and often ineffectual,
the occasional rhetorical outburst seldom being translated into action. Wilmot
Horton denounced 'the Dutch laws of the Cape of Good Hope, or the Spanish laws
of Trinidad, which he declared it scandalous for an Englishman to be subjected to,
as being contrary to all his feelings and prejudices. For himself, he would never
flinch from the proposition that all our colonies should be Anglicized rather than
preserved in their original form.'[8] Yet, as Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office,
Horton did little to translate such sentiments into Imperial practice in the con-
quered and ceded colonies. Officials at the colonial department generally acknow-
ledged diversity and pluralism. French Canada aroused most support for
assimilation but, again, bold words by William Huskisson and Edward Ellice far
exceeded official deeds. The chief impetus for Anglicization came from the English
élite in Lower Canada, not the authorities in London, just as it was English officials
at the Cape like Henry Ellis who in the 1820s sought to change Dutch laws and
institutions, an enthusiasm later repeated by Milner after the South African War.

In the case of settlement colonies, commentators at home and overseas might
refer to the emulation or export of British forms of government, when it suited
their interests. Generally, however, Imperial administrators doubted the possibil-
ity of reproducing a British constitution in very different societies and alien
environments. Most would have agreed with James Stephen that any 'analogy'
with the Westminster model was 'formal and nominal, rather than real'. Local
forms 'must be matters of compromise and of adaptation to the particular
conditions, character, wants and resources of the place'. Moreover, even 'the closest
parallelism in forms' would 'often involve the widest deviation in substance'.[9] As a
commission of inquiry in Malta sensibly remarked: 'To graduate our ideas of the
perfection of Government by the approximation it bears towards our own, is a
mode of reasoning as unjust, as it is erroneous; but it is an error, into which
Englishmen are too apt to fall.'[10]

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[7] 13 Aug. 1860, *PD* (Commons), CLX, col. 1196, and quoted in Thomas R. Metcalf, *The Aftermath
of Revolt: India, 1857–1870* (Princeton, 1964), p. 136. See chaps. by D. A. Washbrook and Robin
J. Moore.

[8] 2 May 1828, *PD* (Commons), XIX, col. 332.

[9] Stephen to Rice, 30 June 1834, C[olonial] O[ffice] 323/50; minute by Stephen, 19 June 1847, CO 323/
63.

[10] Report of Commission of Enquiry into the Affairs of Malta, 1812, p. 12, CO 158/19.

As contemporary comments imply, the imperatives and aims that underlay Britain's governance of the Victorian Empire were subject to persistent constraints and pressures—financial, bureaucratic, intellectual, and political. Throughout the century the opinion prevailed among politicians and commentators that, whatever the Empire's benefits, its administration and defence imposed unduly onerous burdens on the British Treasury which ought to be reduced. This conviction persisted even when Britain became affluent enough to afford such expenditure, so deeply was the obsession with economy embedded in the Victorian political consciousness. In addition to the obvious financial concerns of taxpayers, retrenchment was stimulated by the political goals of greater accountability and efficiency in government. This linkage, first stressed by parliamentary radicals in the 1820s, had profound and constructive implications for Imperial policy-makers. Routine pruning of colonial budgets and avoidance of new expenditures which might be condemned in the Commons had to be supplemented by the more ambitious reform of Imperial bureaucratic and colonial institutions. This was pursued most productively in the settlement colonies where self-government entailed self-reliance in the fields of administration and internal security.

The management of a global empire was also profoundly affected by bureaucratic realities. Vast distances and slow communications meant that it took months to exchange correspondence with colonies—a year or more in the case of Australia—during which interval circumstances could easily drift out of control and instructions be overtaken by events. Even when the flow of information was speeded by clipper ships, then steamships and telegraphs, the fundamental bureaucratic problem remained the continuous adjustment of Imperial preferences and local practice. The mediating role was necessarily delegated to the men on the spot, principally the Governors, Proconsuls, and Viceroys who operated at the key point of interaction between directives emanating from London and pressures generated by conditions on the periphery. These Imperial agents have been described as 'a kind of pointsman on the railway of thought between two stations', who acted as 'a half-way relay station that could charge up, or scale down, the impulses transmitted in either direction'.[11] As these metaphors imply, local officials played a decisive role in determining the strength and the course of Imperial rule in particular territories. They exercised considerable latitude of authority and were notoriously difficult to control, distance blurring the line between discretion and indiscretion. Far from being subordinates, many masterful individuals had their own agendas and ambitions; often they acted independently,

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[11] John Benyon, *Proconsul and Paramountcy in South Africa: The High Commision, British Supremacy and the Sub-continent, 1806–1910* (Pietermaritzburg, 1980), p. 335; also his, 'Overlords of Empire? British "Proconsular Imperialism" in Perspective', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* (hereafter *JICH*), XIX (1991), pp. 164–202.

disregarding directives or exceeding instructions with cavalier exuberance and frequently with impunity. The century provides innumerable examples: Governors Lachlan Macquarie in New South Wales and Lord Charles Somerset at the Cape, equally disdainful of orders and legality; Sir Harry Smith, cast by the Colonial Office in the late 1840s as the saviour of South Africa, who turned out to be a flamboyant, expansionist megalomaniac; Sir George Grey, sent back to New Zealand as a troubleshooter in the 1860s, but high-handed and deceitful; Sir John Pope-Hennessy, an eccentric, disputatious Irishman, disobeying instructions in Labuan, Hong Kong, and Mauritius as keenly as Lord Lytton over Afghanistan in 1878; Cromer in Egypt and Curzon in India, pasha and potentate.

The authorities in London could and sometimes did admonish errant Governors, occasionally disown their actions, and even recall them; but weary acquiescence was a more common response, reflecting both a reluctance to reject the advice or countermand the actions of forceful men on the spot, and an admission of impotence. As Stephen remarked of Governors in 1830: 'Though not perhaps men of very large capacity, their proximity to the scene of action is an advantage which in this case would more than compensate for every other incompetency. Had I the understanding of Jeremy Bentham himself, I should distrust my own judgement as to what is really practicable in such remote and anomalous societies.'[12] 'I fear there is no alternative', Herman Merivale conceded, 'except to shut our eyes to proceedings which seen at this distance wear a most extravagant aspect.'[13] Waywardness may have been less widespread than incompetence; Colonial Secretaries repeatedly complained about the lack of qualified, reliable administrators. Military men, favoured after the French wars, were gradually replaced by civilians, but Earl Grey at mid-century desperately raided the ranks of MPs and directors of railway companies for individuals of ability and sound judgement. Such appointees received no training, and generated no collective professionalism as did the covenanted Indian Civil Service. For servants of the Raj, what mattered was character and such personal qualities as self-sacrifice and public-spiritedness. Yet even in post-Mutiny India, British officials were very thin on the ground, the whole subcontinent of 200 or 300 million Indians being overseen by some 2,000 Europeans. Similarly, in southern Uganda during the 1890s British authority was asserted over 3 million people by only twenty-five officials.[14] This slender control on the periphery was matched by bureaucratic fragmentation in Whitehall.[15]

[12] Stephen to Twiss, 25 Aug. 1830, CO 111/98.
[13] Minute on FitzRoy to Grey, 7 Feb. 1853, CO 201/463.
[14] Figures given in Bernard Porter, *The Lion's Share: A Short History of British Imperialism, 1850–1995*, 3rd edn. (London, 1996), p. 46, and Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century, 1815–1914: A Study of Empire and Expansion*, 2nd edn. (London, 1993), p. 310.
[15] See above, pp. 17–19.

Imperial policy-makers were also subjected to domestic political pressures, but parliamentary legislative intervention was nevertheless rare and decidedly a last resort. In the light of lessons drawn from the American Revolution, Parliament's supreme authority had to be exercised sparingly. As Sir Robert Peel explained in 1839: 'That transcendental power is an arcanum of empire which...should be veiled, and brought forward only in the utmost extremity of the state, where other remedies have failed, to stay the raging of some moral or political pestilence. It should not be produced on trifling occasions, or in cases of petty refractoriness, or temporary misconduct.'[16] If this forbearance was shown, William Huskisson declared in 1828, 'standing aloof, as we do, from the party feelings and local jealousies...our decision will be the more respected; first, as coming from a high and competent authority; and next, on account of our manifest impartiality'.[17] This remained a fond delusion of British parliamentarians, and sits uncomfortably with the fact that colonial issues were regularly exploited for domestic party purposes.

To deal with awesome global responsibilities, Imperial administrators developed a range of strategies and techniques of management. In an emergency, or as a final resort, force might be required to quell internal disorder and uphold legitimate authority. But as the South African War, and on a lesser scale the Indian Mutiny, graphically demonstrated, Britain possessed too few soldiers to hold down large areas of the Empire forcibly; while the Canadian rebellions of 1837 were less threatening, the possibility of US intervention raised justified anxieties about war engulfing North America. Sometimes lesser eruptions of internal unrest, communal violence, or sectarian rioting necessitated the employment of troops. Increasingly during the century, regular public-order duties were discharged by civilian police forces, recruited locally and thought to be less provocative than soldiers, though the military-style, armed gendarmerie, part-fashioned after Irish patterns, blurred this distinction.[18] While the threat of coercion underpinned Imperial sway—detachments of troops being considered emblematic of British power held in reserve—the resort to armed force was an admission that ordinary means of administration had failed. As Cromer explained,

There is truth in the saying, of which perhaps we sometimes hear rather too much, that the maintenance of the Empire depends on the sword; but so little does it depend on the sword alone that if once we have to draw the sword, not merely to suppress some local effervescence, but to overcome a general upheaval of subject races goaded to action either by

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[16] 3 May 1839, *PD* (Commons), XLVII, cols. 767–68.

[17] 2 May 1828, ibid., XIX, col. 302.

[18] See David M. Anderson and David Killingray, eds., *Policing the Empire: Government, Authority and Control, 1830–1940* (Manchester, 1991).

deliberate oppression, which is highly improbable, or by unintentional misgovernment, which is far more conceivable, the sword will assuredly be powerless to defend us for long, and the days of Imperial rule will be numbered.[19]

Lord Roberts might claim that Britain's dominion in Asia and Africa depended on 'Respect based on fear; remove the fear and the respect will soon disappear'.[20] But the viability of colonial governments ultimately rested on goodwill and co-operation rather than on enforced obedience.

British administrators, therefore, pragmatically sought accommodation with indigenous and emigrant societies. Although direct rule and authoritarian Governors sometimes held sway, officials armed with Crown authority, acts of Parliament, or executive fiat still had to confront and resolve the practical problems of enforcement and observation. This was pursued chiefly through mediation with indigenous élites or collaborating groups possessing local influence, where these could be identified, recruited, and relied on. By this strategy British rulers associated with and exploited, as well as legitimized and sustained, local power structures and networks of authority. Their success goes far towards explaining the longevity and relative stability of the British Empire. Without indigenous co-operation, whether voluntary or enforced, a mere handful of British officials could never have governed so many millions.

Such arrangements afforded mutually beneficial bargains, but were also precarious and constraining for both parties. On the one side, the British had to accept limitations on their local control and freedom of action if collaborators were to be kept content. Indeed, in circumstances like those in early-nineteenth-century West Africa, local élites retained the upper hand, while in South India indigenous power at the village level frustrated, even silently corroded, British administrative structures. The traditional Imperial tactic designed to mitigate such dependency was 'divide and rule', shifting patronage among competing élites, especially if distinct 'communities' could be identified or different levels of administration—country-wide, provincial, and local—became involved in government.

On the other side, Imperial endorsement gave collaborating groups and indigenous power structures a reinforced or new-found legitimacy, and often conferred privileges as the rewards of association, whether patronage appointments or favourable allocations of land and labour. Sometimes the Imperial alliance brought readier access to Western education or Christianity, technology or investment. In return—and although British rule was generally light and made few

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[19] 'The Government of Subject Races', *Edinburgh Review*, CCVII, 423 (Jan. 1908), p. 2.
[20] Roberts to Minto, 17 May 1907, Minto Papers, quoted in David Dilks, *Curzon in India*, 2 vols. (London, 1969), I, p. 103.

demands—local élites might have to endure periodic pressure and intervention aimed at upholding metropolitan interests, promoting reformist initiatives, or preserving internal stability. Collaborators might also face tactical difficulties in reconciling their retention of traditional sources of local authority with their performance of Imperial services, particularly the implementation of unpopular policies. As clients and dependants, they had to ensure a degree of stability and popular acquiescence in British rule, lest the withdrawal of metropolitan support fatally loosened their grip on local power. While a repressive employment of colonial authority and the law might serve to calm small-scale or temporary discontent, élites could not afford to alienate large masses of fellow subjects, and this reality placed a premium on skilful mediation and brokerage. To this end, they might exploit the deference due to status, the authority commanded by privilege, or the contentment generated by economic prosperity and benefits, material and intangible, which could accrue from membership of a mighty global empire. Rhetoric, symbols, and ceremony were employed to link various levels of self-awareness, civic dignity, or nascent patriotism with the Imperial relationship. Isolation and widespread apathy, too, among millions of British subjects played a part in sustaining the Imperial enterprise.[21]

As was to be expected in a multifarious empire, diverse environments and circumstances produced different types of collaborators, patterns of association, and power relationships. In the North America settlement colonies, the metropolitan government at first deliberately cultivated social élites and political oligarchies—French seigneurs, English merchants, Loyalist lairds, and timber barons. By the 1830s, however, these élites had in some provinces lost local support and Imperial favour, and the Colonial Office tried to identify and enthrone new collaborators through the mechanism of fully self-governing representative Assemblies, although the French majority in Lower Canada complicated the tactical shift of patronage. Similarly in South Africa, ethnic diversity and uncertainty about the reliability of the Dutch made it difficult to line up satisfactory collaborators, especially outside the Cape colony. In the sectional societies of eastern Australia, forged from ex-convicts, free immigrants, and native-born, the oligarchy of economically dominant graziers afforded the authorities effective, if demanding, coadjutors until their monopoly, enhanced by self-government in the 1850s, was challenged by urban and agrarian interests. The leaders of British settlers in New Zealand seemed cast as natural collaborators, but hostilities with the Maori, involving massive British military commitments and expenditure, eventually generated disillusionment in London with local politicians until they assumed full responsibility for the colony's internal affairs. In the West Indies, the

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[21] See above, pp. 17–27.

earlier reliance on white planters as Imperial agents was abandoned with the final triumph of anti-slavery in 1838, and thereafter London lacked reliable collaborators in the free but segmented societies of the Caribbean, despite the existence in many of them of representative institutions until the 1860s.

In dependencies elsewhere British administrators strove to collaborate with local rulers, whether Indian princes, Malay sultans, or African chiefs, who continued to exercise 'traditional' authority under some form of British supervision, and to mobilize support from amongst indigenous élites whose social status or economic clout enabled them to act as agents of an Imperial power in dealings with the populace at large. Indigenous merchants, traders, and sometimes financiers were incorporated into Britain's global economy, just as sepoy soldiers and later 'martial races' were recruited to sustain an alien military presence. In the vital subcontinent of India, the British relied on Indian magistrates and clerks for the local administration of justice and the collection of revenue, but the strategy for recruiting collaborators changed in emphasis during the nineteenth century. At first the aim of James Mill, Macaulay, and other reformers had been to train a Western-educated élite who would supplant the traditional leaders of Indian society, acting as intermediaries and diffusing enlightenment among the mass of the population. Macaulay hoped 'to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect'.[22]

Especially after 1857, however, faith in Westernization and the new élite gave way to a determined search for those the British considered 'natural leaders' of traditional Indian society, who had seemingly retained the people's loyalty during the troubles, and who might now function as the agency of future order and best safeguard against perennial fears of loss of control.[23] India's princes, as rulers of quasi-independent states, were thus integrated into the Imperial order with a recognized status and special privileges. British administrators also cultivated the collaboration of landlords as the leaders of Indian rural society. As an official of the Punjab government explained in 1860,

Dearly bought experience may teach us that political security is not necessarily attained by just laws, equitable taxation, and material progress... If there is a body scattered throughout the country considerable by its property and rank it will for certain exercise great influence whether its position be hereditary or not. If this body is attached to the state by timely concessions... and obtains a share of power and importance, it will constitute a strong support to the existing Government... [Nothing] is more to be feared than that which threatens a foreign rule from the ignorance and indifference of its alien subjects,

[22] Education minute, 2 Feb. 1835, quoted in G. O. Trevelyan, *The Competition Wallah* (London, 1864), p. 422.
[23] See chap. by Robin J. Moore.

when unattached through their natural leaders and held in allegiance only by military force.[24]

Indian landlords may have been ill-suited to fulfil the assigned role of English gentry, but they were thought by the British to possess a traditional status and authority in the localities which made their participation in the Imperial enterprise more valuable and reliable than that of an urbanized educated élite.

Indeed, in India and elsewhere throughout the late-Victorian Empire, a revulsion occurred against educated and Westernized members of indigenous societies who threatened to overturn the 'difference' sustaining British superiority. Fearing loss of control, Lord Salisbury thought that such misfits as the Bengali 'babus' 'cannot be anything else than an opposition in quiet times, rebels in time of trouble'.[25] If not disparaged as discontented agitators, such individuals were dismissed by British officials as superfluous, given the new strategy of ruling in collaboration with traditional Indian élites. With Western ambitions as well as Western acculturation, some 4,000 Indians served in the uncovenanted Indian Civil Service by 1868, but their advancement to senior posts was slow and unwelcome.[26] Those who became associated with the fledgling Indian National Congress after 1885 were discounted as unrepresentative of the population at large. Since talk of self-government and nationhood seemed a dangerous delusion, such people offered no attraction as potential collaborators of the Raj, as did their counterparts in settler societies. Experience drawn from India was reinforced by a general hardening of racial attitudes from the 1860s, so that in Africa too local inhabitants were less trusted in business and less involved in administrative functions. In 1873 Lord Kimberley thought it better in West Africa to 'have nothing to do with the "educated natives" as a body. I would treat with the hereditary chiefs only.' In 1886 Augustus Hemming, head of the African department at the Colonial Office, condemned 'educated natives' as 'the curse of the West Coast'.[27]

British administrators also occupied an ambivalent position, as reflected in their attitudes towards and engagement with local communities. On the one hand, many consciously pursued separateness and drew distinctions, whether racial, social, or educational. Even in British settlement colonies, Governors and expatriate staff might keep leading inhabitants at arm's length and sometimes disparage local customs and proclivities. In Asia and other dependencies, the studied

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[24] Secretary of Government Punjab to Secretary of Government India, 30 April 1860, quoted in Metcalf, *Aftermath of Revolt*, p. 165.

[25] Salisbury to Lytton, 9 June 1876, Lytton Papers, quoted in Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism* (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 133–34.

[26] See Metcalf, *Aftermath of Revolt*, pp. 271–81.

[27] Minute by Kimberley, 22 Feb. 1873, CO 96/104; minute by Hemming, 24 July 1886, on Griffith to Granville, 14 June 1886, CO 96/174.

remoteness from indigenous societies was more marked, and historians have advanced the notion of the 'other' to encapsulate British feelings of contrast between their own 'modern' and 'civilized' society and 'backward' non-European peoples. The British in India retreated into the all-white club with its customs and formalities designed to assert and uphold a consciousness of beleaguered difference, moral ascendancy, and the mystique of rule. Physical distancing to keep the threatening Indian world at bay was expressed in the bungalow residence, the civil lines or cantonment, and the hill station. Yet, just as proclaimed 'mastery' over India coexisted with a sense of vulnerability and unease, so separation from a seductive subcontinent and its teeming millions could never be wholly successful.

At the same time, British administrators deliberately strove to cultivate the association of indigenous and emigrant communities with the Imperial enterprise by viceregal display, military parades, public ceremony, and the outward symbols of British civilization. In this task they were assisted by missionaries and educators, both as individuals in the field and through networks of societies and auxiliary branches. Governors orchestrated the hospitality of Government House with levees and balls; dates in the Imperial calendar, such as the monarch's birthday, were publicly observed, and in 1904 the Imperial enthusiast Lord Meath launched Empire Day; special events like royal tours and jubilees or days of thanksgiving were celebrated. Sometimes indigenous symbols and local ceremonies were imperially embraced: in Ceylon custody of Buddha's sacred tooth symbolized British authority, while in Malta British troops participated in Catholic religious processions. If local customs were not exploitable, traditions might be invented to sustain Imperial authority, one notable example being the spectacular pageantry of the Indian durbars, their Mughal precedents suitably transformed by elaborately planned ritual into Victorian extravaganzas. In the Imperial assemblage of 1877 Lord Lytton sought to associate India's 'feudal nobility' with the British Crown by exploiting medieval fantasy, complete with princely banners sporting coats of arms and the symbolic rendering of homage. As the Viceroy remarked, 'the further East you go, the greater becomes the importance of a bit of bunting'. To the special order of knighthood, the Star of India (1861), was added the Order of the Indian Empire (1877), linking the princes at Delhi to the Empress at Windsor. Curzon's Coronation Durbar in 1902 similarly acknowledged the high status of Indian notables.[28] In these sundry ways, common participation in the global enterprise of Empire might be stressed, various levels of patriotism encouraged, and identities cultivated, though these might in time be turned against Imperial control.

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[28] Quoted in Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 77; also Bernard S. Cohn, 'Representing Authority in Victorian India', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 165–209. See also chap. by Robin J. Moore.

Recent writers have emphasized another technique of management and point of contact: the designs of British officials to underpin Imperial rule by the collection and organization of 'colonial knowledge'. Effective intelligence-gathering was essential to the successful exercise of British power in the military and political spheres. More controversially, it also had cultural and epistemological dimensions. As in India in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the British could sometimes tap existing indigenous networks of communication and information exchange. In the absence of substantial numbers of European settlers or planters, the British were obliged to draw their knowledge of the people and the country from Indian agents, such as writers, runners, and various 'native informants'. This joint involvement in communications was part of the collaborative process, and colonial knowledge the continuing, adaptable product of Imperial and indigenous contributions rather than a one-sided creation of British imagining and imposed conceptions of Indian society and culture, as the Orientalists would have it.[29]

At the same time, in India as later in Africa, the British built new structures of knowledge that relied less on traditional informants than on European understanding of alien peoples and places. They sought to 'know' the subjects and societies they ruled by studying religions, cultures, and institutions, and by conducting surveys of lands and censuses of population. These investigative endeavours might be characterized as disinterested intellectual inquiries, since the collection and ordering of empirically verifiable information were contemporary British enthusiasms, as evidenced in the decennial census, the statistical table, and the colonial Blue Book. Nevertheless, this accumulating body of knowledge was bound to produce an imperfect grasp of a country's past and social structures. What distorted British understanding most, scholars argue, was the urge to classify information in categories and ordered hierarchies which reflected the preconceptions and purposes of European administrators, caught up in the unequal power relationships of imperialism, rather than 'objective' Indian realities based on dispassionate observation. Convenient categories of religion, community, tribe, and caste (though not class) were superimposed on India; artificial labels like 'criminal tribes' and 'martial races' came into use.

The 'conquest of knowledge' was closely linked, not only with the impact of Imperial rule, but also with the growth of the colonial state. Just as in Britain the compilation of 'scientific' data was often regarded as the necessary preliminary to administrative action, so overseas the codification of laws and languages, the classification of peoples and artefacts, became overtly associated with the creation

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[29] See Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton, 1996), and C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870* (Cambridge, 1997).

of the state in colonial communities where knowledge was power (an interesting inversion abroad of the Victorian notion that useful knowledge would empower the working classes). By statistical surveys and other bureaucratic devices, officials in India might define groups who could be recruited to the services of the Raj and identify those who merited coercive treatment. With institutional knowledge British administrators and their successor élites in settler societies intruded governmental authority and the law into private spheres in order to regulate and regiment disorderly inhabitants. In the early convict colonies in Australia the local authorities subjected bond and free to close surveillance and intensive policing; in mid-Victorian Canada bureaucratic knowledge and cadres of educational inspectors aimed to produce conditioned citizens and docile electors who would contentedly leave respectable men of property to operate self-governing institutions.

Political institutions were the most prominent instrument of British rule. They were the legal embodiment and channels of Imperial authority; their structure and operations both reflected and shaped the nature of colonial societies as well as the distribution of power within them. The framework of government also provided an arena for the debate of public affairs and for negotiation among competing interests. Throughout the Empire such processes involved two interrelated issues: the balance to be struck between metropolitan and local control; and who was to exercise authority in colonial communities. By the nineteenth century two broad patterns of government had emerged, one inherited from the earlier American empire, its precedents and practices, the other created in response to the territorial gains from international warfare and more recent British migration. The former tradition of colonial self-reliance operating through representative Assemblies had been adopted for Nova Scotia (1758), Prince Edward Island (1773), and New Brunswick (1784), and after 1791 the Canadas, though the powers of Governors and executives were nominally strengthened in the light of the American experience. In the conquered, ceded, and later settled colonies, however, more authoritarian regimes were established, involving Governors working initially with advisory Councils and then with nominated Executive and Legislative Councils, the latter pattern coming to be known as Crown Colony government. This versatile innovation was designed for communities whose populations seemed unsuited to elective Assemblies: alien Europeans in Quebec (before 1791), Malta, the Cape, and Mauritius; convicts in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land; and indigenous peoples, for whom the British authorities felt a special responsibility, in Trinidad, Ceylon, and later New Zealand (until 1852).

Representative government was rightly regarded in London and on the periphery as a more responsive and mature political system but it did not always

operate harmoniously, as experience in British North America in the 1830s and New South Wales after 1842 aptly illustrates. Its functioning presupposed forbearance and co-operation among the various agencies. In small and fairly homogeneous communities, like those of the Maritime Provinces, this was facilitated by cosy understandings between Councils and Assemblies which did not come under serious strain until mid-1830s. In eastern Australia, as later at the Cape, deeply felt grievances could produce a genuine or manufactured unanimity of protest. In many colonies, however, divisions and fragmentation were more evident. There opinion tended to be polarized and politics confrontational because representative government, so successful in empowering élites, also cultivated oligarchies: the 'Family Compact' of merchants, Loyalists, and Anglicans in Upper Canada; the 'Chateau Clique' of English-speaking merchants and bureaucrats in Lower Canada; the 'squattocracy' of New South Wales. The resultant contests pitted élites, entrenched in the Councils, against the 'outsiders', working through the Assembly, who themselves aspired to monopolize power and patronage. Factionalism and feuding were exacerbated because assemblymen were powerless to remove councillors and, at the same time, were not themselves subject to the potentially sobering responsibilities of office, while councillors, appointed either *ex officio* or effectively for life, could afford to ignore unpopularity. Until the 1840s no mechanisms or conventions were adopted for resolving the collision of authority and constitutional deadlocks, to which this political system was liable when subjected to stress in a colonial context.

The confrontational nature of politics both reflected and was aggravated by the economic, social, religious, and ethnic divisions that characterized settler societies. Commercial interests set merchants against farmers as in the Canadas, or pastoralists against agriculturists as in eastern Australia. Social distinctions in New South Wales differentiated between bond and free, immigrants and native-born, urban and rural inhabitants. In Upper Canada, the disputed rights of recent 'unnaturalized' American immigrants to own land, exercise the franchise, and hold public office wracked provincial politics in the 1820s, as the ruling élite played the loyalty card. During the following decade religious privilege became a major divisive issue in that colony's multi-confessional society. Ethnic antagonisms exacerbated political contests at the Cape, eased somewhat by the exodus of Afrikaner farmers into the interior, and far more acutely in Lower Canada, where a French agrarian Assembly confronted English-dominated Councils favouring commercial enterprise, British immigration, and land settlement on the basis of freehold tenure. Unpopular policies, whether originating locally or devised in London, implemented by élites on such matters as clergy reserves, land companies, banks, and canals alienated much local opinion, and everywhere discontent was generated most by exclusive definitions of citizenship.

By the late 1820s and 1830s, however, oligarchies in North America were beginning to lose their grip. Repressive measures against critics were insufficient to stamp out local unrest. Equally significant, ruling élites gradually forfeited the confidence and backing of the metropolitan authorities as effective Imperial agents. Unlike their Tory predecessors, Whig ministers, coming into office in 1830, evinced broad sympathy with the attack on monopoly, exclusionism, and religious privilege. Championing consent of the governed as the basic principle, they were prepared in settler colonies to move towards self-reliance through a planned, orderly devolution of authority. Nevertheless, being cautious, moderate reformers averse to constitutional innovation, the Whigs experienced paralyzing difficulties deciding what measures were necessary and practicable for restoring harmony in the Canadas. They resorted to modest tinkering with the Councils and some concession of financial control to Assemblies, but the stumbling-block remained a reluctance to empower a francophone Assembly lest this provoked separation and civil war, even intervention by the United States.

No solution to these puzzles was devised before internal dissensions in the Canadas erupted in rebellions in 1837–38. This provided the British authorities with the opportunity and the necessity of redrawing the structures of government, but much uncertainty and difference of opinion persisted, which were not at once removed by Lord Durham's celebrated mission and report of 1839. Eventually, political advance was sought through the Union of 1841 and a subsequent devolution of authority which facilitated local self-government operating under Cabinet conventions known as responsible government. Colonial politicians, enjoying the legitimacy of popular consent for their exercise of executive power, now provided acceptable collaborators who could be left to their own devices in matters of internal administration.

This was a signal development in Imperial governance. It opened the way towards resolving the political conundrum posed at the time of the American Revolution—namely, how could colonial self-government be successfully reconciled with Imperial unity? Such an outcome was by no means inexorable or straightforward. It emerged haphazardly out of conflict, dialogue, and institutional adaptation. It was neither reluctant Imperial concession to nationalist demands, nor planned transfer of Britain's political practice on the Westminster model. It was, however, an arrangement susceptible of extension to other settler societies as time and circumstance permitted, not just within British North America—Nova Scotia (1848), Prince Edward Island (1851), and New Brunswick (1854)—but more widely to Australia and New Zealand in the mid-1850s, and later the Cape (1872) and Natal (1893). This greater diversity and flexibility in Imperial administration opened up a longer process of political evolution encompassing distinct stages through which maturing communities would normally pass, at

different speeds according to differing circumstances, from Crown Colony status
to full self-government.

Metropolitan administrators might sometimes be interventionist, but few
wanted Imperial relations to rely permanently or customarily on authoritarian
regimes or on direct rule from Whitehall. As a modest advance during the early
1830s in Crown Colonies outside British North America, the Governor's advisory
council was replaced by nominated Executive and Legislative Councils in Western
Australia, the Cape, Trinidad, Mauritius, and Ceylon, thus bringing them in line
with New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land (1825). These illiberal constitutions
were regarded as a temporary, regrettable necessity, since they violated the rights of
British subjects and were insufficiently responsive to local opinion.

Nevertheless, a host of difficulties arose when it came to advancing Crown
Colonies to representative government. British ministers claimed that they alone
possessed the authority and the vision needed for determining the timing and the
extent of constitutional change in any given instance. They had also to satisfy
themselves that colonial communities were ready to profit from an enlarged
participation in government and would exercise responsibly the elective institu-
tions they were granted. It was no use transferring political power to colonies that
were economically backward or lacked financial self-sufficiency: for them, 'a
miniature British constitution' would be 'the grossest of absurdities'.[30] In societies
divided by race, religion, or nationality, or by legal status into bond and free, the
surrender of political control to powerful minorities or selfish oligarchies would
sanctify misrule and sacrifice the interests of the inhabitants at large for whose
welfare the British authorities felt a moral responsibility. Such criteria were cited in
the 1830s to refuse representative institutions in Trinidad and convict New South
Wales, in 'St Lucia and Mauritius, where French minds would misunderstand, and
French fervour would pervert the privilege—in the Cape, which is a Country of
Wastes, and impervious tracts, and dispersed occupancies—and in Ceylon, which
is a different world altogether', for the result would be 'incessant controversy and
confusion'.[31]

By the late 1840s and 1850s a concatenation of circumstances had induced
British ministers to revise earlier assessments of the eligibility of settlement
colonies for self-governing institutions. Events in British North America played
a major part in this process. As the Duke of Newcastle acknowledged, 'all will agree
as to the extreme difficulty of withholding political privileges from bodies of men
to whom the maxims now prevalent in British domestic policy afford so strong a
right to claim them, and of keeping our fellow subjects in Australia on a different

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[30] Stephen to Howick, 11 Jan. 1836, Grey Papers, University of Durham.
[31] Stephen to Twiss, 25 Aug. 1830, CO 111/98.

political footing from those to whom those rights have been fully conceded in America'.[32] As the pace quickened, the original leisurely timetables were hastily foreshortened in most settlement colonies of the mid-nineteenth century, as they were to be a century later in Asia and Africa. Planned decolonization tended to become a headlong rush. The Colonial Office clerk, Gordon Gairdner, complained in 1857 that 'the Home Government appear simply to have receded before the pressure which they were not prepared to withstand'.[33] Once British North America had forced open the gateway to self-government, Australians and New Zealanders were able to make a final dash for local autonomy, securing both representative institutions and responsible government in virtually one leap between 1850 and 1856.[34] They then set about making local sovereignty a reality by eroding residual Imperial authority—Crown lands, fiscal and commercial policy, and internal security—and by forging the political frameworks of the nations they were in the process of building. The Colonial Office might still advise, warn, and cajole, but its power of intervention was practically confined to the disallowance of local legislation, a latent resource very seldom employed, especially after the Colonial Laws Validity Act (1865) had severely reduced the instances in which disallowance could be exercised.

Different considerations applied at the Cape, where issues of race relations and military defence were complicated by the presence of Afrikaners within and beyond unstable borders. In the early 1850s the Colonial Office conceded representative institutions, including the innovation of an elective upper house. But continuing sporadic conflict among the diverse peoples of southern Africa and the constant threat of major frontier wars, which only Britain commanded the resources to meet, remained powerful arguments against granting full self-government for which there existed no insistent local demand.[35] By the early 1870s, however, British ministers keen to cut commitments and costs decided to force the whites at the Cape to adopt responsible government by threatening to withdraw the Imperial garrison. In this instance, British involvement persisted because of overriding strategic concerns, heightened by the discovery of mineral wealth, and continuing turbulence on indeterminate frontiers.

Developments in the West Indies, meanwhile, demonstrated that constitutional progress was neither automatic nor irreversible. In Jamaica and other islands the ancient system of representative institutions gradually broke down under tensions created by the transition from slave to free societies. Against a background of economic decline in the sugar plantation industry, aggravated by the inadequacies

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[32] Newcastle to FitzRoy, 4 Aug. 1853, CO 202/63.
[33] Gairdner to Grey, 28 Nov. 1857, Grey Papers, University of Durham.
[34] See chaps. by Donald Denoon and Raewyn Dalziel.
[35] See chap. by Christopher Saunders and Iain R. Smith.

of free labour and Britain's imposition of free trade, and of simmering social disorders, the planters steadily lost their political dominance. As disputatious Assemblies were infiltrated by 'men of colour' independent of the plantation economy, the planters recognized their predicament. It needed only the occasion of the rebellion at Morant Bay in 1865 for the Jamaica Assembly to relinquish its legislative independence in exchange for the security of direct government by the British Crown.[36] In the ensuing years all the small islands of the Lesser Antilles with representative institutions (except Barbados), where the trend towards single mixed chambers was already gathering force, followed Jamaica down the path of constitutional regression.

Aside from representative and Crown Colonies and India, other areas of British economic penetration or strategic value involved policy-makers in administrative decisions, if not fresh responsibilities. While the conduct of commercial activities in many 'spheres of influence' did not require political action, sometimes the state had to intervene to safeguard freedom of trade by resort to regular diplomatic techniques of treaties, consular representations, and occasionally gunboats. Throughout the century, and particularly from the 1880s, pressures for metropolitan political intervention were regularly generated by circumstances on the periphery: the instability or decay of indigenous institutions in weak states under the impact of European commercial penetration; the acquisitive designs of competing colonial powers; the ambitions of individual administrators, soldiers, missionaries, and other sojourners; and the expansionist machinations of British colonial subjects such as the 'sub-imperialism' of Australians and New Zealanders in the Pacific and Cape colonists in southern Africa. These challenges repeatedly forced Whitehall into making agonizing assessments: whether or not the national interest or chronic disorder overseas necessitated annexation, as occurred in New Zealand (1840), Lagos (1861), and Fiji (1874). Sometimes paramountcy might be exercised through indigenous rulers, as in East Africa through the Sultan of Zanzibar, and in the protected Malay states where from 1874 the Sultans accepted British resident 'advisers'.[37] Elsewhere, to evade costly responsibilities, officials in London gradually formulated the amorphous, elastic concept of the 'protectorate'. This proclaimed Britain's effective paramountcy in a designated territory but stopped short of formal annexation and a declaration of sovereignty, and at least initially entailed minimal administrative arrangements. Although most Protectorates soon became indistinguishable from Crown Colonies, this

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[36] See W. P. Morrell, *British Colonial Policy in the Mid-Victorian Age: South Africa, New Zealand, the West Indies* (Oxford, 1969), chaps. 12–14. See also chap. by Gad Heuman.

[37] See chap. by A. J. Stockwell.

jurisdictional experiment in Africa and the Pacific afforded an interim or transitional form of administrative supervision and an alternative strategy of management initially under Foreign Office control.

The origins of Protectorates lay less in the imperatives of economic expansion than in a concern to uphold order and regularity. In particular, the Imperial authorities felt forced to take cognizance of the conduct of British subjects abroad, not so much to 'protect' them and vouchsafe the birthright of English justice, as to check their propensities to crime and lawlessness, especially participation in African slave trading and illicit labour traffic in the Pacific.[38] In the absence of clear British precedents and comprehensive rules of international law, these questions of extraterritorial jurisdiction were difficult to resolve. Matters were further complicated by rivalry between the Colonial and Foreign Offices and by the necessary involvement of departmental legal advisers and the law officers of the Crown, whose opinions were often vague, ill-informed, and contradictory. Contemporary notions of a Protectorate and the duties of the protecting state were hazy, and particular uncertainty surrounded the extraterritorial application of the English doctrine of sovereignty to non-European areas. During discussions concerning Fiji, Frederick Rogers expressed these misgivings: 'A protectorate is sometimes proposed. I do not quite know what this means. I suppose it is an intimation to the world—that nobody then must assume sovereignty over these Islands or make war on them—but if they have any grievance against them they must apply to us ... I do not myself very much like this kind of thing.'[39] Knatchbull-Hugessen described a Protectorate as 'a very absurd as well as a curious state of affairs; it involved all the responsibility, without the advantages of annexation. Indeed, he had never been able to find out exactly what a protectorate meant.'[40] Doubts and confusion persisted until the mid-1880s, when diplomatic exchanges associated with the Berlin Conference and heightened colonial competition stimulated more positive thinking, and produced what one writer has called 'jurisdictional imperialism'.[41]

As developments in West Africa from the 1840s illustrate, the British government adopted two approaches to chronic disorder and extraterritoriality. One method was to exploit the Foreign Jurisdiction Act of 1843 which covered the activities of British nationals in such countries as the Ottoman empire, Japan, China, and later Siam (1856) and Zanzibar (1866). The Foreign Office was

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[38] See chap. 10 by Andrew Porter.

[39] Minute, 19 Oct. 1870, on Canterbury to Granville, 12 Aug. 1870, CO 309/94.

[40] Minute, 17 April 1871, on Kennedy to Kimberley, 29 March 1871, CO 267/310, and 25 June 1872, *PD* (Commons), CCXII, col. 209.

[41] W. Ross Johnston, *Sovereignty and Protection: A Study of British Jurisdictional Imperialism in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Durham, NC, 1973), *passim*.

especially drawn to this employment of consular jurisdiction. In 1872, for example, a West African order in council defined Consuls' magisterial powers to regulate the conduct of British subjects and the merchants' courts of equity in the Niger delta.[42] Meanwhile, where convulsions or irregularities disrupted areas bordering existing British enclaves, special acts of Parliament empowered Governors to exercise extraterritorial jurisdiction over British nationals. A Cape of Good Hope Punishment Act of 1836 vainly asserted authority over British subjects, including Boer trekkers, beyond the colony's boundaries in an area south of the twenty-fifth degree of latitude. The Colonial Office inclined towards this method of empowering Governors, and periodically from 1846 vested those at the Cape with diplomatic and supervisory responsibilities as High Commissioners in adjacent territories. In Sierra Leone and in the Gold Coast when the forts reverted from the African merchants to the Crown, the Coast of Africa and Falklands Act of 1843 proclaimed—on the basis of treaty, grant, usage, or sufferance—British jurisdictional authority in places adjacent to the coastal forts and settlements. Although it sanctioned colonial courts to try offenders, the Act's failure to define the extent of administrative powers or territorial limits allowed local officials to expand control over hinterlands and small African states or political units whose voluntary submission or acquiescence amounted to a tacit recognition of British protection. In 1861 an act extended the laws of Sierra Leone to neighbouring territories and the West Africa Settlements Act of 1871 provided for the punishment of crimes committed within twenty miles of the boundaries of settlements or adjacent 'protectorates'.

Greater irresolution surrounded the handling of similar problems in the vast area of the Pacific, particularly because the islands occupied a shadowy position in international law as sovereign states. Often British officials drew an unthinking distinction between the identifiable political structures of Africa and Asia and the more unsophisticated societies in the Pacific which often seemed to lack recognizable rulers capable of making internationally valid treaties that would be enforceable. On occasion, however, when it suited Imperial purposes, the theory of indigenous sovereignty was cited and acted on, as in the Treaty of Waitangi (1840) with Maori chiefs and the cession of the Fiji Islands accepted in 1874. Cultural assumptions and legal confusions militated against the ready resort to Protectorates in the Pacific, and until the 1880s policy-makers in Whitehall continued to hope that indigenous governments might provide a satisfactory framework of order, if bolstered by British Residents or Consuls and naval patrols. The main step towards the exercise of extraterritorial rights was the appointment

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[42] See Martin Lynn, 'Law and Imperial Expansion: The Niger Delta Courts of Equity, c.1850–85', *JICH*, XXIII (1995), pp. 54–76.

of the Governor of Fiji as High Commissioner for the Western Pacific. A Pacific Islanders Protection Act (1875) and a subsequent Order-in-Council (1877) vested him with limited powers over British subjects in all places 'not being within the jurisdiction of any civilized Power', an experiment crippled by lack of resources and disregard of foreign nationals and indigenous islanders.[43]

British thinking about Protectorates was clarified by proceedings connected with the Berlin Conference of 1884–85.[44] The international attempt to define the authority and minimize the conflict of European powers in Africa raised questions of sovereignty, extraterritoriality, and what constituted 'effective occupation'. Officials in London discovered that German and French legal theory embodied different, and potentially inconvenient, views on these jurisdictional issues and drew no distinction between annexations and Protectorates. Although the conditions agreed at Berlin for establishing future occupations and recognized authority in Africa were congenially vague, intensified international competition thereafter prodded Britain into a more robust, even interventionist, stance to stake out claims on the ground and pre-empt rival designs. Specific conflicts might be alleviated by diplomatic agreements, but some semblance of 'effective authority' had to be created if the Powers were to recognize and respect British spheres of interest. Following the Anglo-German Agreement of 1886, for example, which partitioned New Guinea, Britain felt compelled to declare Protectorates over the Gilbert and Ellice Islands (1892) and the Solomon Islands (1893) as 'a matter of convenience, enabling us to shuffle off what may prove to be unnecessary for us to hold but the system is not without inconvenience'.[45] At the same time, the proliferation of European ventures in Africa and the Pacific exposed the inability of indigenous regimes to provide stability and withstand both the impact of more intense economic exploitation and the unrestrained initiatives of Imperial agents. To check commitments and expense, British ministers pursued two courses: revival of the chartered company as a quasi-official agency and a seemingly cheap form of paramountcy, already being discharged by the British North Borneo Company (1881); and reinvigoration of consular activity which pointed towards the creation of Protectorates.

In West Africa, ministers declared a Protectorate in the trading zone of the Niger delta in 1885 as an initial, temporary expedient while they turned for assistance to

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[43] See W. David McIntyre, 'Disraeli's Colonial Policy: The Creation of the Western Pacific High Commission, 1874–1877', *Historical Studies Australia and New Zealand*, IX, 35 (1960), pp. 279–94; and his *The Imperial Frontier in the Tropics, 1865–75* (London, 1967); Deryck Scarr, *Fragments of Empire: A History of the Western Pacific High Commission, 1877–1914* (Canberra, 1967). See also chap. by Colin Newbury.

[44] Stig Förster, Wolfgang J. Mommsen, and Ronald Robinson, eds., *Bismark, Europe and Africa: The Berlin Conference, 1884–1885 and the Onset of Partition* (Oxford, 1988).

[45] Minute by Fairfield, 7 Dec. 1892, on Thurston to Ripon, 1 Oct. 1892, CO 225/39.

George Goldie, a commercial entrepreneur, whose National African Company was busy concluding treaties with riverine chiefs which gave it a convenient predominance in the hinterland. After hesitation about creating a commercial monopoly with extensive political powers, a charter was granted to a revamped Royal Niger Company (1886) which undertook to dispense justice, enforce treaty rights, and devote customs revenues to administrative purposes. In the Oil Rivers, however, the government was obliged to establish a more elaborate consular jurisdiction which led in 1893 to the Niger Coast Protectorate. That year Gambia became a Protectorate, as did Sierra Leone in 1895.

A similar dual pattern emerged in East Africa, where German and French advances stimulated British anxiety about Egypt's security and heightened the strategic importance of the Nile Valley. When a diplomatic Agreement in 1886 provisionally divided a swathe of eastern Africa into British and German zones of interest, officials in London resorted initially to the Imperial British East Africa Company (1888) to uphold Britain's claims. After a definitive arrangement with Germany in 1890 had secured a vital corridor between the Indian Ocean and the Upper Nile, the Cabinet turned from an ailing private enterprise to Protectorates over Uganda (1894) and the rest of British East Africa (1895). The Agreement of 1890 also recognized a British Protectorate over Zanzibar and in Nyasaland the British Central African Protectorate (1893). To safeguard Britain's strategic position at the Cape and encircle the Afrikaner republics, a Protectorate was created in Bechuanaland (1885) and Cecil Rhodes's British South Africa Company (1889) received a charter to occupy and administer at its own expense territory that was to become the Rhodesias.

These proceedings in Africa undermined assumptions of politicians and lawyers like Lord Halsbury that a 'Protectorate furnishes a convenient middle state between annexation and mere alliance',[46] and that the rights and obligations of a protecting power differed from those of complete sovereignty. During the 1890s such distinctions were eroded, both in practice and in theory, as British jurisdiction in Protectorates was enlarged in the interests of security, justice, and efficiency and assimilated to German and French patterns. Increasingly, Protectorates came to be administered as if they were colonies—and some were indeed redesignated as such—trends symbolized by the transfer of the Foreign Office's responsibilities to the Colonial Office between 1898 and 1905. This process was marked by two principal developments. Hitherto the law officers had steadfastly insisted that jurisdiction could not be asserted over foreign nationals in Africa and the Pacific. But disagreement with Germany over the status of foreigners in New Guinea, coinciding with doubts about jurisdiction in the native states of India, produced a

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[46] Memo by Halsbury, 28 March 1890, FO 97/562.

consolidated Foreign Jurisdiction Act in 1890, under which the consent of foreigners to the exercise of such authority was presumed.[47] This deliberate evasion of thorny jurisdictional issues was overturned in 1891 when the Colonial Office outlined for Bechuanaland a more positive and Continental view of a protecting power's responsibilities for the safety and conduct of other Europeans. As its instigator, John Bramston, argued: 'This protection includes the repression of crime and disorder among white men, which the native chief is of himself powerless to repress, and the establishment of a judicial system for dealing with such crime appears to be one of the attributes of sovereignty which the protecting Power acquires.'[48] This innovation was routinely transferred to the Pacific in 1893 and extended to British East Africa in 1896.

More significant in the long term was the assumption of jurisdiction over indigenous peoples in a Protectorate, whether or not treaties or consent were secured. Drawing on earlier precedents, this was legally endorsed in Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast in 1895 and then adopted in East Africa and elsewhere. According to Bramston,

the principle which governs these cases is, that the existence of a protectorate in an uncivilised country carries with it a right on the part of the protecting Power to exercise within that country such authority and jurisdiction—in short, such of the attributes of sovereignty—as are required for the due discharge of the duties of a Protector, for the purpose not only of protecting the Natives from the subjects of civilised Powers, and such subjects from the Natives and from each other, but also for protecting the Natives from the grosser forms of ill-treatment and oppression by their rulers, and from raids of slave dealers and marauders.[49]

By the 1890s, without the formality of annexation, the British authorities and local agents were freely establishing in Protectorates rudimentary frameworks of government involving courts, taxation, military 'pacification', displacement of indigenous rulers, and the issue of certificates for land titles which paved the way for Crown land rights and appropriation by European settlers.[50]

These moves towards political control were reinforced by the radical, innovatory views of Joseph Chamberlain at the Colonial Office from 1895 that the state must take the lead in developing the Empire's estates by public loans to create infrastructures and administrative agencies to refashion indigenous economies by

[47] See Colin Newbury, '"Treaty, Grant, Usage and Sufferance": The Origins of British Colonial Protectorates', in G. A. Wood and P. S. O'Connor, eds., *W. P. Morrell: A Tribute* (Dunedin, 1973), pp. 75–80.

[48] 'Memorandum as to the Jurisdiction and Administrative Powers of a European State holding Protectorates in Africa', Feb. 1891, No. 410, p. 5, CO 879/34.

[49] Bramston to Cardew, 16 Oct. 1895, No. 497, pp. 51–52, CO 879/43.

[50] See Newbury, '"Treaty, Grant, Usage and Sufferance"', pp. 82–84.

land reform, regulated labour, and direct taxes. Chamberlain was not alone in urging greater intervention, particularly in West Africa; officials and others with Asian experience advocated extension of the 'Indian model' to Africa. The autonomy and sovereignty of indigenous rulers should be overthrown because they were unequal to the task of modernization. Colonial officers should go beyond giving advice and direct African chiefs in the management of domestic affairs. Frederick Lugard, later the champion of Indirect Rule, at first pursued a highly interventionist, forceful, and expensive regime in Northern Nigeria, even to the point of proposing to introduce Muslim Indian clerks, labourers, and soldiers.[51] Such designs were defeated by a combination of African resistance, symbolized by the rebellion in Sierra Leone in 1897–98 against a hut tax, and hostility from Liverpool merchants, British moralists, and sceptics within the Colonial Office. The department came to reaffirm that securing African consent and avoiding discontent were overriding imperatives, best maintained through the traditional courses of non-intervention and collaboration.[52]

It was in this context that Indirect Rule emerged after 1900 as a much-publicized technique of Imperial management. There was nothing new about the tactic of preserving indigenous institutions and acting through the agency of local rulers. As Goldie and his company had shown, this was a pragmatic response to the problem of controlling huge tracts of territory with scarce resources of personnel and revenue. Nevertheless, Lugard developed the practice in Northern Nigeria and elevated an expedient into a principle, one given a moral justification for its supposed benefits to subject peoples. This theorizing might seem a departure from British pragmatism, but the Lugardian concept of Indirect Rule was essentially an idealization of pragmatism and a rationalization of comparative impotence. Although it was to become the orthodox philosophy of colonial rule throughout tropical Africa, the method had many variants, with local circumstances and metropolitan drift being more influential forces. Some colonies lacked sufficiently hierarchic societies or identifiable chiefs; others adopted a prefectoral system under which chiefs and headmen were colonial appointees and directly subordinate to white district officers; in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia the arrival of European immigrants introduced a complicating factor. Nevertheless, stripped of its moral gloss and un-British dogma, Indirect Rule exemplified and perpetuated in the new century the essential features of earlier administration of the Victorian Empire: limited liabilities and minimal management based on accommodation more than compulsion, on collaboration more than confrontation.[53]

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[51] In Vol. IV, see chap. by John W. Cell.
[52] See Ronald Robinson, 'European Imperialism and Indigenous Reactions in British West Africa, 1880–1914', in H. L. Wesseling, ed., *Expansion and Reaction* (Leiden, 1978), pp. 151–60.
[53] In Vol. IV, see chap. by John W. Cell.

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10

Trusteeship, Anti-Slavery, and Humanitarianism

ANDREW PORTER

Throughout the nineteenth century, territorial conquest, white settlement, commercial growth, economic development, and above all issues of slavery and the slave trade, raised questions about the ethics of economic exchange, the politics of equal rights or racial differences, and the purpose of Imperial power. It was often and widely assumed that Imperial authority had no object other than the narrowly defined organization and defence of Britain's insular interests. Nevertheless, how far those interests required governments' intervention overseas was always debatable, even in wartime. Still more contentious was the idea that British interests might depend on direct action to advance the interests (however defined) of indigenous peoples. There were even those prepared to argue that possession of Empire, wealth, and power brought obligations, irrespective of British interests, wherever opportunities existed to promote the welfare of less fortunate societies.

These passionate public debates spawned powerful pressure groups. From the 1780s until the First World War they significantly influenced the approach of colonial and Imperial authorities to Britain's role in the Caribbean, India, Africa, and the Pacific. Although the immediate results of so much righteous fervour were often disappointing, its indirect and long-term consequences were considerable. By the 1840s, humanitarianism had become a vital component of Britain's national or Imperial identity and, along with missionary work, channelled much female activity into public and Imperial enterprise. In the mid-nineteenth century, the apparent failure of humanitarian expectations reinforced pessimistic views of 'non-European' capacity and racial hierarchies. By the early 1900s, however, humanitarians' continued watchfulness and criticism of Imperial governments contributed to a positive re-evaluation of non-European cultures and a new scepticism about colonial rule.

Speaking in Parliament on the East India Bill in December 1783, Edmund Burke offered an eloquent statement of Britain's obligations as the possessor of power over other peoples:

all political power which is set over men, and...all privilege claimed...in exclusion of them, being wholly artificial, and...a derogation from the natural equality of mankind at large, ought to be some way or other exercised for their benefit.

If this is true with regard to every species of political dominion, and every description of commercial privilege,...then such rights or privileges, or whatever else you choose to call them, are all in the strictest sense a *trust*; and it is of the very essence of every trust to be rendered *accountable*; and even totally to *cease*, when it substantially varies from the purpose for which alone it could have a lawful existence.[1]

Burke's interpretation of Imperial trusteeship was conservative and defensive. He wished to prevent British subjects who acquired power abroad from abusing it for their own private advantage and to the moral or material detriment of Britain and India. The East India Company's government, 'one of the most corrupt and destructive tyrannies that probably ever existed', and its servants, 'the destroyers of India', should be reined in by Imperial controls so that Indians should again enjoy what he understood as their traditional rights and freedoms. His object was restoration by means of reform, with Britain preventing the recurrence of abuses and correcting the systemic problems of Company government by a parliamentary act 'intended to form the *Magna Charta* of Hindostan'.[2]

To protect traditional societies which against their will had either come under British control or were threatened by the unbridled activities of British subjects, seemed a restricted ambition. It was appropriate to an eighteenth-century society, where government functions were limited, and which was only slowly accepting the idea of Imperial control over non-Western societies. It nevertheless remained central in what came to be recognized as the humanitarian approach to Empire and overseas influence. For nineteenth-century governments, reluctant to adopt open-ended responsibilities and keen to limit the endlessly rising costs of direct Imperial intervention even inside Britain's own colonies, it had another advantage. When pressed into action, governments found the idea of 'protection' convenient because it combined a politically acceptable degree of action with at least the prospect of minimal expense. It naturally found favour in the face of competing claims on government revenues. It could calm conscience and avoid accusations of cynicism or indifference.

India also provided the inspiration and setting for an alternative approach to the responsibilities of Empire. Although Fox's East India Bill fell, Pitt's India Act (1784) created a structure capable of meeting Burke's aims. However, the reshaping of Britain's government for India fuelled the ambitions of groups anxious not merely to protect but to transform Indian society. The idea gained ground that

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[1] *The Speeches of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke*, Vol. V, *India: Madras and Bengal, 1774–1785*, ed. P. J. Marshall (Oxford, 1981), p. 385.

[2] Ibid., pp. 441, 439, 386.

British power and influence should be used, as it were, positively, to promote Indians' best interests by improving Indian society, however oblivious most Indians might be of their need for such changes.

Several currents of thought ran together here. Active Christians developed strong and well-publicized criticisms of India's decadence and depravity. Of particular importance were Anglican evangelicals intimately involved in promoting missionary work, such as Charles Grant (proprietor and Director of the East India Company, and friend of William Wilberforce, Henry Thornton, and others in the Clapham Sect[3]), or Sir John Shore, Governor-General in India and later, as Lord Teignmouth, on the committee of the Church Missionary Society (CMS). Grant supported the reforms of the 1780s, but was convinced that in Indian conditions honest, just government could work only if joined with Christianity and Western knowledge. His message, that without moral reform political change would achieve nothing, was developed in two influential studies: *A Proposal for Establishing a Protestant Mission in Bengal and Behar* (1787) and *Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain* (1792). Grant had no doubt that 'we may...govern our Asiatic subjects more happily for them than they can be governed by themselves', by blending Christianity with European skills and know-how.[4]

Other reformers shared Grant's confidence in Britain's capacity for good and progressive government, incorporating and uplifting Indians in the process. They too believed that human nature was everywhere fundamentally the same. They went further than he did in their conviction that progress and prosperity could be advanced by rational thought or systematic administration. Placing less weight on the contribution of Christian belief and ethics, they attributed more to Western scientific knowledge and education. Scottish experience and learning in history, philosophy, and political economy contributed greatly to such principles as expressed in the work of Indian administrators from Lord Cornwallis to Sir Thomas Munro.[5] Scottish ideas were reinforced by English criticisms of Indian society and emphasis on the curative potential of rational administration linked to law reform and a good judicial system. Practical illustrations may be found in Richard Wellesley's foundation of Fort William College (1805) to train a new civil service; in the work of James Mill, Benthamite and author of the influential *History of India* (1819); and in William Bentinck's work as Governor of Madras (1803–07).

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[3] The Clapham Sect was an informal group of wealthy, influential families living near and worshipping in Clapham parish church, south-west of London.

[4] Ainslie Thomas Embree, *Charles Grant and British Rule in India* (London, 1962), pp. 142–43.

[5] C. A. Bayly, *The New Cambridge History of India*, II. 1, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 1988); Burton Stein, *Thomas Munro: The Origins of the Colonial State and His Vision of Empire* (Delhi, 1989).

For Bentinck, 'there is, indeed, no engine of civilisation more powerful than the equitable administration of wise laws'.[6]

The two conceptions of 'trusteeship' differed substantially. Burke focused on British laws to restrain the activities of British subjects; indigenous freedoms were to be preserved by restricting the incursions of outsiders. India's administrators justified their own direct intervention by devising laws to channel the activities of Indian subjects; indigenous freedoms were to be extended by allowing the wise paternalism of responsible outsiders. Grant's insertion of Christianity offered a bridge between the two, with official support for missions and education assisting the process of transformation while mitigating the extent to which government directly imposed change. All, however, agreed on the need to secure property and freedom of exchange, and took as their touchstone the happiness and well-being of indigenous peoples. Of course, those interests were variously defined by differing British views of what was acceptable in local society, what worthy or capable of being reformed, and what intolerable. Sometimes these definitions or criteria were agreeable to Indians, but even if they were not (as was often the case), objections frequently went unheeded.

Eighteenth-century enlightened thinking thus influenced Britain's renewed expansion after 1790 in important ways. Debates about Imperial-colonial policy confirmed the ruler's duty of benevolence or obligation to accept responsibility for the well-being of the Empire's subjects. Influential members of Britain's political and administrative élites shared that commitment in varying degrees. It became likely that where those responsibilities were flouted or ignored, public attention would be alerted, and calls heard for wrongs to be righted. Blinkered expediency or neglect as the unprincipled outcome of British expansion stood a greater chance of being checked. Finally, certain activities were acknowledged as inadmissible and illegal within any area where Britain's control or even influence prevailed.

Notwithstanding India's importance, no issues did more to make principles of Imperial trusteeship explicit, implant them in the public mind, and compel Imperial and colonial governments to act upon them, than those of the slave trade and slavery itself. By the 1780s the intellectual argument against slavery had been won, in that it was no longer generally regarded as defensible on grounds other than material expediency. Its economic efficiency was questioned. It was represented as irreconcilable with secular ideas about the proper end of government and the constitution of legitimate authority; its existence defied notions of

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[6] John Rosselli, *Lord William Bentinck: The Making of a Liberal Imperialist, 1774–1839* (London, 1974), p. 135.

government as being in the interest of the governed, promoting subjects' happiness, and resting on their consent. It had also come to be seen as incompatible with a properly Christian existence. Slave-ownership, for example, conflicted with the obligations of charity and evangelization; slave status removed the liberty for moral choice and ethical behaviour. For British evangelicals especially, slavery and sin were regarded as synonymous, equally individual and national evils to be rooted out.

However, widespread antipathy to slavery coexisted with a substantial interest in its continuation. In particular, Britain's involvement in the African-Atlantic slave trade, her commerce in tropical commodities from the West Indies, her capital investment in shipping, the plantation economies of her colonies, and the prospects for future growth in the West Indies, all continued to flourish. Dislike of slavery was also compatible with attitudes of accommodation towards it, if not of toleration. Nonconformist missionaries, for example, caught between the injunctions of their Societies to avoid political involvement under threat of disconnection, and their loneliness in colonies where officials and planters alike regarded them as subversive, often found no alternative to compromise. Early anti-slavery activists such as Thomas Clarkson and Granville Sharpe thus faced a daunting task in converting an amorphous humanitarianism into the precise terms of Imperial measures of trusteeship.

Prime necessities were, of course, to rally influential friends and mobilize public enthusiasm in ways which would persuade those in authority, notably Cabinet ministers and MPs. Anti-slavery views drew immense support from transatlantic religious networks, notably those of Quakers and Methodists, whose members were sometimes well-to-do but rarely influential outside their own circles. Of critical importance, therefore, was the formation in April 1787 of the Abolition Society in London, and its support by William Wilberforce (MP for Yorkshire) and the Clapham Sect. Their material resources and political weight were essential complements to the broader movement now expressed in the formation of local abolition societies, the petitioning of Parliament, the dissemination of information, and provincial campaigning. In 1788 Sir William Dolben's bill restricting the shipping of slaves, and the Privy Council's Committee of Enquiry, not only stimulated parliamentary debate but were followed in 1792 by the House of Commons' resolution in favour of the gradual abolition of the slave trade, and thereafter by annual motions designed to secure that commitment.

The literature available on the nature and achievements of the anti-slavery movement, on the dynamic kaleidoscopic alliance of reforming interests which propelled it, and its engagement with government and colonial interests is impossible to summarize briefly. Nevertheless, the movement's main phases of

development are clear.[7] Its rapid parliamentary progress between 1787 and 1792 gave way to prolonged frustration, as war with France seriously impeded further action. The argument for delaying, until peace was restored, what all parties agreed would be a far-reaching measure, was endorsed in a parliamentary resolution in 1795. Popular agitation for this as for other reforming causes was severely curtailed by fears of radical revolution and the restrictive legislation from 1795 onwards. Pitt's government was preoccupied with the war, divided internally, and consequently reluctant to take up a contentious issue which lacked the Crown's support. Humanitarians' shortage of effective economic arguments for abolition remained a serious weakness. Not until the disappearance of Addington's ministry in 1804, the major shift in the fortunes of war following France's naval defeat at Trafalgar, a temporary glut of sugar, and the political upheaval which brought the Ministry of All Talents into office was progress possible. Renewed popular agitation, the development by abolitionists of arguments which presented ending the trade as damaging to the French and part of wartime strategy, and the abolitionist sympathies of Whig ministers underpinned the legislation of 1805–07 which ended British involvement in the trade.

The results of abolition were far less striking than humanitarians had hoped. Others took up the trade in Britain's place, and British diplomats were felt to have failed when the peace settlements of 1814–15 produced no general abolition treaty. Continuing clandestine participation necessitated introducing stiffer penalties for British slavers in 1811, and capital punishment in 1824. Slave conditions in the Caribbean colonies appeared unaffected, suggesting widespread evasion of the restraints on the trade. New strategies were therefore devised: humanitarians battled to establish effective colonial registers of slaves. From 1823 they increased demands for direct Imperial intervention, even in colonies with their own Legislative Assemblies, to secure improved conditions for the slaves. Continuing colonial resistance and slave discontent, most graphically illustrated in rebellions like that of 1823 in Demerara, destroyed the remaining patience of Imperial ministers and humanitarians alike. When T. F. Buxton, Wilberforce's successor as leader of the parliamentary movement and the Anti-Slavery Society, seemed insufficiently aggressive, provincial activists such as James Cropper and Joseph Sturge made the running. From 1827, with the assistance from the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* and increasing numbers of women and children, the petitioning of Parliament greatly increased, and at the urging of the ever-more independent Agency Committee, radical abolitionists busied themselves at parliamentary elections. As the superior efficiency of free labour finally emerged as conventional

[7] Roger Anstey, *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition, 1760–1810* (London, 1975); David Brion Davis, *Slavery and Human Progress* (New York, 1984); Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776–1848* (London, 1988).

wisdom, adding a 'capitalist' argument to the humanitarian armoury, so 'Immediatism'—emancipation now—took hold.

The appointment of a Whig ministry in November 1830, the return of more MPs committed to reform or emancipation, and erosion of the West Indian interest at the elections of 1830 and 1832 favoured the abolitionists. Still more so did the Jamaican rebellion of December 1831, followed as it was by fierce retribution against the slaves, attacks on missionaries blamed for the mayhem, and the destruction of their chapels.[8] As in 1823, the evangelical and nonconformist world was fully roused, as were other humanitarians. Petitions to Parliament favouring immediate emancipation outstripped those for parliamentary reform. The first proposals for a bill came from Lord Howick at the Colonial Office in summer 1832, and an act was passed the following August. Slaves in Britain's colonies were emancipated as from 1 August 1834; subject to varying periods of 'apprenticeship' to their former masters, all would be completely free in 1840. Slave-owners were compensated for their loss of property in slaves from a fund of £20 million established by the government and paid for by metropolitan taxpayers.

The implications of this bald outline for the relationship of humanitarian activity and Britain's Imperial experience are several. As with the definition of trusteeship concerning India, so too the development of an anti-slavery movement had a symbiotic relationship with Empire. Had British slaving and slave-ownership not existed in a context where British authority could plausibly be asserted to restrain it, British humanitarianism would have lacked such clear direction and purpose. Abolitionists could cajole and threaten, but without a government willing and capable of acting, humanitarian outcries were ineffectual. Empire provided the sphere within which benevolent government action was most readily conceivable, with the result that humanitarians rarely questioned the continued existence of territorial Empire, and throughout the century frequently supported extensions of British authority if that would serve their purposes. In practice, their assumptions about universal rights necessitated removing limits to Imperial sovereignty. In the same way, imperialists pointed to their association with humanitarian policies as further justifying the maintenance and expansion of colonial territory. With abolition and emancipation behind them, despite the limitations of both measures, humanitarians were always able to believe in the possibility of success; the tradition of Wilberforce, Buxton, and Sturge had to be maintained, and their achievements might be repeated. After 1833 governments, always under pressure from conflicting interests, could express their sympathy with humanitarian goals even when disinclined or unable to promote them effectively.

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[8] See below, pp. 231; 475–76.

Humanitarians' dependence on the Imperial government took many forms. Their tasks of persuasion and exchanging information were eased by the emergence of a single department responsible for colonial affairs in 1801, and the employment there of sympathetic officials such as James Stephen or Henry Taylor. Stephen, legal adviser from 1814 and eventually Permanent Secretary (1836–47), proved invaluable in his detailed review of colonial legislation, his advice to ministers, and in alerting abolitionists to worrying issues. Others, however, such as R. W. Hay, Stephen's predecessor, seemed far less amenable; even ministers could be ineffectual, including Lord Glenelg, notwithstanding his impeccable credentials as a concerned evangelical.

Even well-disposed governments could seem to humanitarians intolerably cautious, prompting suspicions of obstruction or insincerity. Successive ministries were notoriously reluctant to break with constitutional convention and intervene directly in the affairs of the legislative colonies. After years of colonial obstruction and even as Lord Liverpool's Cabinet agreed to experiment with an Order-in-Council laying down the programme of 'amelioration' for slaves in the Crown Colony of Trinidad, George Canning refused to legislate for islands like Jamaica: 'no feeling of wounded pride, no motive of questionable expediency, nothing short of real and demonstrable necessity, shall induce me to moot the awful question of the transcendental power of parliament over every dependency of the British Crown. That transcendental power... ought to be kept back... It exists, but it should be veiled.'[9]

Canning's argument was at once principled and expedient. The constitutional right to self-government, once granted, should not be withdrawn lest the result be arbitrary or despotic rule. Secondly, colonial resistance might leave the Imperial government no alternative but retreat or compulsion; worse still, attempted compulsion might fail. Even in the early 1830s, when clearly neither persuasion nor threats would secure serious amelioration, there was considerable reluctance to grasp this nettle. Westminster's Emancipation Act itself was drawn up for colonial legislatures to enact for themselves, with such detailed local changes as were needed. Throughout the 1830s Jamaica, for example, continued to exploit with a bitter zeal the openings for resistance this provided. Indeed, relations became so bad that in 1838 suspension of its constitution and direct Crown Colony rule was contemplated. Although Melbourne's government held back for fear of parliamentary defeat, its reluctance to take the final step illustrates the fundamental and persistent political obstacles to the attainment of humanitarian wishes.

[9] 16 March 1824, House of Commons, cited in George R. Mellor, *British Imperial Trusteeship, 1783–1850* (London, 1951), p. 92.

Governments in London were often unable to do more than mediate between humanitarian demands and the alternative desires of others at home and abroad who cared nothing for such sensitivities or, if they did care, nevertheless rated other matters more important and pressing. Imperial and colonial authorities always had to consider at what point dictation would become counter-productive. The prospect of colonial revolt, the assumption of direct rule in the face of a recalcitrant local population, were not to be lightly contemplated; they might defeat the end in view—either by so souring relations that all Imperial authority became a target for subversion, or most extremely by breaking the Imperial tie and so removing the basis for intervention. In many parts of the West Indies in the 1830s, for example, it became virtually impossible in jury trials to obtain convictions of whites for crimes against blacks. Law, traditional property rights, individual civil rights, and ethical convictions were all in dispute.

These problems are illustrated by the deep dissatisfaction of many humanitarians with the Act of Emancipation itself.[10] Why should slaves not be freed completely? Was not 'apprenticeship' slavery by another name? What justification could there be in compensating slave-owners for their past evil-doing at the expense of those who had never held slaves? Of course, there were answers to such objections. But for many British emancipationists their real victory came not in 1833, but only after another round of agitation and Parliament's premature ending of 'apprenticeship' schemes from 1838.

The legal ending of slavery in Britain's colonies threatened to deprive the popular emancipation movement of its *raison d'être*, and to reduce humanitarian activity to a few limited voluntary projects, or occasional interventions in aspects of colonial administration and Imperial diplomacy. Among the consequences of abolition were Britain's maintenance of a naval squadron on the West African coast, and a diplomatic commitment to extend by international agreements her powers to stop vessels suspected of slaving under foreign flags. Emancipation implicitly committed British authorities to a continuing process of legal review, to ensure that colonial substitutes for slavery were not created surreptitiously; in India, a special case exempted from the 1833 Act, the East India Company would have to be held to its obligation to phase out indigenous forms of slavery. While governments showed no signs of abandoning these activities, there was little place for popular activity or interest in the detail of official exchanges. Other humanitarian ventures, such as the African Association and British African Colonization Society, maintained a fitful existence or petered out altogether.[11] The same

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[10] See below, pp. 474–78.

[11] Philip D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780–1850* (London, 1965); Rhodes House Library, Oxford, MSS.Afr.S.1629.

problem of financing Sierra Leone which had caused the Sierra Leone Company to abandon it to Imperial control in 1808 was also causing the British government to feel lukewarm toward this humanitarian legacy. Humanitarian leaders, therefore, took steps to sustain and redirect popular enthusiasm by adopting new issues, reviving older ideas in new forms, and institutional readjustment.

As the political reform and slavery debates receded, the mid-1830s saw determined attempts to redirect humanitarian efforts towards peoples untouched by the Atlantic slave trade but nevertheless suffering severely from uncontrolled British expansion. Where once India had loomed large, by 1830 the Khoisan and Bantu peoples of southern Africa, Australian Aborigines, New Zealand's Maoris, and Pacific islanders were attracting attention. The elements of the general problem were clear: British traders, established settlers and new emigrants, seamen, and others in these regions were increasingly in conflict with the indigenous peoples. Under conditions where greed, ignorance, and fear outweighed goodwill; where neither party recognized or understood the political authority and social conventions of the other; where distant governments could not enforce their will, even if they possessed the nominal legal right to do so; where the liquor, arms, and opium trades flourished; there, lawlessness, the right of the strongest, retaliation, and revenge flourished. Where colonial frontiers were ill-defined or non-existent, the geographical extent of British colonial authority even over British subjects was uncertain. Tales of atrocities multiplied and were magnified in the telling, further increasing the general insecurity.

Moved by events in southern Africa, where the Imperial government finally reversed the Cape Governor's decision to retain Queen Adelaide Province after the war of 1834, the House of Commons was persuaded to have a committee examine the whole problem in 1836–37. The evidence taken convinced the committee that 'the effect of European intercourse ... has been, upon the whole, hitherto a calamity upon the native and savage nations', that Europeans were generally at fault where conflicts occurred, and that immediate government intervention was essential. Non-intervention and the absence of regulation served no national interest. 'On the contrary, in point of economy, of security, of commerce, of reputation, it is a short-sighted and disastrous policy. As far as it has prevailed, it has been a burthen upon the empire.' Moreover,

The British empire has been signally blessed by Providence, and her ... advantages, are so many reasons for peculiar obedience to the laws of Him who guides the destinies of nations. These were given for some higher purpose than commercial prosperity and military renown. ... He who has made Great Britain what she is, will inquire at our hands how we have employed the influence He has lent to us in our dealings with the untutored and defenceless savage; whether it has been engaged in seizing their lands, warring upon their people, and transplanting unknown disease, and deeper degradation, ... or whether we

have, *as far as we have been able*, informed their ignorance, and invited and *afforded them the opportunity of becoming partakers* of that civilization, that innocent commerce, that knowledge and that faith with which it has pleased a gracious Providence to bless our own country.[12]

The Report was paternalistic in tone, and took for granted Britain's self-evident superiority. Nevertheless, it was deeply critical of the consequences of British neglect and expatriate activities; well aware of the practical difficulties of legislation and enforcement; and worried about principles of equity as between different cultural groups. Given the appalling prospect that, without intervention, conditions would deteriorate as emigration increased, and noting that British strength often rendered indigenous groups unable 'to resist any encroachments, however unjust, however mischievous, which we may be disposed to make', the Committee tried to define the principles of a system which would as far as possible 'enforce the observance of their [indigenous] rights'.[13]

In its recommendations, the Committee's intentions were clear. 'Whatever may be the legislative system of any Colony, we ... advise that, as far as possible, the Aborigines be withdrawn from its control', and placed in the 'more impartial hands' of Imperial executive officials. All labour legislation and contracts should be regulated so as to preserve the freedom, if people wished, to sell 'their labour at the best price, and at the market most convenient for themselves'. Acquisition and sales of land should be controlled to guarantee just returns, not least opportunities for 'religious instruction and education', for native inhabitants. Reflecting the importance of missionary evidence to the Committee, emphasis was placed on the role of missions as mediators between the British and local peoples. The Report aimed less at imposing Imperial structures or British culture than at adjusting as peacefully as possible 'the disparity of the parties'.[14]

These recommendations should not be dismissed as merely rhetorical or cosmetic. The Report identified clearly the areas and issues which were to preoccupy British administrators throughout the century. In the light of solutions canvassed at the time, its failure to take more seriously the possibility of further restricting or even prohibiting land transfers may seem short-sighted. However, such a course was precluded by belief in its practical impossibility, as well as confidence in the likelihood and advantages of assimilation. Other ideal alternatives were also seen as impractical. Although 'the safety and welfare of an uncivilized race require that their relations with their more cultivated neighbours

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[12] *Report from the Select Committee on Aborigines (British Settlements), Parliamentary Papers* (1837), VII (425), pp. 74–76.

[13] Ibid., p. 3.

[14] Ibid., pp. 77–78.

should be diminished rather than multiplied', British citizens could not be confined to barracks anywhere within the Empire. Even officially negotiated treaties were 'rather the preparatives...for disputes than securities for peace', given 'the superior sagacity which the European will exercise in framing, in interpreting, and in evading them'.[15] Britain's strength and Imperial authority were often incapable of translation into the precise and competent exercise of power. At the time, the Committee's carefully considered suggestions were regarded as imperfect but the best available.

The gap between humanitarian ambition and achievements is now sadly apparent; then, however, many contemporaries were sanguine. The lessons of the anti-slavery campaign were reapplied, in Thomas Hodgkin's establishment of the Aborigines' Protection Society (APS) in 1837. Like the Anti-Slavery Society, it was a voluntary body to investigate abuses, publicize them, and hold governments to their responsibilities by embarrassing revelations and political pressure. Indeed, a later Secretary, H. R. Fox-Bourne, regarded its purpose as the implementation of the 1837 Report. The Report itself was soon followed by that most striking of Victorian attempts to forestall further disasters, the annexation of New Zealand. Its call for action found further echoes in the acquisition of Natal in 1843, a response to Afrikaner expansion in the Great Trek, and in the re-establishment of British control on the Gold Coast. Under the Foreign Jurisdiction Act (1843) the Crown was allowed to acquire judicial powers by agreement with foreign rulers in territories not belonging to Britain.

Buxton, in his attempts to redirect humanitarian energies, appealed to the same benevolent instincts but in a peculiarly evangelical form. He shared the evangelical view that mobilizing public conscience and government power behind humanitarian causes should not only eradicate sin but atone and make reparation for past wrong-doing. Atonement involved not acts of contrition alone, but the performance of good works from which the doer might also benefit. Here lay the possibility of marrying Christian duty with secular self-interest, something the humanitarian coalition had already shown could become politically unstoppable.

In 1789 Wilberforce had begged Parliament to 'make reparation to Africa...by establishing a trade upon true commercial principles, and we shall soon find the rectitude of our conduct rewarded by the benefits of a regular and growing commerce'.[16] Fifty years later Buxton redeveloped this appeal in *The African Slave Trade* and *The Remedy*.[17] He reinforced it with the wisdom of hindsight: naval suppression of the trade was 'too feeble'; legitimate trade would not supplant

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[15] Ibid., p. 80

[16] Klaus E. Knorr, *British Colonial Theories, 1570–1850* (1944; London, 1963), p. 378.

[17] Published separately in 1839, Buxton combined them in *The African Slave Trade and Its Remedy* (London, 1840).

slaving without direct intervention to provide security; after much trial and error, staples—certainly palm-oil, possibly cotton—now existed as a basis for trade.

Legitimate commerce would put down the Slave Trade, by demonstrating the superior value of man as a labourer on the soil, to man as an object of merchandise; and if conducted on wise and equitable principles, might be the precursor, or rather the attendant, of civilization, peace, and Christianity, to the unenlightened, warlike, and heathen tribes who now so fearfully prey on each other, to supply the slave markets of the New World. In this view of the subject, the merchant, the philanthropist, the patriot, and the Christian, may unite . . .[18]

For the moment at least Buxton was right because his arguments proved persuasive. Divisions among humanitarians provoked the collapse of the Anti-Slavery Society. Sturge founded the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS) in April 1839, overtly pacifist and inclined to focus on American slavery. To support his own vision, Buxton formed the African Civilization Society (July 1839), and carried Quakers, Baptists, Wesleyans, and Scottish Presbyterians with him. The government also supported Buxton, anti-slavery sentiment and parliamentary need for humanitarian votes outweighing ministers' privately expressed concerns at the likely costs and expansive consequences of embracing tropical Africa in a network of treaties, land purchases, trading, and peacekeeping expeditions. As a result the slave-trade suppression squadron was increased, and the Whigs agreed to fund a major expedition up the Niger to make treaties and consider territory for agricultural and commercial settlements inland.

The expedition was in many ways a fiasco. Leaving Britain in May 1841, by mid-October it had retreated in disarray from the Niger with forty of the 145 whites dead from fever. The Whig ministry fell, and in 1843, with the Niger settlement abandoned, the African Civilization Society was dissolved. Buxton died in 1845. These consequences, however, were not entirely disastrous for the humanitarians. They simplified the politics of the movement, leaving Sturge and the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society to inherit the earth and divide their concerns with the Aborigines' Protection Society. They also confirmed the wisdom of those politicians like Palmerston who combined humanitarian sentiment with a recognition that government support could only be such as was compatible with other British interests and would receive sustained political support.

The increased naval vote survived, and commercial diplomacy, underpinned by successive consular appointments from Zanzibar to the Pacific, was linked to the continuing diplomatic negotiation of anti-slave trade treaties with rulers everywhere. With annexations in the Pacific and Africa, these measures also helped keep France at bay, an international rival soft on slavery and Roman Catholicism. This modest, severely practical approach at least held the Buxtonian coalition—

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[18] Thomas Fowell Buxton, *The African Slave Trade and its Remedy*, p. 306.

merchants, philanthropists, patriots, Christians—together, even if harnessing their energies in different proportion. Moreover, it implicitly accepted the fundamental humanitarian points that the war against slavery and the slave trade should be a significant ingredient of British policy, and could only be so if government concern extended beyond formal colonial possessions. Anti-slave trade diplomacy, described by Aberdeen in 1842 as a 'new and a vast branch of international relations', seemed capable of making useful gains, and the new treaties with Portugal (1842), France and Zanzibar (both 1845) were enthusiastically welcomed.[19] This approach set the continuing framework for the humanitarian movement's activity in goading government and influencing Imperial policy.

Although the 1840s opened promisingly, the achievements to 1870 were often disappointing. Earlier conventional wisdom was either disproved or at least seriously questioned. In West Africa, legitimate trade was not driving out the slave trade—and not simply because it lacked strength or appeal, as Buxton had argued in 1839. The balance of advantage against the slave trade was frequently unclear, and Britain's use of force to decide the issue increased. It became difficult for humanitarians to sustain their optimistic belief that a temporary push with government assistance would everywhere tip the balance in favour of free and prosperous enterprise. Slavery and the trade in Africa remained an intractable and—if travellers' reports were believed—growing problem, unamenable to existing British naval and diplomatic activity. The greater efficiency of free over slave labour was not borne out by the Caribbean colonies' experience, and the terms available for free labour were often unattractive to freed slaves and indigenous people. The consequence for the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society was a decade of debilitating argument as to whether or not colonial produce should continue to receive preferential treatment in Britain's markets, or be compelled to compete on a free and equal basis with slave-grown produce from elsewhere. The Free Traders' victory by 1854 indicated a loss of commitment to the West Indian cause.

This internal dispute was only one of several which disrupted the anti-slavery lobby. Tactics and geographical focus were also at issue. The greatest division lay between those believing that the slave trade and Africa should be their prime concern, and those following Sturge, who targeted slavery itself and preferred to join forces with American abolitionists. Lesser arguments about methods—the use of violence against traders, economic blockade or sanctions—only exacerbated divisions. Split over essentials, the British and Foreign was hardly well

[19] Gerald S. Graham, *Great Britain in the Indian Ocean: A Study of Maritime Enterprise, 1810–1850* (Oxford, 1967), pp. 106–07, 117, 215.

equipped to pursue other issues beginning to demand attention, such as contract or coolie 'labour'. Recruitment of liberated Africans and Indian labourers for employment in Mauritius, Natal, and West Indian colonies grew steadily from the 1840s, and was easily open to abuse.[20]

Occasionally the Society successfully rallied parliamentary support. On the coolie question in 1842–43 and 1849–50, for instance, it achieved modifications in Mauritius's, British Guiana's, and Trinidad's administration of the system. The general picture by the 1860s, however, was one of indecision, ineffectiveness, and declining membership, with increasing reliance on the connections and resources of the great and good among British Quakers, the Buxton, Gurney, and Barclay families.

The position of the Aborigines' Protection Society was no better. Hodgkin, another Quaker as well as ethnologist and professional physician, remained Secretary until 1866, but seems to have had neither time nor contacts sufficient to his increasingly complicated task. By the end of the 1840s it was clear that Imperial initiatives were having only limited and temporary success. The Aboriginal Protectors appointed in New South Wales and Western Australia (1838–39) after ten years had evidently failed. In New Zealand the early optimism soon evaporated. Confidence was only partially restored by Governor Grey (1846–52), and at the expense of shifting to an overtly assimilationist policy towards the Maori. Moreover, the conflict over land purchases from Maoris remained unresolved, and Grey's ability to negotiate with them, as well as his administrative command, proved beyond his successors.

For those pinning their hopes on the principles of the 1837 Report, however, there were still more fundamental obstacles. Prominent were democratic political institutions and the growth of colonial self-government. Ironically, the same representative electoral practices which enabled the humanitarians to put pressure on the Imperial government to act, once transferred to the colonies worked against humanitarian aims. This came as no surprise in the mid-century. West Indian Assemblies had fought to ward off amelioration and circumvent the Emancipation Act; the Cape Colony's less popularly based Legislative Council tried the same in its 1834 Vagrancy Act. For these reasons the 1837 Report, and by then also the Imperial government, had favoured removing such matters from popular control; but the line proved impossible to hold. The Imperial authorities found the political demand for settler self-government undeniable. Although in Natal responsible government was delayed on the humanitarian ground that such a small white community could not be trusted with power over blacks, this was exceptional. Before 1870 all settler colonies had acquired sufficient financial power

[20] See below, pp. 90–93, 95–96, 98; also p. 553.

to enable them to shape policy towards indigenous populations more or less as they wished. Expenditure on native peoples called for in 1837, and to some extent institutionalized by a Governor such as Grey both in New Zealand and the Cape, was cut to the bone. Legislation, carefully framed to avoid Imperial disallowance, and embodying employment conditions or qualifications for political involvement akin to those in Britain, established patterns of labour law and political rights favourable to white minorities. Everywhere indigenous customary rights to land were steadily extinguished.

Justifications for this determined departure from the intentions of the 1830s were developed in ways reconciling it with what were still seen by Victorians in all walks of life as the preferred, if not the actual, priorities of Imperial policy. W. E. Gladstone, formerly a member of the 1836–37 Aborigines' Committee, spoke for many in arguing that, given the limits to Imperial power and the undesirability of compulsion, the best defence for indigenous rights was normally the greatest degree of local self-government.[21] Settler societies, once made wholly responsible for the consequences of their own decisions, would rapidly establish good relations with native populations and neighbouring states. War would not pay, and swords beaten into ploughshares would cultivate general prosperity. Self-government with free trade would reconcile political rights and acceptable economics.

Making a virtue of political necessity did not automatically make Gladstone right, and distinguished figures such as Earl Grey vigorously dissented. In New Zealand the removal of Imperial troops took place only after they had fought the settlers' war which placed Maoris beyond the pale and facilitated the final great land confiscation. At the Cape too, pacific instincts blossomed reluctantly when local odds favoured settlers or when, as a hardened Colonial Office observer put it, 'a little war would be excellent for trade'.[22] In practice, peace and injustice could cohabit far more easily than Gladstone implied.

What constituted 'justice' or 'the best interests' of indigenous peoples, emancipated slaves, or indentured labourers was also being debated and redefined. Various mid-century developments combined to erode the earlier general optimism about non-Western peoples' capacity and to undermine support for the relatively generous approach of 1837. The humanitarians' position was weakened by material decline in the West Indies, the small numbers of missionary converts, the unwillingness of indigenous communities to absorb British ideas or commercial habits, and by what observers interpreted as the violent rejection of British ways evident in the Indian Mutiny, the Maori Wars, and the Morant Bay Rebellion. Disappointment and developing ideas about insurmountable racial and cultural differences

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[21] Paul Knaplund, *Gladstone and Britain's Imperial Policy* (London, 1927), pp. 86–91.
[22] R. G. W. Herbert to Lord Carnarvon, 10 April 1874, B[ritish]L[ibrary] Add. MSS 60791.

caused even the compassionate to adjust their sights downward, and the confident (for instance, among the missions) to work to a longer time-scale. To those less thoughtful, humanitarian goals and talk of equal rights seemed unrealistic or irrelevant.

In mid-century the humanitarian movement became temporarily but essentially the creature of habit. It had lost the drive, energy, and political weight of its days as a popular movement. Its activities were now those of small, quite well-informed pressure groups, developing their official and political connections. The two societies often reacted vigorously, but could not influence the outcome of large events such as the Maori Wars, and contributed little to mobilize the public outrage provoked by Governor Eyre in Jamaica in 1865.[23] Individual activists, such as the missionary James Long, fighting in the 1860s for labourers' rights against the powerful indigo planters of Bengal, often went unsupported.[24] However, popular protest on behalf of black Jamaicans, or enthusiasm for the anti-slavery cause and the North in the American Civil War, provided important reminders that humanitarian convictions were far from moribund. They added point to official diplomacy, the expansion of consular appointments, and continued oversight of Britons abroad, particularly in tropical regions. They reinforced the perception by other countries of Britain as committed irrevocably to the anti-slavery cause and sustained the prospect of renewed and vigorous campaigns.

The North's victory in the Civil War in America and abolition in 1865 returned the anti-slavery lobby's main interest to areas where British opinion and Imperial authority could make themselves felt. The slave trade of East and Central Africa, dominated by Arabs working from Zanzibar and as far afield as the Persian Gulf, attracted particular attention. David Livingstone's career and death near Lake Bangweulu in 1873 contributed greatly to this, partly by its encouragement of English and Scottish missions. After initial failure inland, the Universities Mission to Central Africa was re-established at Zanzibar, and under Bishops Steere and Tozer began to extend towards Lake Nyasa. The Church Missionary Society revived its Mombasa mission, and in the late 1870s Scottish churches scattered themselves around Lake Nyasa itself.

This combination of a new focus, and the re-engagement with the missions' help of the religious public, so important in the 1820s and 1830s, was complemented by changes of personnel in both societies. At the British and Foreign in 1870 Sturge invited the Revd Horace Waller on to the executive committee. Waller, a founding member of the Universities Mission, active member of the Royal

[23] Bernard Semmel, *The Governor Eyre Controversy* (London, 1962).

[24] Geoffrey A. Oddie, *Social Protest in India: British Protestant Missionaries and Social Reforms, 1850–1900* (Delhi, 1979).

Geographical Society, friend of Livingstone and editor of his *Last Journals* (1874), was well connected and indefatigable.[25] At the Aborigines' Protection Society the Secretary, F. W. Chesson, long overshadowed by Hodgkin, became full time in the same year. Similarly energetic, developing extensive liberal, parliamentary, and journalistic connections, he too made an essential contribution to his Society's revival. The two Societies collaborated closely from 1870 onwards.

In East African matters the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society usually took the lead. It carefully watched the 1871 parliamentary committee on the slave trade and organized much of the pressure on Gladstone's ministry which in 1872–73 produced the new anti-slavery treaty with Zanzibar; it was active in Disraeli's embarrassment in 1875–76 over Admiralty regulations about handling fugitive slaves. On this issue Sturge and Waller spent much time addressing public meetings, approaching the Foreign Office, mobilizing parliamentary support, coaching MPs for their speeches, and above all in sustaining a fundamentally non-partisan coalition.[26] There was also the constant gathering of up-to-date information, badgering the Foreign Office about slave trade suppression, and cultivating new figures interested in the region, such as William Mackinnon and King Leopold of the Belgians.

The Aborigines' Protection Society was active in several traditional areas. The Pacific labour traffic and Queensland's recruiting for its plantations was already creating concern when, in November 1871, news reached England of the murder of Bishop Patteson of the Melanesian Mission by islanders at Nukapu, in the Solomon Islands in September, apparently in revenge for recruiters' outrages. Church and missionary societies' outcry joined the Society's continuing publicity and deputation work, and their united agitation produced the Pacific Islanders Protection Act (1872). With the Wesleyan Methodists and interested parties at the Colonial Institute, the Society then organized much of the campaign during 1872–73 which nudged Gladstone's Cabinet towards annexing Fiji. In West Africa, following the Asante War, APS and British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society work in the summer of 1874 forced a reluctant Colonial Office and Cabinet to commit themselves to abolishing domestic slavery and other involuntary servitude on the Gold Coast. The retention of the Gambia under British control also owed much to the APS, for Chesson brought the Gambia Committee together in summer 1875 and played a strong Protestant card to avoid French Catholic rule.

These activities repeated on a smaller scale those of the abolition and anti-slavery societies in their heyday. They were well-tried staples of effective lobbying:

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[25] Dorothy O. Helly, *Livingstone's Legacy: Horace Waller and Victorian Mythmaking* (Athens, Oh., 1987).

[26] Horace Waller, Diaries 1875–76, Yale University Divinity School, MS Group 72/19–20.

information gathering; collaboration with or mobilization of interested parties among the missions or merchant communities; links with societies such as the Royal Geographical; cultivation of all-party support from younger radicals such as Charles Dilke and solid figures like Arthur Kinnaird or Sir John Kennaway; and playing on the personal sympathies of ministers such as Kimberley. With their smaller resources, however, the societies were necessarily more dependent than their predecessors on making themselves useful as well as pushing in the offices of state, and they perhaps reacted to events more often than they took the initiative.

The chief difference, however, between the pre-1840 and post-1870 decades reflected the humanitarians' final abandonment of visions of sweeping transformations in indigenous societies. The middle-class constituency on which they always significantly depended was by the 1870s increasingly well-established and conservative. General humanitarian impulses were very real. However, vigorous protests at Turkish atrocities and, later, at Britain's own concentration camps during the South African War, were not matched by the same ready involvement on behalf of non-Europeans as had occurred two generations before. This was not simply the consequence of mid-century disillusionments; nor was it that the aims of Buxton's African Civilization Society no longer seemed desirable, especially as arguments favouring biological racial differences attracted wide support. It was their feasibility which seemed increasingly doubtful. The persistence of slavery, the perennial need to stop authorities backsliding, the sheer recalcitrance of problems also had a profound cumulative effect. They not only discouraged optimism about African or Maori capacity to cope with white culture, but taught humanitarians to be thankful for small gains and to emphasize protection above all.

Between 1870 and 1914, therefore, notwithstanding the larger funds and membership of the British and Foreign, British humanitarianism came to adopt the goals of the Aborigines' Protection Society. With the slave trade and slavery both declining, abolitionists considered more the consequences of emancipation and the development of what have since been named 'new forms of slavery'. The partitions of Africa and the Pacific progressively closed off many external frontiers where British subjects confronted independent peoples. Humanitarians' attention inevitably converged on problems in territories directly under colonial control, and they generally accepted the traditional APS preoccupation with property as the guarantee of indigenous rights and freedoms. The death of H. R. Fox-Bourne, APS Secretary, removed the final obstacle to a natural merger of the two Societies in June 1910.

In these circumstances relations between the institutionalized humanitarian lobby and government became ever closer; the lobby adopted the role of watchman, briefed to recall government to its obligations whenever it neglected its position as 'trustee'. Of course humanitarians were encouraged in this by the help

they had always received from sympathetic individual officials, and in places policy was closely attuned to their goals. In India, for example, legislative curbs on the free market were introduced after 1875 to protect peasant landholding. However, sensitive to what government could and could not do, the societies tailored their recommendations accordingly, rather than reconsider their methods or the interests of those needing assistance. Representatives of the societies went with those of chambers of commerce, missions, and private syndicates, to all the major international conferences of the period, notably the Berlin West Africa Conference (1884–85) and the Brussels Slave Trade Conference (1890).[27]

The modesty of humanitarian expectations and absence of independent thinking is evident on South African questions. Until the 1870s the Aborigines' Protection Society enthusiastically supported a conventional policy of federation as the key to prosperity and a uniform, liberal 'native policy'. However, events in Natal and on the Cape frontiers after 1875 brought a complete change. The Society now argued for Imperial intervention, the establishment at least of protectorates, and opposition to chartered company administration, as did many others, including the missionary John Mackenzie, the Wesleyans, and Joseph Chamberlain. Despite their shift away from the 'civilizing' mission, humanitarians' paternalism persisted in assumptions that indigenous cultures should be protected because they were vulnerable *per se*, and that Britain's Imperial authority could be trusted to be impartial. Bechuanaland excited much popular concern when three paramount chiefs threatened by the British South Africa Company visited Britain in the autumn 1895.[28] On the later issue of Chinese labour, imported to assist South Africa's recovery after the war of 1899–1902, APS opposition rested on the conditions under which the scheme operated—areas of British official responsibility— as well as its bad influence on Africans. On each occasion the informed experts of the BFASS and APS moved after the event, swimming with the general tide of humanitarian concern.

Ultimately the combination of limited resources and the search for abuses cramped the potential of humanitarian leaders. In constantly calling the Imperial government to its duty, they unwittingly fostered a negative conception of trusteeship, confirming the reality of 'the white man's burden' rather than searching for ways in which it might be lightened. By the turn of the century, however, new, more positive thinking was beginning to emerge from quite other quarters.

[27] Suzanne Miers, 'Humanitarianism at Berlin: Myth or Reality?', in Stig Förster, Wolfgang J. Mommsen, and Ronald Robinson, eds., *Bismarck, Europe and Africa: The Berlin African Conference, 1884–1855 and the Onset of Partition* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 333–45.

[28] Neil Parsons, *King Khama, Emperor Joe, and the Great White Queen: Victorian Britain through African Eyes* (Chicago, 1998).

New ideas emerged when, like Buxton in the 1830s, people again reconsidered the future of the tropical world. With declining hopes for development under the combined stimulus of free trade and non-European initiative, thought had turned to alternatives. These included direction by Europeans, either through private enterprises with official endorsement and *de facto* monopoly powers like chartered companies, or directly under Imperial government control in the interest of more widely diffused benefits. However, neither the record of Britain's chartered companies nor state-directed enterprise, such as Chamberlain favoured, commanded general support.

In developing further possibilities the Congo Reform Association was of particular importance.[29] The later 1890s saw disquiet developing as evidence mounted that King Leopold was administering the Congo Free State in ways quite contrary to international undertakings made at Berlin and Brussels. Reports multiplied, revealing discrimination against missions other than those of Belgian Catholic orders, restrictions on trade not controlled by Leopold's agents, and exploitative and vicious methods adopted to gather tropical commodities on which the state's revenues depended. The Congo basin was becoming difficult of access to those seen as 'outsiders', and was being administered in Leopold's exclusive interests. Leopold's persistently aggressive diplomacy to extend the conventional boundaries of his territory pointed in the same direction.

Given his political and social influence, Leopold's bland assurances were adequate to prevent criticism by governments which, having settled the Congo's future in 1885, had no wish to reopen this internationally contentious issue. After APS agitation, Edmund Morel, with great difficulty despite experience in West African shipping, uncovered damning evidence of the rapaciousness of the Congo authorities and the atrocities committed against the Congolese. Convinced that the regime should be called to account but rebuffed in official quarters, Morel published *Red Rubber* (1904) and, with extraordinary energy, mounted a public campaign. Conceived by Consul Roger Casement and led by Morel in alliance with Dr Harry Guinness and John and Alice Harris of the Congo Balolo Mission, with the aid of Liverpool merchants, the churches, and missionary supporters, the Congo Reform Association was ultimately successful in forcing Leopold to relinquish control to the Belgian parliament in 1908.

Morel's single-minded crusade had its parallels with those of Clarkson, Sharpe, Wilberforce, and Sturge; but also its particular problems. The British government, while aware of the truth, was reluctant to act lest its own colonial record be questioned or the European balance of power be tipped in Germany's favour.

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[29] Kevin Grant, '"A Civilised Savagery": British Humanitarian Politics and European Imperialism in Africa, 1884–1926', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1997.

There was international suspicion of selfish ambitions on the part of objectors. Moreover, before 1904, as Morel later wrote: 'As for any real Public Opinion on the subject, it is no disloyalty to Fox Bourne's memory to say that it did not exist ... the very catholicity of his sympathies was a source of popular weakness ... and the Aborigines Protection Society of which he was the life and soul, was notorious for criticising every European Government (often quite rightly) in its dealings with subject races.'[30]

To overcome these obstacles Morel relied on his journalistic talents, religious networks, and publicity especially by Baptists and Quakers, and an ability to recreate conditions which had contributed to anti-slavery's early-nineteenth-century achievements. A single issue, the Congo, was combined with a clearly defined outcome—ending Leopold's rule. An alliance of different interests was forged. Crucial, said Morel, was 'appeal to national honour, which meant that the Public, and especially the philanthropic and religious Public, whose aid Stanley had enlisted with such effect in the early eighties in securing British adhesion to King Leopold's enterprise, must be vividly reminded of the very special national responsibility which rested upon England and Englishmen in the matter'. He played up the danger of Leopold's activities to Britain's neighbouring territories, and the immorality of the Free State's commercial monopoly in breach of commitments at Berlin. He also brought to his analysis a vision of what might be if Africans were freed from oppression, guaranteed their land and the profits of its produce, and allowed to develop their own interests. Morel's was 'an appeal addressed to four principles: human pity the world over; British honour: British Imperial responsibilities in Africa: international commercial rights *co-incident with and inseparable from native economic and personal liberties*'.[31]

The persuasiveness of the Congo's appeal also reflected both the continuing significance of Nonconformist commitment to principles of freedom and religious conversion, and the extent to which after 1895 a more positive re-evaluation of non-Western cultures was taking place.[32] Morel had a greater faith than most in Africans to conduct their own affairs. Nevertheless, travellers such as Mary Kingsley, analysts of Imperial economics such as J. A. Hobson, and missionaries and anthropologists were also arguing that the potential of these cultures to change was much greater than generally supposed. The Colonial Office grew hostile to chartered companies and, after 1903, more wary of tropical development

[30] Wm. Roger Louis and Jean Stengers, *E. D. Morel's History of the Congo Reform Movement* (Oxford, 1967), pp. 55–56.

[31] Ibid., pp. 63, 68. Henry Morton Stanley, explorer and discoverer of David Livingstone in 1871.

[32] Bernard Porter, *Critics of Empire: British and Radical Attitudes to Colonialism in Africa, 1895–1914* (London, 1968); Ronald Hyam, *Elgin and Churchill at the Colonial Office, 1905–1908: The Watershed of the Empire-Commonwealth* (London, 1968), chaps. 10–12.

schemes which might deprive Africans in particular of their own labour and land rights. Colonial administrators as diverse as Sir William MacGregor and Norman Leys reinforced the message.

There were thus signs of changing emphases and new directions in the development of Britain's humanitarian tradition before 1914. The momentum regained in the early 1870s was sustained, and the willingness of the extensive humanitarian public to rouse itself was periodically displayed. Popular expressions of humanitarian concern were nevertheless enthusiastic and haphazard—opposing the Portuguese at the time of the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 1884, strongly supportive of British protection for a continued missionary presence in Uganda in 1892— rather than sustained and clearly focused. This reflected the preferences and a certain lack of imagination on the part of the second tier of activists—the committed organizers of the two principal societies, the British and Foreign and the Aborigines' Protection Society—who favoured a detailed, day-to-day working relationship with government. Their mode of operation was not easily linked to the development of popular agitation. However, given Britain's continued expansion, the societies' organizers needed their wider support to provide finance and vital information, while the broader range of supporters always needed those who could focus their outrage on government in ways which would secure effective action. The two sides of the movement began to draw together again in the context of renewed concern over European activities—arms and opium trades, plantations, mining, labour traffic, the consequences of African partition—and a less ethnocentric approach to the needs and qualities of indigenous societies. In its activities from 1904 to 1913 the Congo Reform Association demonstrated the revived potential of this combination for sustained and effective campaigning.

The 'trusteeship' which Morel's campaign supported and the British government finally endorsed was essentially hybrid. It echoed Burke's restraint. It still reflected the pessimism of later Victorians in offering little to Western-educated colonial subjects. Free trade retained its place, albeit more as a buttress to indigenous status than the moral agent of social transformation. Nevertheless, in acknowledging the need and possibility for indigenous social or economic change, in reasserting acceptable standards of colonial practice especially in the legal definition and protection of individuals' rights, and in reminding colonial governments of their international responsibilities, it offered pointers to the future. The roots of Britain's later colonial development and welfare policies are varied, but to a significant degree they embodied the modification of late-nineteenth-century ideas of European-directed development under pressure from supporters of Britain's older humanitarian traditions of anti-slavery and trusteeship.

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11

Religion, Missionary Enthusiasm, and Empire

ANDREW PORTER

Christianity's expansion as part of British culture and activities overseas in the nineteenth century was unprecedented in scale. Emigrants and temporary expatriates, such as merchants and officials, frequently carried their faith abroad with them. Anglicans, Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, and other denominations re-created their churches overseas and adapted them to new environments in the process. In a parallel movement, driven especially by voluntary Protestant missionary societies founded in the 1790s, evangelical Christians and the missionaries they supported overseas—some 10,000 by 1900—set out to convert the extra-European world. Imperial control and colonial societies were consequently influenced in a multitude of divergent and ambiguous ways.

Home and colonial governments supported ecclesiastical expansion wherever it was likely to buttress their authority and promote social order. However, religious dynamics proved unpredictable and often at odds with Imperial needs. In the white settlement colonies, a religious establishment at first seemed desirable. However, more even than in Britain, the growth of denominational conflict forced politicians and officials to conclude that only a policy of religious neutrality would serve their purpose. Finding such state support as they received inadequate and constricting, churchmen too distanced themselves from political authorities. By mid-century the formal separation of church and state was occurring, with the result that religious influences began to shape Imperial ties and colonial identities in less obvious ways.

By contrast, Imperial authorities with few exceptions initially distrusted missionary enterprise, and missions rejected all political involvement. Both sides, however, learned gradually that co-operation had its uses. Missions won extensive popular support at home and, inescapably dependent on their hosts, often acquired considerable influence with non-European communities. They could therefore not be ignored, and might be turned to Imperial advantage. Missionaries came to regard secular authorities in a similarly utilitarian way. British missionary enterprise thus sometimes provided channels through which Imperial controls followed; at other times it delayed annexation and colonization, or even subverted

Imperial authority. In many places (sometimes on purpose, often unintentionally) Christians and their churches provided powerful stimuli for local resistance and opposition to colonial rule.

Settlement of North America's affairs in the 1780s required not only a new military order but practical answers to serious constitutional and political questions. These questions centred on securing British sovereignty, respect for continued British colonial rule, and loyal acceptance of political obligations, without exciting colonial discontent. Political radicalism, such as disrupted the old colonial system and disturbed metropolitan Britain after 1790, was regarded by British leaders as inseparable from religious dissent. Not surprisingly, solutions to the problems of Empire were therefore felt, like those at home, to require reinforcing ties between established religion, especially the Church of England, and the state.

William Knox, of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) and Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies (1770–82), asserted in 1786 that 'the Prevalence of the Church of England in those Colonies is the best Security that Great Britain can have for their Fidelity and attachment to her Constitution and Interests'.[1] Few influential men were as forthright, but his general sentiment was found broadly agreeable. Ministers and bishops felt their earlier haphazard attention to the religious life of the colonies had been disastrous. To nurture such links as survived after 1782, it was felt necessary to provide ecclesiastical leadership for Anglicans remaining in the United States. In neighbouring Quebec, and the Maritime Colonies which had received more than 30,000 Loyalist refugees, entrenchment of an officially supported Anglicanism was regarded as constitutionally essential and a wise response to local needs.

These expedient responses were reinforced by the widespread support in Britain herself for linking church and state. The establishment of Anglicanism appropriately expressed both faith and duty, and served as a reminder of the divine origins of society and state as well as the mutual obligations of subjects and sovereign. The English, Edmund Burke wrote in 1790, 'do not consider their Church establishment as . . . something . . . they may either keep or lay aside, according to their temporary ideas of convenience. They consider it as the foundation of their whole constitution, with which, and with every part of which, it holds an indissoluble union.'[2]

Imperial authorities in London, therefore, acted readily to establish a fully fledged colonial church. The high-Anglican Loyalist Charles Inglis was made

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[1] Vincent T. Harlow, *The Founding of the Second British Empire, 1763–1793*, 2 vols. (London, 1964), II, p. 738.

[2] Quoted in J. C. D. Clark, *English Society, 1688–1832: Ideology, Social Structure and Political Practice during the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 254–55.

Bishop of Nova Scotia in 1787, with responsibilities including New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Cape Breton, and as part of the 1791 settlement of the Canadas Jacob Mountain took up the new bishopric of Quebec in 1793. These were government appointments, and subordinate to the Archbishop of Canterbury's authority, unlike previous arrangements whereby colonial clergy were placed under the Bishop of London.

Inglis, Mountain, and the Lieutenant-Governors also pressed unsuccessfully for another diocese in Upper Canada. This refusal to multiply bishoprics reveals other Imperial calculations. Building up effective ecclesiastical structures was costly everywhere. Parliament was prepared to see grants to colonies used for church building and episcopal salaries, and even occasionally contributed specifically for these purposes. In 1804 £3,040 or 42 per cent of the Imperial grant to Nova Scotia went to support the religious establishment.[3] Further metropolitan assistance came from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. But these were seen as temporary resorts. Although Imperial grants might create a useful dependence on Britain, far more was anticipated from the growth of self-supporting religious hierarchies, developing their own endowments with colonial Assemblies' support, securing assistance from local congregations, and training local candidates as clergymen. Religious establishments would sustain Empire most effectively if fully integrated into colonial society.

When the ecclesiastical establishments of British North America were revised in the 1780s, government intention was therefore to increase substantially the Crown or public land provided in every parish to support Anglican ministers. The acreage for an adequate endowment was highly contentious, but the Canada Act (1791) laid down conditions for the amount to be set aside as 'clergy reserves'. Land values were expected to rise as the colonies developed, making possible the reduction of grants from civil authorities while assisting the maintenance and expansion of the churches. Bishops were encouraged to develop church schools and higher-level colleges, thus cultivating a committed Anglican population, an educated élite, and an adequate clergy.

Additional features were designed to make the settlements more acceptable to local opinion. Colonial bishops' jurisdiction was everywhere confined to a narrow range of ecclesiastical affairs. Although this still left many points over which civil and religious authorities could clash—for instance, the administration of church lands, or marriage and burial licences—the church's power to intrude on colonists' day-to-day lives was minimized. Imperial rejection of pleas for the early introduction of a full church hierarchy, with its deans, archdeacons, and cathedrals, tended

[3] Judith Fingard, *The Anglican Design in Loyalist Nova Scotia, 1783–1816* (London, 1972), p. 212, n. 47.

in the same direction. Such appendages could be left to develop as local wishes and capacity allowed.

In principal, therefore, new or revived colonial churches, increasingly under the leadership of colonial bishops, were acknowledged as indispensable adjuncts to the civil authorities. Where possible the Anglican church, when necessary its closest equivalent, was relied on to underpin the Imperial connection, to provide moral leadership, social cohesion, and education on a scale suited to the colony in question. This pattern of church–state relations, framed for British North America between 1784 and 1793, was applied and adapted throughout the colonial Empire until the 1830s.

Following the Jamaica disturbances in 1796 clerical salaries were raised to elicit greater effort; and after the Demerara rebellion (1823), bishoprics were set up in Jamaica and Barbados, not least, it was claimed, to strengthen the new policy of ameliorating the position of slaves by providing more churches and education. In India, with renewal in 1813 of the East India Company's charter, the first Anglican diocese was established in 1814 based at Calcutta, with a geographical remit later extended to New South Wales. Officials expected the new bishop and his three archdeacons, supported from state funds, to organize more systematic ecclesiastical and educational provision for British expatriates, and to supervise or discipline the growing number of Anglican missionaries and their converts. The disciplining of Dissenters where necessary would be left to the Company or other colonial authority. These arrangements reflected more a concession to public opinion by the Imperial government and East India Company than a feeling either that the supply of Company chaplains was insufficient, or that the Anglican church should become a missionary church directed towards Indians themselves.

Where populations were much smaller than Canada's, resources to support Anglican expansion more limited, and Governors' powers far greater, Imperial governments remained content with only minimal provision. The First Fleet sailed for New South Wales in 1788 with troops and convicts but no chaplain. For a population perceived as largely irreligious and perhaps irredeemable, but none the less tightly controlled, a few chaplains were long thought sufficient. They included the redoubtable Samuel Marsden, assistant chaplain in 1794 and for many years both magistrate and sole chaplain. Colonial expansion prompted appointment of an archdeacon in 1824, and in 1825 new land regulations required at least one-seventh of each county be set aside to support Anglican churches and schools. Administered by a new Church and Schools Corporation, this had all the appearance of yet another 'Anglican design'. At the Cape of Good Hope after 1805 the colonial authorities contented themselves with encouraging revival of the Dutch Reformed Church by recruiting Scottish Presbyterian ministers. In the 1830s new

colonial dioceses were contemplated for Sydney and Cape Town, but by then ideas about the ties of imperial church and colonial state were starting to change.

Applied unevenly, imperial principle also encountered resistance. The endowment of Protestant clergy with reserved lands, and preference for the Church of England, reflected desires to counterbalance the well-endowed Roman Catholic hierarchy of Quebec and to stall the progress of dissent and irreligion. Like his contemporaries in Britain, Bishop Mountain deplored the 'itinerant and mendicant Methodists . . . whose preaching is calculated only to perplex the understanding, & corrupt the morals & relax the nerves of industry, & disolve [*sic*] the bonds of society'.[4] Yet in every colony the mushrooming reality of denominational diversity was inescapable. Many Loyalists migrating to Nova Scotia were Presbyterians or Dissenters, as were emigrants from Britain to the Canadian provinces; the religious affiliations of transportees to the Australian colonies were equally varied, and included numerous Roman Catholics.

Colonial churchmen, keen to exploit endowments, staff parishes, and extend Anglican education, often felt themselves an unreasonably hampered minority. The problem of finding able and energetic clergy developed early and plagued colonial churches throughout the century, partly because salaries and career prospects offered limited incentives. Administrative incompetence or corruption often resulted in the loss of reserved land, and the slow pace of development meant that reserves rarely yielded the anticipated income.

In these circumstances, as an important arm of the 'establishment', Anglican leaders naturally defended their rights in the political arena. Mountain and John Strachan, Archdeacon of York (Toronto), differed only in degree from the milder Inglis or Charles Stewart, Mountain's successor in Quebec. All were members of the Legislative Councils, working to enhance their church's position. They were often successful, sometimes with the overt support of sympathetic Governors. In 1813 Inglis secured an additional 37,000 acres for the Church of England to make good earlier losses. Mountain won Governor Sir James Craig's support for his educational policy. With Lieutenant-Governor Maitland's backing in 1819, Strachan had the Anglicans' interest in administering the clergy reserves for their sole advantage embodied in the Clergy Reserves Corporation. Anglican intentions to control higher education were announced in the foundations of the symbolically christened King's Colleges (Windsor, 1789; Fredericton, *c*.1825), and the university at Toronto in 1827. Outside British North America, only Cape Town's South African College escaped Anglican control.

Anglican political involvement, however, only stimulated political conflict driven by the denominationalism it was intended to marginalize. Colonial

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[4] Gerald M. Craig, *Upper Canada: The Formative Years, 1784–1841* (Toronto, 1963), pp. 165–66.

Governors often failed to combine their backing of high Anglican views with political astuteness, just as victorious or defensive clerics failed to demonstrate religious magnanimity. Presbyterians, also members of an established church (the Church of Scotland, since 1707), justifiably insisted on their equal claim to endowment. Dissenters (or Nonconformists) resented the colonial replication of Britain's own Anglican privilege and discrimination.

The legitimacy of such grievances and the value of protest were easily increased. In their weary attempts to lower the political temperature, or from a pragmatic belief that, when Anglican pretensions outstripped Anglican resources, even Nonconformist religion was better then none, or by genuine gestures of even-handedness, colonial officials often supported Anglicanism's rivals. As Methodist preachers were allowed to conduct marriages by licence, as non-Anglican clergy were appointed magistrates, or received allowances of land or stipends, so a wider sense of entitlement and conviction of right grew. Wherever non-Anglicans were strong, particularly in the British North American Assemblies, movements for political and ecclesiastical reform interwined. Anglican resistance to such developments was weakened by divisions in the church's own ranks, between senior and junior clergy, or over financial, doctrinal, and liturgical issues. Exaggerated claims of Anglican achievement and denigration of other denominations, such as Strachan indulged in when visiting England in 1825, only worsened matters.

An articulate, vigorously supported colonial alternative to the Anglican linking of Imperial church and state was thus progressively elaborated, first in British North America then elsewhere. After 1815 those who wished either to preserve the *status quo* or to strengthen the Church of England's ties with the state declined in numbers or conviction. As in the 1780s and 1790s, however, so in the 1820s and 1830s readjustment of colonial arrangements owed much to parallel changes inside Britain. This is no place to review British social and political developments, including repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts and Catholic Emancipation in 1828–29, which heralded greater equality of civil rights, or the decade of ecclesiastical reform which changed the relative status of the Anglican church as an institution. Nevertheless, their consequences for the colonies as for Britain were profound. They represented metropolitan confirmation of a message most colonists already accepted, namely, the incompatibility of Anglican dominance with continued colonial order and good government; and they recognized the need to place rivals on a more equal footing with Anglicans. With Anglican privilege everywhere coming to seem less a source of strength than an incentive to disaffection, the route to colonial reform was opened.

Although in 1790 the Anglican church was regarded as a defence for Britain's colonial authority, paradoxically the close ties between church and state meant

that it was neither a missionary church nor one sympathetic to missionary enterprise. Since their foundation, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK: 1698) and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (1701) had financed small numbers of colonial clergy, garrison chaplains, and school-masters for the Britons overseas. Missionary work with indigenous peoples, however, was incidental, the product of occasional personal initiatives, for ex-ample, by 'pious chaplains' such as David Brown or Daniel Corrie in India. Such efforts never matched those of the Moravians, or Methodist activity in the Caribbean from 1786, and were overshadowed by the enterprise of voluntary lay missionary societies, newly established in the 1790s as part of a broader evangelical and social reform movement.[5]

In that decade there appeared the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS: 1792); the London Missionary Society (LMS: 1795, originally non-denominational but eventually Congregational); and the Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS: 1799). Methodists extended their operations, and in Scotland the Glasgow and Edinburgh Societies were both formed in 1796. Lay and Nonconformist activity was especially remarkable. Henry Thornton observed of the LMS in 1795, 'what a striking thing it is that a Bishop of London [Beilby Porteous] is hardly able . . . to scrape a few hundred Pounds together for the Missionary Plans in his hands among all the people of the Church Establishment & that £10,000 shd be raised in such a few days by the Irregulars who are also so much poorer a Class of People than the others'.[6]

The institutional Anglican church was slower to act: missionaries smacked too much of 'Methodism' or the embarrassing and dangerous excesses of religious 'enthusiasm', and they were disliked for their ignorance or low social standing. There were no evangelical bishops to support the Church Missionary Society until Henry Ryder became a vice-president in 1815, and the Revd Sydney Smith spoke for many in 1808 when mocking missionary pretensions in the *Edinburgh Review*: 'The wise and rational part of the Christian ministry find they have enough to do at home . . . But if a tinker is a devout man, he infallibly sets off for the East.'[7] Other powerful arguments against missions to non-Europeans included the practical or theological inappropriateness and impossibility of the task itself, and the threat to Imperial security from colonial subjects provoked by proselytization.

By the 1830s, however, the missions had not only impressively extended Britain's global presence, but had won widespread public acceptance and even official

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[5] Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795–1865* (Oxford, 1988).

[6] Elizabeth Elbourne, 'The Foundation of the Church Missionary Society: The Anglican Missionary Impulse', in John Walsh and others, eds., *The Church of England, c.1689–c.1833* (Oxford, 1993), p. 247.

[7] *The Works of the Reverend Sydney Smith* (London, 1839), pp. 136–37.

support. The Church Missionary Society's early shortage of volunteers, causing them to rely on German Lutherans, had given way to steady recruiting of men less likely to attract scorn. Its income averaged £58,655 per annum, and came from a wide social and geographical area. Overseas, the London Missionary Society was well established in the western Pacific and South Africa, the CMS in Sierra Leone and India, the Baptists in Bengal and the West Indian colonies. Methodist and Presbyterian missions were also similarly scattered and poised for a new phase of expansion.

There were no simple connections between this religious expansion and a specifically British influence and Empire overseas. Although critical of non-Christian cultures, missionary thinking was profoundly egalitarian: 'race' was immaterial, humans everywhere corrupt yet equally open to conversion and redemption. Britain's missions led a wider transatlantic and European under-taking, making common cause with Danes, Swedes, Germans, and Americans, with the Moravian and Basel societies and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.[8] These powerful ecumenical and international undercur-rents were reinforced by the societies' determination to avoid involvement with trade, government, and politics. The missions began by explicitly distancing themselves from expanding colonial rule, wary of its chauvinism, secular author-ity, and often flawed commercial ambitions. Throughout the century, however, such detachment was easier for theorists or organizers to assert than it was for missionaries overseas to apply.

Private trade was persistently problematic. Given Indian precedents, mission organizers reasonably feared its potential for exciting conflict. Yet many mission-aries felt their own survival, quite apart from the future of their families and their work, necessitated trade. Marsden struggled vainly to persuade Church Mission-ary Society employees in New Zealand to take communal organization and subsistence agriculture seriously.[9] In the Cape Colony Dr John Philip felt pushed into trade by cuts in the London Missionary Society's budget and the need to preserve his converts' independence of settler society. Not only in the isolation of mission stations were favours from local traders or ships' captains valuable. In Britain, commercial money always played its part in subscriptions to missionary societies. The private fortunes of the evangelical Clapham Sect and the establish-ment of the Sierra Leone Company for trading purposes rescued the evangelicals' first West African settlement, the 'Province of Freedom', in 1790–92. In the 1880s and 1890s involvement in trade and the permissible extent of compromise with

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[8] Roger H. Martin, *Evangelicals United: Ecumenical Stirrings in Pre-Victorian Britain, 1795–1830* (London, 1983).

[9] *The Letters and Journals of Samuel Marsden, 1765–1838*, ed. John Rawson Elder (Dunedin, 1932), pp. 232–36, 410–12.

commerce were no less problematical. Disputes over private commerce, especially in alcohol, intensified clashes between white CMS missionaries and Sierra Leonean agents on the River Niger, and the Society itself relied heavily on the goodwill of the Royal Niger Company, Britain's administrative proxy north of the river delta.[10]

Involvement with Imperial government was equally difficult to avoid. Areas already under British rule inevitably attracted missionary attention. Observing British India in 1814, the East India Company's chaplain Thomas Thomason felt that 'we have annihilated the political importance of the natives, stripped them of their power, and laid them prostrate, without giving them any thing in return'. He therefore supported missionaries and an Anglican ecclesiastical establishment to improve the consequences of British rule. His fellow chaplain, Claudius Buchanan, was sure that such a religious establishment needed no continuing government support, but was no less keen to justify it as attaching colonial subjects to their government.[11] All missionaries required authorization to preach and conduct services. Although being licensed 'By permission of His Excellency the Governor' left most Anglicans unperturbed in the absence of a bishop at Cape Town, Nonconformist missionaries always found it irksome. Everywhere the pressure to conform to official requirements was very real, the alternative being perhaps expulsion or imprisonment. John Smith died in 1823, unjustly imprisoned in Demerara for his work with the slaves.

If missionaries hankered after freedom but found the ties of British expansion inescapable, British authorities wanted to restrain missions but came to accept the value of allowing them greater scope. Opposition, especially to Nonconformist missionaries, was strongest regarding India, and religious neutrality or the restraint of evangelical enthusiasm were at first widely supported. Charles James Fox felt in 1793 that 'all systems of proselytisation [are] wrong in themselves, and … productive, in most cases, of abuse and political mischief'; Sir George Barlow, witnessing the disturbances among native soldiers at Vellore in 1806, was convinced that 'preaching Methodists and wild visionaries disturbing the religious ceremonies of the Natives will alienate the affections of our Native troops'.[12] Nevertheless, although excluded from certain areas—Surat or Mysore—their position slowly improved. Local resistance to their work taught

[10] Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* (London, 1962); E. A. Ayandele, 'The Relations between the Church Missionary Society and the Royal Niger Company, 1886–1900', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, IV (1968), pp. 397–419.

[11] Rev. J. Sargent, *The Life of the Rev. T. T. M.A.* (London, 1833), p. 223; Claudius Buchanan, *Colonial Ecclesiastical Establishment: Being a Brief View of the State of the Colonies of Great Britain, and of her Asiatic Empire, in Respect to Religious Instruction*, 2nd edn. (London, 1813), pp. 37–39, 100–24.

[12] P. S. E. Carson, 'Soldiers of Christ: Evangelicals and India, 1784–1833', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, London, 1988, pp. 35, 75.

missionaries to remain on good terms with officials if possible. While administrators such as Thomas Munro or Stephen Lushington continued hostile, others like Governor Nepean (Bombay, 1812–19) and Travancore's Residents were often sympathetic.[13] Missionaries impressed colonial observers by their perseverance, evident good intentions, translation and educational work, and their scholarship. Support in Britain grew still faster. The rising output of missionary publications, the work of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and local missionary associations all helped improve the missions' image, and contributed to the government's endorsement of their work in the 1813 and 1833 revisions of the East India Company's charter.

Official fears of missions declined as their common interest in the transformation of colonial society became evident. William Bentinck (Governor-General in India, 1828–35), for example, disliked the narrow intolerance of extreme missionary lobbyists, but shared the moderate evangelicals' real commitment to missionary enterprise. As he reminded Charles Grant in 1833, 'it is Christianity, the whole Christian Church, whose cause in this heathen country we are to cherish'.[14] In India this shared ground was symbolized in two ways. Episcopal support for missionary work steadily grew, and in Daniel Wilson (Bishop of Calcutta, 1832–58) the Church Missionary Society had an ardent supporter. Approaches to education also converged, in the support for English-language education from both T. B. Macaulay and the Scottish missionary Alexander Duff.

Missionary activity outside India also helped change perceptions of their role. At Freetown, a community largely composed of liberated slaves from many different parts of West Africa, the Church Missionary Society and Wesleyans became indispensable. The education, religion, and common language they provided, together with their political authority as magistrates or village superintendents, did much to make the colony governable.[15] The obstruction missionaries met from local whites in the colonies of the Caribbean or the Cape, and their persecution by planters during the Demerara and Jamaica rebellions of 1823 and 1831, greatly increased metropolitan respect and sympathy.

This convergence of missionary opinion with that of officials and a wider public focused on the increasingly explicit association of Christianity, commerce, and civilization. The Baptist William Carey's famous pamphlet of 1792 drew attention to British mercantile expansion as pointing the way to the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecies, 'that *navigation*, especially that which is *commercial*, shall be one great

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[13] Ibid., chap. 8.
[14] John Rosselli, *Lord William Bentinck: The Making of a Liberal Imperialist, 1774–1839* (London, 1974), p. 213.
[15] See chap. by T. C. McCaskie.

mean of carrying on the work of God'.[16] Twenty years later, the upheavals of the Anglo-French wars and the disruption of Catholic nations so contrasted with Britain's 'state of comparative rest and growing prosperity' and continued missionary expansion, that the London Missionary Society's founder asserted, 'This land seems peculiarly destined to be the instrument... to carry his salvation into the ends of the earth'.[17] Wealth, stability, and expansion indicated a divinely ordained, providential role for Britain. This evangelical interpretation married neatly with the growing confidence and assertiveness of Britain's governing classes contemplating the extension of British rule in India and her European pre-eminence. By 1830 missions both claimed and were accorded a place in a refurbished British national identity, as vital contributors to that 'Protestant worldview which allowed so many Britons to see themselves as a distinct and chosen people'.[18]

Leading politicians became more tolerant of denominationalism as awareness grew that Imperial preference for Anglicanism might be politically imprudent, but they remained convinced that the encouragement of religion was essential to society's well-being. Toleration did not generally mean indifference. Thus, Whig reforms in the 1830s reflected the importance still attached to a national church, and were intended to improve the Church of England's ability to compete with Nonconformity. So it was in the colonies. Episcopal appointments and the creation of sees remained Imperial prerogatives; although parliamentary grants to North American clergy were phased out, Imperial finance still contributed to bishops' salaries; the laws and usages of the Church of England, as interpreted ultimately by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council and the authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury, remained intact. Just as steps towards responsible government did not signify a retreat from Empire, so a looser relationship between church and state did not weaken the view that the church helped bind the whole together.

By 1840, however, dissatisfaction with Whig measures had spread far beyond those opposed in principle to state control. Colonial bishops could not discover precisely what were the operative laws of the Church of England, and in the absence of ecclesiastical courts, had no means of enforcement. Pleas for bishoprics, to embrace new British annexations and lead the church's missionary activity, produced only three new sees (Madras, 1835; Bombay, 1837; Australia, 1836), all over-large and underfunded. British activities in the Pacific seemed quite

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[16] William Carey, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians, to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (Leicester, 1792), p. 68.

[17] Thomas Haweis, *A View of the Present State of Evangelical Religion Throughout the World: With a View to Promote Missionary Exertions* (London, 1812), esp. pp. 13, 24.

[18] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (London, 1992), p. 368.

uncontrolled by regular political or ecclesiastical influences. Colonial interdenom-
inational conflicts constantly reminded the Anglican church of its opponents'
strength. New South Wales's Church and Schools Corporation was abolished after
only eight years; in the Canadas, battles for control of the clergy reserves con-
tinued. Ill-served by government, insecure in colonial Assemblies, keen to defend
their holdings and combat Nonconformity, churchmen therefore took matters
into their own hands.

Every church party believed expansion essential, for colonial church growth and
Anglican missions to the wider non-European world were now seen as essential
and inseparable. Anthony Grant, Oxford's Bampton Lecturer in 1843, plainly
captured this remarkable change in ecclesiastical outlook. Following 'the wonder-
ful expansion of the Empire of Great Britain, whereby, through her colonies, she is
brought into contact with almost the entire heathen world ... it is no longer a
question whether the heathen shall be left to themselves ... the Church [must]
extend herself with the extension of our Empire, even to prevent our country from
becoming a curse to the pagan world, even, also, to save our countrymen from
lapsing into a state of apostate infidelity, more fatal than pagan darkness'.[19] The
Anglican church must act, or others less qualified would do so.

So church finally moved ahead of state, sponsoring the Bishops in Foreign
Countries Act (1841), the 'Jerusalem Act', two years before the Foreign Jurisdiction
Act. More important, the bishops, following the Bishop of London's initiative, and
with considerable High Church support, established a Colonial Bishoprics Fund.
This movement contributed almost immediately to George Selwyn's consecration
as Bishop to the newest colony, New Zealand, and in the 1840s to the foundation of
a further fourteen dioceses. In 1848 St Augustine's College, Canterbury, was
established to train colonial clergy.

Selwyn's experience confirmed Grant's exposition. Before 1850 he was seriously
overstretched, torn between Maori or settler and developing his Melanesian
mission, and worried about Roman Catholic and Nonconformist rivals. Like his
friends W. E. Gladstone and Samuel Wilberforce (William Wilberforce's son),
Selwyn felt the answer lay in consecrating more 'missionary bishops' like himself.
Reflecting the contemporary revival of High Churchmanship, this attitude was
also inspired by ideas about the early church and contemporary experience of
westward advance in America. Instead of marking the final stage of church
formation in a settled society, bishops should be leaders consecrated to build up
the church, often from nothing. They would make possible the Church of Eng-
land's survival in existing colonial societies and its entrenchment in new regions.

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[19] *The Past and Prospective Extension of the Gospel by Missions to the Heathen*, 2nd edn. (London,
1845), pp. xi, xvi.

This episcopal role had important consequences for the relationship of the Anglican church and Empire. As Grant's lectures suggested, the church's role should be less to support state authority than to scrutinize its exercise of power and moderate the broader processes of expansion. Furthermore, if the church was to be built from scratch, compete with rivals, and be planted beyond colonial frontiers, it would need unrestricted freedom to acquire property, establish its hierarchy and deploy its priests, regulate its liturgy, and discipline members. The existing difficulties of the colonial churches and the new roles being devised for them thus pointed towards episcopal independence, ecclesiastical self-government, and the divorce of church and state.

Powerful interests everywhere resisted such conclusions—among them, colonists eager to preserve ties with Britain, Imperial politicians protective of their patronage, evangelicals seeing a tractarian or ritualist plot to corner the colonial field, and Anglican leaders fearing colonial churches might break with the Church of England. However, after Gladstone took up the issue at the Colonial Office in 1845–46 the reformers gradually gained ground. Successive attempts were made to legislate at Westminster. The idea of ecclesiastical independence as a natural corollary of colonial self-government won growing support in the colonies themselves. Colonial governments everywhere withdrew from religious involvement, not only with Anglicans but all denominations. Bishop Selwyn, for example, found his salary halved in 1855 when the reformed New Zealand Parliament refused to shoulder the Imperial government's share. Finally, in 1856–57 local legislation from Victoria and Canada, effecting for the first time separation of church and state, received the royal assent in London.[20]

Colonial church independence, by reducing political contention surrounding colonial Anglican activity, almost certainly strengthened colonial Anglican churches while allowing important ties with England to persist. The Church in South Africa, for instance, remained heavily reliant on non-governmental funds from England. Everywhere clerical and episcopal appointees continued to come from Britain. Moreover, new pan-Imperial arrangements soon emerged. Colonial bishops attended the first of many Lambeth Conferences in 1867, confirming that their churches would voluntarily retain ties with Canterbury. They continued to acknowledge the spiritual authority of the Archbishops of Canterbury, and developed the habit of frequent consultation and co-operation which thereafter lay at the heart of the Anglican communion.

A similar flexibility characterized other denominations, which also retained powerful links with the metropole, their absence of pretensions to establishment

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[20] E. D. Daw, *Church and State in the Empire: The Evolution of Imperial Policy, 1846–1856* (Canberra, 1977).

notwithstanding. Thus, religious sentiment and ecclesiastical allegiances contributed to the late-nineteenth-century movement for closer Imperial unity, but were able at the same time to accommodate the growth of colonial particularisms. There were always those, in the Anglican case bishops of the American Protestant Episcopal Church and their British friends at the Lambeth Conferences of 1897 and 1908, ready to remind forgetful colleagues of the distinctions between church and Empire.

Increasingly, mid-Victorian missionaries also operated far outside the formal Empire. A surge of missionary activity occurred between c.1836 and 1844, and another wave at the end of the 1850s. Like that of the 1790s, these movements profited from growing popular awareness of the wider world, the knowledge and sense of opportunity provided by British expansion, and periodic religious revivals. Supporters showed the same evangelical preoccupations: a powerful sense of obligation linked to personal experience of conversion; hostility to 'idolatry' (which for Protestants embraced Roman Catholicism as well as, say, animism or Hinduism); desire to save the 'heathen' from eternal punishment; and optimistic belief in a divinely ordained plan assured of success. Mission support was spurred on by the growth of publications, ranging from outstanding popular books, including those by John Williams and Robert Moffat, to periodicals like the Church Missionary Society's *Intelligencer*.[21]

Specific events, however, prompted the timing and direction of particular advances. In West Africa, a mounting exodus of converts from Sierra Leone back to their homelands interacted with requests from African rulers for missions to be stationed in their country. Consequently, the Church Missionary Society and Methodists both settled in Abeokuta (south-west Nigeria). The idea that missionary activity offered recompense for earlier wrongs done to Africans was a powerful element in the vision linking Christianity and legitimate trade which underpinned the Niger Expedition (1841–42). Following emancipation, West Indian converts and missionaries pressed for expansion into West Africa, with the result that what became the United Presbyterian Church mission was established at Calabar in 1846, and the Baptists settled in Fernando Po in 1843.

The expectation that commerce, 'civilization', and Christianity would advance together also manifested itself in the missions' enthusiastic welcome for the outcome of the Anglo-Chinese War (1839–42). The opening of 'treaty ports' allowed missions for the first time to operate in China. Further conflict in 1857–58 and the Treaty of Peking (1860), again extending missionary privileges, coincided with

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[21] *A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands* (London, 1837); *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa* (London, 1842).

other events to heighten public enthusiasm for more determined missionary efforts. The recent rebellion in India, religious revivals in Britain during 1859, David Livingstone's Central African experiences, recounted during his visit to Britain in 1857–58, and his advocacy of Christianity linked to true commerce as the answer to Africa's continuing troubles, had a startling impact.

Missionary work was often planned as long-term, focusing on schools and the introduction of English and vernacular literacy, as essential foundations of Bible study, religious understanding, and cultural change. Schools ranged from the grand Scottish establishments such as Wilson's High School and College at Bombay, or James Stewart's Lovedale in the eastern Cape, to the tiniest of gatherings in missionary homes. 'Without such schools, how can the people learn to read? and if they cannot read of what use will it be to send Bibles and tracts among them? We therefore think that it is the duty of the missionaries, in subordination to the great work of preaching to establish such schools wherever they can be set up', wrote William MacFarlane from Darjeeling in 1871.[22] Emphases shifted, over time and between different societies, as to the balance of preaching and teaching, and the level at which education could be best provided. However, elementary vernacular and higher English-language instruction were often both available if resources permitted.

Before 1870 this dominant approach rested on the theological proposition that evidence of conversion would include the cultural transformation of indigenous society; although only God knew its timing, this outcome would herald the millennium of Christ's rule on earth. Theological belief was reinforced by practical requirements in the field. Even the earliest missionaries found reliance on indigenous assistance shading quickly into belief that native agents offered the best means of propagating the Gospel. Thus, Bishop Grant, appointed to the new diocese of Victoria in 1849, founded a college in Hong Kong; like his predecessors in Auckland, Freetown, and Calcutta, he hoped to attract and foster local élites to pass on the Christian message.

Ideas about mission strategy evolved rapidly in the 1840s as organizers such as Henry Venn, the new Church Missionary Society Secretary, and his contemporary Rufus Anderson at the American Board in Boston looked ahead to what would succeed the missionaries. Against a background of limited progress in most fields, missionary mortality, and painfully inadequate home funds, the rapid creation of indigenous churches made much sense. Between 1848 and 1851 Venn's ideas on promoting as quickly as possible self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating native churches were largely crystallized. By 1850 they seemed a natural

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[22] Cindy L. Perry, 'The History of the Expansion of Protestant Christianity among the Nepali Diaspora', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Edinburgh, 1994, p. 73.

development when, from Calcutta to Calabar, native agents were already being widely used.

From 1852, however, Venn went further, seeking to have native bishops head the new churches, move the missionaries on to fresh openings, and avoid the subordination of indigenous congregations either to missionaries or to white colonial and missionary bishops.[23] The consecration for the Church Missionary Society in 1864 of the Yoruba freed slave, Samuel Crowther, as Bishop of the Niger was a notable step in this direction. Shortly before, the same drive to open up Africa had also been differently expressed in the formation of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa (UMCA), a direct response to Livingstone's call, and in the departure in 1861 of its Scottish bishop, Charles Mackenzie, for the Zambezi.

Despite their common Anglicanism, these two initiatives represented a choice faced by all denominations between fundamentally different approaches to missionary expansion. In Crowther's case, the object was to complete the process of building the mission and the church, by appointing a local head rooted in local society—even if Crowther was temporarily regarded as the Society's appointee and part subject to its control from London. Mackenzie, however, once endorsed by the Universities Mission, was supplied with funds and, as a bishop, left to his own devices. Far from inheriting a going concern, Mackenzie was a local head brought in from outside to found the local church. Both strategies, however, embodied the mid-century's broad confidence in the progress of Christianity and westernization, dissociation of churches from political power, transfer of religious authority away from Britain, and its extension of the faith far beyond the confines of either formal Empire or that 'Greater Britain' which was capturing imaginations by the late 1860s.

Missions, nevertheless, still often supported not only British commerce and culture but direct political control or intervention. They interpreted India's 1857 rebellion as a sign that the government should abandon neutrality and instead vigorously support Christianization. Echoing Dr John Philip some fifty years before, the Revd John Mackenzie in 1878 was convinced: 'The only real question is—will the Europeans in South Africa advance northward by haphazard blindfold, and with outrage and blood . . . or will [the home government] master the problem, no longer regard this movement as an evil, but arrange for it and control it?'[24] In Uganda, Britain's takeover in 1894–95 was welcomed by missions for the security it brought, and after the Boxer Rising in China most missions relied on government to obtain indemnity for the damages they had suffered.

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[23] C. Peter Williams, *The Ideal of the Self-Governing Church: A Study in Victorian Missionary Strategy* (Leiden, 1990), chap. 1.

[24] A. J. Dachs, 'Missionary Imperialism in Bechuanaland, 1813–1896', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge, 1968, p. 209.

Christians frequently viewed the opportunities offered by British expansion as providentially designed to support world-wide conversion. The tendency for missions and government to support—even exploit—each other's concern for matters like prestige and security almost certainly grew after 1870, especially in the setting of Africa's partition. Some officials, not necessarily mission supporters, none the less admired many consequences of their work and tried to implant what they regarded as Christian values. Harry Johnston in 1890 enthused over the fact that missions 'strengthen our hold over the country, they spread the use of the English language, they induct the natives into the best kind of civilization and in fact each mission station is an essay in colonization'.[25] In late-century conditions of international competition, rivalries with Islam and Roman Catholicism, and indigenous resistance, some missionaries were equally effusive, seduced by the prospect of conversions following at last from Imperial use of force. Contemplating Britain's campaign against Asante in 1895, one Wesleyan felt: 'Although not necessarily avowed Christian men in every instance, yet the officers of the two services serving under Her Majesty's flag represent Justice and Humanity', and was convinced that 'the British Army and Navy are to-day used by God for the accomplishment of His purposes'.[26]

Similar tendencies to exalt British authority also existed within the missions after 1875. Missionaries uneasy about Venn's policy for local churches were numerous by 1890, and received much more support from headquarters. A watershed was reached when disputes within the Niger Mission provoked Bishop Crowther's resignation in 1892. Similar clashes happened in other missions, likewise strongly affected by contemporary changes in British evangelicalism. Influenced by American revivalist thinking about conversion and its consequences, missionaries found indigenous converts' lifestyles and existing mission structures seriously wanting. Consequently the promotion of indigenous Christians was increasingly restricted. Even in Uganda, where a thriving, financially strong Christian community was supported by the Anglican Bishop, Alfred Tucker, the Church Missionary Society sided with conservative missionaries and refused a new constitution for the church. It hoped instead that 'the English-speaking race may have the honour of leading the way in a policy of Christian Imperialism'.[27]

It is often argued that the missionary movement and expansion of Britain's Christian denominations represented distinct forms of cultural and institutional 'imperialism'. Despite small numbers of converts, their presence and teaching

[25] Roland Oliver, *Sir Harry Johnston and the Scramble for Africa* (London, 1957), p. 182.
[26] Dennis Kemp, *Nine Years at the Gold Coast* (London, 1898), pp. 232–34.
[27] Williams, *Ideal of the Self-Governing Church*, p. 247; John Wolffe, *God and Greater Britain: Religion and National Life in Britain and Ireland, 1843–1945* (London, 1994), pp. 213–25.

undermined customs and self-confidence, eroded respect for traditional authorities, and created social and political conflict. Thus weakened, non-western societies succumbed to the broader pressures of Western expansion; internal collapse and significant cultural changes opened the way to direct colonial rule, with continued missionary control of education and the churches. In reality, however, the relation of religion and Empire was rarely so clear-cut.[28]

Missionary work was always vitally dependent on local peoples. However strong the metropolitan enthusiasm for evangelism, William Carey relied on Indian advice for his epic translations, just as Livingstone, in combining the roles of missionary and traveller, required African mediators. The careful negotiation of rights of residence, the continuing need to remain acceptable, were problems all missionaries faced. To overstep the mark, or misjudge the local setting, could be fatal. John Williams, killed at Erromanga in 1839, Bishop Hannington in Uganda in 1885, and James Chalmers on Goaribari Island in 1902 appeared as 'martyrs' to appalled supporters at home; but they also illustrate starkly the power of local people to accept, condition, or reject the missionary presence. Preaching and teaching met universally selective responses, being regarded with varying degrees of enthusiasm or indifference. Missions were most often popular for their secular teaching, the trade they might attract, practical skills such as medicine, and their influence with other Europeans or local neighbours. They were naturally opposed by those to whom their presence seemed to threaten important local beliefs, political authority, or social conventions.

No stark dichotomy between 'colonizer' and 'colonized' conveys either the range of local responses to Britain's missionary presence or the extent of missionary adaptation to local cultures. All parties engaged, consciously and unconsciously, in a constant process of mutual engagement and two-way translation, even while unqualified dislike, conservatism, and incomprehension could easily be found on all sides. The frustration and powerlessness so commonly felt among missionaries, indicates not simply the zealot's unreality but the effective pragmatism of indigenous responses to unwanted Western cultural control or domination. Much as missionaries, for example, berated caste divisions in India, compromise with the reality was inescapable, as critics from Bishop Wilson onwards found to their disappointment.[29]

The positive, liberating effect of much mission work is inescapable. Missionaries' schools, their development of literacy and use of the printing-press, their

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[28] Andrew Porter, ' "Cultural Imperialism" and Protestant Missionary Enterprise, 1780–1914', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, XXV, 3 (1997), pp. 367–91.

[29] Duncan B. Forrester, *Caste and Christianity: Attitudes and Policies on Caste of Anglo-Saxon Protestant Missionaries in India* (London, 1980); Geoffrey A. Oddie, *Hindu and Christian in South-East India* (London, 1991).

encouragement of English and vernacular languages, introduced not only the
accoutrements of Christianity but skills and knowledge. Evangelists could not
control the use made of a Christian education, any more than they could restrict
the impetus given by Christianity to the reform and revival of indigenous reli-
gions. Recipients of mission education by 1914 were everywhere among the most
effective and articulate critics of Britain's presence and the mainstays of embryonic
nationalist movements. Scholars now also appreciate that conversion itself
never meant simply the imposition of Western 'civilization'. It often provided
deeply felt religious consolations unavailable in indigenous systems of belief.
While it cut some converts off from their roots, it brought converts and others
degrees of security or independence, and opportunities for advancement in their
own societies that were otherwise unobtainable. This followed from the fact that
converts everywhere were drawn above all from the poor and disadvantaged
sectors of indigenous societies.

The contribution of the churches to metropolitan understanding had similarly
profound and ambivalent implications for Empire. On the one hand, Christian
denunciations of extra-European societies' degradation or savagery were com-
monplace throughout the century. These bleak images balanced by rosy prospects,
reported or conjured up in order to generate support for missions, probably
helped entrench unfavourable stereotypes in the public mind. Missionary bio-
graphies, travels, and periodicals were popular reading, and often contained
misperceptions masquerading as authoritative accounts. Thus, Robert Moffat
wrote quite erroneously of the Tswana, 'No fragments remain of former days, as
mementos to the present generation, that their ancestors ever loved, served or
reverenced a being greater than man.... While Satan is obviously the author of the
polytheism of other nations, he has employed his agency, with fatal success, in
erasing every vestige of religious impression from the minds of the Bechuanas.'[30]

However, denigration was only part of the picture. The general movement of
missionary thinking in the three decades before 1914 favoured a more open
appreciation of other religions. Missions' sense of urgency always reflected accept-
ance of the fundamental similarity of human nature. As pessimism about non-
western abilities grew apace with acceptance of racial hierarchy or the evolutionary
obliteration of ethnic groups, missionary views often offered an important coun-
terpoise. Even the most popular missionary literature, through concern with
grace, conversion, and redemption, kept alive prospects of change and improve-
ment as well as notions of equality. Moreover, there were always those who
detested the deceits and misrepresentation of publicity. In New Guinea, James
Chalmers shrank from 'the begging friar business and the telling of excited pointed

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[30] Moffat, *Missionary Labours*, pp. 243–44.

tales', feeling it 'a pity to overstate facts, to make "striking" missionary speeches. I know a little of the tendency to make a great deal of a little, but I also know its evil effects.'[31] Careful investigation of indigenous societies was the only way forward.

Missionaries often showed genuine curiosity, a scholarly bent, and desire to grasp the reality of non-western societies. The search for aspects of indigenous belief offering openings for the Christian message could be transformed into knowledgeable, sympathetic approaches to indigenous culture; missionaries' constant wrestling with problems of translation and exposition produced cumulative, sometimes dramatic, shifts in perspective. Questions about the Flood by Bishop Colenso's Zulu assistant, William Ngidi, interacted with wider debates about biblical criticism in 1860–61; and Colenso's consequent admission, 'my labours in *translation* have compelled me to . . . take a totally different view of [the Hebrew scriptures] from what I once did', was the prelude to an Empire-wide controversy.[32] For reasons still unclear, some missions, like the Universities Mission to Central Africa, and individuals, such as Chalmers, were more responsive than others to indigenous beliefs. This was most thoroughly expressed in the doctrine of 'fulfilment' as developed by J. N. Farquhar in India, relating Christianity to the realization of fundamental aspirations and potential in Hinduism.[33] By 1914 missions were trying hard to include in their volunteers' training systematic introductions to extra-European societies.

Missionary scholarship was by no means only theologically directed, often flourishing despite missionaries' own limited education. Residence, prolonged observation, knowledge of vernaculars, and close contacts gave missionary observations depths unmatched by early armchair ethnologists and most travellers. Successive London Missionary Society and Church of Scotland missionaries in China and India produced distinguished literary, historical, and theological works; the anthropologists A. C. Haddon and J. G. Frazer were significantly indebted to evangelists such as Chalmers, and John Roscoe in Uganda.[34] Evangelical dynamism at the end of the nineteenth century, as of the eighteenth, continued to influence external perceptions of British expansion and Empire, to extend British knowledge, and shape British understanding of the outside world.

The many-sided nature of that influence is often insufficiently recognized. Knowledge may, of course, assist colonial control, and theologies of 'fulfilment'

[31] J. M. Hitchen, 'Formation of the Nineteenth-Century Missionary Worldview: The Case of James Chalmers', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Aberdeen, 1984, pp. 56, 61–62.

[32] Jeff Guy, *The Heretic: A Study of the Life of John William Colenso, 1814–1883* (Johannesburg, 1983), chap. 7, pp. 90–91, 105.

[33] Eric J. Sharpe, *Not to Destroy but to Fulfil: The Contribution of J. N. Farquhar to Protestant Missionary Thought in India before 1914* (Uppsala, 1965).

[34] A. F. Walls, 'The Nineteenth-Century Missionary as Scholar', in *Misjonskall og Forskerglede: Festskrift til Professor Olav Guttorm Myklebust*, ed. Nils E. Bloch-Hoell (Oslo, 1975), pp. 209–21.

presupposed a superior revelation. However, missionaries grappling with extra-European realities were frequently hostile to Empire and westernization, or sensed their irrelevance to the missionary task. The devout but superficial optimism of Thomas Haweis, surveying Christian prospects in the Pacific in 1795, was short-lived.[35] By the late 1820s missionaries better acquainted with corrupt European activities were arguing that these should be kept at bay until Christianity had established itself, small numbers of missionaries and converts alone were insufficient to win through. Before 1840, this 'Christianity first' strategy was associated with South Africa and the Pacific, where prospects for containing British expansion still seemed realistic.

Hopes for an alliance of Christianity, legitimate commerce, and cultural expansion flourished in the mid-century, but subsequently again seemed less persuasive. Reflective observers felt the association of Christianity with other forms of expansion or authority had produced limited results—in South Africa, India, New Zealand—and had failed—in Africa and the Pacific—to check the destructiveness of unbridled competition and traffic in opium, arms, alcohol, and labour. Christianity was being discredited in the process. Missionary strategies explicitly dissociated from Western ways and significant social transformation began to take hold, especially after Dr J. Hudson Taylor founded the China Inland Mission (CIM) in 1865. He rejected permanent mission stations, missionary bureaucracy, and elaborate funding, emphasizing instead adaptation to local conditions, peripatetic evangelism, and, preferring areas remote from Europeans, reliance on divine provision and protection. By 1890 the CIM was the largest of all British missions. Other societies followed suit to tap this exploding enthusiasm among rapidly growing numbers of young, middle-class volunteers, many of them university students, many of them women. Having recruited just eighty-seven single women in its first eighty years, the Church Missionary Society took on another 230 between 1880 and 1894.

This new fashion illustrates again the independence of religious dynamics, and was profoundly subversive of British influence and control. It derived much force from resurgent pre-millennial thinking among evangelicals anxious to hasten Christ's second coming and the end of the world. Always present in missionary circles, these ideas were greatly stimulated by American enthusiasts such as Charles Finney and, after 1885, A. T. Pierson or John R. Mott, leaders of the widely influential Student Volunteer Movement. They abandoned ideas of working for world conversion through ecclesiastical institutions or broader Imperial structures, for a much more immediate goal. Their watchword, 'the evangelization of the world in this generation', left limited room for older generations of

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[35] *The Evangelical Magazine*, July 1795, pp. 261–70.

missionaries and converts, who now seemed worldly and lethargic, lacking the dynamic commitment signalling true Christian rebirth.

This combination of radicalism, new strategies, and novel criteria for conversion was manifest, for example, in Robert Arthington's Congo initiatives. Many missionaries, both High and Low Church, were relieved to leave behind an increasingly secular and doubt-ridden British society. From Northern Nigeria G. W. Brooke wrote of his own efforts: 'I see no hope given in the Bible that wickedness in this world will be subdued by civilization or preaching of the gospel—until the Messiah the prince come. And to hasten that time is, I believe, the function of foreign missions . . . I therefore should be inclined to frame any missionary plans with a view to giving the simple gospel message to the greatest number possible of ignorant heathen in the shortest possible time.'[36]

The gap between intentions and consequences nevertheless affected missionaries who rejected Empire and Western ways quite as much as those who clung to them. Local confrontations provoked by Brooke on the Niger, contrary to his intentions, encouraged a strengthening of Church Missionary Society controls from London over many of its missions. Simultaneously, like all moves appearing to perpetuate missionary control, this stimulated local resentment. Many indigenous Christians pressed for greater self-government, or broke away from denominational connections to form their own independent churches. From the 1880s onwards, notably in British colonial Africa, such movements presented a substantial challenge to Western authority.

Among British missionaries, the same essentially anti-imperial spirit revived enthusiasm for interdenominational or ecumenical co-operation. Present at the birth of the modern missionary movement, this ambition survived intensified domestic religious rivalries between 1820 and 1880. In the field it was assisted wherever rivals found space to avoid each other, and as needs increased to agree distinct spheres of activity, so did consciousness that denominational conflict bred disrepute and compromised the basic faith. The consequences of this awareness can be seen before 1914. In Kenya, from 1908 to the Kikuyu Conference of 1913, local missionaries worked hard to establish the basis for a united African church which would transcend their own divisions. Presbyterians and Congregationalists brought into being the United Church of South India in 1908. The integration of British missions into a strongly international movement was also abundantly clear in the World Missionary Conferences held at New York in 1900 and Edinburgh in 1910.

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[36] To the Revd A. C. D. Ryder, 14 Sept. 1886, Church Missionary Society Archives, Birmingham University Library, F/2.

Colonial developments conspired to divide British missions and governments. To colonial officials in post-partition Africa, still conscious of their vulnerability but nevertheless strengthening their legal and administrative controls, missionary activities could seem positively unhelpful. Harry Johnston's optimism was replaced by echoes of Indian official worries as governments tried to restrict missions in Islamic areas—the Sudan, Egypt, Northern Nigeria. In China the strong anti-missionary features of the Boxer Rebellion provoked official criticism of the societies and suspicions that, but for them, much blood, treasure, and influence could have been saved.[37] More generally, missions found aspects of colonial rule irksome, for example, in education where, much as they welcomed government financial aid, they resisted attempts to control the content of schooling. Sympathizing with their converts, missionaries were increasingly critical of colonial policies in matters of tax, labour, and the defence of settler interests or certain traditional authorities.

The expansion of Christianity from Britain after 1780 not only paralleled the growth of British influence and Empire, but clearly interacted with it at many points. The contribution of the religious laity, clerics, and missionaries to Britain's knowledge and understanding of other peoples was immense, ranging from sophisticated historical and linguistic scholarship to the crudest perpetuation of stereotypes in innumerable missionary panegyrics. In its global expansion evangelical Christianity reflected the relative balance of material power: its geographical reach came to match its universal creed. Britain's own society was transformed in the century before 1914, broadening its sense of national 'mission', diverting much of its charity to religious causes overseas, and developing new respect for missionary enterprise. Christian heroes were adopted, such as Bishop Patteson of Melanesia, and their achievements institutionalized at home and abroad, as at Selwyn College in Cambridge and the Gordon Memorial College in Khartoum. It is nevertheless impossible to speak in any straightforward way of 'religious', 'ecclesiastical' or 'missionary' imperialism. Such hard-and-fast categories are almost meaningless.

Much as they wanted, Imperial authorities and Anglican leaders could neither re-create the Church of England overseas nor bend it to state purposes. Colonial opinion and lack of resources enforced far-reaching adaptations to local circumstances, and reluctance to forego Anglican privilege only advanced the process of change. Growing ecclesiastical resentment of government policies at home simply reinforced demands for the colonial separation of church and state. Few denominations wished to take Anglicanism's place and none succeeded, because to most people the privatization of religion and governments' support for non-

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[37] 'Lord Salisbury and Foreign Missions', *The Times*, 20 June 1900, p. 10b.

denominational education increasingly seemed preferable. By 1860 all denominations had accepted the necessity for local self-support and self-government.

These were lessons which missionaries and their societies gradually learnt in their turn. Experimentation and adaptation to local conditions were inevitable, in language, liturgy, and church organization. As they occurred, the extent to which a 'British' metropolitan religious culture was being exported, let alone imposed, became increasingly attenuated. At the height of the so-called 'new imperialism' of the late nineteenth century, the influence of non-British strains of Protestantism, millennial or eschatological speculation, scepticism about Western civilization, and greater attentiveness to the values of indigenous cultures combined to make British evangelicalism increasingly less nationalist and chauvinistic. Missions might build in British style, but their location, and activities inside the buildings frequently depended on indigenous wishes, freedoms normally unavailable in Britain, and North American inspiration. High Church ritualists, for example, felt freer of Low Church scrutiny, and women assumed an uncommon prominence in the organization of missionary work. This does not suggest that the religious cultures of the formal and informal empires were necessarily less Imperial for being distinct from both their British and local origins. The argument is rather that religion and Empire frequently mingled, but were as likely to undermine each other as they were to provide mutual support.

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12

British Expansion, Empire, and Technological Change

ROBERT KUBICEK

Technological changes, whatever their origins, have often been turned to imperial purposes. The chariot and stirrup were important empire-building tools in antiquity, as were the sail and gun in the early modern period. Military innovations in weapons and organization were instrumental in expansion before 1800.[1] Thereafter, however, tools crucial to achieving economic advantage and political domination rapidly proliferated. The advent of steam and electrical power, and developments in metallurgy and chemistry provided new means for coercion and movement. Moreover, the tools underwent significant if unco-ordinated development. Soldiers used the musket (a smooth-bore, single-shot muzzle-loader with powder ignited by exposed flintlock) at the beginning of the century, the rifle (a breech-loading repeater accepting metal cartridges activated by internal hammer) at its end. Transport reduced travelling times (see Tables 12.1–6) and carried bulky cargo to distant markets. Communication devices exchanged information in days, then hours.

Nevertheless, while general trends may be clear, there are difficulties in pinpointing when a version of a tool had become sufficiently diffused and effective to institute change in behaviour and relationships. It is hard to decide, for example, when cost-effective, metal-hulled, propeller-driven, ocean-going vessels become sufficiently numerous to make a difference to the connection between technology and empire. Even more elusive are the prevailing norms and values which shaped the use of such inventions, especially since they may themselves have been altered by technology.

Contemporaries were not unaware of the new power sources suddenly available to them. Karl Marx was sufficiently sensitive to their force to be considered by some as a technological determinist. The imperial historian, J. R. Seeley, thought that steam had given the 'political organism' a 'new circulation', that electricity had

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[1] Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution, Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500–1800*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, 1990).

provided a 'new nervous system', and that the two innovations had made a 'Greater Britain' both possible and necessary. Some Victorians and Edwardians protested against the damage inflicted on the landscape by steam shovels and the harm to humans from exploding boilers, but many more took immense pride in this increased human capacity to alter environments.[2]

Twentieth-century commentators have generally assigned technological innovation a pervasive if variable function. Some regard 'all technologies' as 'extensions of our physical and nervous systems to increase power and speed'. Such an increase 'in any kind of grouping of any components whatever is itself a disruption that causes a change of organization'. For others, 'It is useless to rail against capitalism. Capitalism did not create our world; the machine did.'[3] Historians of the British Empire have argued that nineteenth-century Europeans generally, and Britons particularly, distinguished themselves from and claimed a superiority over others on the basis of their mastery of science and technology, and have stressed how mid-Victorians saw themselves as 'the titans of technology'. Late-Victorians were caught up in 'a runaway technological revolution' which fuelled a colossal arms race.[4] The most prolific writer on technology and Empire has argued that the new tools 'of the nineteenth century ... shattered traditional trade, technology, and political relationships, and in their place they laid the foundations for a new global civilization based on Western technology'.[5]

This chapter argues that various technologies, especially when combined, enhanced the state's abilities to expand and dominate. They also affected the timing of the Imperial state's expansion, and featured significantly in the dynamics of commercial and industrial capitalism. In both the formal and informal Empire, in temperate and tropical colonies, their transfer gave Imperial agents more scope for intervention. However, other peripheral groups, including indigenous resistance movements and local entrepreneurs, gained access to them as well. Technologies empowered the metropole but also, to some degree, strengthened the periphery. They may have cemented Imperial connections, but they could

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[2] G. A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 145–46; J. R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England* (London, 1880), pp. 61–62; James H. Winter, *'Secure from Rash Assault': Sustaining the Victorian Environment* (Berkeley, forthcoming).

[3] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (London, 1964), p. 90; Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society* (London, 1965), p. 5.

[4] Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca, NY, 1989); James Morris, *Heaven's Command: An Imperial Progress* (Harmondsworth, 1979), p. 195; William H. McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force and Society Since A.D. 1000* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 277–78.

[5] Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire, Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1981), p. 177.

destabilize them as well. Technology transfer also led diverse peoples to pursue the same material ends by employing similar techniques.

Considerable continuity characterized the diffusion and application of technologies in Imperial activity during the half-century to about 1830. Transport efficiencies were still achieved at home and abroad using old technologies, with human and animal muscle and wind power the prime movers. More extensive use of copper sheathing to protect ships' hulls assisted British dominance in tropical waters. Transferred hydraulic expertise added canals to waterways like the St Lawrence and reclaimed irrigation works in northern India. Some new technologies were absorbed gradually. The displacement of horse-pulled canal boats and coastal sailing vessels by steamers was a long drawn-out process, but steam power on rails was a more precipitate development. Introduced in England in the 1820s, it became extensive and pervasive there in the 1830s and 1840s and shortly thereafter throughout the North Atlantic region. At home its potential for Empire was quickly recognized. As a key invention of the industrial revolution it prompted, along with the clock, a rethinking of humankind's relationship to time and space. The clock measured and allotted activities and the locomotive expanded and speeded them up. Meanwhile domestic productive power increased dramatically as mining and manufacture were mechanized. Increased capacities both to produce and consume 'gave the British a new cutting edge overseas'.[6]

Among the many tools of Empire which empowered both the state and the private sector none was more significant than the steamship. Indeed, its potential was initially overestimated. As a ship owner put it in 1844, 'steam has been a spur to everything'. Administrators in West African backwaters in the 1830s and 1840s demanded steamers as indispensable to operations and as essential and necessary to the 'civilizing mission'. The state, in the form of the Admiralty, was slow to adopt steam, but even the Royal Navy began in 1841 to replace sailing vessels in the anti-slavery squadron. Low-pressure boilers that corroded quickly and consumed coal excessively did not prevent the private sector from sending steamers abroad. Macgregor Laird dispatched steamers up the Niger in the 1830s and 1840s, with disastrous results. The East India Company tried to introduce steamers to the trade routes of the Indian Ocean and sent the *Nemesis*, a Laird-built steamer, to the South China coast. This iron-hulled paddle wheeler played a key role in subduing resistance along the Pearl River during the Opium War of 1839–40. In so doing it enabled local officials to drag the Imperial state into helping merchants gain access to local markets. In 1836 a government-backed expedition descended the Euphrates by steamer in a premature attempt to establish steam navigation on its

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[6] Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men*, pp. 21–68; J. R. Ward, 'The Industrial Revolution and British Imperialism, 1750–1850', *Economic History Review*, Second Series, XLVII (1994), pp. 44–65.

waters. Substantial state aid in the form of mail contracts also enabled venture capitalists to establish expensive ocean-going steamship enterprises. By 1850 subsidized lines organized to run to schedules were operating in the North Atlantic, the West Indies, South America, and the Mediterranean—with an extension by way of the Suez isthmus and Red Sea to India and China, and the western Pacific.[7] But the masts of these steamers were a more pronounced feature of their silhouettes than their funnels, an indication that steam power was still a supplement to and not yet a replacement for sails on ocean-going vessels.

British ordnance, by contrast, still offered only limited advantage on both land and water in the 1840s. It was insufficient to prevent disaster in the First Afghan War and only marginally significant against the Sikhs, where both sides had similar muskets, artillery, and effective organization. Small arms, powder, and shot from Europe poured into West African polities, where coastal states installed cannon in their war canoes. Imported firearms continuously disrupted the eastern frontier at the Cape; in New Zealand, conflict between Maori and Pakeha escalated. In each case indigenous adaptation meant that both sides possessed muskets.[8]

The Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in 1851 expressed the enormous possibilities for the increase in wealth and dominion presented by technological innovation. A world exhibition with products from many places, it featured displays from various parts of the existing Empire as well as the products of contemporary Britain with a potential role overseas. These included clocks, model steam engines and bridges, and the latest locomotive, 'all green and polished brass, brand-new from the Swindon railway works', earlier versions of which had already been transported overseas. Neither private capital nor the Imperial factor fully controlled 'the transfer of high transport technology [which] had a certain free wheeling momentum of its own'.[9]

This assessment had particular relevance for India. Railway construction began there in 1850. Significant public works had already begun as the British built

[7] Sarah Palmer, *Politics, Shipping and Repeal of the Navigation Laws* (Manchester, 1990), p. 2; Robert V. Kubicek, 'The Colonial Steamer and the Occupation of West Africa by the Victorian State, 1840–1900', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, XVIII (Jan. 1990), pp. 9–32; Headrick, *Tools of Empire*, pp. 17–57; Freda Harcourt, 'British Oceanic Mail Contracts in the Age of Steam, 1838–1914', *Journal of Transport History*, Third Series, IX (March 1988), pp. 1–18.

[8] Brian Bond, ed., *Victorian Military Campaigns* (London, 1967), pp. 33–69; Byron Farwell, *Queen Victoria's Little Wars* (London, 1973), esp. pp. 4–11, 37–60; Joseph E. Inikori, 'The Import of Firearms into West Africa, 1750 to 1807: A Quantitative Analysis', *Journal of African History* (hereafter *JAH*), XVIII (1977), pp. 339–68; Shula Marks and Anthony Atmore, 'Firearms in Southern Africa: A Survey', *JAH*, XII (1971), pp. 517–30.

[9] Morris, *Heaven's Command*, p. 198; R. E. Robinson, 'Introduction', in Clarence B. Davis and Kenneth E. Wilburn, Jr., eds., *Railway Imperialism* (Westport, Conn., 1991), p. 2.

irrigation schemes to increase arable acreage and counter the effects of cyclical drought. But according to the rhetoric about the application of steam power, including that of the Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, locomotives and steamers would be a greater boon to both Britain and India. By 1860 1,000 miles of track had been laid; by the early 1870s more than 5,000. Then government-supervised private enterprise had built a transcontinental network linking Bombay by way of Delhi with Calcutta, and Madras with Bombay. It was an impressive technical feat, though its costs may have been excessive.[10] British engineers were keen on replicating or improving in a very different environment what had worked back home. Moreover, investors were guaranteed 5 per cent. The railway integrated India into the world economy as an exporter of cash crops and an importer of manufactured goods. It also fastened British rule more firmly on the subcontinent by transporting Imperial rulers, their armies, and their messages. Railways featured still more prominently in the settlement Empire. Local agendas in eastern British North America and south-eastern Australia determined both where lines would run and their technical specifications, in the process making them integral to the economic and political development of the colonies. At this stage in their transfer abroad, railways initially empowered the Imperial agents of the tropical Empire, while in the temperate settlement Empire they served more rapidly to strengthen local interests.

The compound engine, employing steam at higher pressure and thereby redu-cing fuel consumption, freed ocean travel from several constraints and was, therefore, a significant part of steamship development in the mid-Victorian period. Along with the iron hull, which allowed for much greater size than wood, and the surface condenser, which sharply reduced boiler failure, the speed, dependability, and carrying capacity of ocean-going vessels were sig-nificantly increased and running costs substantially reduced. Linked to rail net-works at ports, they made it much easier for Britons to achieve or contemplate even further overseas initiatives.

The telegraph had the same effect. 'Telegraphic communication', as the Victor-ians called it, was 'the first invention to bring electricity to the service of man'. Its development featured two systems. Overhead wires provided a grid for the rapid flow of information on land, complementing that offered by the railways, and were widely used in both Britain in the 1860s and India. There in 1869 the system generated more than 480,000 internal telegrams. Undersea cables, the second system, were laid to link land networks.[11] Imperial administrators and private entrepreneurs took extraordinary risks to extend their reach, believing them to have become essential. Engineers tried in 1858–59 to link Britain, following the

[10] Ian J. Kerr, *Building the Railways of the Raj, 1850–1900* (Delhi, 1995).
[11] See Vol. IV, Map 1.2.

Mutiny, to India by way of a cable laid in the Red Sea. So convinced was the cost-conscious Treasury of the new technology's potential that it agreed to allocate government funds for its construction. The cable failed. The British taxpayer lost £862,000. In 1870 lines across Mesopotamia linked to cables in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean finally provided a tolerable connection. By 1872 Hong Kong could be reached through sea cable by way of Singapore or through land and sea by way of Russia. Cables to Port Darwin and land lines to Adelaide and beyond put Australia on the net in 1872. But at this juncture overseas telegraphic communication was expensive and undependable. Until cable construction and laying was sufficiently perfected and lines duplicated, interruptions in service were commonplace. Messages were coded, cryptic, and not infrequently unintelligible. The Colonial Office continued to send despatches by scheduled steamer as the preferred means of prompt communication (Map 12.1).[12]

The Suez Canal was somewhat ahead of its times. Built with Egyptian labour mobilized by the khedive as well as locomotives and steam shovels, it opened in 1869. Its capacity to handle traffic was limited until it was deepened and steamships were built that could use it efficiently. British tonnage passing through the waterway was less than 300,000 in 1870, about 2,000,000 in 1875, almost 3,500,000 in 1880, and over 5,300,000 in 1890.

The continued updating and mechanization of the British arms industry in 1858 produced rifled muskets made of interchangeable parts, and reached production levels of more than 100,000 per annum by 1863. These small arms were used to re-equip and thereby make more lethal British military contingents abroad, but their transfer had other repercussions. In India, rifles supplied to sepoys using cartridges greased with animal fat were the catalyst for simmering discontent to erupt into rebellion. Muskets and rifles, many of them obsolescent cast-offs, also continued to be shipped abroad and fell into the hands of groups bent on challenging the British presence in West Africa, on India's North-West Frontier, and in Western Canada. In New Zealand the Maori developed trenches and bunkers to minimize the effect of artillery barrages and, coupled with accurate musket fire, managed to fend off infantry assaults. They were defeated because they were outnumbered, not because they lacked adequate weapons.[13]

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[12] Jeffrey Kieve, *The Electric Telegraph: A Social and Economic History* (Newton Abbot, 1973), p. 13; John W. Cell, *British Colonial Administration in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: The Policy-Making Process* (New Haven, 1970), pp. 220–253; Kenneth Stanley Inglis, 'The Imperial Connection: Telegraphic Communication Between England and Australia, 1872–1902', in A. F. Madden and W. H. Morris-Jones, eds., *Australia and Britain: Studies in a Changing Relationship* (Sydney, 1980), pp. 21–38.

[13] Russell I. Fries, 'British Response to the American System: The Case of the Small-Arms Industry After 1850', *Technology and Culture* (hereafter *TC*), XVI (1975), pp. 307–403; James Belich, *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict* (1986; Auckland, 1988), pp. 292–98.
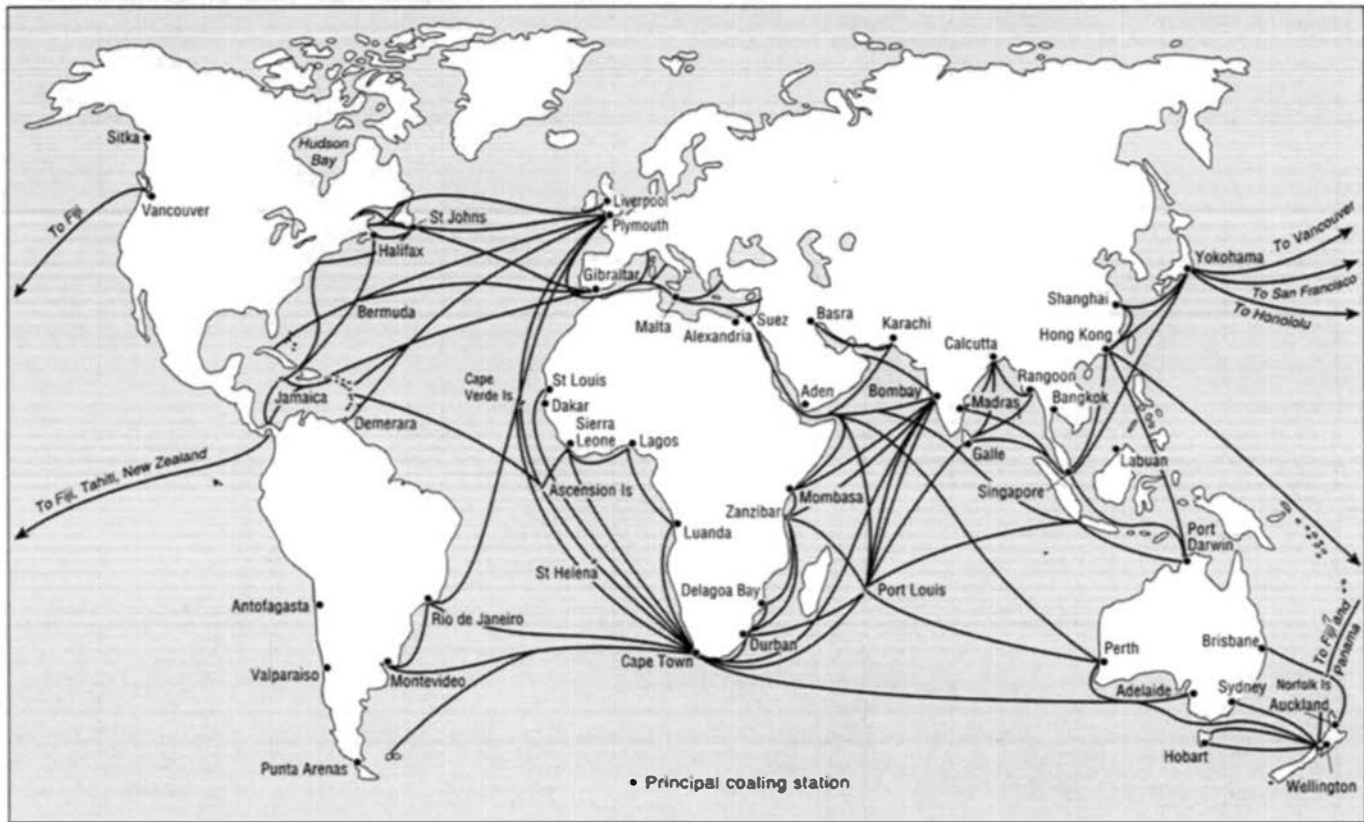
M A P 12.1. Communications: Principal Steamship Routes

TABLE 12.1. *Distances from Plymouth to selected destinations by sea* (in miles)

Destination	via Cape of Good Hope	via Suez
Cape Town	5,800	
Bombay	10,450	6,000
Colombo	10,150	6,490
Calcutta	11,380	7,710
Singapore	11,350	8,050
Hong Kong	12,790	9,490
Shanghai	13,540	10,240
Yokohama	14,220	10,920
Melbourne	11,870	10,670
Sydney	12,340	11,200
Wellington	12,910	12,110

TABLE 12.2. *Distances from Liverpool, Cape Town, Bombay, and Calcutta to selected destinations by sea* (in miles)

From	To	Miles
Liverpool	Quebec	2,625
	New York	3,043
	Jamaica	4,026
Cape Town	St Helena	1,700
	Southampton	5,950
	Mauritius	2,280
	Aden	4,250
	King George's Sound	4,720
Bombay	Aden	1,650
	Zanzibar	2,510
Calcutta	Singapore	1,630

TABLE 12.3. *Journey time by sea from England to Cape Town* (in days)

Year	From Devonport, Dartmouth, Southampton, London	One way	Round trip
1857		42	89
1867		37	—
1872		30	
1873		28	
1876		26	
1888		20	
1893		19	

TABLE 12.4. *Journey time from selected ports by sea: routes East* (in days unless otherwise stated)

Year	From	To	One way	Round trip
1820	London	Calcutta (sail)	5–8 (months)	
1825	Falmouth	Calcutta (steam assisted)	113	
1852	Southampton	Singapore	45	
		Shanghai	57	
		Sydney	75	
1855	Southampton	Alexandria	14	33
	Suez	Calcutta	24	56
		Bombay	14	35
	Bombay	Singapore	15	
	Bombay	Hong Kong (via Singapore)	20	
	Singapore	Sydney	28	
1895	Naples	Adelaide	32	
1897	Brindisi	Bombay	14	
		Shanghai	33	
		Adelaide	30	
1904	Brindisi	Adelaide	27	

TABLE 12.5. *Journey time from England by sea: North Atlantic routes* (in days)

Year	From	To	One way
1819	Liverpool	New York	27
1861			13
1863	Southampton	Jamaica	18
1895			15

TABLE 12.6. *Journey time from England by sea: West Africa routes* (in days)

Year	From	To	One way	Round trip
1857	Liverpool	Sierra Leone	18	}79
		Fernando Po	32	
1866		Sierra Leone	15	}71
		Fernando Po	25	
1883		Sierra Leone	16	}89
		Fernando Po	35	

Note: These figures have been compiled from Imperial and Colonial governments' Mail Contracts, General Post Office timetables, and contractors' returns printed for Parliament. In the delivery of mails the spread of railways complemented the mounting speed and regularity of steam-assisted, sail-assisted, and finally full-steam shipping. By the 1880s mails despatched overnight from London to Brindisi by rail were shipped the following day. Like emigrants and armed forces, they arrived at ports increasingly linked by railways to the colonial hinterlands.

While the steamship, land-sea telegraphy, and weaponry assisted in varying degrees British exploitation of global resources, these and other devices also fostered the creation and transmission of powerful images of peoples and places. In conjunction with techniques used to produce books and newspapers, they provided for the extensive dissemination of evocative travel literature and provocative reports of 'crises' on the periphery of Empire. In the 1860s 'the concept of mechanization' began to 'make an impact on letter-founding, type composition and bookbinding'. At the same time mechanical paper making cut costs and increased production. In 1800 Britain produced 11,000 tons of paper; in 1860 100,000 tons, of which 96,000 were mechanically made. Production costs per pound of paper halved; books became cheaper. In the late 1860s and early 1870s newspapers began to employ the rotary press which used continuous rolls of newsprint to produce quickly a large number of copies. These, containing telegraph reports from abroad and distributed throughout the country by trains running rapidly on tight schedules, transformed the means by which messages were exchanged.[14]

During the mid-Victorian period a number of individuals appeared whose accomplishments were both initiated and disseminated by the evolving technologies. Most famous was the explorer and missionary David Livingstone. Shallow-draft steamers were essential to his abortive attempt to unlock the Zambezi; steam printing enabled a wide public to receive and respond to the accounts of his exploits. *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, published in 1857, quickly sold 70,000 copies at a time when anything over 10,000 was considered a best-seller. There were scientists too with a practical bent and an eye for Empire. Sir Roderick Murchison launched expeditions using newly available communications and transport to acquire topographical data, as well as the telegraph and the press to mobilize support when President of the Royal Geographical Society. Lord Kelvin, more self-effacing but perhaps an even more significant figure, developed telegraphic, directional, and sounding devices of great importance to the maintenance of Britain's hegemony on ocean routes.[15]

Technologically minded entrepreneurs, as well as investors and merchants, contributed to Imperial expansion. Thomas Brassey constucted railways in Canada, Argentina, Australia, and India. Laird, a Liverpudlian, had pioneered ocean and river steamer technology, but John Elder and William Denny, Clydeside

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[14] S. H. Steinberg, *Five Hundred Years of Printing*, 2nd edn. (London, 1978), pp. 275–78; T. Brown, 'The Treatment of the News in Mid-Victorian Newspapers', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, XXVII (1977), pp. 23–29; Alan J. Lee, *The Origins of the Popular Press in England, 1855–1914* (London, 1976), pp. 60–62.

[15] Tim Jeal, *Livingstone* (London, 1973), p. 163; See chap. by Robert A. Stafford; Crosbie Smith and M. Norton Wise, *Energy and Empire: A Biographical Study of Lord Kelvin* (Cambridge, 1989).

shipbuilders, made Glasgow second only to London as the city of the Empire. Along with magnates such as Donald Currie (who also arranged for politicians to cruise free aboard his ships), Samuel Cunard, Alfred Holt, and William Mackinnon, who organized shipping lines around their steamers, and John Pender, who created the Eastern Telegraph Company which dominated sea-cable telegraphy, these entrepreneurs constituted a most formidable if disparate group. All these builders and owners used the tools of Empire to advance their careers and companies. Along with explorers and other professionals, they also received state aid. Livingstone obtained grants as well as transport for his adventures in Southern Africa. Murchison obtained funds to find promising geological formations, while Holt and Pender acquired subsidies for their shipping and telegraph enterprises. Brassey did not always profit from his overseas projects but colonial revenues financed them. The dogmas of *laissez-faire* were in theory the touchstones of governmental, financial, and industrial action. Successive governments, however, were persuaded that technological and economic imperatives required an interventionist approach to safeguard British interests.

After 1875 Imperial activity, driven by policy and interest but assisted by technological innovation and diffusion, rapidly escalated. The tools to move goods, people, and information as well as to extend and solidify domination became more efficient and more widely dispersed. So did inventions to farm, fish, forest, and mine. Meanwhile, habits and notions rooted in past practice were altered as time came to be measured precisely and in smaller intervals, as attainable speeds increased, as access to space eased. In 1873 Jules Verne sent the fictional Phileas Fogg around the world in eighty days: in 1889–90 the American journalist Nellie Bly actually made it in seventy-two. Meanwhile, the world, because of advances in communications, came to be divided into twenty-four time zones one hour apart.[16]

Private railway contractors, backed by guaranteed investor dividends, more than quadrupled tracks in India to 24,000 miles by the end of the century. At the same time Canada emerged as a North American transcontinental polity. Steel rails provided Montreal and Toronto with a western hinterland to develop. In South America a rail net spread into the interior, enriching Buenos Aires and giving substance to Britain's informal imperialism. Elsewhere in the southern hemisphere railway politics assumed an important role. In Australia, a promise to extend rail lines ensured the continent's westernmost colony would become a state in the federal Commonwealth. In South Africa, where Cape Town and Durban competed to monopolize traffic into the Orange Free State and the

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[16] Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880–1918* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), chaps. 1 and 8.

Transvaal, and where the latter obtained an outlet to the sea through Portuguese territory, railway politics held back federation and contributed to conflict.

In tropical Africa, 'railway imperialism' attended by visions of transcontinental links (the French imagined east–west, the British north–south lines) came to a climax with the building of the Uganda railway. Its economic potential was limited, its strategic function questionable; yet both political parties, Liberals and Conservatives, committed themselves to it and the British taxpayer met the £5.5m bill. Through extending and consolidating Empire, 'railway imperialism' attracted Asians and Europeans into the African hinterland adding to the future likelihood of ethnic tension.

With steel replacing iron as the preferred material for boiler and hull construction, with engines running more economically through the adoption of triple and even quadruple expansion, with ships becoming more purpose-built (to carry, for example, frozen meat or petroleum), and with their owners fashioning much larger corporate structures to cope with these changes, Britain's maritime hegemony, once substantial, now became pervasive. British tonnage passing through the Suez Canal almost tripled between 1880 and 1910 to more than 10 million per annum. The Peninsular and Oriental (P&O) steamship company's vessels designed both to carry cargo and passengers and to exploit the Suez Canal, increased in gross tonnage from 4,000 in 1870 to 7,500 by 1895. The European diaspora generally, and British emigration to temperate zones in particular, were significantly facilitated by this revolution in steamer traffic. Also much enhanced was British access to tropical climes, their journeys facilitated by 'posh' ('port out, starboard home') accommodation even if marred by the prevalence of coal dust, especially when loading fuel. Colonial cities were transformed as expatriate and hinterland peoples were attracted to them, and as harbours were deepened, quays lengthened and warehouses were built.[17]

Getting into hinterlands where roads were non-existent and railroads not yet built often meant going upriver. Here the shallow-draft steamer came into its own. The state and private sector became much entwined in its diffusion. The naval screw-driven gunboat, built in numbers for the Crimean War and adapted to force open the China trade, was upgraded and distributed to various stations, becoming both an instrument and symbol of Imperial control. To cite one better-known incident among many, a gun vessel, HMS *Goshawk*, launched in 1873, was used in 1887 to kidnap a local ruler and palm oil merchant, Jaja of Opobo. Less remarked upon but equally important were the navy's sturdy, wooden-hulled, side-wheel survey ships. These provided the navigational charts that saved many private

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[17] Frank Broeze, 'The External Dynamics of Port City Morphology: Bombay, 1815–1914', in Indu Banga, ed., *Ports and Their Hinterlands in India* (New Delhi, 1992), pp. 245–72.

steamers from disaster. Colonial officials and entrepreneurs also acquired stea-
mers for coastal and inland work. These might be stern-wheelers with 'tea-tray'
hulls, as described in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, a simple launch such as
C. S. Forester's *African Queen*, or the ingeniously designed vessels, with twin screws
set in tunnels to cope with unknown currents and snags, which served on the Nile
expedition or featured in Frederick Lugard's specifications for his state-of-the-art
steamer on the Niger. Government vessels could carry traders, as they did in West
Africa and along the coast of Ceylon. Government could subsidize steamers, as it
did on the waterways of British Guiana, or even commandeer them, as it did on
the Lagos lagoon and the Irrawaddy. In India, where river steamers had run since
the 1820s, they were not entirely displaced by the railway. They were instrumental
in getting the tea of Assam to market. For the Colonial Office their diffusion was a
priority. As one of its long-serving senior bureaucrats put it, in an emergency a
steamer 'might prevent a scare from developing into a disaster'. On the other hand,
for the man on the spot looking for opportunities to extend his jurisdiction and
enhance his career, 'having a light draught steamer of average speed, capable of
carrying arms and soldiers, cannot be over-rated'.[18]

During the late nineteenth century Europe became thoroughly wired. By 1882,
for example, Great Britain, France, and Germany possessed more than 28,000
telegraph offices which in that year transmitted some 77 million messages. Ocean
cables also proliferated. Extensions included a cable down Africa's east coast via
Zanzibar and Lourenço Marques to Durban in 1879; prompted by Imperial
disaster in the Zulu War, it was hastily connected overland to Cape Town. West
coast outposts from St Louis to Bonny, and including Dakar, Bathurst, Freetown,
Accra, and Lagos, were linked to Europe in 1886 as trade and the French challenge
grew. Extended southward by way of Luanda, this route gave Cape Town a second
line to Europe in 1889; a third by way of Ascension and St Helena was completed in
1900. The Treasury, though initially averse, perhaps remembering the Red Sea
débâcle of 1859, relented when pressed by the Colonial Office and the Dominions
to subsidize a cable from Vancouver Island to Australasia as part of an all-red
route. Though of some strategic significance, the Pacific Cable laid in 1902 was
largely the result of lobbying by Dominion entrepreneurs. Cables were duplicated
or triplicated and more sturdily constructed. Transmission was much improved,
for example, by introducing the new system of duplex telegraphy that permitted
simultaneous sending of messages in both directions from each end of a conduct-
ing line. Charges, which once made all but brief messages prohibitive, were

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[18] Robert V. Kubicek, 'The Role of Shallow-Draft Steamboats in the Expansion of the British Empire,
1820–1914', *International Journal of Maritime History*, VI (June 1994), pp. 86–106; Percival Griffiths, *A
History of the Joint Steamers Companies* (London, 1979); Minute by Robert Herbert, 17 Dec. 1886,
C[olonial] O[ffice] 96/176/22336; Dispatch by F. W. Evans, 23 Sept. 1886, CO 147/57/19151.

substantially reduced by increased volume and the introduction of efficient codes and ciphers. Messages to Cape Town cost eight shillings and ninepence per word in 1890, five shillings in 1896. Bombay could be reached for four shillings.[19]

The contemporary expert Charles Bright referred to the linked ocean cables, aerial wire, and buried land cables carrying thousands of messages daily as 'the world's system of electrical nerves'. The establishment and use made of links between Africa and Britain are suggestive of the way these 'electrical nerves' featured in Imperial activity. An east coast African line emerged out of a Cape initiative begun in 1873 to obtain either a sea or land link by way of Egypt. Especially influential were the Imperial government's belief that the telegraph would give it effective means to contain chronic conflict south of the Limpopo, and the lobbying of Pender's Eastern Telegraph Company (ETC) which was becoming a dominant player in global cable communications. Also in 1873 the Colonial and War Offices pressed for a west coast cable which, they thought, would be of great value in ensuring the success of the Asante expedition and in preventing the need for such sorties in the future. Speedier communication with agents and more prompt deployment of locally stationed armed forces (whose number could, it was thought, even be reduced), would quell unrest before it escalated. Because local revenues were insufficient to subsidize such an undertaking, since commercial activity did not warrant it, and as the Treasury refused to consider Imperial financial backing, the project was pigeon-holed for almost a decade. Then, when a British cable company with concessions from the Spanish and French governments went ahead with a version of the scheme, the Treasury agreed to provide most of the subsidy for a subsidiary of the Eastern Telegraph Company to do the job. This enabled the ETC to make an agreement with its competitor and the west coast ended up with two cables to Europe, one by way of the Cape Verde Islands, the other by way of the Canaries. Strategic calculations and assumptions that a more effective, and cheaper British presence to preserve the status quo would result, had moved officials to support more cable laying. Railway and steamship imperialism was buttressed by cable expansion.

It is nevertheless unclear that this rapidly expanding communication system gave the Colonial Office greater control over events on the periphery. The Office received telegraphs by ETC messengers who carried them to Whitehall from their headquarters in the City. At night they were left in a letter-box to be retrieved by resident clerks and handled by the same registration and minuting procedures

[19] Eastern Telegraph Company confidential memo to the Colonial Office, 13 March 1900, CO 323/458/8207; CO 96/109/10366; P. M. Kennedy, 'Imperial Cable Communication and Strategy, 1870–1914', *English Historical Review*, LXXXVI (1971), pp. 728–52; Charles Bright, *Submarine Telegraphs: Their History, Construction and Working* (London, 1898), p. 167.

as dispatches. As late as 1899 the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, appeared at the telegraph company's door demanding to know what had happened to a cable expected from South Africa. These practices and incidents suggest that the Office was, even by 1900, still inclined to adopt the telegraphic medium as an adaptation of rather than as a replacement for the dispatch.

The Foreign Office, by contrast, used the telegraph as 'the predominant means of communication' and reduced ambassadorial discretion significantly. Colonial Governors were not so readily restrained. An analysis of telegrams exchanged between the Office and two West African colonies, the Gold Coast and Lagos, is instructive. In 1887, the first full year of telegraphic communication, the Office sent forty-five cables and received seventy-eight. A decade later the figures were 251 and 409. In these exchanges the Office was reactive, especially to reports of French activity in neighbouring territories. At the same time, men on the spot used the telegraph most frequently to relieve a chronic problem: illness and death from tropical diseases, which continued to decimate personnel. Now when officials went down with fever, telegrams could elicit prompt replacements by 'the next steamship'.[20] Cables and local land lines also provided the administrator with much quicker access to the means of coercion. Constabularies or regiments in other West African colonies, as well as naval gunboats which might be elsewhere on the station, could be summoned more promptly. A cryptic telegram calling for immediate Imperial support to deal with conflict conveyed far more sense of urgency than a dispatch arriving weeks after the event, particularly since it was the Colonial Office view that prompt intervention would limit the extent of involvement.

In South Africa, on the eve of the Zulu War, the Secretary of State for the Colonies had wondered if he could use the telegraph to control his Governor on the spot. Here too the periphery sent more telegrams than it received. In 1887, for example, the Colonial Office sent thirty-five telegrams to its agents in the Cape and Natal and received forty-three in return. Administrators fashioned telegrams to get authorization for their preferred agendas while the Colonial Office sought assurance that all was quiet, especially when the press, publishing cables it received, reported Afrikaner raids into Swaziland, for example. In the next decade telegrams failed the premier of the Cape, Cecil Rhodes, in a last-minute attempt to curb his impetuous crony, Dr Leander Starr Jameson. When some of the conspirators' messages came to light, they discredited Chamberlain. Alfred Milner, the man on the spot, used the cable in 1898–99 to help rush the Colonial Office and the

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[20] Raymond A. Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service, 1815–1914* (Waterloo, Ontario, 1983), pp. 125–38; correspondence registers for Gold Coast: CO 343/11; 343/14 and Lagos: CO 421/5; 421/8 and counts conducted in the General Department: CO 323/447/1249 and CO 323/497/1321.

Cabinet into preparing an ultimatum for the Transvaal. Even Lord Salisbury thought Milner's view was 'too heated'. The activist agent had also made South Africa an issue in the media, leaving the Cabinet with few options.[21]

Improved communications certainly facilitated the global growth of Imperial economic activity, but whether cables and telegraphs strengthened Imperial dynamics is less evident. In drawing the Imperial state into more intimate working relations with the private sector, they certainly strengthened the Eastern Telegraph Company. In participating in construction of the Pacific Cable, opened in 1902, the ETC provided support for Dominion ambitions even as it completed an Imperial network around the world. In South Africa communications improvements again strengthened sub-imperialist objectives and fostered conflict. Elsewhere, for instance in China, private ambitions for telegraphic extensions drew Imperial agents into imbroglios set off by cable companies pressuring indigenous authorities for landing rights.[22] When it came to men on the spot, the late-nineteenth-century response to this technology saw the periphery more able to prompt the centre into action.

In 1890 the man who was soon to become Viceroy of India was in Baku on the western shore of the Caspian Sea. He had steamed there by vessel through the Black Sea and travelled by locomotive over Transcaucasia, the latter part of a rail link completed in 1882 to deliver oil to Batum. George Nathaniel Curzon had also steamed even further eastward across the Caspian and along Trans-Caspian railways. Facilitated incidentally by British industrialists and engineers, this transfer of technologies by Russia, of which Curzon had first-hand experience, made him particularly keen to participate in the 'Great Game' of Imperial rivalries in Central Asia. The possibility that steamer and locomotive would funnel Russian empire-building into Afghanistan stimulated the Raj to snake lines from the Indus plains to and even through the historic passes of the North-West Frontier.[23]

Medical advances allowing civil and military personnel, businessmen, and missionaries easier travel and safer tours of duties emerged as a major influence in empire-building comparatively late in the period. In 1893 Burroughs, Wellcome

[21] Lady Victoria Hicks Beach, *Life of Sir Michael Hicks Beach,* 2 vols. (London, 1932), I, p. 103; Telegrams to and from South Africa, Jan.–Dec. 1887, CO 879/26/337; Robert Blake, 'The Jameson Raid and "The Missing Telegrams"', in Hugh Lloyd-Jones and others, eds., *History and Imagination* (London, 1981), pp. 326–39; Robert V. Kubicek, *The Administration of the Colonial Office: Joseph Chamberlain at the Colonial Office* (Durham, NC, 1969), p. 109; A. N. Porter, *The Origins of the South African War: Joseph Chamberlain and the Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1895–1899* (Manchester, 1980).

[22] Jorma Ahvenainen, *The Far Eastern Telegraphs: The History of Telegraphic Communications between the Far East, Europe and America before the First World War* (Helsinki, 1981), pp. 91–157.

[23] Sarah Searight, *Steaming East: The Hundred Year Saga of the Struggle to Forge Rail and Steamship Links Between Europe and India* (London, 1991), pp. 176–225.

and Co. placed an advertisement in a guide to health care for Europeans in Africa by Thomas Heazle Parke, a medical officer in both the Gordon and Emin Pasha relief expeditions of the 1880s. He had treated Henry Morton Stanley for various ailments, including stomach cramps. The advertisement listed the medicines in handy tablet form contained in a chest that it advised no traveller to be without. These included quinine, rhubarb, opium, and ginger. Parke, who supplied an endorsement, also listed more than forty drugs, ointments, and powders as well as more than a dozen instruments and applications which should be stocked. Europeans abroad were more likely to die from disease than their home-bound compatriots, but by the late nineteenth century medical technologies had reduced death rates considerably. None the less, West African diseases—especially malaria, even after quinine was used as a prophylactic—continued to take their toll. Army cantonments had long been rife with contagious diseases and steamers and railroads moved epidemics about with deadly effect. The application of germ theory, the knowledge that insects transmit malaria and sleeping sickness, advice on diet, the use of residential segregation and ship quarantine—these developments finally showed significant results only in the early twentieth century.[24]

Such breakthroughs also nurtured what has been loosely called 'engineering imperialism'.[25] The civil engineers abroad played a significant if insufficiently emphasized role in transferring infrastructure and disturbing the status quo. For example, the Bradford firm of Samuel Pearson and Son, the world's largest contractor in the 1890s, constructed canals and railways in Mexico, docks in Canada, and a dam in Egypt. The mechanical engineer and the marine engineer had been essential for the running and maintenance of steam-driven transport. Mining engineers also applied expertise with significant results. The 'rush that never ended' in Australia, mineral extraction in Ontario and British Columbia in Canada, and gold mines in the Gold Coast all evolved as the consequence of the export of machinery and processes that required engineers. Tin-mining in Malaya had been pioneered by Chinese migrants, but their technologies began to be displaced by Western high-pressure water pumps and bucket dredges. Nowhere were the results of transfers of men and machines as destabilizing as in South Africa. There, Cecil Rhodes got a start on the diamond fields controlling steam pumping machines in the diamond quarries of Kimberley. In addition to modern weapons, telegraphs, and railways, South Africa absorbed new mining techniques. The goldfield which developed after 1886 could not have been exploited without 'blasting gelatine' invented in 1874; the MacArthur Forrest cyanide process

[24] Thomas Heazle Parke, *Guide to Health in Africa, With Notes on the Country and Its Individuals* (London, 1893); Roy MacLeod and Milton Lewis, eds., *Disease, Medicine and Empire: Perspectives on Western Medicine and the Experience of European Expansion* (London, 1988), pp. 1–60.

[25] R. A. Buchanan, 'The Diaspora of British Engineering', *TC*, XXVII (July 1986), pp. 501–24.

patented in 1887; and steel alloys, essential for dies and shoes in the mortar boxes of mills' stamps, produced in quantity only after about 1880'.[26]

Steam trawlers yielded and tin cans distributed more of the oceans' fish. Mechanization and barbed wire also made possible and even profitable agricultural activity in sparsely settled temperate lands. Combine-harvesters for the wheatlands of Canada and mechanical sheep-shearing devices for Australasia reduced costs already lowered by cheap transport. These developments made for volatile politics as urban and rural interests competed for advantage and, in seeking the ear of London, complicated Imperial relations.

Engineering mastery of earth and water was nowhere more evident in the Empire than in the irrigation canals of India. As noted above, British canal-building had begun before railway technology was introduced. Far less funding went into the former than the latter, and with contradictory results. While irrigation enabled Indian peasants to bring otherwise barren lands into production and ease cyclical famines, this technology was also a vehicle for the transfer of tropical diseases. In time, canal-watered land was subject to salination and consequent loss of fertility. Meanwhile, steam-run machinery extracted logs and milled lumber, contributing to extensive deforestation in North America as well as South Asia.[27] Some contemporaries were sensitive to such depredation, and the India Forestry Service, for example, with its reserves played a vital role in conservation. However, most celebrated such Imperial developments as irrigation works and railway networks in, for example, the festivities marking Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. The leading advocate of railways, docks, and other infrastructure for the tropical Empire was Joseph Chamberlain, whose appearance on the national and Imperial stage had been made possible by his roots in Birmingham manufacture.

While the agents of Empire spread tools abroad for their own purposes these inventions were also taken up by others. These transfers served to stiffen resistance but also to exacerbate divisions among indigenous groups, sometimes to British advantage. Egypt's pretensions in the Sudan, its proto-nationalist movement led by the army of Arabi Pasha before 1882, and Afrikaner ambition beyond the

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[26] Robert V. Kubicek, *Economic Imperialism in Theory and Practice: The Case of South African Gold Mining Finance, 1886–1914* (Durham, NC, 1979), pp. 51–52; Simon Katzenellenbogen, 'Cyanide and Bubbles: Patents and Technological Change in Gold and Non-ferrous Metals Treatment', in Klaus Tenfelde, ed., *Sozialgeschichte des Bergbaus in 19. and 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1992), pp. 519–38.

[27] Elizabeth Whitcombe, *Agrarian Conditions in Northern India: The United Provinces Under British Rule, 1860–1900* (Berkeley, 1972); Ramachandra Guha, *Unquiet Woods, Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalayas* (Berkeley, 1989); Richard H. Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens, and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600–1860* (Cambridge, 1995).

Orange River prior to 1899 may be seen as indigenous initiatives made possible by arms obtained in Europe. Arab penetration of East Africa and the Congo basin, whether viewed as indigenous or expatriate activity, or as a state-making as well as a trading endeavour, was also dependent upon European arms. West Africa's forest states received large quantities of flintlocks. West African Sudanese polities supplemented flintlocks with breech-loaders and even repeaters during the final stages of resistance. In the same way, belated 'self-strengthening' undertakings by modernizers of the Manchu establishment built ordnance factories to arm China against both internal challenge and external aggression.[28]

In numerous armed clashes between British invaders and local peoples—worldwide between about 1875 and 1907—both sides had modern weaponry. The Zulu, smashed by British weapons at Ulundi, had very few small arms, but the Sotho, possessed of considerably more, had been involved in 'gun wars' with Cape colonists. The most spectacular arms caches were found in Ethiopia and the Transvaal. Menilik's forces at Adowa in 1896 possessed more than 14,000 muzzle-loaders, a similar number of rifles and carbines, as well as millions of rounds of ammunition and the occasional machine gun. The Boer republic, on the estimates of the War Office Intelligence Department, by mid-1899 had seventy artillery pieces, thirty-one machine guns, 62,950 rifles, 6,000 revolvers, and sufficient ammunition 'for a protracted campaign'. At the Battle of Omdurman Kitchener's forces (transported by rail and river steamer) had fifty-five machine guns. Sudanese resisters had only two, but were equipped with an extensive arsenal of field artillery.

Destabilizing weapons transfers were not confined to Africa. Conflict in the vast reaches of the Argentine pampas, rebellion in western Canada, and resistance on the North-West Frontier (sustained by gun-running enterprises out of the Persian Gulf) found various combinations of weaponry in the hands of locals and conquerors, where the former, though at a technological disadvantage, could often offer significant resistance. Too much explanatory power has been derived from Hilaire Belloc's poetic reference to 'Whatever happens, we have got | The Maxim Gun, and they have not'. A more revealing assessment of the 'little wars' of Empire is perhaps conveyed by Sir Henry Newbolt: 'The sand of the desert is sodden red— | Red with the wreck of a square that broke— | The Gatling's jammed and the

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[28] Howard Bailes, 'Technology and Imperialism: A Case Study of the Victorian Army in Africa', *Victorian Studies* (Autumn 1980), pp. 83–104; P. M. Holt, *The Mahdist State in the Sudan, 1881–1898* (Oxford, 1958), pp. 2–3; David Levering Lewis, *The Race to Fashoda, European Colonialism and African Resistance in the Scramble for Africa* (New York, 1987), pp. 62–72; Michael Crowder, ed., *West African Resistance: The Military Response to Colonial Occupation.* 2nd edn. (1971; London, 1978), p. 27; Thomas L. Kennedy, *The Arms of Kiangnan: Modernization in the Chinese Ordnance Industry, 1860–1895* (Boulder, Colo, 1987), pp. 99–160.

colonel dead, I And the regiment blind with dust and smoke...' Though the
Mahdi wanted Gordon taken alive, he was killed at Khartoum by a bullet from the
gun of a Sudanese soldier who did not know who he was.[29] As the South African
War (1899–1902) also showed, technological advantage could still only too easily
be outweighed by human blunders, mechanical failure, and local knowledge of
climate and terrain.

Although the diffusion of metropolitan technology was largely controlled by
Imperial authorities and entrepreneurs, local initiative was important. Weapons,
as noted, were acquired by indigenous resisters. Others accepted the Imperial
presence because it offered technologies which improved their own condition. In
temperate-zone colonies, officials and capitalists, with agendas sometimes at odds
with Imperial priorities, acquired many tools to ease transport and increase
production. Egyptian khedives were keen on, what often proved to be financially
precarious, modernization. Imperial objectives governed Indian railways, but the
indigenous population flocked in their millions to crowded stations to participate
more readily in religious pilgrimages and family reunions, and they used the postal
system, which piggybacked extensively on the railways. The railway also shaped
Indian economic and political life. Indian contractors and labour built the lines: it
was not unusual for some 200,000 men, women, and children to be employed
annually on construction. Indian entrepreneurs used the lines; so would nation-
alist leaders. Thus, indigenous economic and political groupings with which the
Raj had to collaborate were defined in part by railway developments. Even though
Imperial authorities in India discouraged such transfers, native entrepreneurs
successfully imported textile-making equipment. They also formed a steamship
service, the 'Mogul Line', for the pilgrim traffic to Mecca, and were involved in
coastal steamer traffic. The Tata family laid the foundations of an iron and steel
industry. Despite little encouragement from the British and constraints in their
own culture, Indians sought either abroad or in local institutions to acquire
modern medical and technical education. Bombay and Bengal established tech-
nical institutes, with the British-trained geologist Paramatha Nath Bose becoming
the first rector of the latter. The locally owned China Merchants Steam Navigation
Company by 1880 had six steamers on the Yangtze. The British-based Irrawaddy
Flotilla Company found it necessary to buy out a local challenger, and the Burmese
monarch obtained his own steamer. So did the khedive of Egypt, the sultan of
Zanzibar, and the ruler of Sarawak. Governments in Argentina, China, Haiti, and
Queensland acquired steamers to strengthen their ability to control. Meanwhile,

[29] John Ellis, *The Social History of the Machine Gun* (London, 1975), pp. 94, 105–06; Douglas H.
Johnson, 'The Death of Gordon, A Victorian Myth', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, X
(1982), pp. 285–310.

stokers, deckhands, pilots, even engine operators drawn from diverse cultures were essential for their maintenance and operation.[30]

Missionaries too were often tolerated for the technologies they transferred. These included alphabets, medicines, printing presses, even shovels, which were seen as materially useful but also capable of enhancing status and power. The case of Lewanika, ruler of the Lozi, is instructive. Adapting missionary initiatives, he constructed extensive drainage canals along the Zambezi watershed to serve both economic and political objectives. While African communities resisted some measures introduced to improve public health, they accepted and adapted others.[31] Indigenous acquisition of expatriate tools was, of course, a double-edged initiative. It might strengthen autonomy, but more often it paved the way for more pervasive alien influence.

The intensified or 'new' imperialism, a much-debated phenomenon of the later nineteenth century, has been seen as a product of a particular stage of finance capital, of the rise of ethnic antagonisms fuelled by racist beliefs, and the geopol-itical priorities of the 'official mind'. While these causal factors need not be dismissed, their explanatory powers pale if compared with the transformations wrought by technological innovations. These profoundly stimulated a mind-set already disposed to think about Empire in terms of what was possible, desirable, and (morally speaking) defensible. In their developmental stages before about 1870 they were too costly and unreliable to provide the empowerment visionaries contemplated. In later decades, to most colonizers and many colonized they became more affordable and dependable symbols of a progress rooted in Western knowledge.

By then they also had become more uncontrollable and unpredictable in their effects. Local collaborators could use them to develop their own agendas, espe-cially in the temperate settlement Empire. In these neo-Britains, peoples were strengthened politically and economically by the transfer of technologies. Peoples in the tropics were able, to a certain extent, to use these same tools to resist colonial constraints and alter their material conditions. The wide diffusion of Western weaponry allowed indigenous groups to resist and create imbalances that attracted intervention. Indigenous groups adapted other technologies such as writing, medicines, and steamers. Simultaneously, these devices strengthened the capacity of local Imperial agents, civil and military, to be proactive and less amenable to

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[30] Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tentacles of Progress: Technology Transfer in the Age of Imperialism, 1850–1940* (New York, 1988); Poonam Bala, *Imperialism and Medicine in Bengal* (New Delhi, 1991).

[31] Gwyn Prins, *The Hidden Hippopotamus: Reappraisal in African History: The Early Colonial Experience of Western Zambia* (Cambridge, 1980); Megan Vaughan, *Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness* (Cambridge, 1991).

metropolitan control. Tools to control and shape what had been annexed increasingly fell within the budgets of outposts with modest revenues. The colonial state could more easily raise and equip native troops and lay on infrastructure such as wharves, graving docks, water transport, and rail and telegraph lines.

Maps, another tool of Empire, produced for Victorians and Edwardians comforting and satisfying projections of their nation's numerous possessions. These maps showed how the vast territory was linked by cables, sea routes, and rail lines. However, these depictions of British power and wealth abroad also failed to disclose an important contradiction. Technological innovations had drawn distant places together but had, at the same time, furthered the growth of local nodes of activity less amenable to control than the maps suggested. The diffusion of nineteenth-century, especially late-nineteenth-century technologies, unleashed discontinuities which both abetted and challenged British Imperialist initiatives. From a global perspective this diffusion was also fashioning precedents in which mankind pursued increasingly similar means to sustain material existence. Whether these had to do with using the environment, sustaining life, and communicating or quarrelling with or dominating each other, the techniques employed increasingly differed less in kind and more in degree.

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13

Empire and Metropolitan Cultures

JOHN M. MACKENZIE

> The British were not an imperially minded people; they lacked both a theory
> of empire and the will to engender or implement one.
>
> (Max Beloff)[1]

> So vast and yet so detailed is imperialism as an experience with crucial cultural
> dimensions, that we must speak of overlapping territories, inter-twined his-
> tories common to men and women, whites and non-whites, dwellers in the
> metropolis and on the peripheries, past as well as present and future ... Nearly
> everywhere in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century British and French
> culture we find allusions to the facts of empire ...
>
> (Edward Said)[2]

These quotations represent extremes in debate about the relationship between
metropolitan cultures and Empire. For Beloff, and others of his and earlier
generations, Imperial status did not necessarily imply public interest or concern.
Overseas colonialism and domestic culture could be largely separated. Empire
was essentially centrifugal, the radiating outwards of supposed moral and material
benefits. If Imperial events occasionally stimulated popular excitements,
these were jingoistic aberrations to be decried, not discussed.[3] More recently,
literary critics have joined Said in arguing that imperialism is a ubiquitous,
pervasive element throughout the literature of the late eighteenth to the mid-
twentieth centuries.[4] Although concentrating upon 'high' literary culture, their
implication is that such obsessions filtered down into other areas of popular
culture.

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[1] Max Beloff, *Britain's Liberal Empire*, 2 vols. (London, 1969; 1989), I, p. 19.
[2] Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London, 1993), pp. 72–73.
[3] John M. MacKenzie, ed., *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester, 1986), pp. 1–2; John M. Robertson, *Patriotism and Empire* (London, 1899).
[4] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London, 1978) and *Culture and Imperialism*; Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness, British Literature and Imperialism, 1830–1914* (London, 1988); and works surveyed in John M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester 1995), chaps. 1 and 2. For a critique of colonial discourse analysis, Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government* (Princeton, 1994).

This chapter considers both this debate, and the scale of the problem, which recent work has shown to be much larger than envisaged by either Beloff's concern with an Imperial theory or Said's literary interests. 'Metropolitan cultures' can be divided horizontally and vertically. There are the cultures of different classes, of the aristocracy, bourgeoisie, and the masses, the latter usually viewed as the social milieu of 'popular culture'. There are also the cultures of the various components of the United Kingdom, the English, Welsh, Scots, and Irish, each with their own histories, supposedly contrasting national characteristics, and relationship to Empire. To these may be added (though not discussed here) the cultures of immigrant groups, representing the cultural interpenetration of mother country and colonial territories.

Class and region, of course, intertwine in complex ways. Landed Highland Scots sought to recoup their fortunes through Empire. Younger sons of the upper classes, not least members of Ireland's Protestant ascendancy, often officered the armed forces and secured advancement through colonial campaigns. Many Imperial interests were essentially bourgeois, but distinguishing the nineteenth century is the middle classes' success in co-opting members of other social groups into their concerns. Cities economically bound up with Empire—London, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, and Glasgow—were often settings for the development of Empire-related pressure-groups and leisure interests. Scots and Irish sought to position themselves in a global Imperial context which helped them avoid being swamped by the English, and even the Welsh with less emigration to the Empire had many economic and religious interests in it.[5] Women also identified opportunities in the social causes and religious and political campaigns of Empire.[6]

An Imperial Culture?

It would be surprising had possession of a vast Empire left the cultures of the metropolitan state virtually unaffected. Yet historians have largely ignored such concerns until recently, for several reasons. Researchers have usually been devoted to official archives, and sources derived from the public records are relatively silent on cultural matters, even if their originators were inevitably influenced by such

[5] John M. MacKenzie, 'On Scotland and the Empire', *International History Review*, XV, 4 (1993), pp. 714–39; Keith Jeffery, ed., *An Irish Empire? Aspects of Ireland and the British Empire* (Manchester, 1996); Gwyn A. Williams, *When Was Wales? A History of the Welsh* (Harmondsworth, 1985), pp. 124–25, 201, 220–24. See chap. by David Fitzpatrick, and on Wales p. 20.

[6] From an expanding literature, Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, eds., *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance* (Bloomington, Ind., 1992); Ann McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (London, 1995); and Clare Midgley, ed., *Gender and Imperialism* (Manchester, 1997).

contexts. Secondly, historians have been more interested in cultures of dissent rather than conformity, in working-class resistance and intellectual critique rather than the cultural convergence which seems to characterize the Imperial age in the nineteenth century.[7] Thirdly, the works, stimulated by the South African War, of the liberal economist and journalist J. A. Hobson have long influenced historians. Their debate has been primarily concerned with the economic dimensions of imperialism, but also has cultural implications.[8] In *The Psychology of Jingoism* Hobson seemed contemptuous of the malleability, even gullibility, of popular culture, views unlikely to endear him to social historians or working-class sympathizers.[9]

Many twentieth-century British historians have reacted against both Hobson's polemics and studies by Marxist commentators who built upon his insights. Since Imperialism lost its intellectual respectability, between 1918 and 1939, there has been an inclination to play down the domestic cultural and political effects of Empire.[10] The burning Imperial rhetoric of the Liberal Imperialists of the 1890s and 1900s has been dismissed as mere political opportunism,[11] and the undoubted popular enthusiasms of the 'New Imperialism' seen as brief, spasmodic events.[12] It has also been suggested that the public excitements of the South African (Boer) War were essentially the product of the lower middle class, while the working classes concentrated on hard-headed domestic concerns.[13]

However, the pervasiveness of Empire in entertainment, education, and social activity in Britain demonstrated in recent scholarship reveals cultural practices as inseparable from the political and economic dimensions of imperialism: they both reflected and sometimes actively shaped the instruments of such domestic inheritance of Empire. They offer vital clues to the attitudes of different social classes and individuals; the relationships among them; the flow and ebb of Imperial ideas; and the origins of manipulative forces (if any) within the nation and the state. Cultural practices also illuminate the interaction of the full range of metropolitan cultures and attempts to weld them into a more cohesive Imperial whole. As these concerns

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[7] Bernard Porter, *Critics of Empire: British Radical Attitudes to Colonialism in Africa, 1895–1914* (London, 1968); John Belchem, *Industrialisation and the Working Class* (London, 1990).

[8] J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (London, 1902); D. K. Fieldhouse, *The Theory of Capitalist Imperialism* (London 1967); Porter, *Critics of Empire*; Andrew Porter, *European Imperialism, 1860–1914* (Basingstoke, 1994), pp. 10 and 62–63.

[9] J. A. Hobson, *The Psychology of Jingoism* (London, 1901), and *The War in South Africa: Its Causes and Effects* (London, 1900).

[10] e.g. A. J. P. Taylor, *English History, 1914–45* (Oxford, 1965) and Henry Pelling, *Popular Politics and Society in Late Victorian Britain* (London, 1979).

[11] H. C. G. Matthew, *The Liberal Imperialists* (Oxford, 1973), p. 151.

[12] D. K. Fieldhouse, *Economics and Empire, 1830–1914* (London, 1976), pp. 75–76.

[13] Richard Price, *An Imperial War and the British Working Class* (London, 1972).

with class and community have widened, the debate has also been carried back in time. Discussions about an Imperial culture once concentrated on the second half of the nineteenth century, era of the 'New Imperialism', the period when entertainment and media became susceptible to new technologies and mass-market techniques, apparently rendering Empire more accessible to a larger public.[14] Imperial excitements were readily identifiable and the popular psychology seemed as susceptible to analysis as the 'official mind'. It is now apparent, however, that widespread cultural expressions of Empire can be identified at least from the late eighteenth century.

Consideration of the metropolitan cultural life of Imperialism is closely connected to discussions about the character and objectives of Imperial rule, but it sets up more extensive rhythms than the often short-term concentration of political controversy. All periods of Imperial activity witnessed acrimonious debates about the necessity or otherwise of the extension of rule, the principles and practices of Empire, and the agencies through which they were implemented. The very word 'imperialism' passed through many changes in meanings and resonance (positive and negative) in the course of the nineteenth century.[15] But amid this maelstrom of intellectual and political activity there were also cultural continuities: a sense of Britain's national destiny and purpose, often heightened through repeated representations of outsiders; and, increasingly, a projection of moral purpose and an alignment of patriotic forces, which together built up an emotional distinctiveness (often expressed in the language of superiority) in respect of both the peoples of Empire and other European nations. Through all of this run interlocking elements of nationality, class, and race. Hence, although it is conventional to identify differing periods in the development of Empire's manifestations through the 'long century', cultural activity seems to represent a certain continuity.

Empire, the British State, and Cultural Continuity

There is little doubt that possession of Empire was significant in forging a sense of 'Britishness' in the late eighteenth century. The British may well have constructed their identity by contrasting themselves with their French neighbours, but this was heightened by the long global duel with France.[16] The Scots were also perhaps

[14] W. Hamish Fraser, *The Coming of the Mass Market* (London, 1981); H. John Field, *Toward a Programme of Imperial Life: The British Empire at the Turn of the Century* (Oxford, 1982); Hugh Cunningham, 'The Language of Patriotism, 1750–1914', *History Workshop*, XXII (1981), pp. 8–33, and 'Jingoism in 1877–78', *Victorian Studies*, XIV (1971), pp. 429–53.

[15] R. Koebner and H. D. Schmidt, *Imperialism: The Story and Significance of a Political Word, 1840–1960* (Cambridge, 1964).

[16] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (London, 1992).

crucial to this new identity, and although Britain was often referred to as England, from the early eighteenth century the Empire was never anything other than British, a setting for common action by the component populations of the British Islands.[17]

News of colonial activities circulated fairly widely. History painters, who had previously depicted events mainly from the past, took to portraying such moments as Wolfe's death at Quebec in 1759, the acquisition of the Bengal *diwani* by Robert Clive in 1765, and the succession of wars against Tipu Sultan, ruler of Mysore in the last two decades of the century. Such paintings appeared in highly public places, such as buildings in the Vauxhall and other gardens on the South Bank of the Thames, or circulated in engravings. After Captain Cook's death in Hawaii in 1779 he too became the subject of paintings, engravings, and poems.[18] Such Imperial paintings represent a significant strand in British popular art until the early twentieth century. The work of landscape artists (such as Thomas and William Daniell, who visited India between 1786 and 1793 and published their magnificent volumes between 1795 and 1808) was reproduced in engravings throughout the century. Even more influential were paintings of the defining moments of Empire, Imperial campaigns, and its soldiery and heroes. Sometimes these were painted well after the events depicted. Sir David Wilkie completed his vast canvas of General Sir David Baird discovering the body of Tipu Sultan in 1838, commemorating an event from the Mysore wars in 1799. Lady Elizabeth Butler painted *The Remnants of an Army* in 1879, illustrating the British disaster of 1842 in Afghanistan. Others, like the Indian Mutiny paintings of Frederick Goodall and Henry Nelson O'Neill and G. W. Joy's celebrated depiction of Gordon's death at Khartoum, were painted soon after the events. By the end of the nineteenth century photography was beginning to play a similar role and received wide circulation through the press, postcards, cigarette cards, and advertising.[19]

Visual materials were also used to promote the religious and humanitarian concerns of Empire. These illustrate not only a degree of cultural continuity but also the manner in which different social classes and regions of the country could be swept up into major issues of the day. Just as Protestantism was an important marker of 'Britishness' in the late eighteenth century, so was evangelicalism and its

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[17] George Kirk McGilvary, 'East India Patronage and the Political Management of Scotland, 1720–74', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Open University, Scotland, 1989; G. J. Bryant, 'Scots in India in the Eighteenth Century', *Scottish Historical Review*, I, 14 (1985), pp. 22–41.

[18] Bernard Smith, *Imagining the Pacific: In the Wake of the Cook Voyages* (New Haven, 1992), chap. 10.

[19] Brian Allen, 'From Plassey to Seringapatam: India and British History Painting, c.1760–c.1800', in C. A. Bayly, ed., *Raj: India and the British, 1600–1947* (London, 1990), pp. 26–27; John M. MacKenzie, 'The Art of Empire', in P. J. Marshall, ed., *Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 296–315. James Ryan, *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualisation of the British Empire* (London, 1997).

related humanitarian complex a significant element in Imperial culture. The Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, founded in 1787, was largely middle class, but pioneered techniques that were to embrace a much wider spectrum of the population in the nineteenth century. Effective use of tracts, pamphlets, books, petitions, lectures, powerful visual images and related artefacts soon made slavery a cross-class issue. The propaganda success of this movement influenced domestic political campaigns such as Chartism and the Anti-Corn Law League.[20] It notably drew upon the energies of women and stimulated the remarkable working-class boycott of American cotton in Lancashire in the early 1860s.

At a time when considerable sectors of the population gave time to the education and entertainment as well as spiritual uplift available in the churches, humanitarian concerns permeated the missionary movement. The Victorians became particularly interested in how exemplary lives could illustrate the social and spiritual objectives of these movements and provide moral touchstones to a contemporary generation. William Wilberforce, David Livingstone, and Charles Gordon were all hero-worshipped for their work against the slave trade. Missionary memoirs and biographies, from Robert Moffat in the 1840s to Mary Slessor in the early 1900s, became a popular aspect of publishing. Moreover, evangelical activity offered a milieu where women could express themselves more freely than in many other walks of life. They became steadily more involved in missionary recruitment, fund-raising, and propaganda.[21] The professions increasingly open to them, namely, teaching and nursing, were important routes to work within the Empire overseas, and a source of support at home. Women churchgoers in the city of Glasgow, for example, were active in the Ladies' Colonial Association and the Ladies' Association for the Advancement of Female Education in India in the later decades of the century.[22] Here women were doing much more than acting as auxiliaries in the Imperial endeavour: they were creating significant means of self-expression and independent action, often related to their (albeit culturally and racially slanted) concerns about the position of women in other societies.

From the late eighteenth century a tradition of highly topical theatre began to concentrate on exotic peoples and events. Portraits were painted of Omai, a

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[20] J. R. Oldfield, *Popular Politics and British Anti-Slavery: The Mobilisation of Public Opinion Against the Slave Trade, 1783–1807* (Manchester, 1995); R. Coupland, *The British Anti-Slavery Movement* (London, 1933); Douglas A. Lorimer, *Colour, Class and the Victorians: English Attitudes to the Negro in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Leicester, 1978).

[21] Clare Midgley, *Women Against Slavery: The British Campaigns, 1780–1870* (London 1992), and 'Anti-slavery and Feminism in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Gender and History*, III, 3 (1993), pp. 343–62.

[22] Stana Nenadic, 'The Victorian Middle Classes', in Hamish Fraser and Irene Maver, eds., *Glasgow*, Vol. II, *1830–1912*, (Manchester 1996), p. 288.

Tahitian brought to London by Captain Cook, and he was the subject of theatrical performances on the London stage.[23] One such was John O'Keefe's pantomime *Omai, or a Trip Round the World*, which ran in London and the provinces to capacity audiences between 1785 and 1788. A play about Tipu Sultan, *Tippoo Saib or British Valour in India*, appeared on the London stage in 1791. It included 'a battle dance and a representation of an English and Indian Grand Martial Procession'.[24] It was the first of several dramatic portrayals of Tipu which appeared in 1792, 1799, and 1838. The events of the Napoleonic wars were similarly staged, sometimes in spectacular settings, using aquatic displays, horses, and other animals.[25] By the 1820s the fascination with India of such Romantic poets as Byron, Shelley, De Quincey, and Coleridge was communicated to the theatre and a sequence of popular melodramas was performed on the London and provincial stages.[26] Pantomime, another dramatic form which developed great popularity, also began to use exotic characters, often people from the East associated with Imperial expansion.[27]

The particular conditions of the London and provincial theatre, notably the prevailing censorship, helped emphasize these interests. Domestic political and class conflict, depictions of the royal family and politicians, references to the Irish problem or biblical subjects and religious controversies were all banned.[28] Consequently, plays involving geographical discovery, Empire and war, portrayal of other peoples, and the creation of spectacular fantasy worlds were particularly acceptable. Thus, popular melodrama which in the past had usually derived its effects from the interplay of upper and lower classes, sometimes highlighting moral dilemmas inherent in exploitative social and economic relations, turned overseas in order to produce the same effects, thus externalizing class into race. In this period the audience was being offered exciting new information, fantastic visions of the East which, although sometimes set in East India Company territories, perhaps had more to do with oriental fascinations than Imperial issues.

[23] Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific, 1768–1850: A Study in the History of Art and Ideas* (1969; London, 1985), pp. 114–16.

[24] P. J. Marshall, 'Taming the Exotic: The British and India in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in G. S. Rousseau and Roy Porter, eds., *Exoticism in the Enlightenment* (Manchester, 1990), p. 56; Heidi Holder, 'Melodrama, Realism and Empire on the British Stage', in J. S. Bratton and others, *Acts of Supremacy: The British Empire and the Stage, 1790–1930* (Manchester, 1991), pp. 129–49.

[25] Derek Forbes, 'Aquatic Drama', in David Bradby and others, eds., *Performance and Politics in Popular Drama* (Cambridge 1980), pp. 90–112; Michael Booth, *Victorian Spectacular Theatre, 1850–1910* (London, 1981).

[26] Holder, 'Melodrama, Realism and Empire'; Michael Booth, *English Melodrama* (London, 1965); Nigel Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire* (Cambridge, 1992).

[27] David Mayer, *Harlequin in his Element: The English Pantomime, 1806–36* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969).

[28] John Russell Stephens, *The Censorship of the English Drama, 1824–1901* (Cambridge, 1980).

In many of the early-nineteenth-century plays, interracial couples (almost always a white male and an Asian female) featured prominently: audiences seem to have been fascinated by the crossing of racial lines. The conflict between good and evil, lying at their core, was normally worked out among indigenous factions with Europeans intervening only to promote the victory of truth and justice.[29] An enduring European figure in many plays was 'Jack Tar', a working-class naval hero, invariably seen as rough and rowdy at home but heroically moral abroad. Until about 1850, Tar often fought for interracial harmony and assisted the victory of noble indigenous figures. Later, the increasing concern with the technological and moral superiority of Britain over other parts of the world was expressed by him in chauvinistic language and violent events.

The Indian Revolt of 1857, the Zulu War of 1879, the death of General Gordon at Khartoum, and events in southern Africa in the 1890s and during the Boer War were all staged both in London and the 'provinces' in highly popular plays. In these later works alleged racial differences tended to be presented much more starkly.[30] However, it has been suggested that even this material is highly ambiguous, identifying a 'concentration upon the expiation of Imperial guilt by the sacrifice and return to life of the hero'.[31]

The truly distinctive theatrical form of the later nineteenth century was, however, the music hall. This developed from traditional entertainment in pubs and 'song and supper' saloons, mainly in working-class areas. By the 1870s licensing policies were creating a divide between drinking and the provision of variety shows, and there was a country-wide explosion in theatre building. Music halls sprang up in almost every town and similar entertainments were provided in all of them.[32] Patriotic song scenes, featuring uniformed performers, the showing of the flag, and even representations of Britannia and Queen Victoria, invariably formed a significant part of such shows. The 'tableau vivant' was another characteristic form, sufficiently respectable to appear in church halls as well as theatres. These tableaux often featured well-known patriotic and Imperial events, re-created in frozen dumb-show. Sometimes they followed a well-known painting, thus providing an additional spark of visual recognition for the audience, or took up a key moment in the Indian Mutiny, or Gordon's death.

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[29] J. S. Bratton, 'British Heroism and the Structure of Melodrama', in Bratton and others, *Acts of Supremacy*, pp. 18–61.

[30] Holder, 'Melodrama, Realism and Empire'.

[31] Bratton, 'British Heroism', p. 58.

[32] Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830–85* (London, 1978); R. Mander and J. Mitchensen, *British Music Hall* (London, 1965); G. J. Mellor, *The Northern Music Hall* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1970).

Celebrated singers performed patriotic songs in the most famous London and provincial halls, gaining considerable fame and fortune as a result. Lesser-known imitators carried this material to remoter theatres, while the songs gained further publicity via sheet music for home performance, and concert parties at seaside resorts and in the parks of the larger municipalities. The most famous of these songs was G. W. Hunt's 'By Jingo', source of the word 'jingoism', and performed by G. H. Macdermott during the Russo-Turkish crisis of 1877–78. This represented aggressive nationalism, but there were countless others with more specific Imperial content,[33] one such, again by Hunt, relating to the Afghan crisis of 1879:

> The Afghan Wolf may friendship make
> With cunning Russian Bear,
> But the Indian Tiger's wide awake
> And bids them both beware!
> The prowling foe on plunder bent
> By this should surely know
> The British Lion's not asleep
> As in the years ago.
> The dusky sons of Hindostan
> Will by our banner stand.
> Australia, aye, and Canada,
> Both love the dear old land!
> No foe we fear—we fight for right!
> No day we e'er shall rue
> If England, dear old England,
> To herself be only true.

This representation of countries as animals was extremely common, not only in songs but also in contemporary cartoons. It helped, perhaps, to heighten a sense of power and aggression. The appeal to the White Dominions to stand together with the mother country against a supposedly common foe was also a frequent refrain. In the music halls Tommy Atkins became the equally celebrated military equivalent of Jack Tar.[34] One song from 1894 featured Tommy fighting throughout the Empire:

> And whether he's on India's coral strand,
> Or pouring out his blood in the Soudan,
> To keep our flag a flying, he's doing and a dying,
> Every inch of him a soldier and a man.

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[33] Penny Summerfield, 'Patriotism and Empire: Music Hall Entertainment, 1870–1914', in Mackenzie, *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, pp. 17–48.

[34] Kipling, of course, popularized Tommy Atkins as a generic name for the British soldier, though it originated *c*.1815 when it was used as the name on the specimen enlistment form.

This kind of material led Hobson to portray the music hall as a fount of patriotism, a 'potent educator' of 'mob passion', 'appealing by coarse humour or exaggerated pathos to the animal lusts of an audience stimulated by alcohol into appreciative hilarity'.[35] Many historians have found this seriously overdrawn. However, more recent research indicates that such entertainment was indeed enormously popular in both the working-class halls of London's East End and the middle-class theatres of the West End and wealthier suburbs. Even if Hobson's language is excessively lurid, patriotic shows, prominently featuring Imperial material, were undoubtedly immensely popular from at least the 1870s to 1914. Although much of this material was also satirized, satirical versions themselves tend to indicate the considerable fame of the original rather than undermine its sentiment.[36] Perhaps the underlying comic aspect of many of these songs helped deflect some of the violence and aggression, stressing instead the ambiguities and complexities of the Imperial relationship.

Theatrical fascination with the spectacular character of Imperial activity was matched in visual entertainments which also inspired a considerable following. Exotic animals and peoples were both displayed in commercial shows,[37] but more people probably encountered such diversions through the painted panoramas, dioramas, and cosmoramas shown throughout Britain.[38] The panorama, dating from the 1780s, originally presented a 360-degree image, like a vast theatrical set (and indeed scene painters often executed them) to be viewed from a central gallery. More sophisticated successors offered huge continuous tableaux either as a canvas which was gradually unfurled or on painted boards slid into place by elaborate systems of rollers. The Battle of the Nile appeared on a panorama in 1799, soon followed by the fall of Seringapatam. Thereafter all major military actions were displayed, including events of the Indian Mutiny, the bombardment of Alexandria and the Battle of Tel-el-Kebir during Britain's invasion of Egypt in 1882, and the action at Omdurman in reconquering the Sudan in 1898. Distinguished painters and set designers—David Roberts, John Martin, Frederick Catherwood, and Augustus Earle—were all celebrated for their panoramas.

As the century wore on, many assumed exploratory and didactic purposes: trips around the world, the Overland Mail to India (presented with the assistance of the P&O shipping company), journeys to Hong Kong and later across the Canadian Pacific and Trans-Siberian Railways. Material on emigration, particularly to

[35] Hobson, *Psychology of Jingoism*, pp. 1, 3, 9.

[36] Lawrence Senelick, 'Politics as Entertainment: Victorian Music Hall Songs', *Victorian Studies*, XIX (1975), pp. 149–80.

[37] Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978).

[38] Ralph Hyde, *Panoramania: The Art and Entertainment of the 'All-Embracing View'* (London, 1988).

Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, was disseminated in this way, and there were vast views of eastern cities such as Bombay, Benares, Delhi, and Hong Kong. A Delhi artist even produced spectacular images of the Mughal Emperor's durbar procession in 1815. Panoramas can be seen as a highly successful bridge between high art and popular entertainment. They represented major technical advances in perspective, optics, and efforts at a fresh representation of the world. Displayed everywhere in dedicated buildings, they were a significant means whereby an Imperial people could visualize and encompass within their own imaginations the scale of conquest and command of the outer world. The art critic, social commentator, and supporter of Imperialism John Ruskin greatly approved of them. He described a panorama building in Leicester Square, London, as an 'educational institution of the highest and purest value', worthy of government support as a beneficial 'educational instrument'.[39]

The Indian Revolt of 1857 as an Ideological Turning-Point

While there was considerable continuity in these cultural expressions of Empire, it is also apparent that significant shifts took place in the last decades of the nineteenth century. What had earlier seemed fresh and exotic, full of intriguing potential, became more a battleground not only among empires but also between technical and moral systems. A heightened sense of conflict, a greater anxiety about British capacity to survive and prosper, but also more powerful convictions of cultural superiority and moral worth ran through later projections of Imperialism in these metropolitan cultures. Why had this happened? We can perhaps find answers in the actual events of Imperial rule, in the growing sense of international competition, and in growth of the mass market and the universal search for public acceptability.

One of the most significant ideological turning-points in this cultural metamorphosis came with the Indian Revolt or Mutiny of 1857. Thereafter, this was seen as a great moral watershed, a defining moment of Empire when it faced its greatest test and survived. It also contributed to a progressive heightening of racial attitudes in Imperial culture. The murders of white women and children were particularly shocking to Victorian sensibilities. The Mutiny appeared not only to call forth exemplary heroism, but also to indicate that Indians had rejected policies of Western assimilation. Such racial ideas were further exacerbated by controversy over the brutal suppression by Governor Eyre of the Jamaica Revolt of 1865.[40]

[39] Hyde, *Panoramania: The Art and Entertainment of the 'All-Embracing View'*, p. 28.
[40] See below, pp. 486–87.

Many Victorians, convinced of the supposedly progressive moral and economic effects of Empire upon indigenous peoples and ex-slaves, regarded such resistance as evidence of ingratitude and unwillingness to accept Imperial benefits. Such attitudes were inevitably reflected in the popular culture of the time. Moreover, if the term 'New Imperialism' has meaning, it lies not least in the development of pseudo-scientific racism, the codification of Imperial thought, and the development of the relationship between Empire and education, societies, and exhibitions.

The Mutiny certainly helped transform the army's reputation, already enhanced by the Crimean War; troops became heroic saviours of the besieged avengers of British honour. In the development of Imperial history paintings, it was the Mutiny which helped to create a tradition of grand and sentimental Imperial canvases by such artists as Goodall and O'Neill.[41] The Mutiny also helped generate the atmosphere of hero-worship so characteristic of late-nineteenth-century imperialism. The military leaders of its suppression, figures such as Sir James Outram (the 'Bayard of India' as he was dubbed in a conscious invocation of the medieval Crusades), Herbert Edwardes (whom John Ruskin described as a 'military bishop'), Sir Henry Lawrence (dying while besieged in Lucknow), and above all Sir Henry Havelock became evangelical knights, defenders of the faith as well as the Empire.[42]

Religion, heroism, and Empire were conjoined in a potent mix. Nineteenth-century heroes, most notably Livingstone and General Gordon, were essentially religious figures, portrayed as moral titans facing dark forces which martyred them in a Christ-like sacrifice. The churches and missionary societies were not the least sources of the popular culture of Empire. Moreover, it was perhaps the Mutiny which transformed that powerful evangelical figure Samuel Smiles from a radical, self-improving, working-class propagandist into one who used Empire as a prime source of moral uplift and self-help.[43] He certainly made much of the Mutiny heroes (Campbell and Havelock both had relatively humble social origins), and of David Livingstone whose reputation was contemporaneously being forged in Africa.[44] The Indian Revolt may also have helped transform Ruskin into

[41] J. W. M. Hichberger, *Images of the Army: The Military in British Art, 1815–1914* (Manchester, 1988); Paul Usherwood, 'Officer Material: Representations of Leadership in Late Nineteenth-Century British Battle Painting', in John M. MacKenzie, ed., *Popular Imperialism and the Military* (Manchester, 1992), pp. 162–78.

[42] John M. MacKenzie, 'Heroic Myths of Empire', in MacKenzie, *Popular Imperialism and the Military*, pp. 109–38.

[43] Angus Calder, 'Samuel Smiles: The Unexpurgated Version', *The Raven, Anarchist Quarterly*, V (1989), pp. 79–89.

[44] Samuel Smiles, *Self Help* (London, 1859). A photograph of Livingstone provided the frontispiece of all later editions of Smiles's best-selling work.

the fervent imperialist of his inaugural lecture as Slade Professor at Oxford in 1870.[45]

The military myths of the Mutiny fed into the visual, theatrical, and fictional representations of Imperial action in the later part of the century. They also contributed to the tradition of Christian militarism, which helped enhance the reputation of both army and navy and was reflected in the founding of youth organizations with their military forms and an Imperial patriotism as part of their moral training. The Salvation Army first appeared in 1878, and cadet corps sprang up in the public schools and even spread to working-class districts. The Boys' Brigade was founded in Glasgow in 1883; by 1896 there were over 700 companies in Britain and many soon appeared in the Dominions and colonies. The Anglican Church Lads' Brigade followed in 1891, the Nonconformist Boys' Life Brigade in 1899, and there were Jewish and Catholic equivalents. Many other organizations (such as the Boys' Empire League, the Boys' Naval Brigade, and the Boys' Rifle Brigade) stressed Imperial patriotism with rather less attention to the religious dimension. The Imperial context was given a new twist with the founding of the Boy Scouts (soon followed by the Girl Guides) in 1907 by the hero of the Siege of Mafeking in the South African War, Sir Robert (later Lord) Baden-Powell. He created the most popular youth organization of modern times, and through it brought an Imperial frontier vision (represented in its uniform of shorts, shirt, and broad-brimmed hat, and its emphasis on the outdoors and natural observation) to the training of the young.

The Culture of the New Imperialism

The shifting tone of Empire is observable in the tradition of Imperial exhibitions. The first Great Exhibition, at the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park, London, in 1851, was concerned with the relationship between arts and industry and with world-wide commerce. It represented Britain at the peak of its global economic power displaying Imperial products intermingled with foreign exhibits.[46] In the 1862 Exhibition in South Kensington this Imperial content had grown considerably. India had no fewer than 7,000 exhibits and thirty other colonies also took part, but it was still portrayed as an international exhibition featuring the trade of all nations.

However, from the 1880s the exhibitions became explicitly Imperial and continued so until the Glasgow Empire Exhibition of 1938. In 1886 the London

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[45] 'Inaugural Lecture', in E. T. Cook and A. Wedderburn, eds., *The Works of John Ruskin*, 39 vols. (London, 1903–12), XX, pp. 17–43, and 'The Two Paths', *Works*, XVI, pp. 261–65, where Ruskin, in a series of lectures delivered in 1858, indicates his revulsion from the Mutiny and revaluation of Indian art.

[46] Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851–1939* (Manchester, 1988).

Exhibition was known as 'the Colonial and Indian', an Imperial emphasis continued through many provincial expositions, for example, in Glasgow (1888, 1901, and 1911), Wolverhampton (1902), Bradford (1904), Edinburgh (1908), Liverpool (1913), and Newcastle (1929). In London, exhibitions were so popular that they were mounted commercially by the remarkable Imre Kiralfy. Among his many exhibitions were the Empire of India (1895), the Greater Britain (1899), the Imperial International (1909), and the Coronation (1911). A second, official, Coronation Exhibition was held at the Crystal Palace at Sydenham. The whole movement climaxed with the great Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1924–25.[47] One might view this growing concentration on Empire as yet another symptom of British relative decline. As other nations industrialized, and Britain became apparently more dependent on her Empire, the Imperial connection became the most important focus for these public displays of wealth and power.

These exhibitions featured the products, trade, technology, and cultures of mother country and colonies. The declared objective of the 1886 'Colinderies' (as the Colonial and Indian Exhibition was known) was 'to give to the inhabitants of the British Isles, to foreigners and to one another, practical demonstration of the wealth and industrial development of the outlying portions of the British Empire'.[48] In fact, this and other exhibitions tended to concentrate on Britain's industries' and colonies' potential as suppliers of markets, raw materials, and foodstuffs. As temporary museums of industry, science, and natural history, they also included anthropological and folk display, emigration bureaux, musical festivals, and art galleries. An important element in the later exhibitions (especially Kiralfy's) was a vast funfair, which increased their great popularity. But visitors who moved from the funfair into the other exhibition arenas cannot have failed to sense the extraordinary economic and administrative, military, and cultural power they were designed to represent.

Yet the exhibitions also represented a cultural (if not yet an economic) retreat from free trade and the *laissez-faire* liberalism which had sustained the British since the 1840s. From the 1880s their message was that the British, as a world-wide family of white settler territories and colonies, should stick together in a supposedly complementary economic system.[49] In this, they revealed an awareness of growing continental protectionism, European imperial rivalries, and endemic bouts of industrial depression. As with so much to do with Empire, they were enshrining a number of myths. It was already clear that the Imperial system was far from self-sufficient or internally complementary. Not until the serious slumps of

[47] Exhibitions also took place throughout the Empire, in, for example, Sydney, Calcutta, Bombay, Johannesburg, and Wellington. See Vol. IV, chap. by John M. Mackenzie.

[48] F. Cundall, ed., *Reminiscences of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition* (London, 1886), pp. 1–2.

[49] cf. pp. 348–57.

the inter-war years did the message of Imperial exhibitions seem to match the economic and political mood.

The exhibitions represented a sharpening sense of Imperial conflict and the need for new forms of mutuality in the British Empire; they also indicated a heightening of racial consciousness. The most intriguing (and most frequently commented upon) displays were the 'native villages' that commonly appeared. There was nothing exclusively 'British' about these: they featured peoples from the British, French, and even Russian empires, supposedly inhabiting their traditional dwellings, and displaying craftsmanship, cooking, and sports for visitors' edification. They became a form of ethnic 'peep-show', simultaneously illustrating 'backwardness' and alternative lifestyles. Many Indians came to demonstrate their crafts at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition and several were painted (mainly by Rudolf Swoboda) for Queen Victoria—the paintings are now hung outside the durbar dining room at Osborne House. At Kiralfy's Greater Britain Exhibition in 1899 South African peoples (including Zulu, Sotho, and Swazi) re-enacted scenes from their recent history. A Somali village (stressing the martial nature of Somalis) appeared at several subsequent exhibitions, and also toured seaside resorts. This was a cross-empire fascination, two of the most popular shows being of Dahomeyan and Senegalese villagers first displayed at the Jardin d'Acclimatation in Paris.[50]

Missionary and other societies put on smaller-scale exhibitions in many localities, illustrating their work but also displaying the artefacts and lifestyles of peoples in the Empire. This was the popular and propagandist end of the ethnographic displays mounted in national and private collections, in London (the British Museum and the Horniman Museum), and elsewhere such as Oxford (the Pitt-Rivers Museum), and Liverpool (the Joseph Mayer collection).[51] Smaller ethnographic collections appeared widely in municipal museums and the country houses of those associated with travel or Empire. Such collections illustrated the full range of human taxonomies, paralleling the classification which had gone on throughout the century of new discoveries in botany, entomology and zoology. Although such human materials had been collected since the days of Elizabethan exploration, the process quickened in the eighteenth century and peaked in the period between 1880 and the First World War.

Museums distinguished clearly between the art and artefacts of the 'civilizations' of Europe and the ancient Mediterranean world and those of other peoples.

[50] Michael A. Osborne, *Nature, the Exotic and the Science of French Colonialism* (Bloomington, Ind., 1994); William H. Schneider, *An Empire for the Masses: The French Popular Image of Africa, 1870–1900* (Westport, Conn., 1982).

[51] Annie E. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (London, 1994).

Such 'ethnic' materials were increasingly used to illustrate concepts of social evolution according to stages of 'development', from hunting and gathering, through pastoral and agricultural modes, to commercial and industrial systems. Thus, other peoples were organized into categories which derived authority from their air of scientific objectivity but essentially reflected Europeans' views of themselves. Charles Darwin's two great works, *The Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871), came to underpin much of the ethnography and pseudo-scientific racism of the period (as they did much of later-nineteenth-century intellectual life and in ways largely unintended by Darwin himself). Herbert Spencer, among others, applied Darwin's theory of 'natural selection' to human societies, reinforcing older ideas that 'primitive' peoples, and some supposedly static 'advanced' societies, were liable to extinction if they failed to adapt to the modern world. Such 'social Darwinian' ideas became central to much popular culture, including advertising, juvenile literature, and school textbooks.

Schools were indeed another important medium for the projection of an Imperial culture. While the Empire's development was treated in some early geographical texts, only after the Education Act of 1870 did the significance of Imperial rule in the formation and development of the British state become truly prominent in the large numbers of school texts, on British history, world geography, and the development of English language and literature, which were produced until the 1950s.[52] Many were influenced by Sir John Seeley's *The Expansion of England* (London, 1883) and by the school of Imperial geographers that emerged late in the century. However, there was no state control of the production or use of such texts and a wide variety were in circulation at any moment. They offered various shades of opinion about Empire (though none expressed outright criticism) and their emphases subtly changed to match contemporary Imperial objectives. Many included racial ideas influenced by such notions as climatic determinism and social Darwinism. The reformed English public schools are often seen as the main forcing-ground for this type of material, but state educators both in Britain and the Empire often set out to emulate them.[53]

The re-invention of other cultures at exhibitions and their placing in the scale of human history in school texts was strongly influenced by the emerging discipline of anthropology.[54] Practitioners of this new approach to the study of humankind seldom did fieldwork, but pursued their researches by reading the travel accounts

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[52] Kathryn Castle, *Britannia's Children: Reading Colonialism through Children's Books and Magazines* (Manchester 1996).

[53] J. A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School* (Cambridge, 1981); J. A. Mangan, ed., *'Benefits Bestowed'? Education and British Imperialism* (Manchester, 1988), and *Making Imperial Mentalities: Socialisation and British Imperialism* (Manchester, 1990).

[54] George W. Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (New York, 1987).

of others. They also provided questionnaires for people who did visit colonial territories: missionaries, military officers, and administrators. Many travellers were also notable amateur anthropologists, whose works had a wider circulation than those by writers considering themselves professionals. Mary Kingsley, who travelled in West Africa between 1893 and 1895, followed the tradition of Livingstone in including anthropological accounts as well as colonial economic theory and natural history in her books.[55]

When anthropologists did become field workers, from about 1900, they usually worked within Imperial structures, utilizing the authority gleaned from power, offering advice to rulers and helping to train officials. Anthropology, in consequence, has often been seen as a discipline owing its origins and early development to dominance by Europe of much of the outer world. Nevertheless, although heavily influenced by Darwinism, anthropological discourse was not monolithic. It was riven by controversy, amply reflected in the organizations founded to support ethnographic study. The Ethnological Society of London, founded by Thomas Hodgkin in 1844, retained many of the humanitarian interests of its founders, but racial determinists influenced by Robert Knox (whose *Races of Man* was first published in 1850) founded the Anthropological Society of London in 1863. These two strands of ethnographic study re-established their uneasy partnership in the Anthropological Institute in 1871.[56] Such differences of interpretations however, were seldom inimical to the development or practice of Imperial rule.

Like anthropology, many physical and life sciences were similarly affected by, and in turn influenced, the contexts of power in which they grew up. Well into the twentieth century such disciplines retained a fundamental belief in scientific and technical progress rooted in Imperial ideas of the beneficent spread of Western science. In the nineteenth century they were associated with the extensive development of societies, professional associations, and a considerable amateur membership; their lectures and publications had a much wider public interest than the purely professional. Thus, they became significant channels through which scientific developments associated with imperialism were disseminated to wider audiences. There is space here to consider only one of the most influential interests, the geographical societies.

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[55] Dea Birkett, *Mary Kingsley: Imperial Adventuress* (Basingstoke, 1992); Mary Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa, Congo Français, Corisco and Cameroons* (London, 1897), and *West African Studies* (London, 1899).

[56] Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes towards Race* (London, 1971); Lorimer, 'Race, Science and Culture: Historical Continuities and Discontinuities, 1850–1914', in Shearer West, ed., *The Victorians and Race* (Aldershot, 1996), pp. 12–33.

The origins and development of the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) are considered elsewhere.[57] However, the wider growth of geographical societies is emblematic of the broadening social base of such interest, the emergence of regional bodies with their own agendas, and the stimuli offered, for example, by the Scramble for Africa. The social composition of the early RGS was aristocratic and upper middle class, its prime interests in travel and exploration.[58] But from the 1870s greater interest was shown in both the development of commercial geography and the emergence of a more strictly scientific discipline. Although the RGS remained a strikingly Imperial body, it was now riven by controversies with class, professional, practical, and even gender bases.[59]

Pressure for change came from those who felt the discipline should be severely practical, concentrating on the economic potential of overseas territories, especially for metropolitan industry and trade. Moreover, some argued, geography was too London-dominated; it needed to expand into the provinces, there to be utilized and propagated by practical men of business. Plans for a geographical society in Manchester, begun in 1879, finally bore fruit in 1884. It was founded by prominent local politicians, businessmen, clergy, and professional people, active in what has sometimes been called 'municipal imperialism'. An excellent example was the wealthy merchant J. F. Hutton; highly influential in the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, he was concerned, along with many others, to overcome cyclical depression in the Lancashire cotton and related trades, and was involved in schemes for colonial rule in East and Central Africa. At the society's opening meeting the explorer and journalist H. M. Stanley stressed the importance of such societies to the survival of an Imperial state; to do his job properly every clerk in the industrial, commercial, and shipping offices of provincial cities should have some understanding of the geography of Empire.[60]

In the next few years geographical societies swiftly followed in Scotland (the Royal Scottish, with four branches in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Dundee), Newcastle, Liverpool, Hull, and Southampton. They all sought to create popular local memberships (including women, not admitted to the RGS in

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[57] See chap. by Robert A. Stafford.

[58] D. R. Stoddart. 'The RGS and the "New Geography": Changing Aims and Changing Roles in Nineteenth-Century Science', *Geographical Journal* (hereafter *GJ*), CXXXXVI (1980), pp. 190–202; D. R. Stoddart, *On Geography and its History* (Oxford, 1986).

[59] Morag Bell and Cheryl McEwan, 'The Admission of Women Fellows to the Royal Geographical Society, 1892–1914: The Controversy and the Outcome', *GJ*, CLXII, 3 (1996), pp. 295–312.

[60] John M. MacKenzie, 'Geography and Imperialism: British Provincial Geographical Societies', in Felix Driver and Gillian Rose, eds., *Nature and Science: Essays in the History of Geographical Knowledge* (London, 1992), pp. 49–62, and 'The Provincial Geographical Societies in Britain, 1884–1914', in Morag Bell, Robin Butlin, and Michael Heffernan, eds., *Geography and Imperialism, 1820–1940* (Manchester, 1995), pp. 93–124.

London until some twenty years later), hold lectures by distinguished visitors, issue publications (including semi-scholarly journals), promote the discipline in universities, teacher-training colleges, and schools, and offer prizes for exploratory and educational work. Outside London, only the highly successful Scottish society also financed exploration. Research on their early years has indicated the close association of these societies and the 'New Imperialism'. All were concerned with the cyclical depressions of these years, the international competition represented in Africa's partition, the expansion of knowledge to assist trade, the wide dissemination of Imperial information, and with influencing both governments and voters.

Their success was mixed. Both the Manchester and Scottish societies established firm local foundations, and survive to this day. The Royal Scottish, in particular, contributed significantly to Scotland's reputation as a scientific community pursuing its own interests at home and abroad, for example, in Antarctic exploration. The others rapidly lost members before and during the First World War, and despite attempts at resuscitation in Liverpool and Newcastle between the wars, they all disappeared, following the many other societies associated with Empire which rose and fell in the late nineteenth century. Perhaps their greatest success was in helping to establish the importance of geography in schools. They also brought together geography teachers and academics (who had formed a national body in the Geographical Association of 1894) and often created essay prizes for geography students. In this work they mirrored that of the Royal Colonial Institute, founded in London in 1868 and active in promoting Imperial studies in universities and schools.[61]

Although Imperial pressure groups' fortunes mirror the changing concerns of Empire, other means of propagating Imperial ideas had a longer life and deeper social penetration. This is perhaps particularly true of visual imagery such as advertising, engravings, and (from the 1890s) photography in newspapers and journals, as well as popular and official publications of all sorts. Various developments influenced the wide propagation of such ideas. The later nineteenth century has been seen as the first age of consumerism, reflected in the development of the modern mass market with all its extensive advertising, packaging, and devices (such as tea and cigarette cards) designed to maintain brand loyalty.[62] Many of these reflected patriotic pride, symbols of Empire and the excitements of Imperial events as well as racial ideas. New printing techniques made newspapers, magazines, and books cheaper and more commonly available. Modern studies of these

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[61] Trevor R. Reese, *The History of the Royal Commonwealth Society* (London 1968), pp. 80–92.
[62] Jan Nederveen Pietersee, *White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture* (New Haven, 1992); Robert Opie, *Rule Britannia: Trading on the British Image* (Harmondsworth, 1985).

humble, yet ubiquitous materials indicate that Imperial ideas of all sorts were extensively propagated through them. High literacy rates also made them widely accessible. Even as early as the 1840s, between two-thirds and three-quarters of the working class were fully literate. Between 1870 and 1900 the estimated literacy rate of England and Wales rose from 80 per cent to 97 per cent, and of Scotland from 90 per cent to 98 per cent.[63]

Like theatrical productions, such publications were seen as uplifting, likely to discourage crime or social dissent. They offered instruction about the wider world: they propagated sympathetic views of the military, the royal family, Empire-builders, and missionary endeavour. They contributed to an adventure tradition containing, in the view of many contemporaries, patriotism and moral uplift. For this reason a powerful consensus can be found among religious societies involved in publication—such as the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, and the Religious Tract Society, which published the *Boy's Own Paper* from 1879 and the *Girl's Own Paper* from 1880—and the writers and publishers of many other juvenile journals, Empire annuals, vast numbers of popular novels, as well as school texts. Publishers (notably Blackie) produced books with Imperial themes for use in the expanding prize and present market for the young. Sunday schools and corporation day schools actively disseminated the works of such authors as W. H. G. Kingston, R. M. Ballantyne, and G. A. Henty. The circulations of journals and novels with Imperial content were remarkable. Both the *Boy's* and *Girl's Own Paper* sold 200,000 copies per week from the start; their estimated readerships exceeded 600,000 by 1914. Novelists like Sir Henry Rider Haggard maintained their immense popularity until the Second World War and beyond, their works continuously in print throughout the century.[64]

These publications heightened a sense of national identity, of the common purpose of Empire. Yet within that British framework there were also regional responses. The relationship of Ireland with the Empire was peculiarly complex, as is shown elsewhere in this volume.[65]

For the Scots, too, Empire offered remarkable opportunities. In many respects Scottish national pride was nourished by the opportunity to extend her independent church, educational system, and other aspects of her civil society into Imperial territories.[66] Migration established many links, particularly as Presbyterian churches and Caledonian and Burns societies in settlement colonies helped to

[63] Joseph McAleer, *Popular Reading and Publishing in Britain, 1914–1950* (Oxford, 1992), p. 14.

[64] Jeffrey Richards, ed., *Imperialism and Juvenile Literature* (Manchester, 1989); McAleer, *Popular Reading*, pp. 20, 209, and *passim*; Joseph Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World* (London, 1991), pp. 72–106; 107–25.

[65] See chap. by David Fitzpatrick.

[66] MacKenzie, 'On Scotland and the Empire', pp. 732–37.

maintain close religious and cultural connections.[67] Scots took intense pride not
only in the work of missionaries and explorers such as John Philip, Robert Moffat,
and David Livingstone, but also in the ministers, doctors, botanists, engineers,
and teachers their universities supplied to the Empire.[68] Scots were also prominent
in environmental and forestry work. Scottish regiments, merchant houses, and
shipping lines (although many moved their headquarters to Liverpool or London)
were invariably identifiable as distinctively Scottish. These relationships were
emphasized in the major exhibitions held in Glasgow and Edinburgh between
1888 and 1911, as well as in missionary and learned societies.

While they lacked such a pronounced sense of cultural nationalism, the English
regions also had their distinctive economic and social connections with Empire.
Study of the relations of particular cities with the Empire, such as Birmingham,
Manchester, and Liverpool,[69] is revealing not only economic and social influences
but effects upon the architecture, planning, and design of provincial cities as well
as London itself. It should not be forgotten, also, that textiles, carpets, furniture,
and the very plants in parks and gardens all exhibited the influence of far-flung
Imperial territories. It was difficult to escape the visual impact of Empire in the
shops of Britain.

An Imperial Public?

In the sources surveyed above, developments can be traced in public attitudes not
only to Empire but to the emigrants and officials who colonized and ran it, the
naval and military arms of the state, and the monarchy. The later nineteenth
century witnessed the retreat of republicanism in Britain, and elevation of the
monarchy into an institution endowed with patriotic and Imperial symbolism
and enjoying a world-wide significance. This may have originated under
George III, but undoubtedly, with the great climax of the Diamond Jubilee in
1897, Queen Victoria came to represent almost an incarnation of Imperial
Britannia herself.

[67] R. A. Cage, ed., *The Scots Abroad* (London, 1985).
[68] John D. Hargreaves, *Academe and Empire: Some Overseas Connections of Aberdeen University,
1860–1970* (Aberdeen, 1994), esp. pp. 5–32 and 114–17. Richard H. Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial
Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600–1860* (Cambridge, 1995),
passim; Grove, 'Scottish Missionaries, Evangelical Discourses and the Origins of Conservation Think-
ing in Southern Africa, 1820–1900', in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, XV, 2 (1989), pp. 163–87; John
M. MacKenzie, *Empires of Nature and the Nature of Empires: Imperialism, Scotland and the Environment*
(East Linton, 1997), pp. 65–70.
[69] For Birmingham, Catherine Hall, 'Rethinking Imperial Histories, the Reform Act of 1867', *New
Left Review*, CCVIII (1994), pp. 3–29; M. H. Port, *Imperial London: Civil Government Building in
London, 1850–1915* (London, 1995); Jane M. Jacobs, *Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City*
(London, 1996).

An Imperial ideology, a potent mixture of patriotism, excitements in adventure and colonial warfare, reverence for the monarchy, a self-referencing approach to other peoples, admiration for military virtues (represented also by renewed interest in medieval chivalry), and a quasi-religious approach to the obligations of world-wide power, came to dominate many aspects of, especially, popular culture. Throughout society sporadic excitements turned patriotism into jingoism, ethnic self-regard often shaded into outright racism, and Imperial self-righteousness was capable of being transformed into extreme bellicosity. The ideological messages conveyed by this material were nevertheless also complex and conflicting. Notwithstanding anxiety and apprehension in the writings of Edwardian politicians and intellectuals, central characteristics of the popular cultural approach to Empire survived to resurface in the inter-war years.[70]

Nevertheless, historians have continued to be sceptical of the notion that Imperial ideas and enthusiasms penetrated deeply into the consciousness of the British public. Many societies, such as those connected with Imperial Federation in the 1880s, were short-lived and unsuccessful. Voters were influenced by hard-headed domestic concerns: the Imperial Preference issue seemed to demonstrate that colonial sentiment was likely to be subordinated to anxieties about dearer food. Emigration patterns to 1914 show that the United States was more attractive than the Dominions and colonies. Men were seldom eager to enlist in the army except when driven to it by unemployment and economic distress. The complex concept of social imperialism has been much discussed, but never convincingly applied to the period between 1870 and 1914. Later, the British reacted with relative equanimity to decolonization, experiencing little of the national trauma suffered by France or Portugal.

Yet the cultural expressions of Empire were undoubtedly highly pervasive. The framers and receivers of metropolitan culture were unlikely to adopt what was inimical to the populace. Imperial culture almost certainly represented a powerful interaction among the classes, illustrated in the eagerness of the suppliers of entertainment and popular literature, commercial advertisers, and the founders of youth organizations to attach themselves to it. The public, largely uninterested in specific Imperial principles and policies, were none the less fascinated by Empire's existence, its racial connotations, and the superior self-image which it offered in respect of the rest of the world. Imperial ideology was a significant aspect of late-nineteenth-century nationalism.

Empire also represented an area of convergence, not only between 'high' (as represented, for example, by Rudyard Kipling and Edward Elgar) and popular culture, but also among the political parties. Although politicians hotly debated

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[70] This argument is developed in Vol. IV, see chap. by John M. Mackenzie.

Imperial issues, they tended to coalesce on fundamental aspects of Imperial and patriotic rhetoric. The Liberals produced a group of influential Liberal Imperialists. The Fabians and later the Labour Party promoted ethical imperialism rather than anti-imperialism. Even the radical left, in the shape of H. M. Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation, was initially imperialist.

There are perhaps several powerful—and hitherto largely unnoticed—reasons for this: the existence of structures for disseminating Imperial ideas and images, the exceptionally long period over which they had been entering the British consciousness, their recognized role in consolidating the British state, and the opportunities they presented for a national common ground (however fraught individual issues might be). Hence, moments of Imperial and domestic danger tended to produce bellicose responses heavily laden with Imperial rhetoric. From the late eighteenth century, the public encountered ideas about Empire through news of overseas successes (and reverses), heroic journeys like those of Captain Cook, and the appearance of exotic people in their midst. Anti-slavery propaganda spread its tracts and images very widely, and the theatre repeatedly tackled Imperial themes. Many also heard of such issues from Christian preachers. Others—seamen, traders, and soldiers, for example—often had at least a passing experience of Empire at first hand.

In the nineteenth century the media expanded considerably: the theatre, sermons, tracts, and visual materials such as panoramas were joined by an illustrated press, social campaigns associated with Empire, exhibitions in churches, mechanics' institutions, and local museums, the music hall, national exhibitions in London and elsewhere, local societies, the schools, youth organizations, juvenile literature and journals, and many other forms of entertainment and advertising. Of course, work, family, income, health, and daily survival loomed largest for most people in Britain, but none the less Empire constituted a vital aspect of national identity and race-consciousness, even if complicated by regional, rural, urban, and class contexts. The complex ideological web of social Darwinism, and racial, monarchical, and militarist ideas continued to influence education, the socialization of the young, the integration of the United Kingdom, and the public attitudes which fed into national experiences well into the twentieth century.

Beloff and Said are perhaps both right—and both wrong. The British did not form a theory of empire because their Empire was so complex and culturally dominant that they did not need one. Yet, though it was all about them, a constant source of celebration and self-regard—as well as anxiety—its cultural presence was different from that envisaged by Said. It was more extensive and more popular, yet in some respects structurally less significant. Though it produced much cultural common ground, it also stimulated intense controversy.

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14

Scientific Exploration and Empire

ROBERT A. STAFFORD

Throughout the nineteenth century Britain sustained a programme of scientific exploration linked directly with her Imperial and trading interests. It played an important role both in shaping and expressing her culture. Although official commitment to exploration remained sporadic and efforts were rarely systematic, the continuity of British exploration is striking, and its purpose and style remained remarkably consistent. Britain maintained a higher level of exploratory activity than any other Great Power, making the promotion and popularity of exploration a powerful indicator of the strength of Britain's expansionist drive from the 1790s to the First World War.

Exploration can be defined as goal-directed research that creates knowledge in the laboratory of the wilderness. The explorer plays the same role in this regard as the scientist or inventor, increasing the capital of whatever group gains access to the new information. Exploration is an act of intervention that alters perspectives, probabilities, and processes in its parent culture and those that become its objects. People on the receiving end usually felt this most acutely, but Europeans were also aware of their intrusive impact on alien environments and cultures and realized that they themselves were being ineluctably altered by contact. The explorer was the catalyst that started the reaction, the agent of Europe's inevitable confrontation with peripheral lands.

Since the fifteenth century European exploration and imperialism had developed in the same cultural milieu as science, technology, the extractive industries, and the arts, all of which expressed the drive for wealth, control, and knowledge of the natural world. By the late eighteenth century exploration was a self-imposed expectation of the Great Powers. Particularly after Cook's voyages, the Enlightenment's voracious appetite for facts provided a powerful stimulus to discovery.[1] The comprehensive researches of Alexander von Humboldt added new rigour to this scientific enterprise by demonstrating that discrete data from different disciplines could be correlated to construct theoretical models with wide predictive

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[1] In Vol. II, see chap. by Glyndwr Williams.

value regarding natural processes and patterns of distribution. The power and confidence bequeathed to Britain by industrialization, grafted on to the scientific curiosity sanctioned by the Reformation, combined in the nineteenth century to intensify the nation's expansionist tendencies until they dominated most aspects of culture.[2]

The Organization of Exploration: Metropole and Periphery

The Royal Navy played a major role in managing British exploration during the first half of the century, controlling the world-wide marine charting effort, formalized with the foundation of the Admiralty's Hydrographic Department in 1795, that became one of the outstanding cartographic accomplishments of the Victorian age.[3] The great explorations that characterized the period from 1790 to 1830 were largely maritime coastal reconnaissances. During this era the Admiralty organized voyages of discovery that served a subsidiary training function during lulls in the hostilities with the French, whose achievement in hydrography Britain surpassed only in 1850. Like the Ordnance Survey maps of Britain, the celebrated Admiralty charts codified scientific, strategic, and commercial intelligence, constituting a significant investment in national expansion. For the premier naval, colonial, and maritime trading power, they were a necessity: they made the seas safe to travel. Because of the tradition begun by Joseph Banks[4] of assigning naturalists to naval surveying expeditions, a great deal of scientific research was accomplished during the course of the hydrographic endeavour. Such posts enabled Charles Darwin, Joseph Hooker (later Director of Kew Gardens), Joseph Jukes (later Director of the Geological Survey of Ireland), and Thomas Huxley (later Professor at the Royal School of Mines) to establish their reputations. The amateur tradition and decentralized structure of British science thus linked with official initiatives and resources in the cause of exploration.

In 1830 the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) was founded in London by a small group of enthusiasts led by John Barrow, Second Secretary of the Admiralty from 1804 to 1845. Its goals and membership were based on those of the African Association, established by Banks in 1788 to promote exploration in Africa and elsewhere, and the Raleigh Club, formed by supporters of exploration who seceded from the Travellers Club in 1826. Like earlier geographical societies set up in Paris (1821) and Berlin (1828), the RGS sought to promote scientific exploration over-

[2] Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880–1918* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983); Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London, 1993).

[3] G. S. Ritchie, *The Admiralty Chart: British Naval Hydrography in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1967).

[4] In Vol. II, see pp. 247, 249; 566–67; 573–74.

seas, presenting the results as maps and memoirs in its *Journal* and *Proceedings*.[5]
From its inception, the cartographers, military officers, colonial administrators,
scientists, politicians, diplomats, and travellers who managed the RGS explicitly
linked the Society's activities with Imperial affairs.[6] Most of the early papers were
contributed by the Admiralty and the Colonial, Foreign, and Indian Offices. The
annual addresses of RGS Presidents, like the memoirs, were replete with the
language of national expansion, assumptions of moral and technological super-
iority over other races, expressions of a natural theology that saw design in human
settlement patterns and environmental adaptation, and assertions of Britain's
right and duty to act at will around the world. Geography at the RGS was
conceived and practised in an ideological and institutional matrix that enmeshed
the goals of science and the nation in the practicalities of Imperial rule.[7] In the
widest context, the initiatives of the RGS represented an overseas extension of the
wave of quantification, classification, and improvement that transformed Europe
as a corollary of industrialization.

The RGS managed to secure partial government sponsorship for several early
expeditions, such as Robert Schomburgk's to British Guiana in 1831–35 and
William Ainsworth's to Armenia and Kurdistan in 1838–40. Disappointing results,
however, soon forced the Society to shift to a secondary role in co-ordinating
rather than funding explorations. Naval officers, meanwhile, played a key part in
Arctic exploration from 1820 to 1850, an endeavour driven as much by the urge to
redeem the quest's chief martyr, Sir John Franklin, who perished in 1847, as to
conclude the search for a North-west Passage. In roughly the same period, naval
officers took part in steamship explorations of the Niger and Zambezi rivers in
Africa that were driven by humanitarian pressure to encourage legitimate com-
merce and supplant the slave trade. The Niger voyages culminated the series of
explorations inspired by Mungo Park, another geographical martyr patronized by
Banks's African Association. The Zambezi initiative arose from the celebrity of the
missionary David Livingstone. The Admiralty's Hydrographic Department played
a central role in these undertakings, the line of succession running from Banks
through Barrow to Francis Beaufort and John Washington, official Hydrographers
in the periods 1829–55 and 1855–63. Barrow dominated naval exploration and most

[5] Hugh Robert Mill, *The Record of the Royal Geographical Society* (London, 1930), remains a more
informative source than Ian Cameron, *To the Farthest Ends of the Earth: The History of the Royal
Geographical Society, 1830–1980* (London, 1980).

[6] D. R. Stoddart, 'The R. G. S. and the "New Geography": Changing Aims and Roles in Nineteenth-
Century Science', *Geographical Journal*, CXLVI (1980), pp. 190–202.

[7] David N. Livingstone, 'The History of Science and the History of Geography: Interactions and
Implications', *History of Science*, XXII (1984), pp. 271–302; in this volume, see above, pp. 285, 286–88.

of Britain's terrestrial exploratory effort from Banks's death in 1820 until his own retirement in 1845.[8] These scientific officers wielded great power in Britain's geographical community. Holding posts in the RGS, Royal Society, British Association for the Advancement of Science, and other learned organizations, they ensured that the Senior Service's interests were attended to on most expeditions. As the great rivers were charted, however, and exploration of continental interiors became the only way to reduce the *terra incognita* further, the Admiralty lost its paramount geographical influence. The way was open for another institution to fill the void: the RGS only required determined leadership to enable it to realize the hopes of its founders.

At the RGS, the naval retreat was largely completed by 1850, when Sir Roderick Murchison, building on the work of other reformers, took firm control of Britain's specialist geographical institution and transformed it into the nation's—indeed, the world's—undisputed directorate of exploration. Murchison had already had three careers before he focused on geography: as a soldier, a fox-hunter, and a geologist who defined the Silurian, Devonian, and Permian stratigraphic systems. Like Humboldt, Murchison believed geology and geography were sister sciences, and his military and hunting background rendered him particularly interested in landforms and geography. Murchison not only saw the data provided by geography as critical to the advancement of all sciences, but as crucial to the commercial, military, and philanthropic endeavours of Europe, and Britain in particular. The key to his passionate interest in geography, as that of Victorians in general, was the map. As a spatial science of relationships, geography not only provided topographical base maps upon which scientific data could be recorded, but it codified information of immense value to everyone involved in managing outcomes based on interaction with the physical world. Maps provide a symbolic language that can legitimize the political power and territorial imperatives of those who deploy it. While Murchison and his colleagues understood the significance of maps as intellectual weapons, they spoke of them publicly as objective, value-neutral tools produced for the common good.[9]

Murchison was an ardent patriot who saw his geological tours as military campaigns, relied on imperial metaphors to describe the spread of his stratigraphic designations around the world, and supported the expansion of Britain's Empire throughout his career as a pillar of the scientific establishment. Murchison believed that the natural sciences played an important role in furthering British interests and that the nation had an obligation to support her scientists. His

[8] Christopher Lloyd, *Mr. Barrow of the Admiralty: A Life of Sir John Barrow, 1764–1848* (London, 1970).

[9] J. B. Harley, 'Maps, Knowledge and Power', in D. Cosgrove and S. Daniels, eds., *The Iconography of Time* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 277–312.

forceful character, indefatigable zeal, extensive social connections, and Imperial proclivities went far to ensure that the relationship between British science and Britain's Empire was mutually advantageous.

Murchison, perhaps more keenly than any contemporary savant, felt the connection between science and Empire. While his work to establish this connection found occasional expression through his offices in the Royal Society, Geological Society, and British Association, his most concerted efforts were channelled through the RGS. As his stratigraphic career flagged for want of continental masses to subdue in the early 1850s, he moved to align the RGS more closely with national needs. Many other public figures recorded similar feelings, but several first-rank scientists, including Darwin, Lyell, Huxley, Joseph Hooker, and Alfred Wallace, shunned Murchison's reconstituted RGS as a promotional farce insulting genuine science. Still, even these critics, as well as other proponents of exploration who did not advocate Empire, willingly used the influence of the RGS to raise funds for research. Conflicting agendas were thus subsumed under a blend of Imperial, humanitarian, and scientific rhetoric: Murchison's genius was to package proposals in language that balanced the factions. In part, he sought to popularize exploration in order to secure official funding for a series of expeditions that satisfied the public's thirst for adventure, the scientists' demand for data, the merchants' desire for details about new markets and sources of supply, and the government's need for objective information upon which to base diplomatic and Imperial decisions. At the same time, the RGS provided Murchison with a new vehicle for his insatiable ambition to win social rank through national service. His assumption of command at the RGS also coincided with his engineering of the British Association's recognition of geography as an independent science—again, the motive was to feed and tap public interest in geography for the benefit of all sciences.

Having set geography's house in order and installed himself as its presiding presence, Murchison completed a complementary manœuvre in geology that cemented his position as the unassailable leader of the mid-Victorian exploration drive. In 1855 he was appointed Director-General of the Geological Survey of Great Britain. The first Director-General, Sir Henry De la Beche, acting in the manner of his counterpart Sir William Hooker, Director of Kew Gardens, had established the Survey in 1835 to delineate the kingdom's geological structure and mineral deposits on Ordnance Survey maps. De la Beche had performed a good deal of Imperial work, employing the Survey's Museum of Practical Geology to evaluate colonial ore samples, testing overseas coals to facilitate the navy's global deployment of steamships, and founding geological surveys in overseas dependencies. As with the RGS, the Survey gave Murchison a foundation, and again he erected an edifice of decidedly Imperial style. Not only did he accomplish far more colonial geology

than his predecessor, partly because the mid-century gold rushes dramatically raised expectations of mineral wealth, but he used the Survey's Royal School of Mines to supply geologists for RGS-sponsored expeditions. These forays provided valuable geographical information while allowing Murchison, by proxy, to map the strata of new regions and test his own geological theories. The colonial surveys enabled Murchison to promote the extension of topographical and geological mapping throughout the Empire. Colonial geologists and botanists also accomplished much original exploration in the course of research largely directed from London. Their results were fed back to the 'centres of calculation', contributing to Europe's preponderant knowledge of peripheral regions,[10] though important theories as well as data issued from the colonial frontier where scientific principles were constantly honed against exotic phenomena. In geology, botany, biology, ethnography, and astronomy, colonial and expeditionary access conferred substantial advantage on British scientists. Indeed, so adept were British scientific leaders, such as Banks and Murchison, at exploiting the research opportunities created by Empire that they can be thought of as 'sub-imperialists' who transformed the physiology of the Imperial state in the manner of symbiotic parasites that create niches for themselves in return for services to their host.

Through institutional power and social prestige, Murchison dominated British exploration from the early 1850s until his death in 1871, standing forth unquestionably as the key figure between the death of Banks and the First World War. Murchison's career spanned the transition between gentlemanly amateurs who worked through informal networks based on the scientific societies, and trained professionals employed by specialized government departments. The influence of learned societies linking officialdom and science in support of exploration outlasted Murchison, and new Empire-wide networks developed around the geological surveys, botanical gardens, natural history museums, and universities that were gradually installed in the colonies. Yet Murchison's leadership coincided with the high noon of Victorian prosperity, so that he was able to engineer a brilliant burst of exploration on the basis of the interest in overseas opportunities generated by the cycle of great gold rushes, the success of free trade, and the anti-slavery movement.[11] Following Murchison's death, other presidents with direct links to the Empire led the RGS into the twentieth century, but none approached his success in promoting exploration. Though rising Imperial sentiment swelled RGS membership and the Society briefly experimented with direct support of

[10] Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers Through Society* (Milton Keynes, 1987), chap. 6.

[11] D. H. Hall, *History of the Earth Sciences during the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 160–90, correlates exploratory activity with economic fluctuations.

imperialistic ventures in Africa,[12] the era of primary exploration was ending by the 1880s, Britain's capacity for action was increasingly constrained, and the RGS itself, under the pressure of geography's evolution into a rigorously defined discipline, was transformed into a specialist scientific society. As a result, it was purged of its fashionable, political, and military factions and the attendant ideologies of imperialism, racism, and environmental determinism that had helped express the social utility of this heterogeneous science during its infancy.[13] Thus, while an appreciation of the RGS is critical to understanding the motives and mechanisms behind nineteenth-century British exploration, the Society's Imperial role actually lessened in proportion to the rise of overt imperialism. Except for the poles, the explorers had nearly worked themselves out of a job by the late 1880s, an eventuality Gladstone foresaw as early as 1864, when he remarked to the RGS: 'Gentlemen, you have done so much that you are like Alexander, you have no more worlds to conquer.'[14] The four main regions in which British exploration focused during the century were the Arctic, Australia (Map 14.2), Africa (Map 14.1), and Central Asia. The rest was essentially a piecemeal mopping-up operation.

Official explorers invariably carried detailed instructions drawn up by their sponsors. Until the 1840s such instructions for maritime or riverine Imperial expeditions were usually written by Barrow at the Admiralty. The Colonial Office wrote its own directives, providing general desiderata to be modified by specific local instructions for colonial explorations. For expeditions beyond the Empire, the Colonial Office issued detailed orders direct from London. Again, because of his connection with the African Association, the ubiquitous Barrow wrote the instructions for the expeditions to the Niger hinterland that completed Park's work. Explorers on official service were given the full support of the Imperial government, including naval passages, diplomatic and consular back-up, and aid from colonial and Indian administrations. In the colonies, unclaimed territories, and poorly explored sovereign nations, a good deal of discovery was also accomplished by unofficial British explorers who usually enjoyed the sanction, if not the financial support, of the Imperial or colonial governments. Scientists such as Alfred Wallace likewise received official help while working in remote regions like the Dutch East Indies.

As the RGS gained effective control of British Imperial exploration in the late 1840s it became the chief authority for drafting expeditionary instructions. To ensure co-ordination among all interest groups, the RGS solicited research suggestions from the Colonial or Foreign Office, the Royal Society, and government

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[12] R. C. Bridges, 'The R.G.S. and the African Exploration Fund, 1876–80', *Geographical Journal*, CXXIX (1963), pp. 25–35.

[13] Stoddart, 'R.G.S. and the "New Geography"'; Livingstone, 'History of Science'.

[14] *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, XIV (1869–70), pp. 214.

MAP 14.1. British Exploration in Africa

scientists such as the naval Hydrographer, the Directors of Kew Gardens and the Geological Survey, and Sir Edward Sabine, a specialist in terrestrial magnetism.[15] Emphases in instructions varied with the region and objective, but they generally called for methodical instrumental observation, map-making, written narrative, collection of botanical, geological, zoological, and ethnological specimens, weather recording (temperature and barometric pressure), and inquiry into native languages, customs, population distribution, productions, and trade patterns. Explorers were directed to update their journals daily, trusting nothing to memory. Those travelling outside the British sphere were instructed to send out frequent dispatches, including tracings of maps, to preserve their work from accidents such as Alexander Gordon Laing's murder near Timbuktu in 1826.[16] Explorers were also enjoined to respect native mores, avoid violence, distribute gifts, trade fairly, and cultivate a good name for whites.

Even at this level exploration was profoundly exploitative, for it took hostages in the form of data used to inform decisions about territories made without the knowledge or consent of their inhabitants. The concentration of scientific and commercial data in Europe helped tip the balance of power against the indigenous peoples of other continents, whose control over their destinies could be eroded as surely by map coordinates and museum specimens as by steamships, bullets, and treaties of cession. Natives themselves understood something of this, as was demonstrated by instructions to Dixon Denham, Walter Oudney, and Hugh Clapperton on their mission to the Niger interior in 1822–25 (Map 14.2), to avoid shocking the Africans by blatantly collecting natural history specimens,[17] and the concealment by Richard and John Lander of their interest in the course of the Niger from suspicious local rulers.[18]

Changes in the metropolitan context in which exploration evolved were variously expressed in peripheral regions. In Australia the voyages of Cook, Flinders, Vancouver, and the French had surveyed most of the coastline by 1805 (Map 14.2). While charting continued under captains such as Philip Parker King and John Lort Stokes until the 1850s, few mysteries remained except possible river discoveries. The focus of activity moved inland once the Blue Mountains of New South Wales were crossed in 1813. The two expeditions of 1817–18 led by John Oxley, that colony's Surveyor-General, started a series of explorations by army officers such as Charles Sturt, surveyors like Thomas Mitchell, and bushmen such as Edward

[15] John Cawood, 'The Magnetic Crusade: Science and Politics in Early Victorian Britain', *Isis*, LXX (1979), pp. 493–518.

[16] 'The Letters of Major Alexander Gordon Laing, 1824–26', in E. W. Bovill, ed., *Missions to the Niger*, 4 vols. (Cambridge, 1964–66), I, pp. 123–390.

[17] 'The Bornu Mission, 1822–25', in Bovill, ed., *Missions to the Niger*, II, pp. 20–21.

[18] Robin Hallett, ed., *The Niger Journal of Richard and John Lander* (London, 1965), p. 118.

Map within the figure contains the following labels:

Cape York
New Guinea
Darwin
Gulf of Carpentaria
Indian Ocean
0 miles 500
0 km 500
Coral Sea
Roebourne
L. Mackay
Brisbane
Geraldton
L. Eyre
L. Torrens
L. Frome
R. Warrego
Perth
L. Gairdner
R. Darling
Sydney
R. Lachlan
Adelaide
R. Murray
Albany
Great Australian Bight
Portland
Melbourne
Tasman Sea
TASMANIA
Hobart

◄ – – – Sturt	1828-30 1844-45	◄——— Stuart	1858-62
◄——— Mitchell	1835-36 1845-46	◄—•—— Burke and Wills	1860-61
◄ ••••• Eyre	1839-41	◄ – – – – Warburton	1872-73
◄—•—• Leichhardt	1844-45	◄—— Forrest	1874
◄—•—• A.C. Gregory	1855-56	◄ •–•– Giles	1875-76

MAP 14.2. The Exploration of Australia

Eyre that revealed the broad outline o f the interior by the 1860s. These expeditions were usually the initiative of individual colonies seeking to discover new areas for settlement and to understand the continent's topography. The Colonial Office sanctioned the expenditures and wrote the general instructions, including guidelines about interaction with Aborigines. This remained the pattern until the 1860s, when exploratory management as well as initiative shifted to the colonies in parallel with their assumption of responsible government. In this period open competition broke out between South Australia and Victoria for the glory of first traversing the continent from south to north. The Burke and Wills Expedition, organized by Victoria's Royal Society, illustrates how colonial scientific institutions took over the role of their metropolitan progenitors in sponsoring exploration within the British voluntarist tradition.[19] The Imperial factor continued to be felt in Australian exploration, though it was increasingly mediated by the RGS. The North Australian Exploring Expedition of 1855–56, for example, was promoted and organized by the RGS, funded by the Colonial Office, supported by the Admiralty (aided by Victoria) which seconded its Government Botanist, and led by Augustus Gregory, Assistant Surveyor-General of Western Australia.[20] The strategic interests of the Imperial government centred on ascertaining the north coast's resources to promote settlement as well as trade and communications with Asia.

In Canada and Cape Colony, settler enterprise, even more than the initiative of colonial governments, drove exploration in the first half of the century. In Canada, Colonial Office control again gave way to local management except when Imperial issues that transcended individual colonies or affected global strategy were at stake. Examples are the Palliser Expedition of 1857–60, which surveyed a railroad route to British Columbia to knit together Britain's North American possessions, and the North-West American Boundary Commission of 1858–63, which delimited the international border west of the Rockies. Since the British took the Cape in 1795, southern African exploration was left largely to missionaries, hunters, trekkers, and prospectors operating from Cape Colony and later the Boer republics without government assistance. Yet the Imperial government threw its full support behind Livingstone's Zambezi Expedition of 1857–63 because of its objectives to undermine the East African slave trade while developing new markets and resources for British industry. The government was careful, however, to dissociate itself from Livingstone's colonizing schemes.[21] In New Zealand, missionaries and surveyors of Wakefield's company led the way before sheep graziers, prospectors,

[19] Alan Moorehead, *Cooper's Creek* (1963; Melbourne, 1985).

[20] A. C. and F. T. Gregory, *Journals of Australian Explorations*, 2nd edn. (1884; Victoria Park, Western Australia, 1981); J. H. L. Cumpston, *Augustus Gregory and the Inland Sea* (Canberra, 1972).

[21] Tim Jeal, *Livingstone* (New York, 1973), pp. 184–94; Robert A. Stafford, *Scientist of Empire: Sir Roderick Murchison, Scientific Exploration, and Victorian Imperialism* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 172–82.

and government geologists took the initiative. The motives of colonial epicentres in sponsoring exploration were more parochial than those of London. Expansion and political consolidation were key considerations; scientific research was less important than development, extraction, and trade. Colonial exploration focused on agricultural and pastoral lands, timber, minerals, and routes for stock droving, river navigation, and railways. After the rushes in California and Victoria, gold became a prime goal because of its capacity to initiate self-sustaining economic growth.

India, typically, went its own way about exploration. The Great Trigonometrical Survey, permanently founded in 1818, remained the main vehicle for Indian initiatives, accomplishing much external exploration in the Himalayas as well as mapping British possessions in the subcontinent. The topographical maps produced by the Survey constituted an important aid to British rule, comparable to the railway or telegraph in their elaboration of a space-time grid that enabled the marshalling of the information, troops, and resources necessary to subdue and govern the vast territory. As in Britain and the colonies, these maps were also used by India's Geological Survey, permanently established in 1851, to lay down the territory's structure and mineral resources. The explorations beyond the frontiers provided valuable intelligence about tribal areas, mountain passes, and the shrinking No Man's Land between the British and Russian spheres of influence. They also enabled the Indian authorities to try to funnel the trade of Central Asia. Much of this work was done by the 'pundits', native officers of the Survey who carried out a breathtaking series of covert explorations between 1865 and 1875. India, too, developed voluntarist associations such as the Asiatic Society of Bengal (1784) that sponsored and rewarded scientific activity, complementing the initial botanical (1786–Calcutta Botanical Gardens), geological, and forestry (1847–Bombay Forest Department) establishments of the East India Company.

The Indian Navy also performed a great deal of primary exploration, completing hydrographic surveys from the East African coast to the Straits of Malacca between 1770 and the mid-nineteenth century. The Company's policy of introducing steamboats on the Indus and Ganges and deploying them in punitive campaigns throughout its sphere[22] also necessitated the charting of the major rivers of southern Asia. Valuable palaeontological and zoological collections made on these missions were transmitted to the metropolitan scientific societies, providing important data for the debate on the progression of life. Perhaps the best example of such steam-powered exploratory work was the survey of the Tigris–Euphrates river system carried out by Captain Francis Chesney, RA, during

[22] Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1981).

1835–37 to ascertain its suitability as a new route to India. The scheme proved a failure, largely due to technological advances favouring ocean-going steamships, but a wealth of political, commercial, and scientific data was gleaned and an enduring British presence established. Expressing the logic by which exploration often led to intervention, Chesney advocated the establishment of trade depots as 'points of support' for British efforts to increase the region's commerce.[23] Chesney's work, like that of other British expeditions in Ottoman territory and the trans-Himalayan zone, highlights the political and military value of geographical information about sensitive zones, and how exploration often blended into espionage.

Britain took the lead in opening 'the Dark Continent', focusing successively on the Niger, the interior of southern Africa, the Central Lakes, and the Nile. Except the series of West African explorations conducted by the Colonial Office between 1818 and the 1830s and several Niger voyages organized by the Admiralty, much of Britain's African exploration was overseen by the Foreign Office in conjunction with the RGS. Murchison's close relationship with Lord Clarendon during the 1850s was instrumental in this regard. In the case of Macgregor Laird's steam exploration of the Niger in 1832–34, which sought to capitalize on the trade potential revealed by Richard and John Lander, attacking the slave trade and spreading Christianity were adduced as additional benefits from the introduction of British commerce. The Admiralty provided this private expedition with a naval lieutenant to survey the river; Laird, in turn, extracted a pledge that no information from the chart produced would be divulged without his company's permission.[24] Twenty years later the navy returned the favour, allowing Laird's trading agent to accompany William Balfour Baikie's government-funded Niger expedition.[25] By the 1850s the lesson of quinine as a malarial prophylactic had been learned: Baikie's voyage proved Europeans could maintain their health in tropical Africa. By the 1890s female explorers such as Mary Kingsley were also adding laurels to Britain's record of African discovery,[26] though women were not admitted as RGS Fellows until 1904. As noted, southern Africa was largely explored as a result of local colonial initiative. The Central Lakes and the Nile tributaries were explored to solve the mystery of the Nile's source, but as the scale of Arab slaving operations in East Africa was revealed, humanitarianism and the promotion of

[23] Francis R. Chesney, *The Expedition for the Survey of the Euphrates and Tigris*, 2 vols. (London, 1850), II, pp. 601–02.

[24] MacGregor Laird and R. A. K. Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition into the Interior of Africa by the River Niger*, 2nd edn., 2 vols. (1837; London, 1971), I, p. 11.

[25] William Balfour Baikie, *Narrative of an Exploring Voyage up the Rivers Kwora and Binue*, 2nd edn. (1856; London, 1966), p. 5.

[26] Dea Birkett, *Mary Kingsley: Imperial Adventuress* (Basingstoke, 1992).

legitimate commerce were again deployed to encourage further activity that created the preconditions for annexation. International rivalry for discoveries remained muted before the 1880s, when the quickening pace of annexation in Africa and the shrinking size of untracked regions created friction between European powers.

The Explorers: Styles, Methods, Impacts

While for the most part untiring in following their instructions, explorers interpreted their marching orders according to their own lights. Such ambitious, often flamboyant men were relatively unlikely to be restrained by official dictates once their quests led them beyond Europe's reach. The personalities and motives of explorers were as varied as one might expect in such a broad-based, long-term cultural activity, but discernible patterns emerge. The most significant was the shift during the mid-nineteenth century from the old model of the explorer as self-effacing, duty-driven national servant to a larger-than-life celebrity whose sensational exploits acted out both personal obsessions and public fantasies. George Vancouver exemplifies the first type, Richard Burton the second. Most explorers were serving or former military officers; a few were professional scientists. Many built careers as colonial administrators or diplomats on the foundation of their service in the cause of discovery. Their ability to move between professions by seizing opportunities created by Britain's overseas activities illustrates the larger cultural context of expansionism in which both exploration and empire flourished.

The explorer in the field had to be a man or woman of many parts to accomplish his or her goals—leader, emissary, pathfinder, hunter, observer, collector, recorder, cartographer, and often artist. Unlike their naval counterparts, overland explorers were immersed in alien environments for months or years, having no choice but to get along with indigenous peoples. Sturt believed success came by 'steady perseverance and unceasing attention, by due precaution and a mild discipline'.[27] Eyre admitted that the leader was always lonely and anxious, since one false step or bad judgement might endanger the party or ruin its chances of success.[28] Rarely was the explorer alone: in colonial settings he was accompanied by assistants, native guides, and scientific collectors. Explorers in tropical Africa required bearers because of the susceptibility of draft animals to sleeping sickness and the necessity of carrying trade goods, gifts, and supplies. Many complained of their

[27] Charles Sturt, *Narrative of an Expedition into Central Australia*, 2nd edn., 2 vols. (1849; Adelaide, 1965), I, p. 148.
[28] Edward John Eyre, *Journals of Expeditions of Discovery into Central Australia*, 2nd edn., 2 vols. (1845; Adelaide, 1964), I, p. 24.

impedimenta, Joseph Thomson lamenting 'the dreadful incubus of a caravan'.[29] There was also the strain of maintaining one's dignity amidst crowds of curious natives who had often never seen a European before.

Much of the explorer's energy was dedicated to the day-to-day logistics of moving through the country and dealing with subordinates, animals, equipment, and natives. Terrain and climate were constant issues, as were, depending upon circumstances, disease, water supply, food for man and beast, shelter, and steam fuel. But getting there and back were not enough: concerted scientific work was required to bring new regions within Europe's ken and ambit. The pattern of scientific expectation evolved from eighteenth-century precedents, and the explorer's equipment reflected these requirements. His standard gear—essentially the means for land navigation—included a telescope, a compass for travel and mapping, a sextant for making astronomical observations to determine latitude, chronometers to determine longitude, an artificial horizon, used in conjunction with the sextant for taking altitudes, a barometer to determine altitude by atmospheric pressure, and thermometers to record temperature and determine altitude by boiling point. Other equipment might include surveying chains to measure actual distances travelled, a pedometer to measure approximate distances, a theodolite to measure horizontal angles for triangulation and mapping, sounding lines for determining river and lake depths, and a hygrometer to measure humidity. More specialized research might demand a microscope, blowpiping apparatus for chemical analysis of minerals, or instruments to record terrestrial magnetism and compass deviation due to a ship's iron hull.

Explorers were beset with endless problems maintaining their instruments. Compasses were lost, barometers were broken, chronometers changed rates or stopped, instruments split from heat, their glasses were sandblasted by ferocious winds, thermometers calibrated for English temperatures burst in desert climes, and natives begged precious mercury that was, in Clapperton's words, 'like asking me to part with my heart's blood'.[30] In perhaps the most humourous juxtaposition of scientific order and wilderness recalcitrance, W. B. Baikie had his African crewmen trample the grass at an observation site in order to clear a space for his instruments, only to find he had chosen a hippo track whose owner nearly bowled him over lumbering back to the Niger.[31]

Ever resourceful, explorers improvised and endured, completing an astonishing range of research under the most trying conditions. Accurately fixing positions remained the *sine qua non*. Some colonial explorers went further as they entered

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[29] Joseph Thomson, *To the Central Africa Lakes and Back*, 2nd edn., 2 vols. (1881; London, 1968), I, p. ix.

[30] Bovill, *Missions to the Niger*, IV, p. 630.

[31] Baikie, *Narrative of an Exploring Voyage*, pp. 136–37.

the void beyond mapped districts, surveying baselines and triangulating to determine co-ordinates that were then measured by chaining and checked by celestial observation. Similarly, altitudes taken by instruments were verified by geometric calculation. Explorers were guided in such activities by procedures as well as instructions, the Admiralty publishing its *Manual of Scientific Enquiry* in 1849 and *Instructions for Hydrographic Surveyors* the following year.[32] Paralleling the shift of power in expeditionary organization, the navy's manual was superseded in 1854 by the RGS's *Hints to Travellers*, which soon achieved world-wide fame.[33]

Not all explorers found science stimulating. The more individualistic tired of the daily round of observations, preferring to engage directly with the landscape and people, and revert to subjective, circumstantial reportage. Differences in approach were sometimes striking even between colleagues. On the Bornu Mission, the leader Denham spent his time hunting, recording impressions, commenting on African women, and even accompanying an Arab slave-raiding party, while Oudney, one of the Scottish naval surgeons so conspicuous in Victorian exploration, made comprehensive scientific observations and collections that constituted the chief results of the mission.[34] Similarly, on the Palliser Expedition across British North America, it was the geologist James Hector, another Scottish doctor, rather than John Palliser, a wealthy big-game hunter turned explorer, who accomplished the most significant discoveries.[35] Some explorers, like Charles Sturt, managed to balance their leadership and scientific roles, while others, such as McDouall Stuart, minimized observations to push through to their goals. Scientific leaders, however, could become so engrossed by fieldwork that expedition management suffered. After the Scottish naval surgeon W. B. Baikie assumed command of the Niger expedition of 1854 when its leader died, he busied himself collecting specimens while a serious confrontation with his sailing master was brewing.[36] Joseph Thomson, on the other hand, who had been trained in geology and made substantial contributions to several disciplines, admitted that 'scientific cares' spoiled the charm of new scenery.[37] When life itself was at stake, even exacting observers sometimes had to jettison instruments, collections, and journals.

The highly processed data gathered by the explorers were introduced into Imperial culture through scientific societies, newspapers, and museums,

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[32] John Herschel, ed., *A Manual of Scientific Enquiry* (London, 1849); Ritchie, *Admiralty Chart*, p. 198.

[33] Royal Geographical Society, *Hints to Travellers* (London, 1854).

[34] Bovill, 'Bornu Mission'.

[35] Irene M. Spry, *The Palliser Expedition: An Account of John Palliser's British North American Expedition, 1857–1860* (Toronto, 1963).

[36] Baikie, *Narrative of an Exploring Voyage*, pp. 47–53, 92.

[37] Joseph Thomson, *Through Masai Land*, 3rd edn. (1885; London, 1968), p. 203.

influencing attitudes towards distant territories and peoples. The RGS remained the key institution in this process, shaping the make-up and agendas of outbound expeditions and mediating inbound results. Exploration and its narration, which represented new lands by word, map, and illustration, taught Britons to think about, act in, and finally absorb these areas into their consciousness. Exploration thus became an important part of the process of imperialism, for even when it did not lead directly to annexation, it enclosed vast tracts of the periphery, including their inhabitants and resources, within Europe's purview.

Nineteenth-century exploration favoured the taxonomic, spatially oriented field sciences such as geology and botany because their data could be easily and profitably collected. It was no coincidence that these were the very disciplines required to sustain colonization and commerical penetration of new territories, in that they listed resources and suggested use patterns. Indeed, the rise during the heyday of free-trade expansion of bio-geography, the study of the distribution of organisms,[38] prefigured the development of formal imperialism's characteristic socio-political science—geopolitics.[39] The times called forth the appropriate sciences, which in turn supported the culture that nurtured them.

Exploration literature, a stream of growing significance in national culture, expressed the initiatives of the field sciences and contributed to the vision of Empire that was a major component of Britain's will to rule abroad. While the novel and the historical narrative opened history to the Victorian middle-class, exploration and travel literature made geography available, so that the British public learned the entire world, in both time and space, was accessible for objectification, appropriation, and use. The explorer's text was authoritative and highly subjective, but what and how he chose to describe were constrained by the expectations of his own culture. By reshaping the periphery through the conventions of European representation, science, like literature, helped create what Edward Said terms 'structures of feeling',[40] sets of attitudes that sustained Empire by incorporating its exotic lands and inhabitants into metropolitan consciousness. While Said's theory remains controversial because of its assumed dependence on fictional interpretation, first-hand evidence supports it, not least from the scientists, who were frequently active proponents of Empire for ideological as well as professional reasons.[41] On a practical level, scientific exploration helped British

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[38] Janet Browne, *The Secular Ark: Studies in the History of Biogeography* (London, 1983); Robert A. Stafford, 'Annexing the Landscapes of the Past: British Imperial Geology in the Nineteenth Century', in John M. MacKenzie, ed., *Imperialism and the Natural World* (Manchester, 1990), pp. 67–89.

[39] Kern, *Culture of Time and Space*, pp. 223, 239.

[40] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 14.

[41] Stafford, 'Annexing the Landscapes'; Adrian Desmond, 'The Making of Institutional Zoology in London, 1822–36', *History of Science*, XXIII (1985), pp. 153–85, 223–50; Livingstone, 'History of Science'.

colonists feel at home in their 'neo-Europes'[42] by providing dimensions and explanations for alien environments, as well as strategies for exploiting them. Exploration literature, like the novel, thus portrayed colonial and unannexed territories as 'realms of possibility'[43] and, by maintaining a tradition of British engagement, became a key element of the 'official mind' of imperialism.[44] The narratives, as much as the explorations they chronicled, constituted acts of possession that legitimized and encouraged territorial control.

The logic of geographical discovery undertaken in an atmosphere of utilitarian improvement or redemption often led explorers to propose schemes to develop the territories revealed. The meaning and use of travel literature had already evolved during the Enlightenment from an emphasis on gathering and disseminating information to interpreting and applying it.[45] By 1850 this process had so accelerated that the Christian belief that natural resources exist to be employed for man's improvement had been overtaken by dramatic growth, through technology, in Europeans' power to remake the world. The two traditions fused in the conviction that man was destined to master nature. This drive, in turn, encouraged the development of the civilizing mission, which sought to improve native societies along rational lines.[46] Most explorers and scientists worked within a framework of environmental determinism that allowed them to lament the passing of native peoples before the European advance while justifying the process by analogy to the struggle for survival between species. Explorers and policy-makers were therefore predisposed to continue dialogue with particular places. Explorers usually eschewed outright annexation, but many advocated trading, settler, and missionary activities that made intervention more likely. Baikie, for example, while stating 'I am no advocate for endeavouring to acquire new territory' on the Niger, followed Chesney in encouraging the establishment of permanent depots to facilitate commerce and realign regional trade patterns in Britain's favour.[47] Thomson noted that his exploration of Masai Land led almost inevitably to its coming within Britain's sphere of influence.[48]

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[42] Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900–1900* (Cambridge, 1986).

[43] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 75.

[44] Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, with Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism* (London, 1961; new edn., 1981).

[45] Barbara Stafford, *Voyage into Substance: Art, Science, Nature, and the Illustrated Travel Account, 1760–1840* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984).

[46] Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca, NY, 1989), pp. 70, 212.

[47] Compare Baikie, *Narrative of an Exploring Voyage*, pp. 394, 456, and Alexander Nzemeke, *British Imperialism and African Response: The Niger Valley, 1851–1905* (Paderborn, 1982), pp. 47–135.

[48] Thomson, *Through Masai Land*, pp. ix, 8.

Wherever they penetrated, explorers carried a British yardstick of scenery. As Said remarks, 'English places have a kind of export value':[49] the same was true of English stratigraphic sections which, like English manufactured goods, became recognized as patterns world-wide.[50] Explorers filled their descriptions of new landscapes with comparisons to those of the British Isles and the language of Romanticism, even seeing 'ruinous cathedrals and castles' in African dunes[51] and regretting Australia's want of 'bold or fantastic features, by which the imagination is excited and curiosity enhanced'.[52] Park-like scenery remained the ideal because it combined the beautiful with the tame and useful. The more perceptive explorers were sensitive to the interplay of landscape and emotion and the aesthetic dialogue between nature and civilization, waste and verdure. Similarly, their comments about space evinced a value system based on European concepts of size, regularity, and control. Hugh Clapperton described the plantations of Sokoto as being 'as neatly fenced as if they were the property of Englishmen', while the Landers pined for neat English cottages, complaining that African mud huts 'banish every favorable impression'.[53]

Because of homesickness, outraged sensibilities, or the imperative to convey intelligible images of outlandish places, the explorers thus projected a vision of the home islands on to new lands abroad, conquering them by an act of comparative imagination that began the process of reshaping them into something familiar enough to accept and enjoy. The explorers also carried a full battery of literary reference, so peripheral territories could be storied by analogy to stock scenes from literature—itself a canon often shaped by expansion and Empire. Illustrating this two-way trade in images that supplanted or expropriated native cultures, thereby embedding stereotypes facilitating European domination, the Landers compared an African ceremony to restore the eclipsed moon to a scene from *Robinson Crusoe*, noting that it only wanted a cannibal vignette to complete it.[54] Reversing the comparison between reality and art fifty years later, H. Rider Haggard recycled the physical features from Joseph Thomson's *Through Masai Land* to create a fictitious African topography for *King Solomon's Mines*.[55] The European imagination learned to encompass the world's diversity through the literature of exploration, which presented the periphery as a frontier for acting out both old and new challenges.

[49] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 94.
[50] Stafford, *Scientist of Empire*, p. 19.
[51] Walter Oudney's words: Bovill, *Missions to the Niger*, II, 188.
[52] Paul Edmund De Strzelecki, *Physical Description of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land*, 2nd edn. (1845; Adelaide, 1967), p. 55.
[53] Bovill, *Missions to the Niger*, IV, p. 774; Hallett, *Niger Journal*, p. 184.
[54] Hallett, *Niger Journal*, p. 168.
[55] Thomson, *Through Masai Land*, p. xii.

While explorers generally saw what they were conditioned to see, many found the wilderness frightening and oppressive. Laird noted that the stillness of the forest of Sierra Leone 'chills the heart, and imparts a feeling of loneliness which can be shaken off only by a strong effort'.[56] Thomson, on the other hand, described his 'perfect ecstasy' in the forests of East Africa—the 'ideal of my dreams', where 'everything was strange, and grand, and colossal!'[57] Again, their differing reactions may be attributable to the half-century between them, though individual sensibilities play a part. Laird, writing in the mid-1830s, inhabited a world replete with ancient forests, in which nature still held sway over much of the planet, settlement frontiers were opening, and the maps of several continents still labelled vast areas *terra incognita*. His outlook—essentially a holdover from eighteenth-century sensibility—only saw nature as beautiful where it was tamed and useful. Thomson, in the early 1880s, lived in a world of closing frontiers, shrinking blank spots, and wild nature retreating everywhere before triumphant technological man. He had the luxury and (perhaps unconscious) sensibility to celebrate the value of something disappearing as rapidly as indigenous peoples—primeval wilderness capable of awing humans.

The numinous, dream-like quality of Thomson's experience suggests two further linkages. First, the new appreciation for wild nature and empty space coincided with the discovery of the unconscious and exploration of the irrational or intuitive as alternatives to inductive reasoning. As world-wide exploration dispelled the 'glowing hues of fantasy' that had beckoned Thomson to Africa,[58] the quest for untracked territory moved to the inner *terra incognita* of the human mind. The ritual baptisms in which several explorers indulged upon reaching their goals, such as MacDouall Stuart at the Timor Sea or Thomson at Lake Nyasa,[59] suggest that exploration represented a journey of discovery into the self, a plunge into the wellsprings of the soul, as much as geographical research. Secondly, absorption in overseas wilderness represented a form of time travel: the experience had not been available in western Europe for centuries. Conrad captured all of these themes in *Heart of Darkness*, with its focus on emptiness, timelessness, and implacable nature. The similarity between his description of the tropical forest and Thomson's is striking.[60] By the 1880s it was only in remote regions like the Congo or the East African highlands that such themes could still be acted out.

[56] Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition*, I, p. 181.

[57] Thomson, *To the Central African Lakes*, I, pp. 51–52.

[58] Thomson, *Through Masai Land*, p. 7.

[59] J. MacDouall Stuart, *Explorations Across the Continent of Australia*, 2nd edn. (1863; Adelaide, 1963), p. 57; Thomson, *To the Central African Lakes*, I, pp. 259–61.

[60] Compare Thomson, ref. 57, with Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1902; Harmondsworth, 1973), p. 48.

In the final decades of the century, therefore, the periphery came to represent an alternative to the confusing, suffocating restraints of modernist Europe, where urbanization and technology had transformed the very dimensions of life and thought. The cultural reactions to this trend—geopolitics, preservation of wilderness, exploration of the unconscious, fascination with the primitive—were paralleled by the politics of imperialism, the impulse to claim more space.[61] Yet British Imperialism went further in its acquisitiveness than expropriating land to commandeer the future. It also sought, through the willing aid of geology, to lay claim to the earth in depth, adding the lower portion of the third dimension to this grand Cartesian plan for enclosure. Similarly, Britain's upsurge of enthusiasm for mountaineering during the second half of the century, another activity closely linked to geography and Empire, represented the conquest of height, complementing geology's annexation of the subterranean world. The process of cultural appropriation reached backward within the fourth dimension as well, where stratigraphy and palaeontology helped annex 'deep time', beyond the past revealed by history and archaeology.[62] The British mind, therefore, balanced in dynamic tension between the dual concepts of the periphery as a primitive playground for the imagination and another locus for development. Imperialism was compatible with both these ideas, for it appropriated territories and their potentialities in order that Britons might transform them, thereby reliving the European experience in new settings that provided opportunities to avoid past mistakes. The role colonies played in the growth of European environmental consciousness and the vehemence of ideological debates about colonial development index the profound psychological ambivalence that lay behind this dialectic.[63]

The intoxication with space found expression not only in Imperialism, but in public interest in exploration, the mania for maps, emigration, and an outpouring of novels of Empire that chronicled the claustrophobia of the home islands and the reaction—greed for land and a longing for freedom to act in an unregulated landscape.[64] The explorer was the archetype of this fantasy of escape on to a larger stage where the ego could assert itself on an heroic scale. Exploration, like Empire, offered renewal for the race and the individual in reliving the immemorial saga of conquering nature, aided by the science and technology that proved the superiority of Europeans and their right to rule. Just as the rising curve of British

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[61] Kern, *Culture of Time and Space*, pp. 4, 92.

[62] Stafford, 'Annexing the Landscapes'.

[63] Richard H. Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism, 600–1860* (Cambridge, 1995); John M. Mackenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (Manchester, 1988).

[64] Kern, *Culture of Time and Space*, p. 166. Novels of Empire are thoroughly treated in Susanne Howe, *Novels of Empire* (New York, 1949) and Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830–1914* (Ithaca, NY, 1988).

exploration during this century charts Britain's economic, technological, and military dominance, it also indicates the rise to power of the middle classes. While the landowning classes supported exploration because it generated strategic, scientific, and prestige dividends, the middle classes provided the real impetus behind the nation's investment in overseas discovery. Middle-class scientists, military officers, merchants, and financiers, working through institutions like the RGS and the British Association that represented the community of interest between the traditional élites and rising economic groups, pushed the hardest for exploration and stood to gain the most from it.

While its material goals were obvious, the middle class also needed mental space that was unavailable in Britain's constricted landscape, where every acre was locked into the pattern of control that expressed the hegemony of the traditional élite. Through the technology, science, and organizational abilities that symbolized its ascendancy, the middle class seized on the overseas wilderness as its own fiefdom, calling new worlds into being to redress the balance of the old. Exploration, like the missionary movement, colonization, and the growth of commerce, was largely an assertion of middle-class goals, methods, and values through horizontal expansion. Leaving the finite fields of the occupied home islands, the explorers forged into the seemingly infinite jungles, deserts, forests, and prairies overseas. There they discovered room to create new Britains, built from scratch to middle-class design. They painted a picture of unbounded scope for improvements of every kind, from exploiting virgin resources to civilizing savage natives.

As their treatment of scenery suggests, explorers were often tense and despondent. They fought back by naming things, symbolically claiming alien territories by representing them with English terms. This act of supreme ego—a demonstration of control that had nothing to do with actual sovereignty—stamped new lands with the image of Europe, beginning the process of wresting them from the control of indigenous peoples.[65] Naming was at once an act of cultural imposition and of despoliation. It connected previously unknown places with European history, notifying other powers that Britain had some claim upon them by right of discovery. British explorers generally named geographical features and dedicated their narratives according to the Imperial social hierarchy: royalty first, followed by Cabinet-level sponsors, metropolitan department heads, colonial Governors or patrons, officers of the explorer's own service or institution, admired scientists or authors, mentors, friends, and relatives. Literary characters and places were also commemorated, and European place-names freely reused. For some, naming was an opportunity to remember and repay; for others, it was an act of

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[65] Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Exploration of Landscape and History* (Chicago, 1987).

vengeance against hostile environments.[66] For Thomson, replacing 'uncouth' African names with English ones was simply a relief.[67]

Thomson and many other explorers saw discovery as conquest.[68] Claiming ceremonies, like naming, expressed this scientific equivalent of Imperial expansion. Maritime explorers had long claimed uncharted islands and coasts, but as the discovery frontier moved inland, policy changed to acquisition only where required, and explorers limited themselves to reaffirming British ownership of unvisited portions of recognized claims. In this respect exploration evolved from actual into symbolic conquest, though its cultural significance remained as high. As harbingers of European civilization, explorers developed an entire set of triumphal rituals: naming, claiming, self-baptism, flag-raising, toast-drinking, observing holidays, carving or burying records of achievement, recovering the possessions of martyred predecessors, and partaking of European foods upon their return. Ceremonial etiquette even evolved for meeting other whites in outlandish locations. James Stewart of the Livingstonia Mission introduced himself to Joseph Thomson at Lake Tanganyika 'according to the African salutation *à la mode*—"Mr. Thomson, I presume?"'[69] Such incidents became tropes in exploration literature that merged into mainstream culture, reflexively reinforcing the commitment to expansion. The behaviours ratified by the explorers, as well as their activities, overlaid a web of European association on new lands.

Explorers lost no opportunity to impress indigenous peoples with the superior power of Europeans. Much of this display centred on demonstrations of science and technology, which in the industrial era supplanted religion as key criteria for measuring human capacity. This transformation in attitudes also expressed the rise to power of the middle class, as well as its growing dominance of exploration. While the middle class was neither uniform nor unique in its scientific outlook— explorers continued to be recruited from the gentry—bourgeois intermediaries like John Barrow were instrumental in propagating the new doctrine that material achievement offered the most accurate gauge of civilization. Barrow served as an editor for John Murray, the premier English publisher of geographical narratives who, like Barrow, was a founder and Council member of the RGS. Through many articles in Murray's influential *Quarterly Review*, Barrow also tutored the public in interpreting exploration. Parvenus who made their careers by understanding science and technology thus drew upon and shaped the work of explorers, redefining the relativities between cultures to reflect their own values.

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[66] e.g. John Oxley, *Journals of Two Expeditions into the Interior of New South Wales*, 2nd edn. (1820; Adelaide, 1964), pp. 91, 257.

[67] Thomson, *To the Central African Lakes*, I, pp. 148–49.

[68] Ibid., I, p. 211.

[69] Ibid., II, p. 4.

It was natural, therefore, that explorers exhibit the technical means that enabled their travels, including complex technics such as steamboats, guns, and scientific instruments, and objects as mundane as fireworks and magnets deployed simply to awe and entertain. Their mapping and observational activities were particularly stark demonstrations of cultural superiority, for native peoples often could not understand them. As with primeval environments, explorers often felt that in visiting indigenous cultures they were travelling millennia into the past, confronting ancestral stages of their own culture. The shock of peering into this ancient mirror forced Europeans to question industrial progress, but the disparities revealed easily confirmed the validity of Britain's choices. The decompression required to enter cultures with neither a clock-based sense of time nor a time-based work ethic usually produced frustration equivalent to a mental attack of the bends. Non-European spatial perceptions were similarly rejected.[70] Because quantification was central to industrialism and science, explorers not only used it to evaluate other cultures, but became uneasy when failed instruments left them in the same state of helpless inaccuracy as indigenes. One reason for the phenomenal popularity of the explorer in this era was that he 'voyaged at or beyond the frontiers of technology', demonstrating that the few remaining places not accessible to steam and telegraph could nevertheless be penetrated with a minimum of modern equipment.[71] Explorers were among the élite few who could take full advantage of the global transport systems;[72] for their place-bound audience, much of the excitement of their adventures lay in the disjunction between racing out to the jumping-off point backed by all the logistical might of Britain, and then slowing to the crawl of horse, camel, or safari as they entered unknown lands where Europe's writ did not yet run.

The explorers functioned as living projections of Europe, fired into the void of the peripheral wilderness like modern scientific probes into deep space. They delivered a sharp sense of what the new worlds overseas felt like, reimporting into Britain the colours, sights, sounds, smells, variety, and uninhibited behaviours conspicuously lacking in the culture of physiological denial codified in industrialism's Gospel of Work. The lands revealed by exploration offered an enticing antidote to the cult of the machine—a return to nature and the primitive. At the same time, they offered the lure of new worlds to conquer. This bifocal vision goes far to explain the great vogue of exploration narratives in the nineteenth century: they offered both escape into alternative worlds that were *real*, and psychological respite from the repression of Victorian mores. Audiences allowed themselves to

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[70] Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men*, pp. 177–97, 245–49, 259–64.

[71] E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital, 1848–1875* (1975; New York, 1979), p. 62.

[72] R. A. Buchanan, *The Power of the Machine: The Impact of Technology from 1700 to the Present*, 2nd edn. (1992; Harmondsworth, 1994), p. 123.

enjoy explorers' escapades because they were conducted as scientific exercises with the full panoply of brass instruments, assumptions of white superiority, moral high-mindedness, and commercial perspective. Audiences did not respond to the work of scholars like Burton who, chameleon-like, shifted into the worlds they discovered. They favoured instead bluff authors like Lander or Thomson, who told an adventure story as straightforwardly as they accomplished their goals. The public's favourite, however, remained Livingstone, the martyr who suffered more, and seemed to enjoy it more, than any other explorer.

Victorian British culture was pervaded by geographical knowledge and metaphors that reflected the nation's powerful expansionist urge. While Britain's literate middle class demonstrated a seemingly insatiable appetite for exploration narratives,[73] the teaching of geography languished before the Devonshire Commission of 1870–75 recommended the establishment of a national curriculum, long the pattern on the continent. Yet by 1886, when the RGS published the Keltie Report on geographical education in Britain, no evidence of a general improvement in standards could be detected.[74] Britons' appetite for geography sprang not from schooling, but from direct engagement with commercial, Imperial, and philanthropic endeavours overseas, and more especially from identification with national heroes who were enlarging Britain's sphere in the world. Exploration exemplified the cultural importance of geography more clearly than any other contemporary activity. In the actions of the explorer in the field, in the style and workings of the Royal Geographical Society, in the content and texture of the narratives, maps, and art that conveyed the results of exploration, the emphasis on control of space is paramount. Exploration and Empire sprang from the same motives and mutually supported each other in defining, exploiting, and acquiring territory. Mapping the world and subjecting it to scientific inventory were principle accomplishments of nineteenth-century European civilization. These activities resulted from the same drive for expansion, power, and global connectivity that fuelled imperialism, free trade, emigration, the missionary movement, and the construction of world-wide transport and communications networks. Science operates within the same paradigm of control as technology. In Victorian Britain, they fused with exploration and Empire in support of an aggressive culture that sought to export its achievements for the betterment of Greater Britain. Scientific exploration led this movement, feeding information into metropolitan culture that facilitated the creation, maintenance, and expansion of Empire. Gladstone was more prescient than he knew: exploration and the cultural power of geogra-

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[73] e.g. David Livingstone's *Missionary Travels* (London, 1857) sold 70,000 copies in eighteen months.
[74] Stoddart, 'R.G.S. and the "New Geography"'.

phy waned precisely as Empire reached its zenith. The once-actual realms of fantasy—mapped, annexed, and bureaucratized into banality—were then internalized in art and other symbolic forms. Yet during the Victorian heyday of British expansion, science and Empire reached their most perfect congruence in the activity of exploration, an acquisitive quest for knowledge that conferred power over new territories while sculpting metropolitan culture to support its use.

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15

Defence and Imperial Disunity

PETER BURROUGHS

Safeguarding a global Empire posed British governments with intractable problems and agonizing choices throughout the nineteenth century. In addition to balancing the often-conflicting demands of home defence, protection of scattered colonies against external aggression and internal lawlessness, and security of the interconnecting routes and communications, policy-makers had to decide whether these imperatives should be treated separately or knitted together in a seamless strategy of 'Imperial defence'. Whatever the preferred approach, they had to determine the respective roles of army and navy amidst much inter-service rivalry. Finance was also central, and frequently decisive: the adjustment of unavoidable commitments and acceptable funding, the distribution of costs between British and colonial taxpayers, the desire of politicians and public for defence on the cheap. Seeking to juggle these various elements, British governments successively pursued three different 'strategies'. In the years after 1815 military garrisons overseas commanded priority (Map 15.1), with home defence and the Royal Navy taken for granted. From the late 1840s the perceived threat of a French invasion kindled doubts about the navy's ability to guarantee insular security and encouraged concentration on 'fortress' Britain, secured by fortifications and troops brought home from colonies of settlement, now vested with self-government and self-reliance. By the late 1870s another pattern began to emerge, one which sought to integrate Britain and colonies into an overall strategy of Imperial defence, although the navalist bias towards sea power and centralization operated against such a design.

This diversity of response reflected in large measure the variable climate of international relations and changing contemporary assessments of the dangers threatening Britain and its world-wide interests. Until the 1870s British industrial and naval supremacy was enhanced effortlessly by the absence of serious challenge from other nations. During this 'peculiar interlude', retrenchment and disengagement could be pursued without jeopardizing security. Thereafter, the rise of industrializing foreign competitors with colonial ambitions altered the international context. British ministers and their professional advisers responded

Legend:

Number of ships based on station — Home 1875 → 52 / 1898 → 15

- Naval bases 1848 and 1898 ●
- Naval bases in 1848 relinquished by 1898 ■
- Additional naval bases acquired by 1898 ▲

British troops garrisoned in 1881 — Canada 1,820

Map labels:

- Esquimalt
- Canada 1,820
- Halifax
- Bahamas 101
- Bermuda 2,200
- North America & West Indies → 15 / 15
- British Honduras 247
- Jamaica 778
- Antigua
- St Lucia
- Trinidad 121
- Barbados 813
- British Guiana 246
- Gambia
- Sierra Leone 441
- Ascension
- Lagos
- Gold Coast 191
- St Helena 210
- Cape and West Africa → 11 / 20
- Pacific → 8 / 9
- Cape Town 4,848
- South America → 5 / 4
- Falklands
- Britain 65,809
- Home → 52 / 15
- Ireland 25,353
- Heligoland
- Mediterranean → 18 / 38
- Gibraltar 4,158
- Malta 5,626
- Ionian Is
- Alexandria
- Cyprus 420
- Aden
- Bombay
- Calcutta
- India 69,647
- Colombo
- Seychelles
- Mombasa
- Zanzibar
- Ceylon 1,224
- Trincomalee
- Singapore
- Straits Settlements 1,028
- Mauritius 355
- Wei-hai-wei
- Hong Kong 1,167
- China → 22 / 27
- East Indies → 13 / 10
- Labuan
- Cape York
- Fiji
- Albany
- Adelaide
- Melbourne
- Sydney
- Wellington
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MAP 15.1. Imperial Defence: Naval Bases, Stations, and Army Garrisons

by groping towards a more co-ordinated strategy which entailed greater emphasis on the Royal Navy, a slackening of financial constraints, and bids to conjure co-operation from self-governing colonies.

Within these global dimensions, two defence debates proceeded in parallel, only occasionally intersecting. One was centred on the security of India and was embedded in British diplomacy. It reflected nagging, overblown fears of a Russian invasion across the North-West Frontier, a region periodically convulsed by hostilities with border tribes and not stabilized by British conquests of Sind (1843) and the Punjab (1849) (Map 18.1). Rather than invasion, however, the cardinal concern of the vast garrison (by mid-century some 45,000 European and 230,000 Indian troops) was internal security: to uphold the rule of the Raj by coercive power and massive bluff against the kind of indigenous challenge that erupted in 1857. What Lord Salisbury called 'an English barrack in the Oriental seas' nevertheless also acted as a reservoir of military manpower for employment elsewhere. Indian troops served in Arabia (1821), Burma (1824–26), and Aden (1839), and after mid-century were often sent increasingly far afield.[1] India's defence depended on secure communications, especially the route through the Middle East, which gave the Mediterranean bases, and later the Suez Canal, crucial significance in an overarching strategy that remained remarkably consistent and uncontroversial throughout the century. But what chiefly placed India outside much animated public discussion of defence was the unique arrangement whereby the Indian Army was financed by local revenues, consuming up to half the annual budget, such was its priority. This self-sufficiency also gave the East India Company and then the India Office, as well as the military authorities in India, greater administrative autonomy and freedom from Treasury control than the Colonial and War Offices enjoyed elsewhere in the Empire.

The other focus of British debate, preoccupied with financial more than strategic considerations, involved Britain's non-Asian possessions. Numerous overseas bases, many of them small islands, served as staging posts and vital links in the chain of transmarine communications, a function which, until the 1880s, was taken for granted rather than regularly discussed. Most prominent and contentious were the settlement colonies, principally in British North America and Australasia, whose sizeable British populations and relative wealth ensured them an influential role in the changing patterns of colonial defence. Yet unity of action proved as elusive as an integrated strategy of Imperial defence. Over the years the course of the Empire's defence and governance frequently converged but never

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[1] Quoted in Sir Charles Lucas, *The Empire at War*, 5 vols. (London, 1921–26), I, p. 56; for details of Indian troops sent overseas after 1858, see below, pp. 442–43 and for the East India Company army see Vol. II, p. 202.

exactly coincided. Whereas security ideally demanded co-ordination, colonial administration remained fragmented in Whitehall and entailed bilateral relationships between Britain and individual colonies. The voices and aspirations of communities enjoying representative institutions had to be heeded in London, but their particular interests did not necessarily match those of Britain or the Empire at large. Issues touching security were enmeshed with political and economic dealings between local and Imperial authorities: sometimes this facilitated agreement on defence; often it encouraged disharmony. A further complication arose from the ambivalence of outlook on both sides: just as colonial sensibilities coexisted with Imperial sentiment, so British self-sufficiency jostled with collaborative impulses. These themes and cross-currents will be traced through the three phases which characterize arrangements for the defence of the nineteenth-century Empire.

Between 1815 and 1846 British thinking on defence continued to reflect notions derived from the previous century. The Royal Navy still functioned as the nation's shield against invasion and protector of global commercial interests, as oceanic highways were riveted by a world-encircling network of island bases and mainland entrepôts. 'Our policy', Lord Castlereagh explained in 1816, 'had been to secure the empire against future attack. In order to do this, we had acquired what in former days would have been thought romance—the keys of every great military position.'[2] The navy also acted as an instrument of foreign policy: warships restrained the expansionist designs of France and Russia, especially in the crucial Mediterranean corridor; gunboats occasionally backed British diplomatic or commercial ventures with a show of force, as in South America and China; naval squadrons suppressed piracy and African slave trading and guaranteed the openness of the seas. During these decades and beyond, despite incidents and alarms, no foreign powers were able to challenge Britain's maritime mastery; indeed, they acquiesced in British overseas pretensions and self-appointed policing role, made the more palatable by the shared benefits of free trade. The result was an exceptional period of international peace when Britain's pacific approach to global trading relations, backed by industrial muscle, commanded general acceptance. What was later dubbed *Pax Britannica* reflected an unwillingness on the part of European competitors to question one nation's unassailable naval supremacy.

While the Senior Service retained a prime role in colonial defence, it was supplemented by a substantial military presence throughout expanding territorial domains. Since the Seven Years War (1756–63), the practice had developed of stationing British troops in each new acquisition: twenty-two colonies in 1793

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[2] 4 March 1816 P[arliamentary] D[ebates], XXXII (Commons), col. 1104.

had grown to thirty-four by the 1820s, and stood at forty-five in 1846. In some areas, especially the North-West Frontier of India and Canada, garrisons were intended to forestall aggression by a foreign power. Unstable frontier regions, as in Asia and southern Africa, had to be watched over and sometimes subdued or extended by conquest. Policing duties, particularly in ethnically diverse communities, might encompass disturbances, open revolt, and even internecine warfare, feared in the West Indies during the era of slave emancipation and later realized in New Zealand. Such Imperial burdens constituted the major commitments of a British army which was not expected to fight a large-scale war in Europe. Despite the obligations of home defence, the Victorian army was an Imperial force in function, organization, and prevailing ethos.

Both navy and army were constrained by public and parliamentary insistence on retrenchment, which affected all aspects of government spending and the policies of all ministries after 1815. Many Britons agreed with the Select Committee on Finance in 1818 that 'finances recruited during peace, and . . . all practical savings of expense and consequent diminution of burdens' were as vital to security as 'ships and stores and military arrangements'.[3] The passion for economy derived partly from fiscal considerations and taxpayers' reluctance in peacetime to support 'bloated establishments'. It was also nourished by reformers who designated 'wasteful' expenditure the enemy of probity, efficiency, and good government, vague but influential notions of a political culture of middle-class liberalism which prolonged the quest for economy far into the age of Victorian affluence. Expenditure on the armed forces was both highly visible as the largest component of public spending, and highly vulnerable in the absence of major crises abroad.

Between 1816 and 1834 naval estimates fell from £9.5m to £4.5m, for an authorized complement of 27,000 seamen and marines, while capital ships in commission declined from eighty to fifty-eight. Army estimates slumped from £43m in 1815 to £8m in 1837 and the establishment from 233,952 to 87,993 soldiers. By 1846, however, naval spending had risen to £8m, with 45,000 in the service, and that on the army to £10m, now with 100,600 men.[4] Despite the persevering pursuit of retrenchment, therefore, economizers still had plenty of scope for reining back defence spending. Hitherto, the response of the two services to financial constraints had been to discharge mounting overseas commitments at the expense of domestic defence. The number of ships required for detached duties on foreign stations—sixty-three in 1817, 104 in 1836, and 129 in 1848—was achieved by diminishing the navy's presence in home waters. Of the 103 infantry regiments

[3] P[arliamentary] P[apers] (1818) (57), III, p. 69.
[4] PP (1816) (53) and (32) XII; (1834) (17), XLII; Army Estimates (1837) (47), XL; (1846) (59), XXV; (1847) (47), XXXV.

in the 1830s, seventy-nine might be stationed abroad or in transit, and only twenty-four in Britain preparing for eventual embarkation. In 1846, twenty-three of the 112 battalions were located in India, fifty-four elsewhere in the Empire, and thirty-five in the British Isles.[5]

This imbalance in the deployment of troops and ships aroused grave public and ministerial concern in 1846–47, and again in 1852–53, when scares of invasion were sparked by construction of the French naval base at Cherbourg and alarmist pronouncements that 'steam had bridged the Channel'. What turned temporary panic into longer-term remedial action was the wide-ranging review of Britain's defence strategy conducted in 1846 by Earl Grey, a reforming head of the War Office in the late 1830s and now Colonial Secretary. His proposals for reconciling expanding commitments with tight budgets and scarce resources, embodied in a landmark Cabinet paper of October 1846, envisaged a decisive shift in the deployment of military manpower. Instead of soldiers scattered across the Empire, easy communications by steam permitted a greater concentration of troops at home. In future the security of dependencies had to depend more on naval power, rapid responses to emergencies by the despatch of expeditionary forces, and routine reliance on colonial corps or militia. The reduction of garrisons in settlement colonies neatly dovetailed with Grey's policy of devolving political authority: self-defence was the corollary of self-rule. Imperial bases like Malta and Bermuda would remain a British expense, but self-governing communities should undertake internal policing duties and maintain barracks and other military installations.[6]

However sound and settled the objectives, Grey recognized the need for cautious presentation and flexible timing. The clamour in Parliament and press against colonies as financial burdens caused him considerable anxiety, for 'the economical fever is very strong upon John Bull at this moment'.[7] A precipitate transfer of military responsibilities might appear to give countenance and momentum to scepticism about the Empire; yet cutting defence spending overseas was essential to creating a more palatable, enduring Imperial relationship. Colonial sentiment, as well as differing states of security, had also to be considered. Thinking it least controversial to begin with secure, prosperous, and lightly taxed Australians, Grey announced in 1846 troop reductions and the transfer to local management of barracks and military works. 'N.S. Wales kicked a good deal at

    [5] Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (London, 1976), pp. 170–71; *PP* (1851) (564), VII, pp. 741–42.
    [6] 'The Army', 17 Oct. 1846, C[olonial] O[ffice] 885/1.
    [7] Grey to Elgin, 16 Nov. 1848, in A. G. Doughty, ed., *The Elgin–Grey Papers, 1846–1852*, 4 vols. (Ottawa, 1937), I, p. 252.

first,' he admitted, 'but the people are beginning to understand that they cannot
have the advantages without the burthens of self-Government.'[8] In Canada, Grey
proceeded more circumspectly. With a population that included French Cana-
dians and Irish Catholics, and a mercantile community dissatisfied with the
removal of preferential tariffs, fragile colonial loyalty must not be undermined
by conveying the impression that Britain no longer possessed the will or the ability
to provide protection, and that an unwelcome shift of responsibilities for defence
was a prelude to severing the Imperial connection. Rioting over the Rebellion
Losses Act (1843), which many felt rewarded French Canadians for their treason in
1837, and an upsurge of annexationist sentiment in 1849 underscored the need for
caution; but within two years Grey had determined to extend to Canada similar
arrangements concerning troops and installations to those already applied in
Australia.

Grey's strategic design of 1846, embraced by his successors in office, is chiefly
significant as a statement of long-term intent, its immediate achievements being
limited and dependent on capricious local circumstances. In the Australian
colonies, a force of over 5,000 British troops in 1846 fell below 1,800 by 1852,
while the Canadian garrison, which had totalled 16,000 in 1841, steadily declined
over the ensuing years to a low of 2,800 by 1856, when deteriorating Anglo-
American relations prompted the despatch of five regiments. In the West Indies,
despite protests by local legislatures, the Colonial Office gradually reduced by a
quarter in the mid-1850s a force of 6,000 men by concentrating scattered detach-
ments. While warfare in southern Africa had obliged Grey to augment British
regulars to 9,000 men, these were cut by a third in 1854 following cessation of
hostilities, the grant of representative institutions at the Cape, and conventions
with the Boer communities.[9] The persistence of intermittent fighting precluded an
early reduction in New Zealand's small garrison.

After military calculations had been thrown into disarray by the Crimean War
(1854–56) and the Indian Mutiny (British forces in India were increased by a third
to 60,000 and sepoy numbers prudentially halved to 120,000 in a reconstructed
Indian Army),[10] renewed consideration of colonial defence costs led in the late
1850s to a second phase in troop withdrawals from self-governing colonies. Now a
sharper divergence of opinion emerged. Behind the practical questions of strategic
deployment and financial responsibility lay a speculative controversy over the
nature of future Imperial relations. Previously, the moderate, qualified stance of
Grey and his successors had been in the ascendant, with their belief that devolu-

[8] Grey to Elgin, 25 Oct. 1850, in ibid., II, p. 721.
[9] *PP* (1854) (117), XLI, and Report from the Select Committee appointed on Colonial Expend-
iture ... (1861) (423), XIII, p. 367.
[10] See below, pp. 427–29.

tion of management in matters of internal security, judiciously pursued, was wholly compatible with sustaining Imperial unity in an altered, more acceptable, and therefore more enduring form. They had not envisaged the complete abandonment or total abnegation of British obligations for the defence of colonies urged by a small but vocal minority of Cobdenites and sceptics. Britain, as an Imperial power, had to maintain the security of overseas possessions, not just by naval strength, but also by military garrisons at key bases and token units strategically stationed elsewhere as emblems of a massive force held in reserve for any emergency.

By the late 1850s and 1860s, however, more rigorous views came into greater prominence. In Parliament, a phalanx of 'colonial reformers' advocated the recall of British troops, irrespective of particular local circumstances and colonial wishes. They believed that Britain might disengage herself almost entirely from the obligations of defence and still preserve Imperial ties based on sentiment and common interests. These opinions also infected official circles, commanding open support at the War Office and the Treasury and among individual Cabinet ministers, including both Gladstone and Disraeli as Chancellors of the Exchequer, as well as covert sympathy among some permanent staff at the Colonial Office, though that department's policy remained ostensibly wedded to Grey's design. The debate which raged between 1859 and 1870 was less about ends than about means and timing: both sides favoured 'self-reliance' but differed over how best to cultivate it among colonists; both championed 'economy' but disagreed over how to apply it appropriately. In this domestically centred debate, finance and political relationships bulked larger than strategic considerations; the defence of individual colonies was left to future local exertions, or to chance. This was not a defence strategy but the absence of one: colonists were somehow expected to fill the vacuum left by British military withdrawal. Ironically, despite the predominance of moderate counsels in the shaping of colonial defence policy during the 1860s, circumstances overseas effected the virtual triumph of the thorough-going approach by 1870.

The issue came to the fore in 1859 because of practical problems experienced by the War and Colonial Offices in co-ordinating their responsibilities for Empire defence, redefined during the Crimean War. Under the prompting of John Robert Godley, a 'colonial reformer' now assistant Under-Secretary, the war department criticized current policy and proposed more demanding, rigid guidelines. In 1857–58 Britain's military spending overseas amounted to £3.9m, towards which colonies contributed only £378,253, 'a state of things' with 'no parallel or precedent in the case of any other organised community of which the history is known'. While the Empire's security relied principally on naval supremacy, and key Imperial bases required military garrisons, British soldiers should be withdrawn from all

other dependencies. Internal policing should be left wholly to local management, forces, and funds, 'there being no ground for drawing any distinction between a Colony and an independent nation in this respect'. For protection against aggression Britain was obliged to provide assistance, but colonies should pay towards external defence at a uniform rate, regardless of vulnerability or resources. This arrangement, the War Office believed, would 'stimulate the patriotism, self-reliance and military spirit of the Colonists' and 'show that we rely on their loyalty and attachment and nothing else'.[11] Officials at the colonial department condemned such 'doctrinaire', unworkable proposals. The Empire's diversity precluded any 'single maxim' or 'self-acting rule' for calculating payments towards military expenses. While colonies should help to defend themselves, Britain could not be indifferent to their internal tranquillity, nor take such a minimalist view of her proper responsibilities as the concerned Mother Country of an integrated Empire. Moreover, small military garrisons symbolized British power in reserve and signalled a resolve and a capacity to defend its possessions in a last resort.[12]

An interdepartmental committee comprising Godley, T. F. Elliot of the Colonial Office, and George Hamilton from the Treasury discussed these issues during 1859–60, and so divergent did their views remain that Elliot wrote a dissenting memorandum to Godley's report. In March 1861 the disagreement among officials spilled over into the parliamentary arena. A Select Committee on Colonial Military Expenditure was secured by Arthur Mills, a 'colonial reformer' who adopted a moderate stance, as did most committee members and witnesses examined. The report, reflecting this balance of opinion, distinguished between Imperial bases, whose defence rested with Britain, and colonies proper, where responsibility 'ought mainly to devolve upon themselves', with British ministers applying the principle to particular cases with discretion and flexibility. Overseas garrisons should be further reduced, but not necessarily withdrawn completely.[13] In March 1862 the House of Commons accepted without a division Mills's resolution:

That this House (while fully recognising the claims of all portions of the British Empire to Imperial aid in their protection against perils arising from the consequences of Imperial policy) is of opinion that Colonies exercising the rights of self-government ought to undertake the main responsibility of providing for their own internal order and security, and ought to assist in their own external defence.[14]

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[11] Godley, 'Military Expenditures in the Colonies', 2 Oct. 1858, W[ar] O[ffice] 33/6; Hawes to Merivale, 14 March 1859, CO 323/255; Report of the Committee on Expense of Military Defences in the Colonies, 24 Jan. 1860, PP (1860) (282), XLI, pp. 574–83.

[12] Merivale minute, 16 March 1859, Lytton minute, 19 March 1859, CO to WO, 26 May 1859, CO 323/255; PP (1860) (282), XLI, pp. 574–83.

[13] PP (1861) (423), XIII, pp. 73–75.

[14] 4 March 1862, PD, CLXV (Commons), col. 1060.

This resolution represented a tightening-up of the policy initiated by Grey, and the addition by the Commons of the pregnant final phrase gave it wider implications. Yet the failure to differentiate precisely between Imperial and local obligations was a tacit acknowledgment that defence still straddled areas of jurisdiction, a fact strikingly demonstrated during the 1860s by events in New Zealand and British North America.

Uncertainties over the division of responsibilities for internal security were highlighted in New Zealand and settled only after protracted controversy and an acute crisis in Imperial relations. With the outbreak of the Taranaki War in 1860, heralding a decade of almost continuous fighting in the North Island, several awkward questions arose: was this an Imperial or a colonial war? Whose interests did the conflict serve and the British troops protect? How far should the Imperial authorities commit men and money to dealing with a local emergency which white inhabitants of a self-governing colony ought themselves to tackle, and in future avoid by more judicious proceedings towards the Maori? By 1860 settler assertiveness and Maori resistance had undermined Britain's ability to mediate or do justice to the conflicting interests: either it could assert a residual oversight of 'native affairs' and bear the military and financial costs of wars it deprecated; or it had to accept the logic of responsible government, oblige colonial ministers to handle internal security, and hope that the discipline of having to face the consequences of their own actions would discourage confrontation. As Gladstone had earlier remarked, neatly combining economy with morality, 'the burdens of war were the providential preventives of war, and operated as a check upon the passions of mankind'.[15] Nevertheless, it took the Imperial authorities a decade to resolve this conundrum.

At first it seemed appropriate for Britain to help New Zealanders bring the current hostilities to a speedy termination before throwing them on their own resources. But the fighting dragged on inconclusively and local politicians displayed an aggravating reluctance to embrace the duties of self-reliance. As British involvement grew from one regiment in 1860 to 18,000 troops in 1864, the ministerial dilemma intensified and Parliament became more restive, especially when the New Zealand government requested a loan guarantee of £3m. With mounting misgivings about the purpose, conduct, and expense of the war, successive Colonial Secretaries exhorted the colonists to redouble their exertions and warned of early troop withdrawals. Eventually, in 1864 Frederick Weld's government adopted a policy of 'self-reliance', under which colonial ministers would assume full charge of Maori affairs and raise a local defence force. This welcome development led to the recall of five of the ten British regiments in 1865 and four

[15] 15 April 1851, *PD*, CXVI (Commons), col. 266.

more the following year. The final disengagement, however, was not so harmoniously completed. When fighting flared anew in 1868–69, pleas by Edward Stafford's ministry to retain the remaining troops, whatever the price, were rejected by the Colonial Office: 'I think we must harden our hearts', remarked Lord Granville.[16] The last regiment of British regulars departed in 1870, even before the hostilities ceased.

This stubborn, unfeeling stance provoked an outcry in both New Zealand and Britain and placed relations between the two countries under a severe but temporary strain. The contents and brusque tone of Granville's despatches created anger and resentment in the colony, where anti-British comment in the press and motions of censure in the legislature predicted secession from the Empire. The fracas soon subsided, in part because commissioners sent to London secured a loan of £1m to promote immigration and public works. Britain thus extricated herself from military involvement in New Zealand's internal security, and while some contemporaries interpreted this as indifference to Empire, or even a covert plot to dissolve it, Granville himself claimed that he had only carried to fruition long-established policy. What, however, gave some substance and plausibility to his critics' charges was that the scuttle from New Zealand coincided with the recall of the Imperial legions from British North America.

Questions concerning Britain's responsibility for the defence of self-governing colonies against external aggression had an urgent reality in Canada during the 1860s, when Anglo-American relations were strained by the Civil War, and later the Fenian border raids. The British government's military advisers, chiefly the influential Colonel W. F. D. Jervois, repeatedly considered how best the security of Canada could be safeguarded. According to the political mood of the moment, their recommendations varied with respect to the troops required—British regulars and colonial militia or volunteers—the dispersal of Imperial units or their concentration at Montreal and Quebec, the value of fortifying these fortresses, and the naval force needed on the Great Lakes. Liberal and Conservative ministers responded to assorted advice with irresolution and divided opinions. Some doubted whether Canada could be effectively defended against a well-organized American assault; most conceded that so long as British regiments were stationed there, something had to be done to place them in a defensible position. Cost was a key factor for the politicians. At least until 1868, the Cabinets of Palmerston, Russell, and Derby had a majority in favour of essential expenditures, though often reluctant to act. A more rigorous minority line was taken by Gladstone, who begrudged spending on the misconceived task of defending Canada, and who thought that self-governing colonies 'should cease to have the sentiment and

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[16] Granville to Sir Frederick Rogers, 29 Sept. 1869, CO 209/212.

habits of mere dependencies' and should, through military self-reliance, 'ascend to the condition of free communities'. The American Civil War provided 'the golden opportunity' and 'almost a necessity' to 'shift the centre of responsibility from this metropolis to the capital of Canada'. The same view was expressed by Disraeli: 'what is the use of these colonial deadweights which *we do not govern?...* we should withdraw the great body of our troops, and foster a complete development of self-government'.[17]

Whether or not local self-reliance was stifled by the continued British military presence, the readiness of Canadians to protect themselves formed a vital element in any Imperial plan of disengagement. With varying degrees of exhortation and success, British ministers persistently strove during the 1860s, through joint consultations in Canada or in London, to secure and extend colonial contributions of men and money. At moments of severe crisis the Canadian government responded, as in 1861, calling out 38,000 militia in addition to increased numbers of volunteers. In 1862, however, the Militia Bill was defeated, a 'reprehensible and provoking' action which the Colonial Secretary condemned as 'unbecoming feebleness' when no Imperial force could defend the country 'without the efficient aid of the Canadian people'.[18]

In these circumstances, ministers became keen to encourage closer union among the North American provinces as a way of strengthening their defences against annexation by the United States and allowing Britain to escape from an impossible military commitment. Once Canadian politicians had embraced a project of Confederation in 1864, the Imperial government gave them positive backing. A larger political entity with a developing sense of nationhood would be better able and more willing to uphold its territorial integrity, as well as less likely to arouse the aggressive instincts of its republican neighbour, a threat sharpened by the North's victory in the Civil War. Even so, Canadian leaders visiting London to clinch Confederation complained that British enthusiasm for disengagement and scepticism about the Imperial connection betrayed a churlish want of fellow-feeling.

Whatever the future prospects for Canada, Confederation in 1867 opened the way for British military withdrawal. An incoming Liberal government in 1868 made troop redeployment a central purpose of its army reforms, which included short-service enlistment and linked battalions—one serving overseas, the other

[17] Gladstone memorandum, 'Defence of Canada', 12 July 1864, B[ritish] L[ibrary] Add. MSS. 44, 599; Disraeli to Derby, 30 Sept. 1866, quoted in William Flavelle Monypenny and George Earle Buckle, *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli: Earl of Beaconsfield*, 6 vols. (London, 1910–20), IV, pp. 476–77.

[18] Newcastle to Monck, 21 Aug., 20 Dec. 1862, minute, 28 June 1862, on Monck to Newcastle, 10 June 1862, CO 42/634; see also Kenneth Bourne, *Britain and the Balance of Power in North America, 1815–1908* (London, 1967), pp. 257–70, 284–95.

based in Britain as a source of reliefs and focus for reserves. Edward Cardwell, the Secretary for War, hoped to save £2.3m by reducing the army establishment from 137,500 to 126,000 men and concentrating more soldiers at home by halving colonial garrisons to 26,000 men (though 70,000 British regulars and 140,000 sepoys remained in India). He reassured Canadians that their 'true defence' lay in membership of an Empire 'under the aegis' of Britain: every foreign nation knew that 'war with them is war with England'. Although the Duke of Cambridge, the Commander-in-Chief, fought an unrelenting rearguard action against this policy of 'colonial desertion'—an evasion of, not a solution to, the problem of Canadian defence—events hastened towards a denouement despite further Fenian raids and concern over American intentions.[19] By 1871 all British troops had been withdrawn, except at the Imperial naval bases of Halifax, and Esquimalt on the west coast, where they remained until after the South African War.

Mid-Victorian naval policy followed a parallel and similar pattern: redistribution haphazardly driven by economy at home and circumstances abroad. In the navy's case, the full impact of retrenchment and the reappraisal of commitments were delayed until the 1860s. Until then, the invasion panics, coupled with unease about France's naval ambitions, possibly in alliance with Russia, fuelled British naval expansion and higher spending. These tendencies were reinforced by technological developments, because the emergence of the large steam ironclad stimulated both alarm and expenditure. Despite conservatism and technological uncertainty, the Admiralty experimented with steam-powered vessels of superior speed and firepower designed for pursuit and coastal offensive operations. Meanwhile, Palmerston's assertive, meddling diplomacy and resort to gunboats meant the growing deployment of naval forces in non-European waters. By the early 1860s, twice as many ships (some 140) were dispersed on foreign stations as in 1835, including sixty-six vessels on the China Station and a transatlantic squadron augmented from twenty-three to forty-one ships at the start of the American Civil War.[20]

From about 1862, however, or symbolically with Palmerston's death in 1865, the initiative passed to Gladstone, and his determination to slash defence spending ensured a reassessment of the Royal Navy's commitments and deployment. In some respects this process had begun with the invasion scare of 1859, which had prompted massive expenditure on the fortification of major British ports and proposals to concentrate a larger fleet in home waters by scattering fewer vessels around the world. Such a strategic redistribution also depended on changes in the

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[19] 11 March 1869, *PD*, CXCIV (Commons), cols. 111–17; also Bourne, *Balance of Power*, pp. 295–304.
[20] C. J. Bartlett, 'The Mid-Victorian Reappraisal of Naval Policy', in K. Bourne and D. C. Watt, eds., *Studies in International History* (London, 1967), pp. 190–94.

conduct of British foreign policy. By the late 1860s the international scene in
Europe and beyond facilitated this shift, and potential naval rivals—France,
Russia, and the United States—had their attention otherwise occupied. In such
propitious circumstances, when security could be purchased cheaply, the govern-
ments of Gladstone and Disraeli pruned naval spending, partly through the
construction of fewer ironclads, but chiefly by reductions in the non-European
squadrons, aided by a foreign policy of greater restraint. The task of redistribution
was tackled with vigour by Hugh Childers, the Liberal First Lord. Instead of the
routine, permanent dispersal of naval forces across the globe, he favoured greater
concentration in home waters of mobile reserves or 'flying squadrons' which,
especially with the expanding network of submarine telegraphs, could be speedily
despatched to any location where British interests or prestige had to be upheld. In
the decade after 1865 the number of ships serving on non-European stations fell by
40 per cent and manpower was halved to 11,000. Naval estimates decreased by a
quarter to under £10m, the largest savings under all heads of public expenditure,
and the total establishment was cut from 47,000 to 34,000 men.[21] Broadly speak-
ing, this pattern of naval policy prevailed until the mid-1880s.

   Because British security was adequately safeguarded by these dispositions and
naval dominance remained unchallenged, no grand strategy of defence evolved.
Unsure about the future of the large ironclad and the type of fleet required, the
Admiralty was too immersed in grappling with technological change to reflect on
the broader strategic implications. Politicians tended to regard the Royal Navy, not
as a single force to command the seas, but as an assortment of units employed for
various particular services. No co-ordination of military and naval policies was
attempted or envisaged, and the Imperial dimension of defence was hardly
considered in the preoccupation with British interests. One isolated gesture,
made principally to the Australian colonies, was the Colonial Naval Defence Act
of 1865, which permitted the commissioning of colonial warships and the recruit-
ment of naval personnel as part of the Royal Navy. A measure of future rather
than immediate significance, it too aimed at possible economies, not strategic
planning, and as such typically reflected the impulses and priorities of mid-
Victorian defence policies.

During these years of unchallenged supremacy, a few experts expressed concern
about the lack of public debate on a national strategy in the age of steam, the
poverty of strategic thinking, and the contemporary fixation with land defences
and fortifications. In 1867 John Colomb, an officer in the Royal Marine Artillery,

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[21] Cf. *Navy (Distribution of Forces)*, PP (1867–68) (167), XLV, pp. 638–39, and *Navy Estimates for the
Year 1874–75*, PP (1876) (225), XLV, pp. 522–23; also PP (1874) (20), XXXVIII, p. 3.

published a pamphlet, *The Protection of our Commerce and Distribution of our Naval Forces*, which was to have a profound impact on British defence policy. Starting from the premise that the uninterrupted flow of commerce afforded the key to national survival, he identified the complementary roles of the navy as the protective shield and the army as the spearhead of attack. In the event of war, the Royal Navy would form the front line of home defence, keep open the lines of commerce and communication which bound together the Empire as an interdependent complex of communities, and secure many colonial possessions against external assault; the army would protect British ports from desultory raids, garrison India, and reinforce strategic bases overseas from which strikes against enemy territory might be launched. In this and subsequent writings, Colomb advocated an Empire-wide strategy of defence, and though later identified with the 'blue water school' of naval strategists, he recognized the partnership of the two armed forces in an integrated system of 'Imperial defence'. As for colonies, they might form local squadrons and contribute to the common protection of oceanic trade, but a centralized naval command was imperative.

At first these ideas failed to shake public indifference. By the late 1870s, however, a more threatening international climate caused ministers and their defence advisers to fear that the process of concentration had been carried to a dangerous excess, undermining Britain's margin of security. The Russian war scare of 1877–78, and more distant rumblings of the Second Afghan War, as well as the revival of French maritime and colonial activities, saw the tide turn with respect to naval policy and Imperial defence. British anxieties were as much commercial as diplomatic, and fears of beleaguerment replaced fears of invasion. The necessity for Britain to live by trade in an increasingly competitive world had grown more urgent as the advantages gained by earlier industrialization ebbed away and the country became dependent on imported foodstuffs. An expanding merchant marine (roughly one-third of the world's tonnage, carrying half its seaborne trade) would be highly vulnerable in wartime to commerce-raiding by swift enemy cruisers—so naval propagandists argued. At the same time, Britain's naval supremacy might now be jeopardized because coaling stations and operating bases were too few, too dispersed, and too defenceless to afford the required sustenance and security.

These weaknesses were highlighted in several creatively alarmist departmental investigations in the late 1870s which led to the appointment in 1879 of a Royal Commission chaired by Lord Carnarvon to inquire into 'the defence of British possessions and commerce abroad'. Despite the exclusion from its remit of home defences and the four Imperial fortresses—Gibraltar, Malta, Halifax, and Bermuda—the Commission produced the first comprehensive study of Imperial defence. Recognizing a crucial link between trade and security, its reports of

1881–82 emphasized the volume and value of inter-Imperial seaborne commerce (estimated at £367m a year, with Empire shipping and cargoes afloat worth £900m), its vulnerability in wartime, and the defencelessness of many shore establishments across the Empire. The navy's effectiveness depended on the development of a network of over 150 secure bases world-wide, with repair facilities and ample stocks of coal, since 'the strategy by which a naval force is to obtain the command of a given sea will resolve itself very much into a question of coal supply'. The Commission also advocated reinforcing the Royal Navy in an emergency with fast steamers from shipping lines and mail companies which might in wartime carry moderate armaments, transport troops and supplies, and act as monitors or communications vessels. Its reports refrained from apportioning the costs involved in enhancing the security of what eventually came to be classified (according to the degree of protection afforded) as 'defended ports', 'coaling stations', and 'harbours of refuge', but suggested that colonies should defend their own commercial ports and might reasonably be expected to contribute to local naval squadrons maintained for the benefit of all.[22]

The Carnarvon Commission marked a turning-point in official policy. It sketched a system of Imperial defence based on naval power, embracing both Britain and colonies, combining central command and local contributions. During the 1880s the government accordingly took hesitant steps to improve inter-departmental co-ordination in Whitehall and consultation with the emerging Dominions, as through the Colonial Defence Committee (1885), a pale forerunner of the Committee of Imperial Defence (1902). Such collaboration proved no easy task. Naval arrangements had to recognize that 'the sea is one', a strategic reality affecting the composition, deployment, and command of the fleet not readily reconciled with the political polycentrism of the Empire. No conflict arose while colonists confined their activities to harbour security, providing floating batteries, blockships, and coastal sloops; but general naval defence relied on ocean-going vessels ready, if necessary, to operate outside the territorial limits of any particular colony and as part of a wider strategy drawn up in London. It remained to be seen whether localization and colonial participation could be satisfactorily combined with centralized direction and unity of command.

Although the Commission's findings were kept confidential, they harmonized with the public mood as Imperial naval defence became the subject of lively debate. Reacting to a more hostile world, Britons not only rediscovered the Royal Navy but turned to settler communities as allies whose resources would materially underpin British global power. Colonial self-reliance might now be

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[22] *Proceedings of the Colonial Conferences, 1887*, Vol. II (Appendix), *PP* (1887) (c.5091–I), LVI, pp. 917–18, 931–32.

transmuted from disengagement to involvement. This call for assistance signalled a change in British attitudes to Empire often noted by historians of the period: in the sphere of defence, it reflected pragmatic calculation, tinged with anxiety. The desire for consolidation and the heightened awareness of common dangers and shared interests—even of a Greater Britain of satellite nations—were most overtly expressed by the movement for Imperial federation which burgeoned in the 1880s. Defence formed a prominent purpose in all blueprints of political union and an area where centralized structures might be particularly appropriate and acceptable, now that 'distance has been almost abolished by steam and electricity', as the historian J. R. Seeley remarked.[23] Nevertheless, the Imperial Federation League (1884), like its successor the Imperial Federation (Defence) League (1894), failed to gain a grip on public opinion, while governmental discussions of defence exposed an ambivalent outlook: ministers and officials wanted the material aid of the self-governing colonies without sharing with them control of policy-making, planning, or operations. More constructively, the government recognized the vital strategic importance of creating an efficient and secure network of submarine cable communications, and under persistent pressure from the Colonial Defence Committee and the service departments, an 'All Red Route' was gradually constructed, linking every part of the Empire without touching foreign soil.[24] This world-wide web braced Britain's military and economic power, but the easier exchange of views and information between London and colonial capitals did not, as the federationists hoped, foster Imperial cohesiveness or co-operation.

In the colonies too, the 1880s saw more active public discussion of Imperial defence, though differences in geographical location and strategic exposure produced diverse responses. Preoccupied with a transcontinental boundary, Canada felt no pressing need for its own naval vessels. Canadian politicians claimed that they could best contribute to Imperial defence by developing the country's resources and building a railway to link two oceans. At the Cape, the presence of the British base as yet discouraged local initiatives. It was principally in Australasia, therefore, where isolation on the exposed fringes of Empire generated the most naval activity. The sense of insecurity was accentuated by the upsurge of French and German colonial enterprise in the Pacific, which also excited the colonists' desire to pre-empt or shape the division of territorial spoils. Irritation with apparent British indifference to the intrusion of European powers into adjacent waters stimulated regional moves to closer co-operation through Inter-Colonial Conferences and the Federal Council of Australasia (1883), a harbinger of eventual federation. While these events also inclined politicians to study local defences and

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[23] J. R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England* (London, 1883), p. 64.
[24] See Vol IV, Map 1.2.

increase naval expenditure, sensitivity about needs and status made them wary of paying for enhanced naval protection without controlling the deployment of the additional ships.

These matters surfaced at the Inter-Colonial Conference in 1881, where members recommended expenditure on improved land defences at major ports and requested the Admiralty to augment the Australian squadron—'at the exclusive charge of the Imperial Government'.[25] Soon afterwards Victoria purchased three vessels for harbour defence, and New Zealand offered to contribute towards a cruiser assigned to its coastal waters. Welcoming these initiatives, the Admiralty was compelled to consider with urgency what supplementary role Australasian governments might play in naval defence and how best to regulate these incipient colonial navies. Initially, in 1884, the First Sea Lord, Sir Astley Cooper Key, envisaged port defence ships owned by individual colonies but placed under Royal Navy control. When this proved unacceptable, an alternative was successfully negotiated by Rear-Admiral George Tryon, appointed Commander of the Australian Station in 1885. In return for a fixed annual subsidy from the colonies, the Admiralty would supply extra manned ships, serving under a Royal Navy commander, which would not be permitted to leave Australian waters, even in wartime, without the colonial governments' consent. The First Lord in the new Conservative ministry in 1885, Lord George Hamilton, endorsed Tryon's recommendations. The Admiralty acknowledged that this localization of naval forces, designation of duties, and method of financing entailed departures from the traditional insistence on mobility as essential to the effective use of sea power. But a surrender to Australian opinion seemed prudent lest the colonies should otherwise start acquiring fleets of their own. Haggling continued over the costs of five cruisers and two torpedo gunboats, matters being finally resolved at the Colonial Conference in 1887. With Canada and the Cape remaining tight-fisted, the Australian colonies agreed to pay £126,000 a year and New Zealand £20,000 for two ships stationed in its waters. The conference failed, however, to address the wider issues of Imperial defence. Having secured Antipodean money under the pretext of protecting Australasian floating trade, and having thus breached Britain's exclusive responsibility for sea-going defence, British officials showed no inclination to discuss with colonials the principles and implementation of naval strategy.

The Australian Naval Agreement of 1887 was ratified by the various legislatures, producing some heated exchanges and much misunderstanding about Imperial co-operation. Critics in New South Wales and Victoria feared being sucked into Britain's European quarrels and condemned the naval force as an instrument of

[25] *PP* (1887) (c5091–I), LVI, p. 817.

British rule in an independent colony. In Queensland opponents castigated an expensive deal stitched up in London, whereby Australians were expected to tax themselves for Imperial purposes. More moderate nationalists were prepared to accept the agreement as an interim expedient until Australia made its own arrangements for defence, and in this spirit they could join with Imperial-minded advocates of greater Empire unity. In New Zealand such difficulties and diversity of opinion did not arise, and it was easy for British ministers to attribute the forging and ratification of the agreement to Imperial loyalty, and to discern in this a mood favourable to closer co-operation. As Sir Henry Holland, the Secretary of State for the Colonies remarked: 'We do not regard this question in the light of a mere bargain between the mother country and the colonies, but as the starting point of a new policy—the first step towards a federation for defence which will not only add strength to the Empire, but tend to find its members in a closer union.'[26]

The need for colonial assistance was underlined by the ministry's decision to launch an expensive programme of naval construction in the late 1880s. In 1884 revelations in the *Pall Mall Gazette* by its editor, W. T. Stead, concerning British naval weaknesses and the rapidly expanding fleet of French battleships excited considerable public alarm. Although the strength of foreign navies and the threat they posed were exaggerated, the popular outcry stung the government into action. In 1885–86 expenditure on shipbuilding almost doubled to £3.6m, and after an official inquiry had discovered continuing deficiencies, the Naval Defence Act of 1889, designed to uphold a 'two-power standard' of superiority, authorized expenditure of £21.5m over five years on ocean-going fighting ships, not coastal assault vessels—a victory for the 'blue water' propagandists. In 1894, amidst renewed agitation, a further five-year programme was approved. Spending continued to rise as construction costs spiralled with larger battleships and rapid technological change. Naval estimates of £11m in 1883 climbed to £18.7m in 1896, and £34.5m in 1903. Even so, the Royal Navy's relative numerical superiority declined: in 1883 Britain had thirty-eight battleships to the forty of other countries; in 1897 the ratio was sixty-two to ninety-six.[27]

Contemporaries found grounds for both apprehension and reassurance in the pronouncements of a clutch of naval strategists. Their Bible was *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* (1890), written by A. T. Mahan, an American naval captain, which appeared to enunciate immutable strategic rules, valid for the future as for the past, concerning the role of navies in international relations. Mahan stressed

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[26] Quoted in Richard A. Preston, *Canada and 'Imperial Defense'* (Durham, NC, 1967), p. 104. For colonial views, see Donald C. Gordon, *The Dominion Partnership in Imperial Defense, 1870–1914* (Baltimore, 1965), pp. 78–97.

[27] Statistics taken from Kennedy, *British Naval Mastery*, pp. 193, 209.

the value of transmarine commerce, underpinned by secure communications and key bases, but what crucially mattered was a concentration of armed might where it would be most effective. A large battlefleet stationed in European waters would best protect the British Isles, command the world's oceans against rival navies, and clear the seas of commerce-raiders. As an island nation, too, Britain could focus on naval strength and ignore the military contests of land powers, a familiar theme now refurbished as the navalist strategy of the 'blue water school' which downgraded the soldiers and fortifications of the 'bricks and mortar school'. Navalists like Mahan thus equated Imperial defence with British sea power and adopted a centralist stance which not only rendered defence preparations almost exclusively a British responsibility, but also had a stultifying effect on Britain's relations with self-governing colonies. Navalist thinking, and future wars visualized as decisive clashes of battlefleets far out at sea, ran wholly counter to the coastal warfare which had hitherto dominated British experience and naval policy; it also envisaged no collaborative role for colonists, except as financial donors to the Royal Navy.

These navalist tenets, widely championed by leading public figures, sections of the press, and such organizations as the Navy League (1894), were profoundly influential in the 1890s and beyond. They raised public awareness of defence matters, though skewing the debate excessively towards the navy. 'The panic mongers are abroad', a correspondent to the *Daily News* complained in 1893, 'and venerable Admirals are joining juvenile politicians in their attempts to prove that the British fleet, if it has not already gone to the dogs, is at least on its way to them.'[28] At the same time, navalist doctrines undermined both the overall, integrated concept of Imperial defence advocated by the Carnarvon Commission and closer collaboration between Britain and the Dominions. The Australian Naval Agreement, symbol of the co-operative phase during the 1880s, stood condemned as strategically misconceived and practically irrelevant. Despite the jingoistic fervour in Britain and a resurgence of talk about Imperial federation, the debate about defence now sidelined colonies. Ministers and professional advisers, for their part, remained unconcerned to foster greater naval co-operation through policy initiatives or more unified structures.

The Colonial Conference in 1897 exposed these contradictions and the differences in outlook between Britain and the Dominions. Espousing the cause of Imperial unity, Joseph Chamberlain told delegates that the time might be at hand 'when the Colonies will desire to substitute for the slight relationship which at present exists a true partnership', perhaps through 'a great council of Empire'. But he warned that with 'the privilege of management' would come 'the obligation and the responsibility', including a share of defence expenditure. Britain currently

[28] Quoted in Arthur J. Marder, *The Anatomy of British Sea Power* (New York, 1940), p. 174.

spent some £35m a year, over a third of national revenue, on armed forces maintained, not 'exclusively, or even mainly, for the benefit of the United Kingdom', but as 'a necessity of empire'. Although colonial contributions to the British navy were as yet 'absolutely trifling', the colonies were 'still children, but rapidly approaching manhood', and now was the time to begin cultivating the 'principle of mutual support' and 'a truly Imperial patriotism'.[29]

The Colonial Secretary's effusive sentiments and appeal for naval co-operation failed to elicit a positive response. He was not assisted by untimely criticisms from Admiralty spokesmen, directed against the restrictions on the movement of ships of the Australian auxiliary squadron under the 1887 agreement. The Premiers retorted that legislatures would not vote funds if admirals controlled the deployment of subsidized vessels, lest these be removed from Australian waters in time of war. G. J. Goschen, the First Lord of the Admiralty, reluctantly acquiesced, describing the present arrangement 'from a political point of view worth maintaining' but, reflecting the impact of navalist thinking at the department, reprobated any naval strategy based on 'hugging the shoreline', since in wartime the Royal Navy must be 'aggressive' and mobile. Colonial leaders displayed no greater enthusiasm for extended subsidies. The Premiers of Australia and New Zealand refused even token grants towards the general defence of the Empire. For Canada, Sir Wilfrid Laurier adamantly shunned naval commitments. Only the Cape rose to the occasion and offered the Royal Navy a cruiser, a gift later converted into an annual payment of £30,000. As Goschen assured the premiers with respect to subsidies: 'Though I do not mean to say that it assists us to any great extent, it does produce between the Admiralty and the Colonies certain ties which we value, and which I should be very sorry to do anything to loosen?'[30]

In reality, these ties were both slight and strained by attitudes prevailing on the periphery and in the metropole. Politicians in autonomous colonies viewed co-operation in naval defence with wariness or indifference: 'the strategic arguments of the naval imperialists' made little headway against 'the political arguments of the colonial nationalists'.[31] Such circumstances were not conducive to forging the administrative structures essential to closer collaboration. The reservations expressed in colonial capitals were echoed in London. Although Chamberlain talked expansively about 'a true partnership' and shared management of Empire, neither he nor the Admiralty was ready in practice to vouchsafe colonial governments a voice in shaping the priorities, formulating the policies, or supervising the conduct of naval defence. The Royal Navy, for its part, displayed little interest in

[29] *Proceedings of a Conference between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Premiers of the Self-Governing Colonies, at the Colonial Office, London, June and July 1897, PP* (1897) (c8596), LIX, pp. 535–38.
[30] Ibid., p. 548.
[31] Preston, *Canada and 'Imperial Defense'*, p. 118.

cultivating colonial navies or naval reserves. On one principle only could all parties agree: that naval defence of the Empire had to remain a British responsibility. Any departure from this safe common ground exposed Imperial disunity.

Yet this was not the whole story. The military dimensions of safeguarding the Empire re-emerged in the late 1870s, accompanied by considerable popular enthusiasm for the army, though no upsurge in enlistment. Rivalry from foreign powers with expansionist or colonial ambitions led to the intermeshing of defence and diplomacy, exemplified by Disraeli's 'forward policies' in the Middle East and Afghanistan and Salisbury's subsequent annexations in Africa. In North-West India, the longest land frontier in the Empire, and one unsettled by periodic skirmishes with border tribes, the prospect of warfare intensified with the surge of Russian military activity and railway building in Central Asia and territorial encroachment on buffer states like Afghanistan and Persia. The Indian authorities took the menace seriously, though they were not averse to fuelling the Russophobia in order to enhance the army's profile in Imperial strategy and counter the navalist influence. What General Roberts, the Commander-in-Chief (1885–93), feared most was that a Russian incursion across the North-West Frontier, or even a minor military reverse, would undermine British prestige and supposed invincibility in the eyes of Indians sufficiently to trigger an internal uprising. 'At the best,' he gloomily predicted, 'we could only expect the natives to remain passive, while the first disaster would raise throughout Hindustan a storm, compared with which the troubles of 1857 would be insignificant.'[32] For twenty years after the Russo-Afghan clash at Penjdeh in 1885, British military planners wrestled with the seemingly insoluble difficulty of meeting the threat to security. One response was increased regional recruitment of 'martial races' from the Punjab and Nepal as a more reliable force against Russian troops than the sepoys traditionally enlisted from diverse Hindu communities whose continued collaboration might prove fragile. In 1893 the three presidency armies were amalgamated and General Kitchener introduced further organizational reforms a decade later. But as his forecasts of the number of troops required to repel an invading army escalated alarmingly, ministers were prompted to pursue a diplomatic solution of the frontier emergency, realized in the Anglo-Russian entente of 1907.[33]

Meanwhile Russian designs on the Ottoman empire had revived the Eastern Question, emphasized the crucial importance of Egypt and the Nile Valley to communications with India, especially after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869,

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[32] Quoted in Rose Louise Greaves, *Persia and the Defence of India, 1884–1892* (London, 1959), p. 197.

[33] See Sneh Mahajan, 'The Defence of India and the End of Isolation: A Study in the Foreign Policy of the Conservative Government, 1900–1905', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, X (1982), pp. 168–93.

and drawn British administrators and soldiers into Egypt and the Sudan in the 1880s. These activities formed part of the Scramble for Africa as Britain, like her European competitors, staked out territorial claims by conquest or annexation, undertook punitive expeditions, and suppressed signs of resistance, lawlessness, or insurrection among peoples as diverse as the Asante (1873–74, 1895–96), the Zulu (1879), the Boers (1881), and the Matabele (Ndebele) (1893, 1896–97). For all the advantages of firepower, disciplined troops, and naval support, these distant campaigns against indigenous warriors and the ravages of nature placed severe strains on military organization, matériel, and above all manpower. Despite the employment of locally recruited auxiliaries and of Indian troops in some instances, General Wolseley and other commanders had to 'bleed' regiments at home for men to complete expeditionary forces. Cardwell's reforms, deranged by the demands of an expanding, unstable Empire under challenge, attracted critical scrutiny. Professional soldiers, Parliament, and press agonized over a dangerous weakening of home defence and administrative shortcomings, as yet partly obscured by the success of British arms in the small colonial wars of Africa and Asia.

In Britain's military dealings with the Dominions, the 1890s witnessed more constructive activity than in naval affairs. The Colonial Defence Committee and local authorities exchanged information and discussed defence plans; an inter-change of military personnel took place; British officers, paying inspection visits overseas or serving as General Officer Commanding of the militia, provided expert advice and exhortation. But military collaboration was frustrated by the lack of forward planning in Whitehall and by the hesitations and sensibilities of colonial governments. Even after the Hartington Commission in 1889–90 had attempted to improve administrative structures, the War Office was ill-equipped to oversee colonial defence, co-ordination with the Admiralty was minimal, and divided responsibilities were aggravated by tensions between civilian politicians and military advisers. Despite the strain placed by wars in Africa and Asia on the resources of the British army, the potential Imperial role of colonial land forces remained unclear and little progress was made towards incorporating any of them, including the West Africa Frontier Force, into a pattern of Imperial defence, even as auxiliary troops or emergency reinforcements.

For their part, colonies were likely to show more concern about land defence than coastal security, given local interests and spending priorities, but their planning in peacetime betrayed a lack of urgency and a sensitivity about British involvement. Following a tour of inspection by Major-General J. Bevan Edwards to advise on the better integration of the Australian colonies' defence arrange-ments, a scheme of what was termed federal defence sparked debate during the 1890s, but it became uneasily entangled with the fluctuating fortunes of the

political federation movement. Attempts in Canada to render the militia more effective were offset by friction between politicians and Imperial professional advisers over control of military power and the amount of expenditure required. Although some colonists volunteered for service with British expeditionary forces in the Sudan, the militias or partially paid units which had emerged in the self-governing colonies were neither in size, nor composition, nor mobility suited to wider Imperial purposes, and colonial governments did not envisage them playing such a role.

At the outbreak of the South African War in 1899, however, the preferences of politicians were pre-empted by the actions of their constituents. While New Zealanders expressed few qualms about the war's justification, and Australian criticisms were muted, in Canada the government feared entanglement in unwanted responsibilities of Empire and heeded the hostility or indifference of French voters. Yet even tardy governments were drawn into military participation by the spontaneous surge of volunteers. Despite disagreements over the type of troops required, their terms of service and rates of pay, and their organization as separate contingents, the self-governing colonies eventually contributed some 30,000 men (16,000 Australians, 8,300 Canadians, and 6,500 New Zealanders), together with 50,000 recruited within the South African territories.[34] While only a fraction of the 450,000 soldiers engaged in the conflict, the authorities in London saluted this tangible demonstration of Imperial solidarity by colonial communities willing to come to Britain's aid at a time of crisis. Indeed, advocates of federation drew fresh hope from the display of Imperial sentiment and the spirit of co-operation in wartime.

Much of this was wishful thinking, and the experiences of the war were misleading, its lessons ambivalent. Popular enthusiasm among Imperially minded colonists was not equalled by continuing governmental interest in recruiting, equipping, and funding troops for a distant conflict that remained localized in its dangers and impact. The official commitment was limited, qualified, and diminishing. At the same time, participation, prowess, and pride fostered national sentiment and identities, of which Imperialist fervour was but one manifestation. Colonists also had to recognize that nationhood might mean involvement in international disputes, planning for defence that went beyond local security, and development of military forces that reliance on Britain had hitherto postponed. For Britain, too, the South African War exposed the limitations of 'Imperial defence' according to prevailing theory and practice. The navalist doctrine of sea power had been vindicated to the extent that the Royal Navy had helped to keep

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[34] *Report of His Majesty's Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Military Preparations and Other Matters connected with the War in South Africa, PP* (1904) (1789), XL, p. 76.

the war localized and free from foreign intervention and had maintained communications and supplies unimpeded. But for an Imperial power, naval supremacy was by itself insufficient; an army was as vital a part of national defence and strategic planning as a navy. The length and severity of the war, and British military reverses, also revealed fundamental defects in the army's ability to field a large, trained, well-equipped force, with the necessary leadership, staff officers, plan of campaign, and adaptability. Such evident unpreparedness and military difficulties against small Boer communities led many contemporaries to ponder uneasily on the implications should Imperial Britain become embroiled in a major European war.

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16

The Political Economy of Empire, 1880–1914

E.H.H. GREEN

My policy... is entirely based on my firm belief of its necessity if we are to keep the Empire together. Rhodes was absolutely right: if we cannot find a practical tie we shall insensibly drift apart.

(Joseph Chamberlain)[1]

In 1883 J. R. Seeley famously remarked in *The Expansion of England* that 'we seem... to have conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind'.[2] The significance of this celebrated aphorism is that it was an eloquent statement of belated British acknowledgement of the Empire's existence. The point Seeley was making, echoed almost one hundred years later in another Cambridge historian's comment that, apart perhaps from India, 'there was no such thing as a British Empire',[3] was that although Britain had by the late nineteenth century come to hold vast territorial possessions, this had not been the result of a conscious, systematic plan. Equally important, although many Britons were aware and even proud of their nation's Imperial position, there existed no design for turning these sprawling territories into a coherent structure—in Seeley's view, the British Empire had no theme.

Publication of *The Expansion of England* was Seeley's personal attempt to heighten Imperial consciousness in Britain, and the success of the book, which sold half a million copies in the 1880s and went into several editions, appeared to vindicate his efforts. That *The Expansion of England* found a receptive audience was due to a general awakening of interest in Empire and the question of Imperial organization. From the early 1880s on the role and function of the Empire was examined in detail by both government institutions and other organizations, with the result that the relationship between Britain and its Dominions and colonies was reconsidered at several levels. One prominent development was the establish-

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[1] J. Chamberlain to E. B. Iwan-Muller, 11 Dec. 1903, E. B. Iwan-Muller Papers, B[ritish] L[ibrary], Add. MSS, 51 316.

[2] J. R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England* (1883; London, 1897 edn.), p. 10.

[3] Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century, 1815–1914: A Study of Empire and Expansion*, 2nd edn. (London, 1993), p. 1.

ment of regular high-level meetings between Britain and the self-governing colonies. The first Colonial Conference met in 1887, and five similar conferences were convened before the First World War, providing an increasingly important forum for policy discussions on matters ranging from Imperial defence and trade to the laying of the 'all red route' of transoceanic cables[4] and the Imperial penny post. Of course not all Imperial activities had a high public profile, but a most strenuous public effort to reconsider and reshape Imperial relations was made by organizations and individuals committed to what is best termed 'constructive imperialism'.

The term 'constructive imperialism' was first used by the English historical economist[5] W. A. S. Hewins[6] in 1899. He defined it as 'the deliberate adoption of the Empire as distinguished from the United Kingdom as the basis of public policy', in order to realize 'the splendid dream of a progressive, organized Empire'.[7] Five years later Hewins helped to produce a more precise definition. By that time he had become the leading economic adviser to the campaign for Imperial Preference launched by Joseph Chamberlain in May 1903, and was a member of the organizing committee of the Compatriots' Club. The Compatriots, a group of one hundred Empire enthusiasts[8] interested in 'the purely Imperial and constructive side of the Chamberlain movement',[9] defined their object thus— 'to advance the ideal of a United British Empire and to advocate consistently those principles of constructive policy on all constitutional, economic, defensive, and educational questions which will help towards the fulfilment of that ideal'.[10]

Although the actual term was not used until the turn of the century, the basic parameters of constructive imperialist thought were established in the 1880s. The activities of the Imperial Federation League (IFL), founded in 1884, provided the earliest attempt to promote closer Imperial relations and systematic organization of the Empire. For the IFL, like the Compatriots, the ultimate goal had been to bring about 'the permanent unity of the Empire'[11] by strengthening institutional links between Britain and the colonies and by developing close military and commercial bonds within the Empire. The break-up of the IFL in 1893 was an

[4] See above, pp. 259–62.

[5] G. M. Koot, *The English Historical Economists* (Cambridge, 1986).

[6] W. A. S. Hewins (1865–1931), first Director of the London School of Economics, from 1903, and Conservative MP, from 1912.

[7] W. A. S. Hewins, *The Apologia of an Imperialist*, 2 vols. (London, 1929), I, pp. 56, 57.

[8] E. H. H. Green, *The Crisis of Conservatism: The Politics, Economics and Ideology of the British Conservative Party, 1880–1914* (London, 1994), pp. 161–62, 339–40.

[9] L. S. Amery to B. Kidd, 4 March 1904, Benjamin Kidd Papers, Cambridge University Library, Add. MSS, 8069.

[10] Rules of the Compatriots Club, copy in Arthur Steel-Maitland Papers, Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh, GD 193/129/133x.

[11] Minutes of the First Meeting of the IFL General Committee, 18 Nov. 1884, IFL Papers, B[ritish] L[ibrary] Add. MSS, 62778, ff. 1–5.

early setback for the development of constructive imperialism, but discussion of the issues the IFL helped to raise continued both in Britain and the colonies after its demise. Hence, when Hewins presented his lectures in 1899 and when the Compatriots defined their objectives they were drawing upon a well-established current of ideas. That the first decade of the twentieth century witnessed a campaign which brought constructive imperialism to the centre of public debate in both Britain and the colonies was thus hardly surprising. Writing almost thirty years after Joseph Chamberlain had inaugurated the crusade for Imperial unity based on preferential trade within the Empire, Austen Chamberlain remarked that 'the immense echo of my father's speech in May 1903 is inexplicable unless it is appreciated that the train was already laid'.[12] The tariff reform campaign provided a rallying point for those who sought to fulfil Hewins's 'splendid dream', but it was as much a symptom as a cause of an ongoing debate within and between Britain and the colonies over the Empire's future, in particular over the desirability of a more formal Imperial structure.

The constructive imperialist argument for Imperial unity was in part a response to changes in the international environment. From the mid-1870s the growing industrial and military strength and increasing overseas activity of, in particular, Germany, France, the United States, and Russia meant that Britain was no longer the sole genuinely global power. In Britain and the colonies official awareness of this new problem was manifest in a number of important developments, principally relating to defence policy. At both the centre and periphery of Empire there was a growing sense that neither could survive alone, and the idea of closer Imperial co-operation on questions of Imperial defence enjoyed a steadily increasing appeal in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[13]

Many in both Britain and the colonies would have agreed with Adam Smith's dictum that defence was more important than opulence, but some felt it equally essential to secure the economic future of the Empire. For constructive imperialists the solution to the new challenges facing the Empire was the Empire itself. Drawing on fashionable currents of evolutionary thought, constructive imperialists contended that the emergence of imperial powers indicated that God, or perhaps Darwin, was on the side of big battalions. Constructive imperialists saw the unification of Germany, Italy, and the United States, and the apparent reinvigoration of Russia, as symptomatic of an evolutionary trend in favour of large-scale states. For Seeley the implications of this trend were clear, namely, that the

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[12] To B. Dugdale, 4 March 1931, Joseph Chamberlain Papers, Birmingham University Library, JC 18/18/22.

[13] See above, pp. 333–34; and below, pp. 704–08.

forces 'which make vast political union possible tend to make States which are on the old scale of magnitude unsafe, insignificant, second rate',[14] an argument echoed by Joseph Chamberlain, who declared in May 1902 that 'The days are for great Empires and not for little States.'[15] It followed that, as Alfred Milner put it, 'the time is coming . . . when the United Kingdom *alone* will be hard put to retain its place amongst the foremost nations of the world', and hence constructive imperialists urged both the statesmen and peoples of the Empire to 'learn to think imperially'.[16] What 'thinking imperially' meant was partially explained in 1903 by the then First Lord of the Admiralty and former Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Selborne, who stated that 'if this country is to maintain herself in the years to come in the same rank with the US, Russia and Germany, the unit must be enlarged from the UK to the Empire'.[17] This was a *partial* explanation in so far as its emphasis was on the survival of the United Kingdom, but for constructive imperialists, including Selborne, the key point was that although 'the maintenance of the Empire must depend to an overwhelming degree upon the power and wealth of the island', it was also the case that 'the power and wealth of the island must depend upon the maintenance of the Empire'.[18] An Imperial problem demanded an Imperial solution.

At first glance there was an inconsistency in the constructive imperialist argument, in that if evolution was tending to produce Empire states then surely the British Empire would coalesce 'naturally'—where was the need for *policy*? The IFL summed up this problem with its reaction to the calling of the first Colonial Conference, when it noted that 'the action of the laws of political development as exemplified in such orderly, though almost unconscious growth, emphasizes the need for the deliberate adoption of [the] federal principle [in the Empire]':[19] at one and the same time, it seems, there were *laws* of development and yet also a need for deliberate, conscious action. The resolution of this seeming paradox is that whilst constructive imperialists saw the trend towards Empire states as the predominant evolutionary path, they also argued that it was not the only one. In their view Empires did not just happen, they had to be *made* by people who recognized their importance. Hence, when Hewins defined constructive imperialism he singled out *laissez-faire* liberalism as its antithesis, on the grounds that

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[14] Seeley, *Expansion of England*, p. 88.

[15] J. Chamberlain at Birmingham, 16 May 1902, in J. L. Garvin and J. Amery, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, 6 vols. (London, 1929–68), IV, p. 177.

[16] Lord Selborne at Handsworth, 4 Jan. 1905, *The Times*, 5 Jan. 1905.

[17] To E. G. Pretyman, 19 Sept. 1903, Selborne Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford, MSS Selborne, 73, ff. 5–9.

[18] J. L. Garvin, 'The Principles of Constructive Economics as Applied to the Maintenance of the Empire', in *Compatriots Club Lectures* (London, 1905), p. 44.

[19] IFL, Annual Report, 24 March 1887, IFL Papers, BL Add. MSS, 62779 (my emphasis).

Empires could be 'un-made' if their peoples, and especially their leaders, failed to appreciate the need for Imperial consolidation in the struggle with other Empires.[20] *Laissez-faire* liberalism was deemed incapable of grasping this for two reasons. First, the words and deeds of Cobden, Bright, and 'Little England' Liberal governments had shown that its adherents were opposed to the very notion of Empire, and second, it was inherently antagonistic to *any* conscious government action. In the constructive imperialist schema the 'visible hand' of the human will was vital if the Empire was to be organized. In this last context the Social Darwinism of constructive imperialism was often strongly flavoured with Idealism. The British Empire was depicted as an entity with the *potential* to realize a genuinely Imperial form, but it required an act of will for the *idea* of Empire to be made *real*. Hence it was necessary for decision-makers in Britain and the colonies to develop an Imperial consciousness in order that the Empire could realize its as yet only partially formed essence.[21]

The constructive imperialist stress on the need for conscious direction of Britain's Imperial destiny implied a deliberate break from the 'imperialism of free trade' and an extended, positive role for the British State. The most obvious, early manifestations of this aspect of constructive imperialist thought were the arguments of the Imperial Federation League and the National Fair Trade League (NFTL) for Imperial tariff arrangements in the 1880s.[22] Any suggestion of tariffs was itself heretical in a nation where free trade was regarded as more an article of faith than an economic policy. But it was not only the idea that government should interfere with trade flows that made the IFL and NFTL's call for closer economic links with the Empire subversive of established political-economic orthodoxy. In 1864 the liberal economist J. E. Cairnes had written that 'We do not ask—we certainly do not receive—any commercial advantage from the Colonies which are not equally open to the whole world, which we should not equally command though the political connection were severed tomorrow'.[23] His view outlined a tradition of liberal economic thought on the commercial value of Empire which had been expressed in the work of Smith, Nassau Senior, and J. S. Mill, and which

[20] Hewins, *Apologia*, I, p. 58. One reviewer remarked of the *Compatriots Club Lectures* that 'In their opposition to laissez faire . . . the contributors . . . are fully agreed', *Economic Review*, XV (1905), p. 364.
[21] The most explicit and influential Idealist contribution to constructive imperialist thought was made by the Canadian George Parkin in *Imperial Federation* (London, 1893). Other Idealist contributions were made in Canada by G. M. Grant, the Principal of Queen's University, and Colonel G. T. Denison, a doyen of the Canadian IFL. In Britain constructive imperialists who drew heavily on Idealist concepts were the historical economists William Cunningham, W. J. Ashley, and Hewins, and the Conservative politicians Alfred Milner, Leo Amery, Arthur Steel-Maitland, and George Wyndham.
[22] Sydney H. Zebel, 'Fair Trade: An English Reaction to the Breakdown of the Cobden Treaty System', *Journal of Modern History*, XII (1940), pp. 161–85 and Zebel, 'Joseph Chamberlain and the Genesis of the Tariff Reform Movement', *Journal of British Studies*, VII, (1967), pp. 131–57.
[23] J. E. Cairnes, *Essays in Political Economy* (London, 1873), pp. 311–12.

was to be reiterated by Henry Fawcett, Thorold Rogers, Goldwin Smith, W. S. Jevons, Alfred Marshall, and J. A. Hobson.[24] However, underpinning the Leagues' argument for closer Imperial trade relations was the assertion that the colonies were important for Britain *because* they were colonies and were therefore more secure, stable, and potentially more valuable markets. The British state was urged to acknowledge that the world was dominated by tariff-protected Empire states, and to adjust accordingly its stance on the regulation of Imperial trade.

Late-nineteenth-century arguments for Imperial tariffs were early examples of unofficial agencies propounding constructive imperialist ideas. But there was an episode of official constructive imperialism in the 1890s which also had important implications for the role of the British state. Joseph Chamberlain was the chief actor in this episode during his tenure of the Colonial Office from 1895 to 1903, and the focus of events was his development programme for Britain's tropical Empire. In March 1895, shortly before the general election which was to bring him into the Cabinet as Secretary of State for the Colonies, Chamberlain argued that 'it is not enough to occupy certain great spaces of the world's surface unless you can make the best of them—unless you are willing to develop them'.[25] Once in office this was precisely what Chamberlain set out to do, seeking to use public revenues or loans to finance the development of colonial infrastructure. Chamberlain's period in office saw the passage of the Colonial Loans and Colonial Stocks Acts of 1899 and 1900, and a large number of irrigation, sanitation, and railway and harbour construction projects carried out under the aegis of the Imperial government. In 1896 work was begun in Nigeria on building a rail link from the port of Lagos to the Northern interior. Likewise, 1895 saw the commencement of the Uganda railway to link the hinterland of East Africa to the port of Mombasa. The overall scale of these development projects remained small in relation to the enormous expanse of British territory. The limitations were largely the responsibility of the Treasury, which constantly objected to the expense of Chamberlain's schemes.[26] Had it not been for the fiscal constraints imposed by the 'Gladstonian garrison' in Treasury Chambers, Chamberlain's schemes would doubtless have had a larger effect. As it was they provided a testimony to Chamberlain's energy and brought about a significant transformation of the economies of, for example, Lagos, British Guiana, Cyprus, and the Gold Coast.[27]

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[24] J. C. Wood, *British Economists and the Empire* (London, 1983), pp. 1–180.

[25] J. Chamberlain in Birmingham, 15 March 1895, in Garvin and Amery, *Chamberlain*, III, p. 19.

[26] Richard M. Kesner, *Economic Control and Colonial Development: Crown Colony Financial Management in the Age of Joseph Chamberlain* (London, 1981), *passim*.

[27] Ibid., pp. 216–17; Michael Havinden and David Meredith, *Colonialism and Development: Britain and Its Tropical Colonies, 1850–1960* (London, 1993), pp. 70–90.

But it was not simply the direct impact of the development projects which made Chamberlain's period at the Colonial Office significant. Chamberlain's time as Colonial Secretary accelerated and confirmed a tentative trend for greater government responsibility for economic management and development of the Empire. Until the last quarter of the nineteenth century the preferred method of Imperial government was to devolve responsibility upon private concerns. Even the partition of Africa had been, wherever possible, left to private companies. But through the 1890s, and especially after 1895, the Imperial government increasingly underwrote or replaced private enterprise. Hence, after years of difficulties, the assets of the Imperial British East Africa Company passed to the government in 1895 and the East African Protectorate was established. The British South Africa Company had its autonomy curtailed by Westminster, and even the relatively successful Royal Niger Company was brought under closer supervision and superseded by colonial rule in the newly created colony of Nigeria in 1906.[28] Some in government were resigned to rather than enthusiastic about this trend. When presented with the Mombasa railway plans in July 1895 Lord Salisbury commented that it would have to be financed and constructed under the direction of Indian Public Works. This, he argued, would be preferable to contracting the scheme out to a private company because although 'this mode of proceeding is often dignified by the name of "trusting to private enterprise"', it was the case that 'it cannot be adopted except with the offer of a guarantee from Government', and this rendered 'the use of the words "private enterprise"... a ridiculous misapplication of language'.[29] For Joseph Chamberlain, however, such developments were to be welcomed as part of a more rational exploitation of Britain's Imperial resources. Chamberlain's proposals to 'improve' or develop Britain's 'undeveloped estates' in the Empire were in this respect part of a larger debate about how best to meet challenges to Britain's Imperial position and the growing problems of Britain's maturing economy. That after Chamberlain's tenure of the Colonial Office 'the development issue was fixed permanently on the British government's agenda'[30] was not simply a legacy of Chamberlain's charisma and energy. It was an indication of a shift in both policy and general outlook that was taking place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—a move towards accepting a more active role for the state in shaping Britain's social, economic, and Imperial development. Chamberlain's battles with the Treasury over colonial development were one aspect of a broader attempt to break the ideological as well as the fiscal shackles of the Gladstonian minimal state. That 'private enterprise' was deemed no longer

[28] Richard M. Kesner, *Economic Control and Colonial Development: Crown Colony Financial Management*, *passim*, pp. 70–82.

[29] To Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, 26 July 1895, Salisbury Papers, Hatfield House, Hertfordshire.

[30] Havinden and Meredith, *Colonialism and Development*, p. 90.

capable of carrying the burden of Imperial responsibility placed question-marks against the adequacy of *laissez-faire* as anything like a governing maxim either for the Empire or more generally. Chamberlain's development policies gave practical expression to the view that the active agency of a self-conscious Imperial state was essential to the future prosperity and indeed the very survival of the British Empire.

For government to learn to think imperially was one thing, but the encouragement of a genuine Imperial consciousness was also seen as necessary in order to head off internal disruption of the Empire. In his famous speech of 15 May 1903, the opening oration of the tariff reform campaign, Joseph Chamberlain warned his audience: 'Make a mistake in your Imperial policy—it is irretrievable. You have an opportunity, you will never have it again.'[31] Chamberlain's urgency reflected concern that the self-governing colonies were growing increasingly independent. This concern first arose in the 1880s, and grew continuously. Canada's 'National Policy', inaugurated by the government of J. A. (later Sir John) Macdonald in 1879, had introduced high tariffs on manufactured imports, including Britain's, and these were extended in the 1880s and 1890s.[32] By 1911 Canada had negotiated trade treaties with Austria-Hungary, Switzerland, Japan, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Belgium, and there was lurking fear that a trade agreement or even commercial union between Canada and the United States was a possibility.[33] Indeed, the Canadian trade negotiations with the United States in 1910–11 induced near panic in constructive imperialist circles.[34] The individual Australian colonies took tariff initiatives in the 1890s, and by 1907 the Deakin administration had placed high tariff barriers around the recently formed Australian Federation.[35] Similar tariff barriers also appeared in Southern Africa and New Zealand. This apparent desire on the part of Britain's self-governing colonies to decide their own commercial priorities was seen as symptomatic of a creeping colonial nationalism.[36] To a degree this was accepted as inevitable, even laudable—a sign of the growing maturity of some of Britain's one-time dependencies—but the

[31] At Birmingham, 15 May 1903, in C. Boyd, ed., *Speeches of the Right Honourable Joseph Chamberlain*, 2 vols. (London, 1914), II, p. 128.

[32] R. C. Brown, *Canada's National Policy: A Study in Canadian–American Relations* (Princeton, 1964); G. Williams 'The National Policy Tariffs: Industrial Underdevelopment Through Import Substitution', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, XII (1979), pp. 333–68; Michael Bliss, *A Living Profit: Studies in the Social History of Canadian Business, 1883–1911* (Toronto, 1974).

[33] J. Chamberlain to Lord Lansdowne, 10 Nov. 1887, in Brown, *National Policy*, p. 150.

[34] For the grave 'dangers to Imperial Unity threatened by these developments', Tariff Commission Memorandum, 'The Problems of the Imperial Conference and the Policy of Preference', 18 May 1911, Tariff Commission Papers, London School of Economics, TC/MM46.

[35] J. A. La Nauze, *Alfred Deakin: A Biography*, 2 vols. (New York, 1965), II, pp. 410–26.

[36] R. Jebb, *Studies in Colonial Nationalism* (London, 1905).

constructive imperialist fear was that it could become a powerful 'centrifugal force' undermining and ultimately fragmenting the Empire.

Imperial unity was thus both a means and an end for constructive imperialists. They felt that only a united Empire would have the strength and resources to match the threat of rival imperial powers, and that general recognition of this fact would hold the Imperial structure together. But the question remained as to *how* the elements of the Empire could be made to recognize that unity was their true interest. Here Imperial trade was seen as the key to Imperial unity. In an increasingly protectionist world an intra-Imperial trading system was to provide guaranteed markets for both British and colonial producers. In its most sophisticated guise, as developed by the tariff reform campaign after 1903, this was to be achieved through a system of reciprocal tariff preferences between Britain and the colonies. The colonies were to offer preferential treatment to British manufactured imports, whilst Britain would offer preference to colonial food products. The economic case for such an arrangement was based on the argument that intra-Imperial trade was the tale of the future. Certainly it was difficult to gainsay that the Empire was a large and growing market for British exports. By 1914 Imperial markets were taking 51.7 per cent of British cotton exports, 33.5 per cent of woollens, 45 per cent of non-textile manufactured goods, and 48.2 per cent of pig iron and metal goods. Likewise, Britain was the main market for colonial produce. For example, between 1875 and 1914 Britain took slightly more than half of Canada's total exports, most of them agricultural products. By 1909 Canada alone was supplying about 15 per cent of Britain's wheat flour, and 10 per cent of beef imports, and Australia and India were also important suppliers of foodstuffs to Britain.[37]

Critics pointed out that Imperial trade was not as great as Britain's trade with other nations, but the constructive imperialists' argument was not based on total value and volume alone. They contended that although the volume of Britain's foreign trade was higher, colonial trade, especially with the self-governing colonies, was growing faster. Imperial markets were presented as markets with a future, as opposed to older markets where tariffs and import substitution precluded any growth of British or colonial trade.[38] The *kind* of goods the colonies imported from Britain was also deemed important, in that Empire markets were reckoned to consume 'almost exclusively our fully manufactured goods'.[39] Last but not least,

[37] John Eddy and Deryck Schreuder, 'The Edwardian Empire in Transformation and "Decline", 1902–14', in Eddy and Schreuder, eds., *The Rise of Colonial Nationalism: Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa First Assert their Nationalities, 1880–1914* (Sydney, 1988), p. 27. Williams, 'National Policy', pp. 355–56; Avner Offer, *The First World War: An Agrarian Interpretation* (Oxford, 1989).

[38] Sir Vincent Caillard, *Imperial Fiscal Reform* (London, 1903), pp. 31–32; Brown, *National Policy*, p. 218.

[39] Tariff Reform League, *Speakers' Handbook* (London, 1908), p. xvi.

Imperial trade was deemed superior because its freedom from foreign control made it more secure and, equally important especially where food was concerned, strategically reliable in times of emergency.[40]

That *preference*, in the form outlined above, dominated the early-twentieth-century campaign for Imperial unity was largely due to two factors. First, the only colonial goods that Britain imported were foodstuffs and raw materials. Hence, if Britain was to introduce a new commercial policy that favoured the colonies then it had to be based on tariffs on such goods. Secondly, preference was the only policy acceptable to the colonies. In the 1880s and 1890s the colonies made it quite clear that they would not accept Imperial free trade or a *zollverein*, for the simple reason that they wished to protect their 'infant' industries against British imports.[41] This was recognized by constructive imperialists in Britain. At Glasgow in October 1903 Joseph Chamberlain told listeners that the colonies were 'all protective countries' because they were not content 'to be what the Americans call a "one horse country" with a single industry and no diversity of employment'.[42] Constructive imperialists were most anxious to demonstrate that the structure they envisaged was not simply 'big Little Englanderism'.[43] They grasped that preference was the only viable policy, with the Tariff Commission noting that, '[t]he development of the autonomous powers of the self-governing Colonies has made it necessary that any commercial arrangement with them should be the result of negotiations between the Imperial and the several colonial Governments as representatives of co-ordinate British States each having special regard to its own national interests as well as the interests of the Empire as a whole'.[44] The argument for preference represented an acknowledgement that a new conception of Empire economic relations was necessary if Imperial trade was to provide a basis for Imperial unity. This point was established by W. A. S. Hewins, who in February 1907 told the Conservative party leader Arthur Balfour that mercantilist conceptions of the colonies were no longer valid. 'The colonies', Hewins wrote, 'had a definite place in this [mercantilist] system. But it was a subordinate place, both economically and politically... they were to supply... raw materials...

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[40] Green, *Crisis of Conservatism*, pp. 196–97.

[41] For example, the remarks of the Queensland and Tasmanian representatives, at the Imperial Conferences, *Proceedings of the Colonial Conference, 1887, Vol. I*, C. 5091, LVI, *P[arliamentary] P[apers]* (1887), p. 1; *Report by the Right Hon. The Earl of Jersey, GCMG, on The Colonial Conference at Ottawa, with the Proceedings of the Conference and Certain Correspondence*, C. 7553, *PP* (1894), LVI, p. 337.

[42] 6 Oct. 1903, in Boyd, ed., *Speeches*, II, p. 159.

[43] Eddy and Schreuder, 'Edwardian Empire', pp. 23–24.

[44] The Tariff Commission was a body called together by Chamberlain in 1904 to formulate a 'scientific tariff'; 'Colonial Preference and Imperial Reciprocity', Tariff Commission pamphlet, 22 July 1908, TC MM 35.

which we could not produce and take in our manufactures.'[45] In Hewins's view mercantilist notions had to be replaced with a genuinely reciprocal relationship which would take into account 'recent developments both within and without the Empire'.[46] It was just such a relationship that Joseph Chamberlain sought to define in Birmingham in 1905, when he had argued that 'the British Empire is not an Empire in the sense in which that term has been applied before. The British Colonies are no longer Colonies in the sense in which that term was originally applied to them...We are sister States in which the mother country by virtue of her age, by virtue of all that has been done in the past, may claim to be first, but only first among equals.'[47] This was a vision of Empire based on the creation of a system in which no State would be subordinate to another, and ultimate loyalty was to lie with the Empire conceived as an organic entity. Hence, when Leo Amery asked in 1910 'What do we mean when we speak of Imperial unity?' he answered himself by saying 'we mean that all its [the Empire's] members should remain citizens of a single world State with a duty and loyalty towards that State, none the less real and intense because of the co-existence with it of a duty and a loyalty towards the particular nation or community within the Empire to which they belong'.[48] Imperial Preference was to be the commercial system that embodied the economic aspects of this new relationship.

But if Imperial Preference was to provide a tie of general economic interest which would override particular interests and bind the Empire together, it was not the only tie designated for this task. In the constructive imperialist schema consanguinity was as important as cash. Writing in 1904, George Wyndham, the Conservative government's Chief Irish Secretary, argued that 'the remedy against exaggeration of National sentiment' lay in 'preferring...the two ideas of Empire and Race'. Empire was vital because 'the State must be large enough in contour to fire the imagination of all its citizens with faith in the future', and in a world dominated by large-scale states only an Empire could instil such faith.[49] Encouragement of racial pride was essential because it was healthier than encouraging national pride, which could easily lapse into a narrow chauvinism.[50] Because nationality was not 'co-extensive with Race',[51] racial pride did not prevent loyalty on the part of members of a particular race towards the nation in which they

[45]   Hewins to Balfour, 18 Feb. 1907, Balfour Papers, BL Add. MSS, 49779, ff. 61–70.

[46]   Ibid.

[47]   27 July 1905, in Boyd, ed., *Speeches*, II, p. 329.

[48]   L. S. Amery, 'Imperial Unity', a speech to the Chatham Club, 15 July 1910, in Amery, *Union and Strength* (London, 1912), p. 2.

[49]   G. Wyndham, *The Development of the State* (London, 1904), pp. 51, 11.

[50]   Ibid., p. 48.

[51]   Ibid., p. 47.

happened to dwell. So, when Wyndham declared 'let pride be in Race, patriotism for the Empire', he harmonized 'universal allegiance' to the Empire and race with the 'particular sentiment' of individual (colonial) nations.[52]

As Irish Secretary, George Wyndham was very familiar with the problem of containing national aspirations within an Imperial framework. But his remarks are also of interest because the concept of 'race loyalty' which he discussed at length in 1904 was central to the constructive imperialist project of Empire. In May 1903 Joseph Chamberlain made it clear that when he discussed the Empire he wished to consider 'only our relations ... to that white British population that constitutes the majority in the great self-governing Colonies of the Empire': at Glasgow that October he stated that the aim of Imperial Preference was 'to consolidate the British race'.[53] The Compatriot editor of the Observer, J. L. Garvin, spoke of the British Empire as 'a dominion that should be secured by the preponderance in numbers of the race that holds it', whilst Alfred Milner spoke of the Empire as 'these new lands of immense promise inhabited by men of our race'.[54] Whenever the notion of Imperial Preference appeared, the theme of racial unity was never far behind.

By equating Imperial unity with racial unity—and only white settler, self-governing colonies featured prominently in constructive imperialist literature and statements—it was possible to avoid an overstress on separate national, and particularly British, interests. The notion of the Empire as a racially unified polity complemented the constructive imperialist description of the Empire's unity of economic interest. Just as Imperial Preference was to blend national and Imperial economics, so the idea of 'the Race' was to allow for separate national identities within the broader framework of a supra-national identity. In this way constructive imperialists built up arguments designed to show that 'the existence of Empire is reconcilable with the self-development of all its parts,[55] and that there was 'no incompatibility between ... national patriotism and the wider patriotism of Empire'.[56]

By 1910 constructive imperialism had developed into a cogent and subtle doctrine. Yet, in spite of the best efforts of Joseph Chamberlain and his cohorts, the constructive imperialist project failed, and the 'splendid dream' of a united Empire did not become a reality. In many respects the reason for the failure of the constructive imperialist project was simple: it did not gather enough support.

[52] Ibid., pp. 49, 58.
[53] Boyd, ed., Speeches, II, pp. 2, 142.
[54] Garvin, 'Economics of Empire', p. 57; Milner at the Authors' Club, 2 Dec. 1912, in The Nation and the Empire, p. 490.
[55] B. Wise, 'The Problem of Empire', in Lord Malmesbury ed., The New Order (London, 1908), p. 101.
[56] A. Milner at Vancouver, 9 Oct. 1908, The Nation and the Empire, p. 310.

At first glance this may seem strange, in that from the 1880s on there was an increasing groundswell of opinion both in Britain and the colonies in favour of Imperial unity. Business opinion in Britain appeared particularly sympathetic. Evidence gathered by the Royal Commission on the Depression of Trade and Industry in 1885 indicated that many chambers of commerce wanted closer commercial relations with the Empire,[57] and in March 1887 the annual meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce passed the first of several motions over the years calling for Imperial federation.[58] Individual trade associations were equally vocal. Between 1889 and 1894 the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce organized several special meetings to stress the importance of colonial commerce, including one addressed by the IFL's 'star' speaker G. R. Parkin, the leading Canadian advocate of federation.[59] In the 1880s and 1890s the Birmingham Chamber passed motions almost annually arguing that 'the future prosperity of British commerce must depend on increasing our commercial relations with our colonies',[60] and these sentiments found frequent echo in chambers as diverse as Blackburn, Bradford, and London.[61]

Interest in Imperial unity was not confined to the business community. By the late 1880s the IFL had established branches throughout Britain, and its literature was widely disseminated. Included in the IFL membership were one hundred British MPs, and its longest-serving President, Lord Rosebery, was to become Prime Minister in 1894. Further evidence of Imperial federation becoming entrenched in Britain's political culture was provided by the National Union of Conservative Associations, which debated and supported motions in favour of federation and/or preference at its annual meetings from the mid-1880s on. Although the IFL broke up in 1893, Imperial federation and attendant questions of Imperial relations continued to play a prominent part in British public debate, and Joseph Chamberlain was more than justified when he declared at the 1897 Colonial Conference that 'the idea of federation is in the air'.[62]

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[57] *First Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Depression of Trade and Industry, 1886*, Appendix A (questionnaires to Chambers of Commerce), C. 4621, pp. 73–113, *PP* (1886), XXI, 1.

[58] 'The Lords of Trade and Imperial Federation', *Imperial Federation*, II, no. 3, March 1887, p. 51.

[59] Special meetings on 16 Dec. 1889; 19 Feb. 1890; 18 Nov. 1891; and 30 Nov. 1892; Imperial federation was also discussed at ordinary meetings: Liverpool Chamber of Commerce papers, Liverpool Central Library, 380 COM 1/2, ff. 61–2, 380 COM 1/3, ff. 3–4, 54, 82.

[60] G. H. Wright, *Chronicles of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, 1813–1913* (Birmingham, 1913), pp. 314–411.

[61] Blackburn Chamber of Commerce, *Annual Report* (Blackburn, 1893), p. 17. For Bradford and London, and other chambers, see William G. Hynes, *The Economics of Empire: Britain, Africa, and the New Imperialism, 1870–95* (London, 1979), pp. 109–29.

[62] *Proceedings of a Conference between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Premiers of the Self-Governing Colonies, at the Colonial Office, London, June and July 1897*, C. 8596, *PP* (1894), LIX, p. 631.

Nor was it only in Britain that the argument for Imperial unity gained ground. In March 1888 a branch of the IFL was established in Toronto, and by the early 1890s the cause of federation appeared to be well established in Canada. The 1891 Canadian general election saw the Conservatives, led by Sir John Macdonald, raise the 'Empire loyalty' banner against the 'Continentalist' argument for closer commercial relations with the United States.[63] The great Conservative victory led Macdonald's government to seek to consolidate support by securing benefits for the 'loyal' vote, and an address was sent from the Canadian Parliament to the Crown in April 1891 pressing for the introduction of a scheme of Imperial Preference.[64] Later that year Macdonald, still anxious to make progress on this question, wrote to W. H. Smith, Leader of the House of Commons in Lord Salisbury's government in Britain, expressing the hope that if the British Conservatives won their forthcoming election, 'which Heaven grant!' [then] some Imperial policy can be formed and carried out'.[65] Macdonald's death in late 1891, and the Liberal party's victory in the British general election of 1892, dashed hopes of immediate progress, but the Canadian government continued to press the Imperial case.[66] Indeed, the general popularity of the preference cause in Canada appeared to be confirmed when the Canadian Liberal party, having triumphed in the 1897 general election, 'stole the clothes' of the Conservatives: they unilaterally reduced tariffs on British goods by 25 per cent after the 1897 Colonial Conference, gave West Indian sugar a similar preference in 1898—a purely Imperial gesture— and gave Britain a further 8 per cent preference at the 1902 Imperial Conference. By the early years of the twentieth century Canadian enthusiasm for Imperial preference seemed deep-rooted.

The question of Empire was less prominent in other self-governing colonies, but there was still sympathy for closer Imperial relations. At the Colonial Conferences of 1887, 1894, and 1897 there were calls from the Cape Colony, Tasmania, Queensland, Victoria, and New Zealand for Imperial Preference. By 1902 the Australian Commonwealth had decided to grant Britain an at that point unspecified preference, whilst New Zealand offered Britain a 10 per cent tariff reduction and the Cape and Natal offered 25 per cent.[67] Such actions as these seemed to indicate that enthusiasm for Imperial unity was, if anything, greater in the colonies than in Britain, and certainly there were few who summed up the constructive imperialist position more succinctly than Alfred Deakin, who told the Australian

[63] G. T. Denison, *The Struggle for Imperial Unity* (London, 1909), pp. 96–98.

[64] Brown, *National Policy*, pp. 209–13.

[65] 8 Nov. 1891, in ibid., p. 213.

[66] Ibid., p. 230 and C. 7553, *PP* (1894), LVI, p. 337.

[67] *Papers Relating to a Conference between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Prime Ministers of Self-Governing Colonies, June to August, 1902*, Cd. 1299, *PP* (1902), LXVI, p. 451.

Parliament in 1904 that the Empire's position was 'unstable, untrustworthy, impermanent and requires to be replaced, gradually, but surely, by a fuller and more complete organization'.[68]

The development in both Britain and the colonies of a body of support favouring closer Imperial relations, especially in the commercial sphere, posed some problems for 'official' opinion in Britain. The introduction of Imperial Preference as requested by the colonies would have demanded a sea-change in British commercial policy. Britain had negotiated a series of most-favoured-nation treaties with other states; offering the colonies privileged access to the British market would have entailed abrogating those agreements. Equally important, from the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 Britain had eschewed tariffs for anything but revenue purposes, and the idea of introducing any taxation on imports of basic foodstuffs (in order then to be able differentiate between colonial and foreign suppliers) was regarded on all sides as politically dangerous or even suicidal—the assumption being that the British electorate would not accept 'stomach taxes'. Yet, if governments were concerned about taking action, there was also the question of whether they could afford *not* to act. In February 1891 a memorandum to the Conservative Cabinet stated that there were sound arguments against Imperial Preference, but it also pointed out that 'the persistent demand of the colonies for preferential fiscal arrangements may...become politically embarrassing'. On the one hand British reluctance to implement Imperial Preference was, the memorandum pointed out, 'interpreted in the colonies as indifference to commercial union itself' and constant refusals were likely to fuel separatism. Examining the scene in Britain, the memorandum noted that 'the existence of the Imperial Federation League, and the support given to it, and to the Colonial Institute and Imperial Institute, show the strength of feeling at home in favour of a consolidation of the Empire', and this, it was concluded, could not be ignored forever.[69]

By the end of the 1890s Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State for the Colonies since 1895, was increasingly of the view that the issue of Imperial organization should not be ignored. At the 1897 Colonial Conference Chamberlain encouraged talk of federation and commercial union. He also made it clear to his Cabinet colleagues that Britain should respond to colonial requests by abrogating its trade treaties with other states, noting that he was 'perfectly willing to risk the wrath of Germany [because] the question of Imperial policy involved in the Canadian preferential offer is so important'.[70] But if Chamberlain was moving rapidly

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[68] 8 Dec. 1904, in La Nauze, *Deakin*, II, p. 477.

[69] 'Commercial Union Between the United Kingdom and the Colonies', Memorandum by R. G. to the Cabinet, 9 Feb. 1891, CAB[inet] [Office] 37/29 (7).

[70] J. Chamberlain, Minute of 3 June 1897, C[olonial] O[ffice] 42/847.

towards a strong constructive imperialist position before 1900, it was after that date that he became fully committed to such a stance, and was prepared to devote all of his energies to the cause of Imperial unity.

The event which finally convinced Chamberlain, and many others, that Imperial organization was both essential and practicable was the South African War. Apart from the fact that the term itself was coined during the war, the South African crisis was important to constructive imperialism for three reasons. First, the fact that the mightiest Empire ever known took four years, lost thousands of lives, and spent millions of pounds subduing 'a little people, few but apt in the field' was a great shock. Alfred Milner, who as High Commissioner had, along with Chamberlain, done most to shape British policy in South Africa before and during the war, argued in January 1902 that 'the condition of South Africa today is a most bitter commentary on our supposed Imperial strength. Here is a single Colony, not by any means one of the largest in the Empire, in which a bare majority of disaffected people is able to disorganize our whole South African policy... and threaten the foundations of the Empire itself.'[71] It was no coincidence that Chamberlain launched his crusade for Imperial unity soon after 'Joe's War' had revealed these problems. In many respects the tariff reform campaign was born on the veld.

A second, more positive, aspect of the war that gave impetus to constructive imperialism was the voluntary support Britain received from the self-governing colonies. Writing to Lord Beauchamp in 1900, Chamberlain noted that 'whatever may have to be recorded in this war there is one great inestimable gain: the bloodshed has cemented the British Empire, and the sense of unity is stronger than it has ever been before.'[72] Three years later Chamberlain restated these wartime sentiments in the opening speech of the tariff campaign, declaring that 'we have had a war—a war in which the majority of our children abroad had no apparent direct interest. We had no hold over them, no agreement with them of any kind, and yet, at one time during this war, by their voluntary decision, at least 50,000 Colonial soldiers were standing shoulder to shoulder with British troops.'[73] Looking at the war from this perspective the *National Review* was able to argue that 'the South African War opened a new epoch in our history'; although 'the crisis revealed the unpleasant fact that Great Britain had scarcely a foul weather friend in the civilized world', it had been the case that 'the hostility of the foreigner had been superabundantly compensated by the grit and determination of the

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[71] To C. Dawkins, 4 Jan. 1902, Milner Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford, MSS Eng. Hist. c. 68, ff. 4–6.
[72] 5 March 1900, in Garvin and Amery, *Chamberlain*, III, p. 629.
[73] Boyd, ed., *Speeches*, II, p. 127.

Colonies'.[74] The South African War seemed to demonstrate that colonial nationalism need not be an insuperable obstacle to Imperial unity.

Lastly, within the United Kingdom the war seemed to provide evidence of widespread popular support for the Empire. Contemporaries of all political shades saw events such as the mass celebration of the relief of Mafeking and the Conservative victory at the 'Khaki' election of September 1900 as indicative of mass enthusiasm for imperialism. Pro-Boer Liberals such as J. A. Hobson were profoundly depressed by the apparent ease with which the masses had fallen prey to the 'mass psychology of jingoism', but Conservative commentators were also persuaded of the force of what Lord Salisbury called the 'jingo hurricane'. The maintenance of Empire appeared to be an electoral trump card, and hence Joseph Chamberlain's attempt to play it more decisively after 1902. In the wake of the South African War the constructive imperialist 'moment' appeared to have arrived.

The great problem for constructive imperialism was, however, that wartime enthusiasm for Empire proved less substantial in peacetime, and Imperial Preference proved less popular than had been hoped. At various levels support for the Imperial cause proved to be incoherent and difficult to mobilize. In the United Kingdom the business community's support for Empire was highly selective and fragmented. In the 1880s and 1890s there had been many expressions of enthusiasm for improved Imperial trade relations, but there had also been very little agreement as to how to bring this about. There were strong differences of opinion both between and within chambers of commerce over the merits of Imperial Preference,[75] and the only issue which seemed to generate agreement was the damaging impact of, and thus the need to remove or reduce, colonial tariffs.[76] The break-up of the IFL in 1893 had occurred because, when charged with producing a concrete scheme, the fault-lines in its membership and constituency had rapidly emerged, with the result that it had become, as its Secretary put it, 'a house divided against itself'.[77] In spite of continued concern over Britain's economic situation, divisions of opinion over the Imperial economy were still rife in Britain's business community in the early twentieth century. Thus, when Chamberlain launched the campaign for Imperial Preference large sections of industrial and commercial opinion opposed his scheme, with the cotton, coal, and shipbuilding industries and the banking interests of the City of London proving especially hostile. These sectors associated their interests with the maintenance of free trade and a fostering of links

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[74] L. J. Maxse, 'Episodes of the Month', *National Review*, CCLXXVII (March 1906), p. 8.

[75] Green, *Crisis of Conservatism*, pp. 32–33.

[76] *Correspondence Respecting the Canadian Tariff*, C. 5179, *PP* (1887), LVIII, 1, containing protests from many different Chambers of Commerce.

[77] H. O. Arnold-Forster to IFL Council, 24 April 1893, IFL Papers, BL Add. MSS, 62780.

with the international economy in general rather than with the Imperial economy in particular, and for the cotton trade there was added concern about Imperial Preference opening the way to Indian tariffs. None of these interests could be deemed 'anti-imperial; they were simply resistant to the constructive imperialists' particular definition of the Imperial economy.

Business interests in the colonies were also wary. The Canadian example illustrates the problem particularly well. By the early twentieth century constructive imperialism seemed to have established a firm base in Canada, but there were limits to Imperial enthusiasm. The preferences granted to Britain in 1897 and 1902 seemed to indicate a desire to foster closer Imperial economic ties, but the British Board of Trade noted in 1902 that 'Canadian policy remains protectionist in spite of the preference to British goods . . . the Canadian tariff . . . discourages the importation of manufactured goods . . . [and] Although . . . British goods enjoy a preference compared with the *same* goods imported from other countries, the average *ad valorem* rate of duty on British imports *taken as a whole* is still higher than the average duty levied on all imports, . . .'[78] This was hardly surprising given Canadian opinion on the matter. In 1902 Robert Borden, Macdonald's successor as leader of the Canadian Conservatives, stated that he did not wish to deal with the Imperial question 'by accepting a tariff which will shut up mills in Canada and give increased profits and outputs to some manufacturers in Yorkshire',[79] and he also noted that his party was deeply divided on the issue of Imperial Preference.[80] These concerns and divisions in the supposedly pro-Empire Canadian Conservative party reflected concern in the Canadian constituencies. After the introduction of the 1897 preferences the Canadian Manufacturers' Association had emphasized that tariffs must contrive to offer genuine protection against *all* imports, and the Association's journal warned in 1903 of 'sacrificing on the altar of Imperial sentiment the industries which are the bulwark of Canada'.[81] Scepticism in the industrial east meant that support for Imperial Preference was strongest in the rapidly expanding western farming provinces of Canada, aware of Britain's importance as a market for their produce, but perhaps also influenced by a large and recently arrived British immigrant population in those regions.[82] At any rate the Canadian position on Imperial Preference was by no means one of unequivocal support, but was marked by complex patterns of diverse interest and opinion. In fact, pro-Empire views were arguably more an indication of anti-Americanism than

[78] Cd. 1299, p. 85, *PP* (1902), LXVI, p. 451.
[79] Canadian House of Commons, 18 March 1902, cited in Robert Craig Brown, *Robert Laird Borden: A Biography*, 2 vols. (Toronto, 1975), I, p. 63.
[80] Borden to J. Stairs, 24 March 1902, cited in ibid., p. 64.
[81] Bliss, *Living Profit*, p. 107.
[82] Ibid., *passim*; P. Berton, *The Promised Land: Settling the West, 1896–1914* (Toronto, 1984).

Imperial enthusiasm. G. T. Denison remarked in 1909 that 'it was not until the Commercial Union [with the United States of America] movement alarmed the people...that the cause of Imperial Federation became a strong and effective influence upon the public opinion of Canada',[83] and there was much to be said for this argument. Certainly it was at times when closer links with the United States were mooted, such as in 1910–11, that 'federationist' opinion surfaced most strongly in Canada. The joy with which constructive imperialists in Britain greeted the victory of Borden's Conservatives in the Canadian election of 1911 was thus largely misplaced. While Borden played the Imperial card in 1911, in a campaign dominated by opposition to reciprocity with the United States, he also reassured Canadian businessmen there would be no downward adjustment of tariffs for Imperial ends. Indeed, Borden made it clear that any Imperial tariff initiative would have to come from Britain.[84] The Imperial link may have been important in constructing a distinctive Canadian national identity in a North American context, but this did not necessarily indicate a commitment to constructive imperialism.

If business élites in both Britain and the colonies proved to be less than unanimous in their support for constructive imperialism, it was also the case that mass support was also largely absent. This was a particular problem in Britain, where in three contests (1906, and January and December 1910) the electorate remained unconvinced that their interests would be served by Imperial Preference. The 'wild clatter of the bread tax', and the association of tariffs and Imperial Preference with defence of propertied privilege, fatally weakened the electoral appeal of constructive imperialism.[85] The British electorate was either indifferent to Empire or quite discriminating as to its value and role. Much the same was true in the colonies. In Australia the Labor Party and trade unions showed no enthusiasm for Imperial Preference, perhaps in part because some keen federationists insisted that only 'the best sort' were Empire enthusiasts,[86] whilst, as noted above, Canadian enthusiasm was also conditional. None of this prevented either the British or colonial masses from rallying to the Empire's defence in great numbers in 1914. There was general support for the Empire *in extremis*, but this was not translated into support for a *particular* project of Empire.

This last point is important, for although constructive imperialists tended to depict opponents as 'anti-imperialist' or 'anti-Empire', this was not the case. In Britain some of Joseph Chamberlain's effective opponents were the Liberal Imperialists, most notably H. H. Asquith. Nor was this a simple party-political

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[83] Denison, *Struggle for Imperial Unity*, p. 97.
[84] Brown, *Borden*, I, pp. 232–33.
[85] N. Blewett, *The Peers, The Parties and the People* (London, 1972).
[86] La Nauze, *Deakin*, II, pp. 509–10; C. S. Blackton, 'Australian Nationality and Nationalism: The Imperial Federationist Interlude, 1885–1901', *Australian Historical Studies*, VII (1955), pp. 1–16.

division, for a number of prominent Conservatives questioned the constructive imperialist vision of Empire. Conservative free traders, such as the sons of the great Lord Salisbury, Lords Hugh and Robert Cecil, the one-time Proconsul of Egypt, Lord Cromer, and the editor of the *Spectator*, John St Loe Strachey, opposed Imperial Preference with the maxim 'No Free Trade—No Empire'.[87] At the heart of the free trade argument against constructive imperialism was the contention that it would disrupt, not unite the Empire. Winston Churchill, who in 1904 left the Conservative Party as a consequence of his opposition to Chamberlain's initiative, put this argument most eloquently at the 1907 Colonial Conference, arguing 'that [tariff] preferences, even if economically desirable, would prove an element of strain and discord in the structure and system of the British Empire. Why, even in this Conference, what has been the one subject on which we have differed sharply? It has been this question of preference ... the principle of preference is positively injurious to the British Empire, and would create, not union, but discord.'[88] Constructive imperialists were chided for trying to base the Imperial relationship on questions of 'sordid materialism' rather than sentiment.

Nor was this the only problem. Constructive imperialist discussion of the Empire concentrated purely on the white self-governing colonies, and placed emphasis on racial unity as a basis for Imperial harmony. This seemed to indicate indifference to the territories and peoples of British India, Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. Yet, a supposed *raison d'être* of the British Empire—what stamped *Britishness* upon it—was the duty to provide good governance of 'subject peoples' and the idea of racial harmony. Equally important was the simple fact that one territory rarely mentioned by constructive imperialists, India, was the economic jewel in the Imperial Crown. Hence the irony of John Morley, derided by constructive imperialists as the archetypal Liberal 'Little Englander', pointing out that those who '[blew] the imperial trumpet louder than other people ... would banish India, which is the most stupendous part of the Empire—our best customer among other trifles—into the imperial back kitchen'.[89] Even within the self-governing colonies there was the question of the large French population in Canada, and the even more evident issue of harmonizing Briton and Boer in Southern Africa. The 'white Australia' policy of the Australian federation provided an isolated example of the kind of race-nation-Empire link posited by constructive imperialists,[90] but it raised more problems than it was ever going to solve. Many

[87] J. St Loe Strachey, 'Free Trade and the Empire', in C. S. Goldman, ed., *The Empire and the Century: A Series of Essays on Imperial Problems and Possibilities by Various Writers* (London, 1905), p. 144.

[88] *Published Proceedings and Precis of the Colonial Conference, 15th to 26th April, 1907; 30th April to 14th May, 1907*, Cd. 3406, pp. 1, 29, *PP* (1907), LV, 406–07.

[89] To Lord Minto, 2 May 1907, cited in La Nause, *Deakin*, II, p. 481.

[90] D. Cole, 'The Crimson Thread of Kinship: Ethnic Ideas in Australia, 1870–1914', *Australian Historical Studies*, XIV, 1971, pp. 511–25, and for constructive imperialist sympathy see Joseph

active supporters of the Empire found constructive imperialism wanting in terms
of both its theory and its practical implications.

Constructive imperialism was handicapped from the outset. Its basic assumption,
that *general* support for the Empire could be translated into enthusiasm for a
particular concept, was wrong. Constructive imperialists sought to produce a
clearly defined Imperial structure, but in so doing discovered that their vision
did not find favour with all groups and interests who were still none the less
supporters of Empire. The Imperial constituency in both Britain and the colonies
was broad and deep but also highly stratified—an aristocratic High Commissioner
did not necessarily see the Empire in the same way as a Birmingham screw
manufacturer, and neither necessarily saw Imperial issues in the same light as
either a farmer from Alberta or a banker from the City of London or a Lancashire
cotton operative. All these groups, and many others, had 'interests' in the Empire,
but they did not necessarily overlap either materially or ideologically, and when it
came to the test constructive imperialists were unable to forge a coherent coalition
of support. Constructive imperialism sought to reduce the complex political
economy of Empire to an impossibly simple formula.

Yet the failure of the constructive imperialist vision does not imply that the
British Empire had 'no theme'. It may well have been the case that in the late
nineteenth and early twentieth centuries many in both Britain and the colonies
were in favour of the Empire in the same way that many are against sin, that is to
say, as a general position. Nevertheless, the rejection of the constructive imperi-
alists' economically insular and racially exclusive vision of the Empire *contra
mundum* was in effect an expression of preference for an open, inclusive concept
of Empire which saw the Imperial relationship, especially in economic terms, as
part of rather than separate from Britain's broader international position. The
failure of constructive imperialism was in this sense a testimony to the ongoing
strength of the arguments and interests that favoured the preservation of Britain's
commitment to free trade, a liberal trading order, and a liberal Empire.

Constructive imperialism appears on the face of it to have been one of the great
lost causes of the twentieth century. But its significance does not lie purely with the
fact of its defeat. Although none of its goals were achieved, it represented a major
attempt to redefine the Empire's role in the light of changes within the Empire
itself. As an intellectual as well as political project it acknowledged the growing
nationalism of the self-governing colonies, and sought to reshape the Imperial
relationship to take account of this new force. Alfred Deakin has been admirably

Chamberlain's remarks at the 1897 Colonial Conference, *Proceedings*, 1897, C. 8596, p. 13, *PP* (1897)
LIX, 631.

described as 'groping towards a new theory of Empire, which discarded both the traditional superior–inferior relationship between metropolitan and colonial governments and the old British race patriot dream of federation'.[91] However, Deakin's efforts must be placed in their proper, wider context, for they were part of a pan-Imperial effort to develop such a theory. In both Britain and the self-governing colonies constructive imperialists, drawing on a common framework of ideas developed largely through intra-Imperial discussion and debate, worked towards a concept of Empire based on what Robert Borden called 'co-operation and autonomy'.[92] Constructive imperialism was one of the first attempts to design a form of co-partnership or Commonwealth structure of Imperial relations, whose relevance was to become very apparent in the inter-war years. That veterans of the constructive imperialist campaigns of the early part of the century were to view the outcome of the 1932 Ottawa Conference as a belated triumph for their ideas was in many ways not unjustified. In a climate where colonial nationalism had become stronger and more widespread, the British economy weaker, and the liberal world trading order had collapsed into hostile trading blocs, elements of the constructive imperialist project were to take on renewed significance.

[91] John J. Eddy, 'Nationalism and Nation-Making From Federation to Gallipoli', in Schreuder and Eddy, *Colonial Nationalism*, p. 139.
[92] Undated remark cited in B. Holland, *The Fall of Protection* (London, 1904), p. 392.

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PART II

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17

British Expansion and Rule in South-East Asia

A. J. STOCKWELL

British expansion in South-East Asia was shaped by the well-being of India, opportunities in China, and international, particularly Anglo-French, rivalry. When British authorities in Calcutta or in London sanctioned a forward policy here, it was usually in order to prevent another power from controlling a vital sea lane or threatening a sensitive frontier. Nevertheless, considerations of global strategy were frequently reinforced by prospects of profit from South-East Asia itself. From the late eighteenth century British commerce in South-East Asia became enmeshed with British commerce in India; from the late nineteenth century the development of agriculture and mining tied South-East Asian economies more closely to industrial and finance capitalism in Britain.

While business interests were not always in tune with high policy, zealous merchants and headstrong men on the spot frequently got their way in spreading British influence further than their masters might have wished. Often they took advantage of the lack of Imperial supervision; sometimes they seized chances thrown up by crises in indigenous societies. The British frequently achieved their objectives merely by rattling the sabre but, provided that intervention had been authorized, in times of trouble they could draw reinforcements from the Indian Army and Royal Navy which underpinned British power and prestige in South-East Asia.

Yet the exercise of Imperial power and the extent of colonial control were limited. Mismanagement, disease, and jungle impeded military expeditions; pirates eluded British warships in the mangroves while rebels took to the forests. Moreover, Asian rulers frequently succeeded in turning to their advantage the British propensity for negotiating and signing agreements for the purposes of protecting British subjects, nourishing commerce, securing frontiers, and foiling the ambitions of other powers. Indeed, British imperialism advanced by the pen as well as by the sword and its history is peppered with treaties—albeit unequal ones—concluded with South-East Asian monarchs, some of whom secured their thrones and dynasties through such arrangements and regarded them as a source of prestige.

Advances into 'Further India', 1786–c.1830

MARITIME SOUTH-EAST ASIA

From 1786, when Britain acquired the settlement of Penang, to about 1830 Britain's position in South-East Asia was transformed, though an empire was scarcely established. Outmatched by the Dutch in the spice trade, in the late seventeenth century the English East India Company had withdrawn from Macassar (in the Celebes) and Bantam (in Java) to Bencoolen in South-West Sumatra (Map 17.1). Although Bencoolen prospered on pepper for a time, after about 1760 it was inconveniently located to fulfil three increasingly pressing needs. The first of these was the containment of French naval power in the Bay of Bengal. Lacking a base sheltered from the north-east monsoon, the British fleet was obliged to withdraw to Bombay in order to refit. Secondly, as the economy of British India and the Company's trade with Europe became more dependent upon exports from China, a secure post was required on the maritime route between India and China. A station was sought, thirdly, to serve British 'country' (or regional) trade in South-East Asia itself. As South-East Asia was drawn into the commercial network of India, private (or non-Company) 'country' traders alleviated the imbalance of trade with China by carrying to Canton rattans, betelnut, and tin from the Malay world, in addition to cotton from Bombay, Coromandel piece-goods, and Bengal opium.[1] Late-eighteenth-century expansion in maritime South-East Asia was promoted by 'country' traders who, outnumbering all others from Europe, encroached upon Dutch preserves, and was eventually authorized by the Company, whose priorities were to counter French threats in India and improve trade with China.

After the Seven Years War (1756–63) attempts were made to establish a settlement on the eastern side of the Bay of Bengal, but they proved either abortive, as in the case of Acheh, or short-lived, as with Alexander Dalrymple's experiment (1762–75) at Balambangan in the Sulu archipelago. In 1771 and again in 1786 successive sultans of Kedah, who sought protection against the expansionist Bugis of Selangor and, later, resurgent Thai power, offered Penang to Francis Light. Light was a 'country' trader serving a Madras firm and engaged in commerce with Sumatra, the northern Malay states, and Siam. He tried to interest the Company in the island but it was unwilling to be drawn into disputes between local kingdoms; it therefore rejected Kedah's earlier offer and refused to honour the defensive clauses in the agreement by which the Sultan ceded Penang on 11 August 1786.

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[1] Anthony Webster, 'British Expansion in South-East Asia and the Role of Robert Farquhar, Lieutenant-Governor of Penang, 1804–5', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* (hereafter *JICH*), XXIII, 1 (1995), pp. 1–3.

Map 1: Burma

CHINA

ASSAM
Br

Br

Br
BENGAL

Bay
of
Bengal

Mandalay

UPPER BURMA

1886

Br
1890

SHAN
STATE

ARAKAN 1826

R. Irrawaddy

R. Mekong

LOWER
BURMA
1852 Br

Rangoon

SIAM

TENASSERIM
1826

Bangkok

Map 2: South-East Asia

INDIA

CHINA

BURMA

Bay
of
Bengal

SIAM
(Thailand)

FRENCH
INDO-CHINA

HONG
KONG

South
China Sea

PHILIPPINES
to US 1898

MALAYA

Malacca

Singapore
1819

SUMATRA

Bencoolen

Bantam

JAVA

NORTH BORNEO
1888

BRUNEI
1888

SARAWAK
1888
Protectorate

Sulu
Sea

Celebes
Sea

Macassar

DUTCH

0   miles   500

0   km   500

—— Boundary between British,
French, and Dutch spheres
of interest

Map 3: The British in Malaya

THE BRITISH IN MALAYA

0   miles   100
0   km   100

PERLIS

PENANG

KEDAH

SIAM

KELANTAN

TRENGGANU

PERAK

PAHANG

SELANGOR

Kuala Lumpur

NEGRI
SEMBILAN

MALACCA

JOHORE

SINGAPORE

- - - - State boundaries

▨ Straits Settlements

☐ Federated Malay States,
inaugurated in 1896

▦ Protected Malay States,
acquired from Siam in 1909

▩ Protected State of Johore, 1914

MAP 17.1. South-East Asia

The French Revolutionary Wars drastically reduced the Dutch position in South-East Asia but increased the French challenge to Britain. After the French invaded the Netherlands, William V fled to England and issued the Kew Letters (1795) instructing Dutch Governors overseas to transfer their territories to British safe-keeping. Britain consequently occupied the Cape, Ceylon, Padang (Sumatra), Malacca, Ambon, and Banda. It was not until after the fall of French Mauritius in December 1810, however, that the way was clear for the Governor-General of India, Lord Minto, to mount an expedition to Java, the centrepiece of the Dutch seaborne empire. Java fell in August 1811 and Stamford Raffles was appointed Lieutenant-Governor. Raffles's desire was to spread British influence throughout the East Indies and rid them of what he condemned as the twin evils of Dutch imperialism and oriental misrule. He quashed local resistance, as in the destruction of the court of Yogyakarta, annexed land, deposed Javanese rulers, and elevated others in their place. He attempted to extirpate slavery, monopolies, tolls, and forced deliveries, and he introduced a land rent (or land tax) system adapted from Bengal. Despite his vision and energy, however, his reforms foundered on financial difficulties and lack of support from the Company. Moreover, following the defeat of Napoleon, Foreign Secretary Castlereagh wished to build up the Netherlands as part of a cordon preventing French revanchism in Europe, with the result that Java and their other East Indies interests were returned to the Dutch by 1816.

Nonetheless, Raffles continued to urge the extension of British influence in the archipelago. He was convinced that the Dutch had a malign effect upon the area, and disappointed that Penang had not fulfilled the expectations of its founder. In its first twenty years the British settlement had prospered: its population had grown and its trade with the region had flourished. Furthermore, it had seemed eminently suitable as a naval station and in 1800 had acquired Province Wellesley, across the water in Kedah. After 1805, however, its disadvantages became clearer: the island lacked both a dockyard and supplies of timber, while it was poorly placed for ships plying between India and China.

Having won the support of the Governor-General, the Marquess of Hastings, in February 1819 Raffles took advantage of a succession dispute in Johore to conclude an agreement with one of the contestants, Sultan Hussein, by which Singapore was ceded to Britain. This bold move was of dubious legitimacy and provoked strong protests, not only from the Dutch, who laid claim to the Riau-Johore archipelago, but also from administrators and merchants in Penang, fearful that a new settlement would threaten their own. For a time the future of Singapore was uncertain but, while the British authorities were reluctant to incur Dutch wrath, they were unwilling to abandon what might prove to be a profitable commercial centre organized on free-trade principles. In 1824 Anglo-Dutch differences were settled in

a treaty by which the Dutch recognized Singapore as British and exchanged Malacca for Bencoolen. Although half a century would elapse before the Dutch attempted to establish effective occupation over Sumatra or the British embarked on a forward policy in the Malay peninsula, the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824 divided the Malay archipelago into two spheres of influence, splitting the kingdom of Riau-Johore and converting the Straits of Malacca from a corridor of access between kindred communities into a frontier between British and Dutch imperial zones. Two years later Penang, Malacca, and Singapore were amalgamated as the Straits Settlements under the Bengal Presidency.

BRITAIN IN MAINLAND SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Meanwhile, Penang merchants, operating in the northern Malay states and Siam, were pressing upon the closed world of the Thais, from 1782 ruled by the Chakri dynasty in Bangkok. Although the Chakri kings allowed European traders into Siam, they were anxious to restrict Western activities and maintain their authority over the northern Malay states. In 1826 Henry Burney negotiated a treaty redefining the scope of Thai suzerainty over the Malay states and the British gained some trade concessions in Siam. Penang merchants were bitterly disappointed by the meagre commercial provisions of the Burney Treaty, but the priorities of the Supreme Government of the Company lay elsewhere. So long as Asian states did not bow to French pressure or endanger the security of India, Calcutta had no wish to interfere in their affairs. For example, it refrained from intervention in Cochin-China (or southern Vietnam) once reassured by John Crawfurd (British envoy to Emperor Minh-Mang in 1821–22) that the Cochin-Chinese 'are not our immediate neighbours, but far removed from the sphere of our Indian politics'.[2] Similarly, far from hoping to prise concessions from the King of Siam, the Company wished 'to avoid contiguity of dominion or intricacy of relations with that state, and the consequent and necessary hazard of collisions and rupture'.[3] Indeed, Calcutta was anxious to reassure Bangkok that the Anglo-Burmese War of 1824–26 was not the prelude to a wave of expansionism which would threaten Siam.

Conflict between the British and Burmese arose from frontier turbulence aggravated by different perceptions of power and the state. The British settlement of Bengal was underpinned by an equation of land with power alien to Burmese concepts of authority and government. Desiring to demarcate frontiers and define power territorially, the British clashed on their eastern border with an expansive but inherently unstable regime. The fount of justice and patronage but the target

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[2] Quoted in Nicholas Tarling, *Imperial Britain in South-East Asia* (Kuala Lumpur, 1975), p. 92.
[3] Ibid., p. 136.

of intrigue and rebellion, the Konbaung monarchy was weakened by succession contests at court and well-entrenched governors and hereditary headmen in the provinces. Boundary disputes between Arakan and Bengal, together with anxiety lest the French set up bases in Burmese ports, induced Governor-General Shore to despatch Captain Michael Symes as an envoy to the Court of Ava in 1795 (he went a second time in 1802). Although King Bodawpaya refused to treat with the representative of a mere Governor-General or to exclude the French from his harbours, he was willing to accept a British Resident who would superintend commerce. A number of short-lived attempts were made to post a British Resident in Rangoon, such as that by Captain Hiram Cox in 1796–98, and further envoys were sent to the Court of Ava to discuss frontier problems, but the upshot was only increasing mutual mistrust. In 1819 Bodawpaya was succeeded by Bagyidaw whose army commander, Maha Bandula, embarked upon expansion. Meanwhile the Company, having subdued the Marathas, turned to its eastern frontier. After a Burmese force had driven the British garrison from Shahpuri island in the disputed zone of the River Naaf, the Governor-General, Lord Amherst, declared war on Burma on 5 March 1824.

The first Anglo-Burmese War was long, mismanaged, and costly. Of the 40,000 men serving in the British force, 15,000 died, mostly from dysentery and malaria, while the Burmese, already exhausted after three-quarters of a century of military expansion, were crippled by the war and peace settlement. By the Treaty of Yandabo (24 February 1826) the Burmese were required to pay an indemnity of 10 million rupees; cede Arakan, Assam, and Tenasserim; surrender claims to Manipur and Cachar; receive a British Resident at Ava; post an envoy to Calcutta; and open negotiations for a separate commercial agreement. The British had mixed feelings about these gains; while merchants and missionaries welcomed them, administrators doubted their value. What soon became clear, however, was that, far from settling Anglo-Burmese disputes, the Treaty prepared the ground for further conflict.

British expansion into South-East Asia between 1786 and the late 1820s was part of a dramatic resurgence in British imperialism world-wide. Rocked by crises in America, India, and at home during the 1770s and 1780s, half a century later British national self-confidence rested on economic superiority, naval predominance, and recent military successes. Commercial growth and war with France had resulted in a massive expansion of British Imperial power, especially in Asia.[4] As regards South-East Asia, British intervention had been brought about by Anglo-French rivalry and fluctuating Dutch power, by the needs of India and opportunities in China, by the attractions of South-East Asian trade and the reactions of South-

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[4] C. A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780–1830* (Harlow, 1989).

East Asian societies. Although in the late 1820s British formal Empire amounted to no more than two strips of coastal Burma and the Straits Settlements, British commerce had brought about significant changes in the pattern of regional trade, especially in the Straits where the focus shifted from traditional entrepôts to the Settlement ports. Moreover, local communities of British administrators, merchants, and missionaries were accumulating knowledge and interests stretching beyond the boundaries of official involvement. In the era of free trade imperialism that followed, they would vigorously demand support for their activities from frequently reluctant authorities in Calcutta and London.

Free Trade Imperialism and Turbulent Frontiers, c.1830–c.1870

MALAYA AND BORNEO

The period of so-called 'liberal non-intervention' from the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824 which partitioned the Malay world into British and Dutch spheres, to the Pangkor Treaty of 1874 which laid the basis for the British Residential system in the Malay states, was in fact a half-century of immense activity. Singapore's trade soon outstripped that of Penang and Malacca and, largely because of Chinese immigration, its population rose from approximately 11,000 in 1824 to 81,000 by 1860. The island's infrastructure rapidly expanded as it attracted shipping and investment. Banking houses opened, notably the Oriental Bank 1846, Mercantile Bank 1855, and Chartered Bank 1859. Major companies, such as P&O and Jardines, established offices here. A dry dock was constructed in the 1850s and Singapore became a major coaling station for steamships. Singapore profited from the liberalization of British trade with China after 1833, the British acquisition of Hong Kong in 1841–42, Dutch exploitation of Java, and French expansion in Indo-China after 1858. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 confirmed the Malacca Straits as the main route to East Asia and Singapore's strategic significance for the Empire. Straits merchants were also looking for opportunities in the Malayan hinterland where Straits capital was invested, especially after the discovery of rich tin deposits in Perak in 1848.

These developments placed considerable strains on the boundaries of the Straits Settlements and also on their relationship with the Government of India. Urged by merchants to intervene in the Malay states, Straits officials were also worried by Thai expansionism southwards. Several forays were made beyond the Settlements: a skirmish in 1831–32 resulted in the absorption of Naning within Malacca, and when in 1862 Siam sponsored a claimant to the Pahang throne, Governor Cavanagh bombarded Kuala Trengganu in order to warn off the Thais. The Government of India, however, frowned on exploits which threatened to incur political, military, and territorial responsibilities. When the East India Company lost the monopoly of the China trade in 1833, its interest in the Straits Settlements faded.

It retrenched on their administration, reined in those who wished to curb the Thais or conclude further agreements with Malay rulers, and even compromised the basis of their prosperity by attempting to raise revenue from their trade. Meanwhile, piracy in Malayan waters and feuds between Chinese secret societies endangered life and property; riot rocked Singapore for ten days in 1854, and again in 1857, while Penang was plagued by disturbances throughout 1857–67.[5] European and Chinese community leaders bitterly complained about the Government of India's apparent indifference to Straits interests. In the 1850s they successfully protested against Calcutta's schemes to replace the local dollar by the rupee and to end Singapore's free-port status, but calls for intervention in the Malayan hinterland went unheeded. The review of Indian government following the uprising of 1857 provided Straits leaders, such W. H. Read, with the opportunity to press for transfer of the Settlements to the Colonial Office. Largely because of Colonial Office reluctance to take on additional burdens, this was not effected for another ten years. When it did occur in 1867 it brought some significant changes, notably the introduction of the Crown Colony institutions of executive and legislative councils, but the Colonial Office appeared unmoved by mercantile pleas for intervention in the west-coast Malay states.

Meanwhile, in Borneo James Brooke had assisted the Sultan of Brunei in the subjugation of a revolt. Acting as a freelance, Brooke was rewarded by the Sultan in 1841 with the grant of Sarawak, which he and his heirs extended and ruled until 1941 as more or less autonomous rajahs. Because Sarawak lacked resources, Brooke made a virtue of necessity and, adapting the liberal imperialism of Raffles to the legacy of the Brunei regime, he founded an enlightened if impecunious despotism ostensibly committed to the conservation of the way of life of indigenous peoples. Although lionized on visiting England in 1847, James Brooke was attacked a few years later by Imperial critics, such as the radical-Liberal MP Richard Cobden, on account of the ruthlessness of his suppression of pirates. A commission of enquiry subsequently cleared him of inhumanity, but Brooke could never again call upon the Royal Navy or expect financial assistance from the British government.

BURMA

At the time when Brooke's actions were under scrutiny, Cobden also protested against the conquest of Lower Burma which, he feared, would increase taxation at home and enlarge Britain's standing army.[6] The origins of the Second Anglo-

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[5] See chap. by Susan Bayly, p. 454.
[6] e.g. Richard Cobden, *How Wars are Got Up in India: The Origin of the Burma War* (London, 1853). See Miles Taylor, 'Imperium et Libertas? Rethinking the Radical Critique of Imperialism during the Nineteenth Century', *JICH*, XIX, 1 (1991) pp. 8–9.

Burmese War (1852) lay in the Treaty of Yandabo which was supposed to have settled the first. Resenting the loss of territory and unable to pay reparations, King Tharrawaddy (reigned 1838–46) repudiated the treaty, and in 1840 the British Resident withdrew from the Court of Ava, thereby removing the channel for peaceful settlement of outstanding problems. Under Pagan Min (reigned 1846–53) central government broke down and provincial governors were left more or less to their own devices. Eager to bring Rangoon and its hinterland into the orbit of the Indian Empire, British traders were swift to complain of ill-treatment at the hands of the Burmese but were regularly reminded, as was one Rangoon merchant in 1842, that 'A private trader who thus ventures into an unfriendly port, does so at his own risk, and cannot claim the intervention of his Government as a matter of right.'[7]

While it may not have been particularly sympathetic towards traders, the Government of India was constantly sensitive to any hint of unrest on its frontiers. Lord Dalhousie, who had annexed the Punjab after the defeat of the Sikhs in 1849, was now in a position to attend more fully to the border with Burma. In addition, there was growing support in Calcutta for merchants wishing to exploit the rich teak forests in Moulmein or open up a route through Burma to the potentially lucrative market of Southern China. Indeed, the change in Britain's relations with China in the early 1840s encouraged interest in China's traditional feudatories, Burma, Siam, and to a lesser extent Vietnam. When two British sea-captains complained about Burmese fines totalling nearly 1,000 rupees, Dalhousie despatched to Rangoon a naval force under Commodore Lambert to demand compensation and the removal of the Burmese governor, Maung Ok. Lambert's mission (November 1851–January 1852) only made things worse: he bombarded Burmese shipping but returned to Calcutta empty-handed. Consequently Dalhousie felt obliged to send a second, larger force which demanded an even greater sum in compensation for wrongs suffered by British citizens. Although British attitudes to the Burmese smacked of Palmerston's doctrine *civis Romanus sum* in the Don Pacifico affair (June 1850), Dalhousie fervently desired to avoid hostilities, largely on grounds of cost, and was furious with the 'combustible commodore' for leaving him no option but to take stronger measures. None the less, the Governor-General never contemplated retreat since it was axiomatic that 'we can't afford to be shown to the door anywhere in the East'.[8]

When negotiations failed, the British occupied Rangoon in April 1852 and war ensued. Unlike the conflict of 1824–26, the Second Anglo-Burmese War was a more

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[7] Quoted in Oliver B. Pollak, *Empires in Collision: Anglo-Burmese Relations in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Westport, Conn., 1979), p. 53.

[8] Quoted in D. G. E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, 4th edn. (1955; London, 1981), p. 650. For the 'Don Pacifico' affair, see above, p. 109.

clinical operation. What had started as an attempt to force concessions from the Burmese led to further annexations: first the ports of Rangoon, Martaban, and Bassein; then their hinterland, the old kingdom of Pegu; and finally, a swathe of teak forests lying north of Prome. In the wake of this Burmese disaster Pagan Min was deposed and succeeded by his half-brother, Mindon Min (reigned 1853–78). Mindon wanted peace but refused any treaty involving the cession of territory. As a result, the British unilaterally annexed Lower Burma, which they amalgamated in 1862 with Arakan and Tenasserim to form the province of British Burma, with Rangoon as its capital. In losing the fertile Irrawaddy delta, the kingdom of Burma was landlocked and the Konbaung dynasty further weakened. Some at Mindon's court urged resistance, and for a while it looked as though the frontier would erupt in war for a third time. That this did not occur was due to the Governor-General, key men on the spot, and most significantly, the King of Burma himself. Knowing the cost of territorial expansion—indeed, stubborn resistance in Lower Burma occupied Dalhousie's troops for three more years—the Governor-General wanted to avoid further fighting. In patching up differences with Mindon he was ably served by the first British Commissioner of Lower Burma, Arthur Phayre, and by Thomas Spears, who until 1861 acted as an unofficial British agent in Mindon's court. Soon Dalhousie was lauding Mindon for his 'rare sagacity, humanity and forbearance'.[9]

While hoping to regain lost land, Mindon did all he could to avoid confrontation with Britain's Indian Empire. He accepted the reality of British power which had already been proved in China as well as in Burma. Instead of succumbing to the temptation to exploit British difficulties during the Crimean War (1854–56) and the Indian rising of 1857, he strove to win British favour by administrative reforms and improving conditions for trade. Mindon concluded a commercial agreement with Phayre in 1862 by which he agreed to trade in rice from Lower Burma and the appointment of a British agent to the new capital at Mandalay. In 1867 he concluded with Colonel Albert Fytche a new treaty surrendering all his trade monopolies (save those involving rubies, oil, and timber), reducing customs dues, and granting certain extraterritorial privileges such as the right for the British to be tried in mixed courts. Mindon also introduced coinage, encouraged the mining of minerals, and set up factories with European managers for the manufacture of sugar, cotton, and silk-lace.

SIAM

Like Mindon, Mongkut of Siam (reigned 1851–68) impressed the British as an 'enlightened oriental ruler'. His predecessors had resisted Western blandishments,

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[9] Quoted in Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, p. 653.

so much so that in 1850, after a fruitless mission to open Siam to free trade, James Brooke had urged upon Palmerston a new, more forceful policy involving 'decisive measures to be taken without delay'.[10] Mongkut, realizing from events in Burma and China that further obstruction would be futile, pre-empted such moves by bending before the wind. In 1855 he negotiated with Sir John Bowring (Governor of Hong Kong) a treaty whereby tariffs on British imports were reduced, export duties defined, British subjects allowed to acquire land and houses in the Bangkok area, and a British Consul was to be stationed in Bangkok with extraterritorial jurisdiction over British subjects. Mongkut concluded similar treaties with France and the United States in 1856, and with other powers thereafter. Mongkut also made territorial concessions on his borders: he retreated from Pahang when opposed by the British in 1862, and in 1867 agreed to abandon all claims to Cambodia (except for Battambang and Siem Reap) in response to pressure from the French, who had advanced into Cambodia after their conquest of Cochin-China in 1859–62. In domestic affairs Mongkut embarked upon cautious reform: he employed foreign advisers to supervise government departments and modernize the army; he constructed canals and roads around Bangkok; he relaxed court ritual; and he attempted reform of the revenue system. By Victorian standards of modernization, however, these measures were limited, since at the end of his reign slavery still existed, hereditary governors held sway outside Bangkok, the infrastructure was rudimentary, and the law had yet to be codified.

Mongkut appeared to have saved Siam from colonial rule by accommodating the commercial ambitions of the West; but there was a price to pay. In addition to winning territorial and extraterritorial concessions, foreigners dominated certain sectors of Siam's economy and, notwithstanding Mongkut's strategy of balancing Western interests, the British established pre-eminence in banking, shipping, and Bangkok's import–export trade. External relations were constrained by the European presence, and during the reign of Mongkut's successor French pressure on Siam would grow. Paradoxically, Siam's survival as an independent kingdom would owe much to Britain's influence over its foreign affairs.

Imperialism and Colonialism, c.1870–1914

Although the British preferred the exercise of influence through agents, advisers, and collaborating monarchs to the annexation of territory, in the years 1870–1914 they consolidated their position in the Malayan peninsula, northern Borneo, and the rest of Burma, and tightened their hold over Siam. In so doing they reacted to three sets of circumstances: local crises, economic opportunities, and

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[10] Quoted in Tarling, *Imperial Britain*, p. 153.

international challenges. Of course, British activities in each country had their own dynamics and were determined by factors whose significance varied with the perspective of participants and the level of decision-making. Moreover, there was no centrally directed policy from London: British interests in Burma, Malaya, and Siam were supervised by the India, Colonial, and Foreign Offices respectively. None the less, despite the absence of a coherent policy for expansion in the region, Britain completed its paramountcy there during the final phase of the European partition of South-East Asia.

MALAYA AND BORNEO

Although historians no longer accept the view that the British were 'invited, pushed, and persuaded into helping the Rulers of certain States to introduce order into their disorderly, penniless, and distracted households',[11] the evidence points to local unrest as triggering Britain's 'forward policy' in Malaya.[12] The turbulent frontier convinced the Straits government, and eventually the Secretary of State, of the need for intervention. Disturbed by decades of contact with foreign traders and by the more recent influx of Chinese tin-miners, the Straits hinterland was torn by Malay succession disputes and wars between Chinese triads. Straits officials were worried by the unruliness, which endangered shipping and from time to time washed over the frontier into the Settlements. Aggrieved merchants regularly petitioned the Colonial Office which, notwithstanding the fact that the Liberals were in office (1868–74), modified the orthodoxy of non-intervention. This change of heart was essentially the result of a keenly felt, though largely unsubstantiated, fear that another power, possibly Germany, might take advantage of Malayan unrest to move into what was a British sphere commanding a vital sea lane. Thus, while reasserting that 'Her Majesty's Government have, it need hardly be said, no desire to interfere in the internal affairs of the Malay States,' Lord Kimberley (Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1870–74) insisted that 'we could not see with indifference interference of foreign Powers in the affairs of the Peninsula'.[13]

When issued to the Governor in September 1873, Kimberley's instructions did not appear to signal a new course in British policy or a watershed in Malayan

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[11] Sir Frank Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 3rd edn. (1906; London, 1948), pp. vi–vii.

[12] C. N. Parkinson, *British Intervention in Malaya, 1867–1877* (Singapore, 1960); C. D. Cowan, *Nineteenth-Century Malaya: The Origins of British Political Control* (London, 1961); W. David McIntyre, *The Imperial Frontier in the Tropics, 1865–75: A Study of British Colonial Policy in West Africa, Malaya and the South Pacific in the Age of Gladstone and Disraeli* (London, 1967); Emily Sadka, *The Protected Malay States, 1874–1895* (Kuala Lumpur, 1968); Eunice Thio, *British Policy in the Malay Peninsula, 1880–1910* (Kuala Lumpur, 1969); Khoo Kay Kim, *The Western Malay States, 1850–1873* (Kuala Lumpur, 1972).

[13] J. de V. Allen, A. J. Stockwell, and L. R. Wright, eds., *A Collection of Treaties and Other Documents Affecting the States of Malaysia, 1761–1963*, 2 vols. (London, 1981), II, pp. 13, 15–16.

history. He authorized Sir Andrew Clarke merely to report on conditions in the west-coast states, examine ways in which law and order might be restored, and consider the advisability of appointing British officers to reside in Malay kingdoms. Yet Clarke acted first and reported back later. In January 1874 he concluded with Perak chiefs the Pangkor Engagement whereby the accession of Sultan Abdullah and the appointment of British Residents were agreed. By the end of the year similar arrangements had been determined with Selangor and Sungei Ujong (a part of Negri Sembilan). Although the British had signed treaties with Malay rulers before, the Pangkor Engagement marked the start of a 'forward policy', becoming the model for written agreements concluded with the rest of Negri Sembilan and Pahang in the 1880s. However modest Kimberley's original intentions, intervention in 1874 began a process whereby Malay society was placed within a political and economic frame dominated by non-Malays.

These Anglo-Malay agreements proved highly ambiguous and were hotly disputed, especially in the early days of the Residential experiment. They confirmed the sovereignty of the Malay rulers yet obliged them to follow the advice of British officers. The clause, which stipulated that the sultan was bound to act upon the Resident's advice in all matters save religion and custom, left undefined both Malay sovereignty and the executive powers of British advisers. In November 1875 the first Resident in Perak, James Birch, was murdered and the state erupted in war. This reversal led neither to Perak's annexation nor to clarification of the Resident's role. Instead, Hugh Low, Frank Swettenham, and other political officers were left to work out for themselves ways of asserting power behind the throne. Gradually they secured the financial well-being of the rulers, whose authority was elevated over lesser chiefs. In so doing, Residents conserved, and in some ways even reconstructed, a set of traditional Malay kingdoms consisting of princes and peasants.

Although British policy rested on the principles of the sovereignty of the Malay rulers, the autonomy of the Malay states, and the rights of Malays as 'princes of the soil', in practice power passed to the Residents and their European staff. The need for greater uniformity in the administration of Perak, Selangor, Pahang, and Negri Sembilan, their uneven economic performance, and Pahang's insolvency, led to their incorporation within the Federated Malay States (FMS) in 1896. As a result British rule became more direct and centralized under a Resident-General and a growing number of specialist departments based in the FMS capital of Kuala Lumpur.

The British hand was felt more lightly in those Malay states remaining outside the FMS. The Foreign Office restrained officials and businessmen who in the late 1890s urged the takeover of Malay states still under Siamese suzerainty. It was unwilling to authorize expansion at the expense of Siam, whose neutrality and

territorial integrity were cardinal principles of British policy in mainland South-East Asia. For reasons discussed below, it later modified this line and in 1909 Britain concluded the Treaty of Bangkok whereby Siam surrendered its rights over Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan, and Trengganu. The rulers of these states subsequently agreed to accept British Advisers rather than Residents, the different nomenclature indicating the rulers' determination not to be assimilated by the Federated Malay States. Finally, in 1914 the British lost patience with Sultan Ibrahim of Johore (reigned 1895–1959), who was turning out to be even more capricious than his flamboyant father Abu Bakar, and forced him to accept a General Adviser.

There was an element of Imperial logic, though little colonial cohesion, in this last phase of British 'forward policy'. Indeed, while various agreements concluded with Malay Rulers in 1874–1914 facilitated Imperial expansion, they also made for administrative untidiness. During the inter-war period colonial officials became preoccupied with the reform and simplification of Malayan government but, displaying a resilient capacity to survive the challenges of colonialism, the sultans frustrated further attempts to tamper with their sovereignty and the autonomy of their states.[14]

In Sarawak the Brookes lacked both the will and the means to carry out fundamental changes. Although Charles Brooke (second Rajah, 1868–1917) extended the frontier to its present-day configuration, consolidated administration, and benefited from the revenue derived from the trade and agriculture of Chinese settlers, the regime was still plagued by headhunting and poverty. To the disappointment of both Rajahs, London had refused responsibility for Sarawak, but in 1888 the Foreign Office established control over its external affairs as well as those of Brunei and the British North Borneo Company. The Company, which had won concessions from the sultans of Brunei and Sulu and received a royal charter in 1881, administered its territory loosely in 'a gambling style of government'.[15] By establishing 'protection' over these three territories, London sought to prevent border disputes between them and also with the Netherlands East Indies and the Philippines.

The prime role of the Federated Malay States government in economic development was to encourage private enterprise. Until 1900 the prosperity of the west-coast Malay states depended mainly on Chinese capital and labour. Chinese enterprise dominated retailing and pioneered the cultivation of sugar, tapioca, pepper, and gambier. Because of their command of Chinese labour and low profit-margins, Chinese entrepreneurs controlled tin-mining until, with the introduc-

[14] J. M. Gullick, *Rulers and Residents: Influence and Power in the Malay States, 1870–1920* (Singapore, 1992).
[15] Ian Black, *A Gambling Style of Government: The Establishment of Chartered Company Rule in Sabah, 1878–1915* (Kuala Lumpur, 1983).

tion of the bucket-dredge in 1912, the industry became increasingly capital-intensive. Twenty-five years later Europeans owned two-thirds of Malaya's tin mines, whose management had come under the control of international cartels, notably the London Tin Corporation and its subsidiary, Anglo-Oriental (Malaya) Ltd., which sought to control production and fix prices.

British planters experimented with sugar and coffee, but it was rubber which transformed their involvement in agriculture. Rubber cultivation took off at the end of the nineteenth century on account of a number of factors: Malaya's climate, the coffee blight, world demand, the enthusiasm of Henry Ridley (Director of the Singapore Botanical Gardens, 1888–1911), the availability of Tamil labour from South India, and European capital investment. New ventures were often under-capitalized and a number collapsed, but the booms of 1905 and 1910 prompted the formation of numerous UK plantation companies. Many of these raised capital on the London Stock Exchange, but did so under the auspices of Singapore agency houses (such as Guthries, Bousteads, Sime Darby, and Harrisons and Crosfield) which, with the benefit of local expertise, supervised their activities in Malaya. Though agency houses were answerable to shareholders in Britain, their operations were centred upon the region and to a large extent they ploughed back locally generated profits. Rubber was cultivated on estates and also Asian smallholdings along the length of west-coast Malaya, where an infrastructure had already been laid for tin. By the 1920s rubber was the main pillar of Malaya's economy and Malaya was the world's largest producer of natural rubber. Rubber was, therefore, of immense importance both for Malaya and for the Empire, but its expansion confirmed rather than revolutionized the country's role as supplier of commodities to the West.[16]

The connections between British rule and British economic interests were close yet complex. On the one hand, businessmen brought their views to bear on government through representation on the Straits Legislative Council, the Federal Council, and commercial associations in London; on the other, the colonial government secured law and order, regulated land use and labour, and financed the construction of ports, railways, and roads from revenue and loans. Nevertheless, British business interests frequently diverged and policy-makers adopted various approaches to economic development. Tin and rubber companies rivalled each other; miners and planters of the Federated Malay States were on their guard against subordination to the bankers and traders of Singapore; and whereas some administrators single-mindedly extolled the benefits of European enterprise and joined the boards of British firms on retirement, others strenuously defended peasant proprietorship.

[16] J. H. Drabble, *Rubber in Malaya, 1876–1922: The Genesis of the Industry* (Kuala Lumpur, 1973).

British sympathy for the Malay way of life and perceptions of the rural idyll fostered the myth of 'the lazy native'. Though Malays participated in administration and though *kampong* (village) agriculture was officially encouraged, they were neither expected nor educated to participate in the bustling 'modern Malaya' being constructed round them. By 1914 Malay élites in the Federated Malay States felt marginalized by an increasingly centralized government, which was controlled by British officials, and by the export-orientated economy dominated by Europeans and Chinese. Moreover, Malay numbers, while boosted by Indonesian immigration, had not kept pace with those coming in from China and India. Long since a minority in the Straits Settlements, Malays were now in danger of losing their majority in the west-coast states as well. Although the British persisted in the belief that non-Malays were 'birds of passage', census figures revealed a trend towards settlement and a growing proportion of second-generation immigrants amongst the Chinese and Indians. In Malaya, as in Burma, colonialism was creating a 'plural society', in which ethnic differences were reinforced by colonial attitudes, administrative practice, and the division of labour. Communal compartmentalization in turn shaped political awareness and accounted for the emergence of Malay nationalism rather than multiracial, Malayan nationalism.

Initial opposition to British intervention, such as occurred in Perak in 1875 and in Pahang in 1891–95, where Malay chiefs rose in armed resistance, was followed by more considered reactions as Malay leaders sought to articulate their community's identity in order to protect it in a rapidly changing environment. The Malay press became their principal medium. In 1906, for example, an article in the first issue of the Malay periodical *Al-Imam* declared that 'the one thing that will strengthen and realise all our desires is knowledge of the commands of our religion'.[17] The Islamic community (or *umat*) was, however, only one concept of 'Malayness'; another was ethnicity or race (*bangsa*); a third was the monarchical tradition (*kerajaan*).[18] The quest for communal identity provoked contests between Malay élites for ideological hegemony which continued to splinter the Malay nationalist movement after 1914. It also ran counter to any thought of Malayan or non-communal nationalism. Non-Malay, immigrant communities experienced the colonial impact in most direct and oppressive ways, through its labour regulations, for example, and the social repercussions of market forces. On the whole, however, their allegiances remained to their countries of origin, and it would be upheavals there, rather than those in their adopted home, which would fire their political awareness in the first half of the twentieth century.

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[17] Quoted in William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (New Haven, 1967), p. 56.
[18] Anthony Milner, *The Invention of Politics in Colonial Malaya: Contesting Nationalism and the Expansion of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, 1994).

SIAM

To one British visitor in the late 1880s, Bangkok appeared as 'a city made to live in watercolours, not warranted otherwise to last'. It did not bear comparison with the 'flourishing and enlightened, so advanced and well-governed' town of Singapore.[19] None the less, the reign of Chulalongkorn (1868–1910), coinciding almost exactly with the Meiji restoration (1868–1912), resembled the reformist era in Japanese history in its eclectic borrowing from the West. Chulalongkorn, himself educated by English teachers, encouraged secular education, abolished slavery, prohibited compulsory labour for government service, built hospitals, roads, and railways, and altogether behaved like a thoroughly enlightened despot. He also set up new ministries and strengthened central control over the provinces by replacing hereditary governors with civil servants. In these ways Chulalongkorn advanced along a trail blazed by his father, modernizing government while enhancing monarchical authority.

Godlike though the king remained in the eyes of his subjects, the effectiveness of his governance rested in large measure upon the guidance of advisers whom Chulalongkorn recruited from abroad. The principal areas were government finances, the legal system, and the army. Like Mongkut, he was careful to distribute favours across a range of foreigners, but the key Financial Adviser (instituted in 1898) was invariably British. Moreover, of the total Western population residing in Siam in 1889, about 40 per cent were British, whose involvement in the economy spread from Bangkok to the teak and tin areas far beyond the capital. Some have argued, consequently, that Thai needs were subordinated to the interests of British trade and investment and that Siam escaped formal colonialism only to succumb to British informal empire.[20]

Such a picture of all-pervasive British influence, however, should be qualified. First, the role of Western business was less significant than that of the Chinese, who acted both in competition with, and as vital compradores for, European firms. Secondly, although Britain was Siam's main trading partner, Siam was never one of Britain's principal economic interests in South-East Asia. The British were disappointed by the Thai market and in 1914 their investments amounted to approximately £2m compared with £16m in Burma and £25m in Malaya.[21] Finally, detailed examination of Thai administration and the activities of Financial Advisers has revealed that, while the British may have appeared to direct Siam's

[19] Florence Caddy, *To Siam and Malaya* (1889; Singapore, 1992), p. 227.

[20] e.g. John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', *Economic History Review*, Second Series, VI (1953), pp. 1–15; J. C. Ingram, *Economic Change in Thailand, 1850–1970* (Stanford, Calif., 1971).

[21] Malcolm Falkus, 'Early British Business in Thailand', in R. P. T. Davenport-Hines and Geoffrey Jones, eds., *British Business in Asia since 1860* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 117–56.

financial and economic policies, in fact their advice coincided with and generally confirmed the intentions of the Thai government.[22]

Quite as significant as Chulalongkorn's domestic policies in ensuring that Thailand avoided colonial control was Anglo-French rivalry in the area. Mindful of the proverb that 'when elephants fight the grass is trampled',[23] Chulalongkorn followed a course that had characterized Siam's earlier relations with Burma and Indo-China: he made concessions to stronger neighbours in order to protect the independence and integrity of the core of his kingdom. Pressed on his eastern flank by the French, he accepted their annexation of Sipsong Chu Thai (the Twelve Thai States in the hills bordering Tongking) in 1888, surrendered all land east of the Mekong in 1893, and relinquished territory on the west bank in 1904–07. The stability of Siam was of major importance for British foreign policy in the region: were it to disintegrate or succumb to partition, a cushion between British India and French Indo-China would be lost. Another fear was that the French, Germans, or Russians might win the concession to cut a canal across the Kra isthmus, thereby circumventing Singapore, destroying its prosperity, and negating its strategic value. To prevent this, Britain first guaranteed the security of the Chao Phraya valley (that is, the heartland of Siam) through a joint Anglo-French Declaration (January 1896), and secondly, concluded a secret Anglo-Thai Convention (April 1897). By this Convention, Siam agreed not to make concessions in the Siamese Malay states and Britain offered support 'in resisting any attempt by a third Power to acquire dominion or to establish its influence or Protectorate' in that area.[24]

Subsequent events contributed to a more direct approach to Siam by the Foreign Office. The *entente cordiale* of 1904 relaxed Anglo-French tension in South-East Asia and continuing rumours of German and Russian designs on the Kra isthmus suggested that the secret Convention of 1897 was an inadequate safeguard against European interference in southern Siam. Consequently, the Foreign Office abandoned its opposition to the extension of colonial influence into the four northern Malay states. In March 1909 Ralph Paget, British Minister at Bangkok, concluded with Prince Devawongse, Foreign Minister of Siam, a treaty by which the Thais transferred to the British suzerainty over Kedah, Perlis,

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[22] Ian Brown, 'British Financial Advisers in Siam in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn', *Modern Asian Studies* (hereafter *MAS*), XII, 2 (1978), pp. 193–215; and *The Elite and the Economy in Siam, c.1890–1920* (Singapore, 1989).

[23] Chandran Jeshuran, *The Contest for Siam, 1889–1902* (Kuala Lumpur, 1977); Patrick Tuck, *The French Wolf and the Siamese Lamb: The French Threat to Siamese Independence, 1858–1907* (Bangkok, 1995). This proverb is shared with Burma and some African societies, see John D. Hargreaves, *West Africa Partitioned: The Elephants and the Grass* (London, 1985), p. xiii.

[24] Allen, Stockwell, and Wright, eds., *A Collection of Treaties*, II, pp. 327–28.

Kelantan, and Trengganu, agreed not to admit the military presence of a third party into southern Siam, and granted the British the exclusive right to finance and supervise the construction of a railway linking Bangkok to Singapore. Britain, responding to Thai national concerns, surrendered the extraterritorial privilege of consular jurisdiction over British subjects in Siam.

BURMA

Geopolitics partly account for the contrasting fortunes of Siam and Burma in the age of European expansion. Whereas Siam's independence was underpinned by its position as a buffer between British and French empires, that of Burma was undermined owing to its location on the borders of British India. In addition, the Siamese were far more accommodating than the Burmese in responding to Western commercial ambitions and strategic concerns. While the Chakri kings avoided colonial rule by concluding unequal treaties with the British, the Konbaung dynasty ultimately failed either to resist or to meet British demands. Having lost territory to the British, the power and authority of the Burmese kings diminished, so that Mindon's strategy of co-operating with the West provoked discontent and bids for the throne. Moreover, the cloud of mutual mistrust and incomprehension overshadowing Anglo-Burmese relations, which lifted briefly during his reign, descended again in its last decade when the appetite of Rangoon merchants for further concessions seemed insatiable and the British and French competed over the route to Yunnan. Although Mindon handled this rivalry skilfully, the British were wary of his association with the French. Furthermore, in the mid-1870s disturbances involving the Red Karens of western Karenni rekindled the frontier issue. Deteriorating relations between Burmese Mandalay and British Rangoon were aggravated by the customary requirement that the British Resident remove his shoes in the presence of the king. Most significant of all for the collapse of the Anglo-Burmese *modus operandi* was Mindon's failure to secure the succession. As the Burmese saying put it, 'very difficult is the time of the changing of kings'.[25]

On the death of Mindon Min in 1878, Thibaw seized the throne in a blood bath that signalled renewed upheavals at court and elsewhere. At war with Afghan and Zulu, the British government avoided a clash with the Burmese and withdrew the Residency from Mandalay in September 1879. Non-confrontation continued during Gladstone's administration (1880–85) and the Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon (1880–84), but complaints of Rangoon merchants that the Burmese were failing to observe commercial agreements came to a head in 1885 when the *hluttaw* (council of ministers) imposed a swingeing fine on the Bombay-Burmah Trading

[25] Leslie Glass, *The Changing of Kings: Memories of Burma, 1934–1949* (London, 1985), p. 1.

Corporation for breaching the terms of a forestry concession. The chambers of commerce were outraged and the Government of India issued three principal demands: that the fine be suspended pending an investigation; that the British Residency in Mandalay be reopened; and that Burma place its foreign relations under British control. When Thibaw rejected this ultimatum, a force under General Prendergast invaded Upper Burma on 14 November 1885 and occupied Mandalay two weeks later (see Map 17.1).

Historians have debated the relative importance of political, economic, cultural, and strategic factors in Britain's decision to go to war with Burma a third time.[26] Lord Randolph Churchill (Secretary of State for India in Lord Salisbury's government of June 1885–January 1886) was well aware of the inherent risks. War might antagonize China, and the Conservatives could not afford a reversal like that recently experienced by the Liberal government when the Russians occupied Penjdeh in Afghanistan. Yet inaction could result in a disaster such as Gladstone had suffered in January 1885 when the British relief force reached Khartoum two days too late to save General Gordon. Victory, on the other hand, might improve Churchill's personal stock, even that of his party, while augmenting British commerce and restraining French expansion. Ultimately the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, and the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, were more exercised by the prospect of a French presence on the borders of British India than by injuries to British pride or northern Burma's commercial potential. Although their understanding of French designs was obscured by rumour, the British discovered that the Franco-Burmese commercial treaty had been followed up in January 1885 with a letter promising Thibaw supplies of French arms via Tongking.

The war itself was soon over, but 'pacification' of the country tied down some 30,000 troops and Indian police until 1890. The first task being to restore order, the second was to establish a system of government. The British had promptly deposed Thibaw and, in the absence of an amenable heir and with exaggerated expectations of wealth to be derived from unimpeded access to Upper Burma, they were in no mood to cultivate a client state. Instead, having discounted a claim that Burma was a tributary of China, they annexed it on 1 January 1886. Thereafter they treated the whole of Burma as a province of British India, building on foundations laid in 1862 when Lower Burma had been annexed.

In contrast to the pragmatic sensitivity which they learned to adopt towards the customs and religion of the Malays, the British substituted forms of direct rule for

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[26] D. P. Singhal, *The Annexation of Upper Burma* (Singapore, 1960); Dorothy Woodman, *The Making of Burma* (London, 1962), pp. 222–46; A. T. Q. Stewart, *The Pagoda War: Lord Dufferin and the Fall of the Kingdom of Ava, 1885–6* (London, 1972); E. Chew, 'The Fall of the Burmese Kingdom in 1885: Review and Reconsideration', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, X, 2 (1979); Robert Vicat Turrell, 'Conquest and Concession: The Case of the Burma Ruby Mines', *MAS*, XXII, 1 (1988), pp. 141–63.

the monarchy, council of ministers, and 'circle headmen' (*myothugyis*). The new regime also dispensed with indigenous distinctions of status and disparaged the social role of Buddhism. Bereft of monarchical patronage, the authority of the *sangha* (monkhood) and *thathanabaing* (head of the monkhood) declined and monastic education languished. Central government of the colonial state was anchored in bureaucracy, lawcourts, police, and the Indian Army. As it acquired new functions, so government set up departments for forests, agriculture, public works, and so on. Local government adapted models from India; thus Burmese 'circle headmen' were replaced by an imported system of district and village administration. The colonial state has been called a leviathan,[27] but although it tore at the fabric of old Burma, its impact was uneven and its reach limited. As in the Konbaung era, the outlying Shan states and hill areas inhabited by Chin, Kachin, and Karen peoples remained semi-detached from 'Burma proper' and were administered indirectly through indigenous authorities.

As in Malaya, the government encouraged trade and created conditions in which private enterprise flourished. The colonial economy depended on the extraction, processing, and export of rice, timber, and later, oil. Migrant farmers from Upper Burma, immigrant labourers from India, and abundant cash credits provided by *chettiars* (Madras moneylenders) transformed the Irrawaddy delta into a major rice bowl exporting grain to Europe, India, and elsewhere in Asia. Of the rice exports entering the world market by 1914, mainland South-East Asia supplied 90 per cent, of which over 60 per cent came from Burma.[28] Most of the small, up-country rice mills were owned by Burmese, but Chinese and Indian merchants were prominent in rice trade with Asian ports. The larger mills and the rice trade with Europe, however, were in British hands. The government modified *laissez-faire* principles in the case of forestry, where it adopted the pre-colonial precedent of state ownership. Officials used forestry policy to control the Karens and circumscribe their shifting lifestyle, and the means to assert government's proprietary right over the rich resources of timber. Teak was exploited either by the government's own forestry department or by lessees, such as the Bombay Burma Trading Corporation and Macgregor & Company.[29]

Relationships between government and business were close, although the extent of their complicity in the exploitation of Burma is open to debate. George Orwell's Flory asserted that the 'official holds the Burman down while the businessman

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[27] J. S. Furnivall, 'The Fashioning of Leviathan: The Beginnings of British Rule in Burma', *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, XXIX, 3 (1939), pp. 1–138.

[28] Paul H. Kratoska, 'The British Empire and the Southeast Asian Rice Crisis of 1919–1921', *MAS*, XIV, 1 (1990), p. 117.

[29] Raymond L. Bryant, 'Shifting the Cultivator: The Politics of Teak Regeneration in Colonial Burma', *MAS*, XXVIII, 2 (1994), pp. 225–50.

goes through his pockets', but Maurice Collis 'seldom met an English official who did not speak up for the Burmese'. Whatever their intentions, however, J. S. Furnivall argued that British administrators opened Burma to unbridled capitalism and Indian immigration. 'Under Burmese rule the Burman was a poor man in a poor country; now he is a poor man in a comparatively rich country.'[30] A 'plural society' emerged, separating ethnic communities with different social and economic roles. Whether peasants or professionals, the Burmese were vulnerable. Commercial development of rice exposed Burmese cultivators to agrarian indebtedness and expropriation by moneylenders, while the small Burmese middle class lost in the contest with the Indian bourgeoisie. By 1931 Indians, who amounted to only 7 per cent of the total population of 14,647,756, dominated internal banking and trade, were acquiring a major share of the best rice land, and competed with Burmese for skilled and unskilled jobs in Rangoon and the delta area.[31]

As with the Malays, nationalism was the means of identifying and consolidating a community challenged by Western colonialism and Asian immigration. Twenty years after Burmese princes led armed risings against the British to restore the old order, the Western-educated élite of the Young Men's Buddhist Association (1906) launched a Burmese cultural revival. After the First World War constitutional reformers, religious militants, republicans, and socialists would compete for the soul of the Burmese nation and, in so doing, clash not only with the British but also with immigrant groups and ethnic minorities.

As the British pursued their interests and extended their power in South-East Asia, the demarcation between those areas falling within Britain's formal Empire and those remaining outside it became indistinct. As the experience of Burma and Malaya showed, Britain never achieved omnipotence in those countries coloured 'British pink' on the map. Yet, as was seen in Siam or the channelling of much Netherlands East Indies trade through Singapore, Britain's influence was by no means excluded from territories which claimed to be independent or had succumbed to other colonialists. 'British pink' seeped over the whole region; nearly indelible in some areas, it merely tinged other parts and elsewhere faded fast.

Formal or informal, however, the British presence depended upon mechanisms of local collaboration. Such mechanisms fluctuated in their effectiveness, saddling each side with costs as well as benefits. Never better than rickety in Burma,

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[30] George Orwell, *Burmese Days* (1934; London, 1967), p. 38; Maurice Collis, *Trials in Burma* (1938; London, 1945) p. 52; J. S. Furnivall in 1948, cited by R. H. Taylor, 'Disaster or Release? J. S. Furnivall and the Bankruptcy of Burma', *MAS*, XXIX, 1 (1995), p. 53. Orwell (Eric Blair) served in Burma in the Indian Imperial Police, 1922–27; Collis and Furnivall served in Burma in the Indian Civil Service in 1912–34 and 1902–23 respectively.

[31] Robert H. Taylor, *The State in Burma* (London, 1987), pp. 123–47.

collaboration contributed to overall, though fragmented, British control in Malaya, while in Siam it could inhibit as well as assist the acquisition of influence. Formal British rule depended on the active co-operation of traditional rulers, village headmen, council members, and Asian clerks, all of whom acquired vested interests in the colonial regime. Simultaneously, the new order alienated many more. Its institutions, ideas, and material demands posed a threat, as well as offering an alternative, to pre-colonial ways. Such threats provoked resistance of many kinds.[32] Before 1914, however, the British always overcame opposition in the end, if only by resorting to assistance from the Indian Army and Royal Navy.

Alongside local collaboration, the maintenance of British interests in South-East Asia necessitated compromise with other Western states. Although their power surpassed that of the French, Spanish, and gigantic Netherlands East Indies, international challenges between 1870 and 1914 forced the British into international deals. As the British and Dutch effectively occupied their respective spheres in the late nineteenth century, so they adjusted the arrangements contained in their 1824 Treaty. Similarly, in 1885 the British accommodated Spain over the frontier between British Borneo and the Philippines. Again, Britain contained French ambitions, not only by pre-emptive bids for further territory in Burma but also through diplomatic negotiations with respect to Siam. Although powerless to affect the outcome of the Spanish-American War of 1898–99, Britain somewhat grudgingly accepted US occupation of the Philippines, not least because it was preferable to that of, say, Germany. Indeed, the rise of Germany, together with the costs of global commitments, drove British governments into major agreements with Japan (1902), France (1904), and Russia (1907). By 1914 Britain's global pre-eminence may have been weakening but its position in South-East Asia was not seriously challenged. Despite shallow roots in many parts of the region, Britain's presence had yet to be shaken by nationalist protests or the international aspirations of Japan and the United States.

[32] See chap. by Susan Bayly; for twentieth-century nationalism, see Vol. IV, chap. by A. J. Stockwell.

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18

India, 1818–1860: The Two Faces Of Colonialism

D. A. WASHBROOK

The history of British India from the abdication of the Peshwa of Poona (1818), which secured the East India Company's supremacy, to the Great Mutiny of 1857 possesses many paradoxes. On the one hand, it can be seen as marked by a growing self-confidence among the British public and policy-makers in the 'world-destiny' of their own civilization and Imperial project. India was subjected to a battery of changes aimed at drawing it more closely under the authority of Britain and converting its culture and institutions to Western and Anglicist norms and forms. Familiarly, Parliament attempted to erode the Company's old monopoly trading privileges, utilizing the Charter Acts of 1813, 1833, and 1853 to open out the Indian economy to the forces of 'free trade' and market competition. Reforming Governors-General, such as William Bentinck (1829–35), legislated against the 'abominal' customs of *suttee* (widow suicide) and female infanticide, while innumerable lower-level officials promoted the causes of evangelical Christianity and/ or Utilitarian rationality. The historian Thomas Macaulay proclaimed the transforming mission of Western education and heralded the virtues of an emergent race of 'brown Englishmen', while the colonial state steadily withdrew its patronage from the support of Hinduism and Islam. India was to become part not merely of a *Pax Britannica* but of a *Civilis Britannica* too.[1]

However, if this period is viewed less from the perspectives of British rule and more from those of the practices of Indian society, its meaning can be construed quite differently. While some Indian intellectuals, most notably around the British capital of Calcutta, may have responded positively to the new Anglicizing spirit and generated their own cultural 'renaissance',[2] elsewhere the signs of any 'beginnings of modernization' are difficult to detect. The economy hardly boomed as a result of its 'liberation': the second quarter of the nineteenth century witnessed a prolonged depression during which the growth of the colonial port-cities of

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[1] For an interpretation following these themes, see C. H. Philips and Mary Doreen Wainwright, eds, *Indian Society and the Beginnings of Modernisation, c.1830–1850* (London, 1976).

[2] David Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: The Dynamics of Indian Modernization, 1773–1835* (Berkeley, 1969).
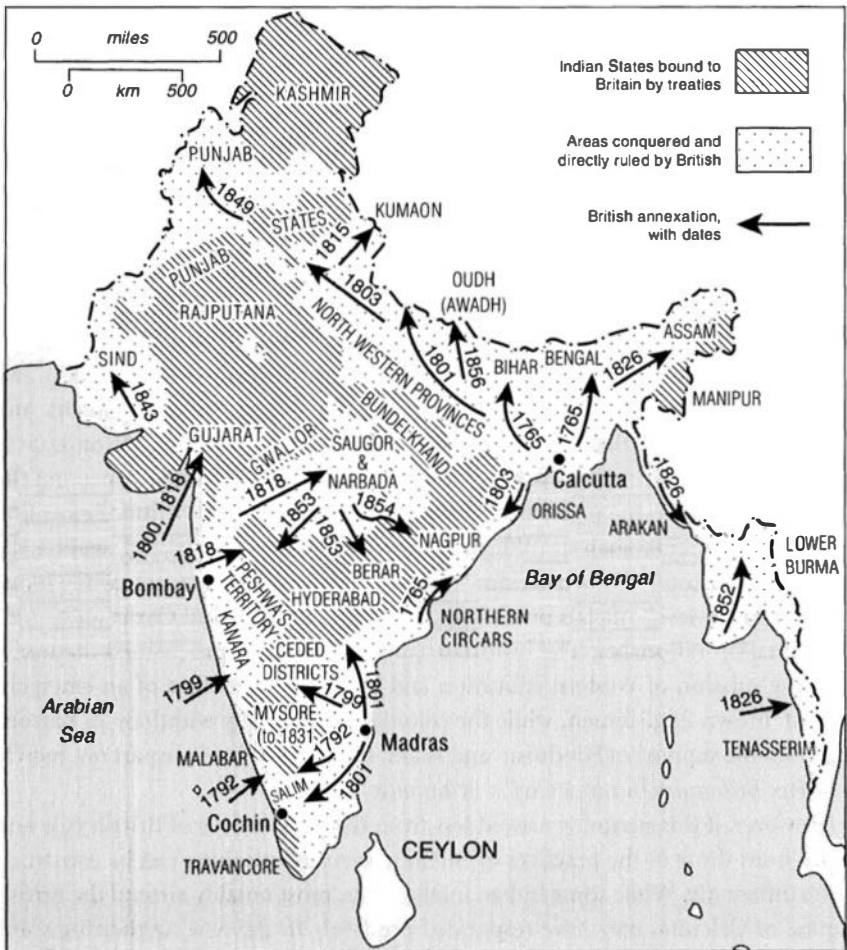
MAP 18.1. Pre-Mutiny India

Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay was more than offset by de-urbanization and de-industrialization in the hinterland.[3] India's social economy, which once had provided 'the workshop' of the early modern world, became increasingly agrarian and peasant-based. Traditional institutions, most obviously the Brahmanic caste system, were also scarcely uprooted. Rather, caste became more rigidified and spread its influence into areas—ranging from the ritual practices of South Indian temples, to the honours systems of Indian princes, to the distribution of access to land—where it had been less pervasive earlier.[4] Residual Indian kings, or maharajas, also developed royal styles which emphasized the antiquity of their origins and permanence of their authority to degrees never seen before. In other domains, the proportion of Indians pursuing Western education and, even more, converting to Christianity remained extremely small. But revivalist and fundamentalist currents in Hinduism and Islam were regularly stirred, making Indian society more overtly 'religious' and 'sectarian' than prior to British rule.[5] In the terms through which they viewed the world, Bentinck and Macaulay were preaching sermons on Westernization and progress to an Indian society which was actually becoming more 'Oriental' and 'backward'.

One way of unravelling this paradox is to see Indian society's reactions to the new colonial hegemony as dominated by resistance and reaction. It was precisely because the assault of Western modernity was so fierce that large areas of Indian society came to reject it and to promote counter-ideologies premised on the self-conscious defence of tenaciously held 'traditions'. For many years, the responses represented in the Great Mutiny and Civil Rebellion of 1857 were interpreted in this light.[6] More recently, a new historiography of the 'subaltern' orders of society has highlighted similar imperatives.[7]

However, such an approach may not be entirely satisfactory and colonial Indian history not easily reduced to a simple dialectic of domination and resistance. In the first place, many of the 'traditions' which now were evoked appear to have been new. Several of the Islamic and Hindu religious movements emerging in this period bore the hallmarks of engagement with Christianity, frequently adopting

[3] C. A. Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 1989), chap. 5.

[4] Arjun Appadurai, *Worship and Conflict under Colonial Rule: A South Indian Case* (Cambridge, 1981), chap. 5; Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Hollow Crown: Ethno-History of an Indian Kingdom* (Cambridge, 1987), chaps. 8, 12; Susan Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings: Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society, 1700–1900* (Cambridge, 1989), esp. part 2.

[5] Avril Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India* (London, 1993); Sugata Bose, *Peasant Labour and Colonial Capital: Rural Bengal since 1770* (Cambridge, 1993), chap. 2; Kenneth W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Movements in British India* (Cambridge, 1989), chap. 2.

[6] Thomas R. Metcalf, *The Aftermath of Revolt: India, 1857–1870* (Princeton, 1964).

[7] Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Delhi, 1983).

its forms of discourse and weaponry of the printing-press.[8] Ideas concerning the etiquette of caste, the longevity of 'the village community', and the prerogatives of royalty also drew on an infusion of Western concepts.[9] Secondly, much of society's 'traditionalization' carried no obvious implications for anti-colonial resistance but rather reflected adaptation to new circumstances. The many members of India's once-great 'military market-place'[10] and erstwhile manufacturing economy, who now were pushed out on to the land, did not become 'traditional' peasants by choice; nor, by doing so, did they challenge the dictates of their new colonial masters. Indeed—and thirdly—in a large number of areas the traditionalization of society appears to have been promoted by the logic of colonial institutions themselves. It was the Anglo-Hindu lawcourts which enforced the rule of the Brahmanic caste system and disseminated it to deeper social levels.[11] It was the tribunals of the colonial bureaucracy which decreed agrarian society to be based on the self-sufficient village community and the privileges of royalty and aristocracy to be founded on 'ancient' prerogatives held since 'time immemorial'.[12] The assertion of India's Tradition in this context reflected as much an accommodation to the new colonial order as a rejection of it.

But why and how did British rule itself effect these imperatives towards the reconstruction of a traditional India? Here, perhaps, our received historiography has been guilty of too eclectic an approach to the discourse(s) of colonialism, and also of overemphasizing the significance of discourse (and texts) at the expense of analyses of both institutional practice and politico-economic context. Macaulay and Bentinck were not the only British statesmen to address Indian society, nor necessarily the most important. Their sojourns in India were brief and the audiences to which they spoke were largely British. Long-term Company officials—such as Thomas Munro, Charles Metcalfe, John Malcolm, and Mountstuart Elphinstone—made a far greater impact on India's effective government and held very different views.[13] Equally, current methodological obsessions with 'the word' may risk blinding history to 'the act', the unintended effects of institutional structures and the external pressures constraining the making of decisions. Even had British rulers seriously sought to Westernize Indian society they might

[8] Powell, *Muslims and Missions*, chaps. 5, 6; Jones, *Socio-Religious Movements*, chaps. 2, 3.

[9] Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (Oxford, 1990); Clive Dewey, 'Images of the Village Community', *Modern Asian Studies* (hereafter *MAS*), VI, 3 (1972), pp. 291–328.

[10] See Vol. II, pp. 197–201; D. H. A. Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy: The Ethno-History of the Military Labour Market in Hindustan, 1450–1850* (Cambridge, 1990), chap. 1.

[11] Appadurai, *Worship*, chap. 5.

[12] Peter Robb, *Ancient Rights and Future Comfort: Bihar, The Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885, and British Rule in India* (London, 1997), chap. 5.

[13] For the differences, see Javed Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's 'History of India' and Orientalism* (Oxford, 1992).

not have been able to do so, and their failed attempts could have diverted its development in other directions.

If British rule in India in this period is approached from these angles, its character begins to take on a very different appearance. The predominant effects which it had (both intended and unintended) were less to transport British civilization to the East than to construct there a society founded on the perpetuation of 'Oriental' difference, as Edward Said has put it.[14] India became a subordinate agricultural colony under the dominance of metropolitan, industrial Britain; its basic cultural institutions were disempowered and 'fixed' in unchanging traditional forms; its 'civil society' was subjected to the suzereignty of a military despotic state. British rule before the Mutiny may be credited with having fundamentally changed Indian society. But this change moved against the anticipations of 'modernization' and left it with a vast legacy of 'backwardness' subsequently to undo.

From Conquest to . . . Conquest

If the East India Company's supremacy in India was signalled by the Treaty of Bassein (1802) and the final defeat of the Maratha Confederacy in 1818, the process leading up to it had already been long and complex and riven with many contradictions. The foundations of the Company's power in Bengal had been laid between the 1750s and 1770s by the likes of Robert Clive and Warren Hastings. Soldierly men, they had few illusions that the sources of the Company's dominance in India rested on anything other than gunpowder and musket-fire. Both also eschewed visions of a society in 'British' India founded on anything other than inherited Indian institutions—most notably those of 'Oriental despotism', which would give their state (and its rapacious officials) virtually unlimited authority.[15]

But the Clive–Hastings 'model' of Indian Empire had provoked great controversy in Britain, where it was assailed by Company shareholders concerned at its costs and parliamentarians fearful that it jeopardized 'the liberties of free-born Englishmen'. In 1786 Lord Cornwallis had been sent to India with specific instructions to curtail the rapine and bring Bengal under both British and 'civilized' government. Famously, he sought to fulfil his mandate by separating the civil and military powers of the state and bringing the latter under control of the former. He also sought to separate executive and judicial powers through a new legal system; to introduce private property rights in land through a Permanent Settlement

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[14] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London, 1978).

[15] In Vol. II, see chap. by Rajat Kanta Ray; P. J. Marshall, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead: Eastern India, 1740–1828* (Cambridge, 1987), chap. 4.

(1793), which would safeguard them from the revenue demands of the state; and to create a 'civil service' which depended for its income more on official salaries than the profits of private trade and the perquisites of local power.[16]

Interpretations of the nature of the colonial state after Cornwallis and through the early nineteenth century have been inclined to assume that its development continued along the lines which he set for it. And, in institutional terms, he undoubtedly set up a certain momentum. Parliament, through legislation and a Board of Control under its President (a member of the Cabinet), exercised an ever more detailed regulation of Indian affairs. The idea of 'professional' civil service was enhanced by the creation subsequently of training schools in England, at Haileybury College, and in India, at Fort William College. Lawcourts proliferated through the Company's expanding territories, notionally securing 'private' rights and property under the rule of law.

The significance of these developments cannot be denied, especially for India's long-term future. Parliament, for example, attempted to open further the Company's territories to Christian missionaries in 1813. The training colleges produced a breed of officials very different from the old, most of whom had come to India in early adolescence and grown up amidst the violence of the Company's conquests. Now the Company's servants were to spend their formative years at home receiving instruction on the scientific principles of political economy from the likes of Thomas Malthus, and imbibing the atmosphere of British evangelical revival. Their educational background has been seen as a crucial link between the Company state's expansion and the 'civilizing mission' which it is held to have adopted.[17]

However, this scenario overlooks a crucial phase in the development of British power in India: a phase which was marked by a sharp reversion to the militarism and ideology associated with the Clive–Hastings era and which, until the first Haileybury generation began to achieve senior offices in the 1840s, left the Company state in the hands of men schooled in the politics and styles of the eighteenth century. This phase arose from the dynamics of the conquest which, from 1792, saw the Company break out of its original, limited enclave in Bengal and, especially through victories over Mysore (1792 and 1799) and the Marathas (1803–05 and 1816), establish the power of its arms over the subcontinent. The conquest released imperatives which contradicted the principles on which Cornwallis had reformed the Bengal state: if his mandate was to stabilize, 'settle', and constrain, that of his immediate successors was to expand, aggrandize, and predominate. During these

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[16] In Vol. II, see pp. 511–21; 546. P. J. Marshall, *Problems of Empire: Britain and India, 1757–1813* (London, 1968), chaps. 1, 2.

[17] Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Studies and British Rule in India* (New York, 1990).

years the military reasserted its effective authority over the civilian branches of government and left its own legacy not only on the state's political character, but also on the position of 'British' India in the world. For of course these conquests were but part of that much wider expansion of British power taking place during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars against France.[18] Out of them, Britain emerged with a newly dominant global status to which India was central, and to serve which Indian development came subsequently to be directed.

Following the defeat of Napoleonic France in 1815 Britain faced no significant international rivals (other then Russia in Central Asia) and built the framework of an Empire in the East which eventually stretched from southern Africa, through South-East Asia, to Australia. One source of the power sustaining this framework was always the Royal Navy. But the second source was the Company's forces in India, which added to Britain's Imperial position an element previously lacking— a major land-based army. The Company's army and the British navy had first come together in India during the Seven Years War (1756–63) to defeat the French and secure dominance over Bengal. Their relationship remained close and continuous during the various conquests leading up to the defeat of the Marathas, and demonstrated its extra-Indian significance as early as 1799, when the two joined forces to evict Napoleon from Egypt. Thereafter, they represented the hammer and anvil of British Imperial power in the world.

For India's own destiny, this was to be extremely consequential. Its most obvious implication was that, following the achievement of domestic supremacy, the vast war-machine that the British had built up in the course of effecting their conquest was not dismantled. Rather, it was maintained intact and utilized for further conquests and 'police' duties beyond British-Indian borders and around the world.

In a first set of manœuvres, the machine swung eastwards following the lead that it had taken during the Napoleonic Wars when it had captured Dutch Java (1811). Singapore was acquired in 1819; the kingdom of Burma defeated and weakened (1824–26); China opened up to British trade by the First Opium War (1839–42). It then turned to the north-west. By the early 1830s Russian expansion into Central Asia was starting to cause Calcutta concern. Although the First Afghan War (1838–42) proved a disaster, it cleared the way for the conquest of Sind (1843), and eventually for the conquest of Punjab (1845–49). Ranjit Singh's great military state had held British expansionary ambitions in check for a generation. But following his death in 1839 it broke apart in turmoil—enabling the Company to extend its Indian domains right up to the 'North-West Frontier'.[19]

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[18] C. A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780–1830* (London, 1989).

[19] Stanley A. Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 2nd. edn. (Oxford, 1982), chaps. 14, 15.

To sustain this continuous process of expansion, the Government of India from the mid-1820s maintained sixteen European regiments of the line as well as a permanent standing army of 170 sepoy regiments, totalling 235,000 men,[20] which represented the preponderant military force in all of Asia. Inevitably, its military institutions and purposes came to shape both state and society. Government in the newly acquired territories passed first into the hands of the soldiers who had conquered them—and often remained there for a considerable time. Munro, Malcolm, Metcalfe, and Elphinstone, who had won their spurs on fields of battle, became the dominant voices for the next generation in the provincial governments of Madras, Central India, North India, and Bombay respectively. Military influence even crept back into the government of Bengal: when, in 1824, the Bengal Army sought to mobilize for the Burma War, it was severely hampered by the number of its officers under secondment to the 'civil' service, as *de facto* Collectors and Magistrates. For Indian society too, martial qualities acquired a special premium. Those social groups who supplied loyal soldiers to the Company found themselves in receipt of special privileges and protections; and Indian princes, who contributed men and money to the Imperial effort, were treated as valuable allies—to be protected, if necessary, against the protests of their own subjects.

Military imperatives also clearly came to dictate economic policies. The army was extremely expensive and absorbed most available revenues. This made the state very reluctant to give up potential income by withdrawing from the many economic activities which it had inherited from its Indian predecessors. Parliament might attempt to prise a range of concessions for 'free' business interests— dismantling the Company's erstwhile monopolies on Indo- and Sino-British trade in 1813 and 1833—but it would be a mistake to see the Indian economy opened up to anything resembling 'free trade' in this period.

The most crucial element in the structure of the Indian economy was the land revenue system. Parliament made no move to weaken the Company's grip on this. Indeed, under the terms of the 1813 Charter Act it sanctioned procedures guaranteeing the Company increased rights of extraction. Cornwallis's Permanent Settlement had placed severe restrictions on the Company's ability to raise the revenue demand in Bengal. But the new Act sanctioned the adoption of a different *ryotwari* system of land settlement in most of the Company's newly acquired territories.[21] The *ryotwari* system permitted the direct taxation of 'individual' peasants (or *ryots*) in ways which facilitated the continuous revision and raising

[20] Douglas M. Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon: Colonial Armies and the Garrison State in India, 1819–1835* (London, 1995), p. 133.

[21] Burton Stein, *Thomas Munro: The Origins of the Colonial State and His Vision of Empire* (New Delhi, 1989), chaps. 3, 4.

of assessment levels.[22] The economies in these regions were then squeezed extremely hard to compensate for the revenue deficiencies of Bengal.

Parliament also made no serious effort to touch the range of monopolies which the Company now held over a wide range of the most valuable items of domestic Indian commerce. These included the production of opium, salt, saltpetre, and of high-priced woods and minerals, and the rights to retail tobacco, alcohol, and betel. The Company's military state was backed and financed by an extremely powerful state economy and the interests of the one were closely intertwined with those of the other, especially with regard to expansion to the East and North-West.

Expectations in London that the conquest of India would lead to a greatly expanded trade with Britain for a long time were only partially fulfilled—and then in ways which caused the Company problems. During the 1820s imports of British goods into India grew quickly but then levelled off for most of the 1830s at £3–4m a year.[23] However, a major difficulty arose over exports. India lost many of her textile markets to the products of Britain's industrial revolution, and by 1830 the Company had decided to abandon 'the Investment' by which it had procured large quantities of Indian-manufactured cloth for sale in Britain and as a mean of remitting funds back to Europe. The purchase and export of indigo only partially filled this vacuum, for the indigo trade to Europe was highly unstable and ultimately contracted. Europe appeared to find less and less in India worthy of purchase.

It was, instead, towards the East that the export trade now began to develop. Cotton, silver, and above all opium reached a growing number of consumers in China and South-East Asia. In several years of the 1830s and 1840s opium sales exceeded £5m and, alone, were worth over 40 per cent of the total value of India's exports.[24] Leading British-Indian spokesmen fully acknowledged this fact and demanded greater power and freedom to exploit it. In 1837 John Crawfurd argued:

Opium is an article calculated to become of vast importance to the agriculture and commerce of India ... the great marts for its consumption are the Malayan islands, the countries lying between India and China, and above all, China itself ... Among these customers ... whose numbers cannot well be estimated at fewer than 400 million people, opium has been more or less an item of consumption ever since we knew them. During the last fifty years it has been constantly on the increase ... It would be absurd, then ... to sacrifice a great national advantage.[25]

[22] Nilmani Mukherjee, *The Ryotwari System in Madras, 1792–1827* (Calcutta, 1962).
[23] K. N. Chaudhuri, *The Economic Development of India, 1814–1858: A Selection of Contemporary Writings* (Cambridge, 1971), p. 185.
[24] Ibid., pp. 38–50.
[25] Quoted in ibid., pp. 250–51.

That Indo-British military power also, along with the export trade, should have been swinging to the East was no coincidence. In economic terms, Company India was engaged in building perhaps the world's first 'narco-military' empire, an empire in which power and profit remained as closely linked as ever they had been in the Mercantilist Age of the eighteenth century. Similar considerations were also present in the subsequent swing to the North-West, although genuine fear of 'the Russian bear' played its part in this too. Until the 1830s the strength of the Punjab state had kept British soldiers from plundering the valley of the Indus and kept British business interests out of its lucrative overland trade to West and Central Asia. The 1840s saw Lord Napier pocket a private fortune of £50,000 from his conquest of Sind, and Western commerce find a new passage to Iran and the Middle East.[26]

A Very Military State

In the post-Napoleonic era, then, the Company state veered strongly away from the course suggested by Cornwallis's administration of Bengal and back to the 'military fiscalism' practised (and enjoyed) by Clive and Hastings. With this reversion went also a reappraisal of the virtues of ruling India according to Anglicist rather than Oriental principles. The fathers of this second age of expansionary imperialism were broadly of one mind that India must be governed according to its own, and not British, precedents: they looked to 'traditional' aristocracies, 'yeoman' peasantries, and the village community 'republic' as the foundations of India's future.[27] But one aspect of supposed Oriental Tradition particularly attracted their attention, as it had done that of Clive and Hastings. This was the idea of an Oriental Despotism by which the state might exercise unitary and untramelled authority. Whether and how far the theories of sovereignty actually informing previous Indian regimes met the criteria of this concept has, today, become a much-debated issue.[28] However, in its neo-colonial form the concept provided an incisive tool for advancing the authority of the Company state—a state whose military victories now gave it an unprecedented concentration of armed power. Appealing to the precedents of Oriental despotism, the new generation of British rulers claimed a monopoly of legitimate coercive force within society and of authority over it. They also drew back together into the same hands

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[26] Wolpert, *New History*, chap. 14.

[27] Stein, *Thomas Munro*, chap. 2; Kenneth Ballhatchet, *Social Policy and Social Change in Western India, 1817–1830* (London, 1957); Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge, 1994), chap. 3.

[28] André Wink, *Land and Sovereignty in India: Agrarian Society and Politics under the Eighteenth-Century Maratha Svarajya* (Cambridge, 1986). However, Wink's theory of a weak Mughal sovereignty is widely disputed. Compare John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire* (Cambridge, 1993).

the civil, military, and judicial functions which Cornwallis had sought to separate; and they posited the sovereign (i.e. the Company) as ultimate possessor of all land and resources in India.[29]

The immediate corollary to this was that, at least outside Bengal, the military asserted itself as the dominant institution within the Company state. What Cornwallis had done in Bengal could not be undone, but in the new conquest territories it was certainly not to be done again. John Malcolm proclaimed the ethic of the post-Napoleonic era thus: 'Our government of ... [India] is essentially military and our means of preserving and improving our possessions through the operation of our civil institutions depend on our wise and politic exercise of that military power on which the whole foundation rests.'[30] The Company's military power was now to be used, not merely externally for defence against Britain's enemies, but internally to inform the institutions and ethos of its rulership.

This was accomplished in several ways. The army was made highly visible through garrison policies which dispersed it widely across the country. Pacification policies were developed which treated the slightest manifestation of civil disorder as incipient revolt and punished it accordingly. Soldiers were deputed to attend many of the functions of civil government, such as revenue collection. Non-military departments of the state adopted military-style uniforms and rituals.

Some statesmen of the epoch even thought that the process ought to go further. Elphinstone favoured extending to civil executions the extreme mode of military execution—that of 'blowing from guns'. This was not accepted, but a less severe method of military discipline, that of flogging, came to be regarded as a highly appropriate punishment for an ever-widening range of 'civil' offences. Martial force—that is, torture—was also extensively used in such tasks as the collection of land revenue.[31] By the 1820s and 1830s the ideals of Cornwallis's government were becoming but a distant memory.

Moreover, in at least one area the military offensive against civil society left a lasting impression on Cornwallis's key legacy—the rule of law—and also contributed to the changing image in Britain of India as a 'barbarous' society almost beyond the pale of civilization. After the conquests of the Napoleonic era, the Company state was left with a major problem in the detritus of the *ancien régime's* political and military economy. In the last years of the eighteenth century as many as 2 million armed men may have circulated in India's 'military market-place', looking for mercenary employment in the armies of its regional potentates.[32] The

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[29] Stein, *Munro*, chaps. 3, 4.

[30] John Malcolm, *The Political History of India from 1784 to 1823*, 2 vols. (London, 1826), II, p. 245.

[31] Government of Madras, *Report of the Commissioners for the Investigation of Alleged Cases of Torture in the Madras Presidency* (Madras, 1855).

[32] Kolff, *Naukar*, pp. 110–16.

Company's victories and subsequent dismantlement of the armies of defeated princes left employment in its own forces for barely a quarter of a million. What was to be done with the rest, and how could they be 'persuaded' to beat their swords into ploughshares and to 'settle' to pacific, peasant ways of life?

But a redundant mercenary soldiery was only part of the problem. Along the main arteries of communication, large numbers of semi-armed travelling peoples had circulated, moving commodities through the interior on pack-animals and sustaining the military operations of warring states.[33] In the countryside, many peasants who did not regularly leave the land for war none the less possessed weaponry and maintained traditions of armed resistance against the encroachment of superior authorities. On the forest fringes of settled agriculture, so-called 'tribal' groups regularly raided neighbouring cultivators—or taxed them in return for not raiding them.[34] All this represented an affront and a potential threat to the despotic authority which the Company state now imputed to itself.

In response, it turned its military frontier inwards and began sustained campaigning against the society over which it ruled. Wars were launched against the *pindaris*, former soldiers who continued their 'adventuring' in Central India. The forest fringes were physically cut back and their peoples subjected to heavy military repression for pursuing their age-old livelihoods.[35] Peasants were disarmed at gunpoint and travelling peoples fixed in their tracks—not infrequently to gallows trees. One consequence of this onslaught, not least to provide justification for the Company's swelling military budget, was the representation to British audiences of India as a primitive and violent society. Most famously, perhaps, the campaign to restrict the movement of travelling peoples was attended by attempts to whip up popular hysteria against *thugee*: supposedly, a cult of ritual murder pursued on India's roads in the service of the goddess Kali. Phillip Meadows Taylor penned a popular contemporary novel on the theme, and the image which it presented fixed India in British minds ever after as definitively 'Oriental' in its fanaticism and cruelty.[36]

However, the military onslaught also had another impact. It seriously questioned the principles of Cornwallis's rule of law. As the military frontier extended into civil society, army commanders were wont to suspend civil justice and enforce the rule of martial law instead—executing offenders on the most summary of charges. This gained part-institutionalization in the cases of travelling peoples and 'tribal' groups, who often became collectively proscribed and stripped of the

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[33] C. A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: Northern Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770–1870* (Cambridge, 1983), chaps. 1, 5.

[34] Eric Stokes, *The Peasant Armed: The Indian Revolt of 1857*, ed. C. A. Bayly (Oxford, 1986), chap. 3.

[35] Guha, *Elementary Aspects, passim*.

[36] Philip Meadows Taylor, *Confessions of a Thug*, 3 vols. (London, 1839).

individual rights and protections enjoyed by 'civilized' members of society.[37] It was developed further by the claim of the state to prerogatives enabling it to exile 'undesirable' or 'dangerous' people at will and in a manner scarcely different from that of the Russian Tsar.

All this put the status of the rule of law at issue. In the newly expanded presidencies of Madras and Bombay, for example, Munro and Elphinstone sought deliberately to curtail the authority of the lawcourts. They combined together the powers of taxation, magistracy, and police in the single office of the Collector; demanded that the courts be deemed incompetent in revenue matters; and insisted that executive officials be immune from legal challenges to their decisions. Admittedly, the courts were by no means willing to concede the substance of their authority, and between the 1820s and 1840s there were repeated battles between the executive and judiciary.[38] But eventually the tension began to ease, although hardly in ways which defended the spirit of a rule of law. The courts had shown greatest independence in matters where they claimed to 'discover' customary law. However, afraid to permit Indian juries or even 'learned authorities' a dominant role in the discovery process, British judges stood on their own authority and failed to establish mechanisms which could give customary law the same independent status as common law in England. This left judicial rulings vulnerable to the pressures of statutory law which, there being no constitution or representative legislature, consisted merely of the general regulations and codifications promulgated by the executive itself.[39] These reduced the scope of judicial independence and imbued executive fiat with the sanctity of law.

Here, as in the colonial Empire more generally, the idea of a rule of law became fatally confused with that of a rule by law under which 'civil society', while perhaps directed by general legal principles, is denied any part itself in formulating those principles; while the state may make law for its subjects, it posits itself as above that law and as unaccountable to it. British-Indian law became less a tool of liberty than an instrument of despotism.

While the fuller implications of this position were to become clear only later, for Indian society before 1860 its most obvious consequence was that rights to private property in land—offered by Cornwallis and subsequently talked up by Company servants as Britain's greatest gift to India—remained indistinct from the state's revenue rights and therefore equivocal, at least outside greater Bengal. The revenue demand continued to be the prime determinant of both the value and the

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[37] William van Schendel, 'Madmen of Mymensingh', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, XXII (1985), pp. 139–83.

[38] D. A. Washbrook, 'Law, State and Agrarian Society in Colonial India', *MAS*, XV (1981), pp. 649–721.

[39] Ibid., p. 714.

ownership of land. The Oriental despotic state lived on; indeed, given the greater power which the Company state was able to wield against civil society, it was much more potent than it had ever been before.

The Economics of Backwardness.

Another reason why, perhaps, the Company state promoted the 'rule of Oriental difference' over that of Anglicization was that, from the late 1820s, the economy in most regions of India plunged into a recession and did not recover until the early 1850s. In many ways, the effects of this broke up the more advanced indigenous institutions of commerce and investment which had sustained India during its early-modern economic heyday, and fostered an expansion of more primitive forms of petty commodity production and peasant subsistence farming.

Until the 1820s the basic structures of India's legendary manufacturing industry and commercial economy had survived war and colonial conquest more or less intact. The economies of certain sub-regions no doubt suffered, but these received compensation as labour and capital migrated and restarted elsewhere. Indeed, in the decade 1815–25 there were signs of general growth.[40] Calcutta drew on a deepening hinterland for its expanding exports; Bombay and Madras began to experiment with new forms of the China trade. However, at the end of the 1820s a rot set in. A long-term depression saw the prices of all commodities, but particularly the foodstuffs which dominated agricultural production, falling in some cases to barely half their pre-1820s levels. Many high-quality forms of artisanal production went out of commission; long-established Indian commercial families were bankrupted; outside the main colonial cities, extensive de-urbanization took place.[41]

The broad origins of the depression can be traced to changes in the international economy to which India, with its large and historic textile export trade, was peculiarly vulnerable. India's high-quality export markets were undermined by the products of Britain's industrial revolution, while the beginnings of global economic integration under British Imperial auspices reduced commodity prices world-wide. India was scarcely unique in feeling the impact of the depression, but was much more so in the depth and length of time that depression lasted. For this, distinctive features of colonial rule can be held responsible.

First, the nature of the conquest generated problems of demand. The Company set about dismantling the courts and armies of those who had resisted its expansion and been conquered. But such kings and soldiers had previously possessed purchasing power to demand a wide variety of goods and services. As this

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[40] Bayly, *Rulers*, chaps. 2–5.   [41] Ibid., chap. 7.

declined, the Company-state failed to spend in ways which could fill the gap. Its resources flowed out to Europe and to China; merchants, Collectors, and officials bought Western rather than local artisan-produced goods; wealth was concentrated in the main colonial centres at the expense of up-country towns. Where the new rulers congregated or maintained large military barracks, local economies could be stimulated and might even thrive. But such places were too few in number to make up for wide stretches of the hinterland denuded of consumers and markets.[42]

The problem of demand also had a direct corollary in a growing problem of supply. Many redundant soldiers, artisans, and servants made their way on to the land to take up agriculture. In most regions cultivation expanded ahead of a population, which itself may have been expanding more rapidly than at any other time in the century. But this increased volumes of production while markets were in decline. In the 1830s and 1840s many European commentators on Company India attributed its economic troubles to the difficulty of finding sales outlets. But until the transport revolution in steamships and railways later in the century, they were at a loss to come up with a satisfactory remedy.[43]

A further depressant was the nature of Company specie policy. At least until the Opium Wars (1839–42 and 1856–60) blew China open, British merchants were unable to meet all the costs of their purchases of China goods through opium sales. Raw cotton became an important item of export, but so too did silver taken from the Indian monetary system. As India itself produced little specie metal and as its traditional sources of import were drying up with the decline of textile exports, this led to an effective contraction of the money supply.[44]

A fourth set of pressures, perhaps less quantitative than qualitative, came from revenue and fiscal policy. On the one hand, outside the Permanently Settled regions of greater Bengal, the new revenue systems were not only heavy, but operated to inhibit investment. Rates of assessment were geared to soil fertility: the more productive the land, the higher the rates that it paid. In several areas, agriculturists—faced with climatic uncertainties and declining prices—moved from good land to bad and showed little inclination to invest in improving production lest they incur rate re-evaluations.[45]

In the Permanently Settled tracts, restrictions on the state's revenue demand ought to have removed this problem, but the harnessing of landlord proprietary

[42] Bayly, *Indian Society*, chap. 4.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Asiya Siddiqi, *Agrarian Change in a Northern Indian State: Uttar Pradesh, 1819–33* (Oxford, 1973), chap. 8; A. Sarada Raju, *Economic Conditions in the Madras Presidency, 1800–1850* (Madras, 1941), parts 6, 7.

[45] Mukherjee, *Ryotwari System*, chap. 6.

rights to the new coercive powers of the Company state ensured that they did not. In Bengal and Upper India large landlords armed with eviction writs went on 'rent offensives', which increased rates of extraction from agriculture in much the same way as elsewhere.[46] Further, in the course of settling the land, both state and landed proprietors had absorbed many forms of taxation immunity (*inam*), originally intended to encourage investment, especially in irrigation. Notionally, the state or landlord held these immunities in return for providing and maintaining water supplies, but both now neglected such responsibilities. In Madras between 1825 and 1845 the amount spent on irrigation works fell to less than 0.5 per cent of the land revenue gathered.[47]

The Company state also caused havoc to indigenous commercial and banking systems by separating its own 'treasury' institutions from them. A marked feature of the eighteenth century had been the increasing interpenetration of state fiscal and 'private' commercial networks. 'Great houses' of Indian bankers had progressively taken over the revenue rights of post-Mughal regional states 'on farm' and provided finances for the latter's activities. The Company during its rise to power had made full use of these connections.[48] In many senses, it was financed to power by indigenous bankers—in Bengal in the 1740s and 1750s, by the Jagath Seth; in southern and western India later on, by a number of leading Gujarati houses. However, after achieving preponderant state power the Company then began to reconsider the nature of its fiscal strategy, viewing the profits made by tax-farmers, bill-brokers, and money-changers as notional losses of its own revenues. Under the new revenue systems of the post-conquest era, tax-farming was heavily discouraged and fiscal management taken under the prerogative of state bureaucrats. 'Private' bankers were also denied access to the facilities and cash held in government treasuries.

The effects of these changes on the economy were very considerable. Although some historians have seen the tax-farming regimes of the eighteenth century as merely exploitative, others have emphasized the benefits which they brought to investment and production.[49] Bankers advanced money to producers and often themselves invested in improved irrigation works and manufacturing facilities. Shorn of the security provided by their access to state power and revenue rights, many now ceased to do so; while the preoccupations of the Company-state with military expansion gave productive investment a low priority in its spending plans.

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[46]   Bose, *Peasant Labour*; chap. 3.

[47]   D. A. Washbrook, 'Progress and Problems: South Asian Economic and Social History, 1720–1860', *MAS*, XXI (1988), pp. 57–96.

[48]   Bayly, *Rulers*, chap. 6; Lakshmi Subramanian, *Indigenous Capital and Imperial Expansion: Bombay, Surat and the West Coast* (Delhi, 1996), chap. 3.

[49]   Wink, *Land and Sovereignty, passim*; Bayly, *Rulers and Townsmen*, chap. 2.

In separating its own fiscal system from that of indigenous capitalist agencies, the Company appealed both to new European principles of political economy, which took the move as necessary to 'sound' financial management, and to new principles of political theory, which regarded the separation of the spheres of 'the public' and 'the private'—of the state and 'civil society'—as crucial to moral progress. Previous forms of interconnection between the two were now conceived as tantamount to 'corruption'. However, in early colonial India the definition of what exactly comprised 'the public' and 'the state' was not at all clear. The Company might be conceived variously as a commercial corporation, the armed agency of a 'foreign' power, or even a latter-day Oriental despot. But it was hardly the representative of an Indian 'body politic', as the European theory of the 'public domain' decreed.[50] In these circumstances, its eager adoption of the discourse of public and private right may have masked an ulterior purpose. Under its guise, Indian capital could be removed from the heights of the economy and from close association with the state in order to be replaced with British capital.

British business houses now came to enjoy, if sometimes informally, privileged access to loans from state treasuries and banks, to licenses from state monopolies, to contracts for government supplies, and to powers over land and agricultural production in order to found plantations. Moreover, their deepening access to state power also saw them distancing themselves from indigenous businessmen and developing a greater 'racial' exclusivity. In Calcutta, particularly after the 'indigo' crisis of the late 1820s, new British firms arose—most noticeably in the expanding import trades—which eschewed forming partnerships with Indians;[51] in Bombay, London-based companies came to dominate over Indian-based agencies.[52] Again, the benefits of this shift to the Indian economy can be seriously doubted. British businessmen were reluctant to commit themselves to heavy fixed investments and always looked to repatriate their profits home.

But the shift also raises questions about the 'moral' character of the Company state. Cornwallis had tried to restrain the private-trade interests of government officials and, subsequently, London had organized a series of campaigns aimed at converting the Company's bureaucrats into 'disinterested' civil servants. One consequence of this was that, supposedly to weaken the attractions of 'corruption', the salaries of European officials in India were raised to astronomic heights, far

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[50] Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings, passim.*

[51] Blair B. Kling, 'Economic Foundations of the Bengal Renaissance', in Rachel M. van Baumer, ed., *Aspects of Bengali History and Society* (Hawaii, 1975), pp. 26–42.

[52] Marika Vicziany, 'Bombay Merchants and Structural Changes in the Export Community, 1850–1880', in K. N. Chaudhuri and Clive J. Dewey, eds., *Economy and Society: Essays in Indian Economic and Social History* (New Delhi, 1979), pp. 163–96.

above those to be found anywhere else in the Empire and making Company Collectors financially equivalent to Maharajas.[53]

But even this scarcely broke the nexus between state office and business activity, although it may have relocated it from individuals to families. Access to Hailey-bury School, whence the Company now drew ever more of its officials, remained patronage-based and very restricted. Many families successfully gaining entry there also sent off other sons to train in the City of London. As a result, a series of family dynasties arose represented simultaneously in the Indian bureaucracy and in companies operating in India—usually in the same local regions. In Madras, for example, the Arbuthnots provided five successive generations of leading civil servants and ran the largest agency house and private bank in the presidency. The Stokes and Sullivans were not far behind them. 'Gentlemanly' combinations of office and business remained basic to the structures of Indian Empire, as much in the nineteenth as the eighteenth century—but combinations possible now only for Englishmen.[54]

The Traditionalization of Indian Society

It is perhaps against this background of neo-Oriental despotism, economic depression, and the displacement of Indians from the leading offices of wealth and power, that Indian society's passage towards 'backwardness' and 'traditional-ization' can most clearly be seen. Their combined effects were, first, to promote forces of 'peasantization'. Peasant petty-commodity production became ever more widespread as other employments—in artisan crafts, soldiering, and 'service'—weakened. Secondly, society also tended to become noticeably more 'sedentary'. This followed both from military policies aimed at dismantling the market in mercenaries and restricting the movement of travellers, and from revenue policies aimed at tying taxpaying peasants to the land. The new *ryotwari* settlements in Madras and Bombay, for example, threatened the peasant who failed to cultivate his fields (or, at least, to pay revenue on them) for a single year with loss of his lands. And thirdly, many parts of the social structure became flattened and 'homogenized' as once-complex sets of distinctions, which had articulated net-works of status within pre-colonial Indian kingdoms and been sustained by differential tax immunities, were crushed by the weight of the Company's revenue machine.[55] In the Permanently Settled tracts, admittedly, tenurial law continued to permit greater social diversity. None the less, the rental offensives of the 1830s

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[53] Bayly, *Imperial Meridian,* chap. 6.

[54] P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914* (London, 1993).

[55] Bayly, *Indian Society,* chap. 5.

and 1840s had something of the same effect here too. The pressures of the epoch beat down the agrarian order and rendered it static and 'fixed'.

Of course, rural society did not necessarily accept its fate passively and many of its members tried to take action. Local rebellions regularly punctuated the peace which Company rulers liked to present as their gift to India, and reached their apogee during the 1857 Mutiny. But age-old methods of defending local autonomies and distinctions were becoming difficult to apply: disarmament reduced possibilities of successful revolt and growing pressure on the land curtailed opportunities for migration. Moreover, the Company state conducted a subtle ideological campaign directed at persuading rural society that its new structure of relations was based upon its 'true' past, which had been disturbed by the 'anarchy' of the war-torn eighteenth century. Particularly important in this regard was the idea (borrowed from medieval Europe) that Indian civilization was founded on the self-sufficient and unchanging 'village community'.[56] This concept regarded as 'natural' the immobilizing of Indians in their birthplaces and also offered the Company a curious form of legitimation for its new revenue practices. On the theory that village communities were self-sufficing, the state could both remove all their surplus and deny them outside investment resources without, in any way, impairing their imagined ability to self-reproduce themselves and the agrarian economy.[57]

Yet not all of Indian society was flattened and immiserated in this way. The Company state could not, in fact, function without the support and 'collaboration' of certain Indian groups. In the 1830s the number of Europeans in its territories was less than 45,000 (including soldiers) among a population of 150 million—and its efforts to stimulate greater 'white' settlement proved a failure. In order to rule, the Company needed to draw on the resources, skills, and energies of at least some of its indigenous subjects, who necessarily profited thereby. As a result, it became involved in building structures of power and hierarchies of authority within Indian society as well as over and above it. But the way that it did this marked a departure from the past and also carried strong implications for the processes of 'traditionalization'.

One set of groups who came to enjoy particular Company favour was the 'scribal gentries' who—mostly of high-caste and Brahmanic status—possessed traditions of literacy and had long served as administrators to previous regimes. Now they filled the subordinate positions in the Company's revenue bureaucracy. A second set comprised certain 'martial' communities, especially the Rajputs and Bhumihars of North India, whom the Company decided made the best soldiers for

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[56] Dewey, 'Images', pp. 291–95; Robb, *Ancient Rights*, chap. 5.
[57] Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India* (Oxford, 1959), part II.

its army. A third set consisted of residual Indian princes and warrior-noblemen who had allied with the Company during the wars of the eighteenth century. They became its 'aristocracy', retaining varying degrees of independence over their domains.

Such groups, needless to say, had possessed prominent positions in society previously—but never so predominant as they were now to become. Then, all had faced competition and challenge in the fluid world of pre-colonial politics. Brahmin scribes might have possessed high status, but political power was the prerogative of warriors and wealth that of merchants. Rajputs and Bhumihars might have chased military employment, but they had constantly to prove their superior skills against warriors from other backgrounds. Princes and noblemen rose and fell with remarkable rapidity depending on the fortunes of war, imperial successions, and the tolerance of a still-armed peasantry. But under Company Raj, power and privilege—once they had been gained—became much more secure and less susceptible to challenge.

Reflecting its sense of India as a static Oriental society, Company institutional practices defined and recruited would-be collaborators largely according to criteria of caste and racial ascription and the heritage of blood. They then put the unprecedented power of the new state machine behind the maintenance of their collaborators' authority, ruling out competitors for their honours as illegitimate parvenus and challengers to their positions as contumacious rebels. Princes and noblemen who gained the Company's approval were redefined as members of an 'ancient aristocracy' to be protected against rivals, recalcitrant subjects, and even creditors for all time.[58] Rajput and Bhumihar castes benefited from privileged access to the army and also—of no small consideration—from the right to bear arms in a society whose other members were now disarmed.[59] Substantial numbers of subordinate offices in the villages—and the remaining tax-immunities and perquisites which went with them—became strictly hereditary, to be resumed by the state only if succession failed.[60] While higher bureaucratic office was notionally open to competition, de facto it was engorged by family dynasties of Brahmin clerks.[61] Privilege and power in Indian society became frozen in prescriptive and immutable forms, insensitive any longer to imperatives of achievement and change.

[58] Dirks, Hollow Crown, chap. 11.

[59] Seema Alavi, The Sepoys and the Company: Tradition and Transition in Northern India, 1770–1830 (Delhi, 1995), chaps. 1, 2.

[60] Robert Eric Frykenberg, 'The Silent Settlement', in Robert Eric Frykenberg, ed., Land Tenure and Peasant in South Asia (Delhi, 1977), pp. 31–66.

[61] Robert Eric Frykenberg, Guntur District, 1788–1848: A History of Local Influence and Central Authority in South India (Oxford, 1965), chaps. 6, 7.

Under these circumstances the culture associated with privilege and power also underwent a metamorphosis, making it more arrogant and oppressive. Rajputs and Bhumihars responded to their new status by appropriating to themselves as collectivities the habits and attitudes which once were the prerogative only of kings.[62] Brahmins, especially in southern and western India where their positions had been equivocal, created greater distance between themselves and low-caste *Sudra* society.[63] It may well have been that such groups possessed aspirations in these directions before—and, indeed, that such aspirations had informed the perceptions of Indian 'tradition' held by the British, who were largely dependent on their collaborators for 'knowledge' about it.[64] But the altered colonial context changed the meaning and effect of these pretensions.

The nature of the caste system, for example, was profoundly affected by the actions of the Anglo-Hindu courts of law. Although previously effective caste status had been subject to multiple influences and flexible interpretations, the Company's lawcourts looked largely to the authority of Brahmin pundits and Sanskritic scriptural sources, which they accredited with guardianship of society's mores. The Brahmanic theory of caste (or *varna*) was extremely rigid and hier-archic, and its influence had largely been confined to élite circles before. However, now and as instrumentalized by the courts, it penetrated deeper into society, restructuring the relations of public worship, physical mobility, marriage, inherit-ance, and even property ownership.[65] The Anglo-Hindu law sketched out an immobile, status-bound social order perfectly in keeping with the Company state's dreams of Oriental despotism and European imaginings of a 'different' Oriental civilization.

The West Strikes Back

Yet such dreams and imaginings were not the only ones affecting the development of Indian society. The Anglicizing impulse lived on, especially in Britain, and survived the Company state's reversion to military fiscalism and 'Orientalism'. Periodically, it offered contradictory promptings: advocating the spread of West-ern learning, the reform of caste, the virtues of meritocracy, and the competition of the market economy. But until the later 1840s its influence remained circum-scribed and many of its initiatives ended up heavily compromised. Macaulay's

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[62] Alavi, *Sepoys*, chaps. 3, 4.

[63] Appadurai, *Worship*, chap. 4.

[64] Nicholas B. Dirks, 'Castes of Mind', *Representations*, XX (1992), pp. 126–64; Sheldon Pollock, 'Deep Orientalism?', in Carol Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer, eds., *Orientalism and the Post-Colonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia* (Philadelphia, 1993), pp. 84–110.

[65] Appadurai, *Worship*, chap. 4.

celebrated 1835 recommendation to promote Western education was backed by the Company's government only to the extent of £10,000 a year. Persian might have been displaced as the official language of the state but, in North India, it was replaced with Urdu, not English. Company officials were repeatedly warned that, whatever their own Christian beliefs, their government was to be strictly neutral in matters of religion.

Indeed, the tangled web of cultural meanings represented by colonialism led many attempts at Anglicizing reform to produce social consequences which actually strengthened Oriental 'tradition'. For example, the legislative attacks on 'abominal' Hindu customs, especially regarding the treatment of women, were aimed mainly at the practices of the upper castes. They served to associate those customs closely with the possession of high-caste status. In a society becoming increasingly conscious of caste hierarchy, the result was perhaps inevitable. Many lower castes, who previously had not followed such practices, now began to adopt them.[66] Suttee, female infanticide, and especially bans on the remarriage of widows showed tendencies to become more, not less, widespread. Equally, evangelical pressures to force the Company state to abandon the role which it had inherited from previous regimes in the patronage and protection of Indian religions had the effect of strengthing the latter. The state was obliged to pass the powers and properties, which it had exercised and enjoyed on their behalf, directly to authorities—priests and trustees—constituted within them. In effect, such authorities absorbed the erstwhile prerogatives of the state and became king-like in their own right: their rulings absolute, no longer subject to royal mediation, and their 'private' wealth enormous.[67]

From the 1840s, however, a sea-change began to set in and the pressures of Anglicization to become more forceful and effective. The change was partly associated with the decade-long Governor-Generalship of Lord Dalhousie (1846–56), who pronounced himself an uncompromising Westernizer. Dalhousie readdressed the issue of private property right, calling for revisions in the *ryotwari* settlement in order to reduce taxation and promote economic growth; and, in Bengal, posing the need for tenancy legislation to give productive peasants protection from rentier landlords. He also spurned India's newly 'ancient aristocracy', threatening to liquidate its landed estate-holders for bankruptcy and to reduce its 'independent' maharajas to extinction by annexing their principalities. In other domains, Dalhousie repudiated caste and sought to reform the military—in the case of the Bengal Army, both at the same time. He reduced neo-Oriental

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[66] Rosalind O'Hanlon, 'Issues of Widowhood', in Gyan Prakash and Douglas Haynes, eds., *Contesting Power: Resistance and Everyday Social Relations in South Asia* (Delhi, 1991), pp. 62–108.
[67] Appadurai, *Worship*, chap. 4; Bayly, *Saints*, chap. 8.

privileges giving special status to Bhumihars and Rajputs, and attempted to produce a more disciplined, European-style fighting force. Finally, he reactivated the causes of both Western education and evangelical Christianity. His government committed itself to promoting mass education and laid plans for the first Indian universities (enacted in 1857); and it licensed wider missionary criticism of Hinduism and Islam.[68]

That Dalhousie should have made so deep a mark where previous Westernizers, such as Bentinck, had failed stemmed from more than just the force of his personality. Political, social, and economic circumstances also were changing. Dalhousie took office facing the increased military costs of the north-west military campaigns in the context of the deepening world economic recession of the late 1840s. It took no genius to appreciate the economically regressive nature of the Company's military-fiscalist state: stagnant levels of production and revenue had their corollary in an inability to meet government bills. The deficiencies of the Company's army were also palpable in the disasters of the First Afghan War (1838–42). The 'old system' was failing in ways which made the case for reform unanswerable.

That reforms were effective—ultimately devastatingly so—also had much to do with two novelties of the time. First, in the Company bureaucracy the generation of the Napoleonic Wars was dying out, being replaced in the higher offices of the state by the products of Haileybury and, following further service reforms in 1853, of Oxford and Cambridge. This, in turn, undid the close relationship between 'military' and 'civil' service, which had coloured the nature of Company government. The new leaders of the 1840s were long-trained in England as bureaucrats and had fewer inclinations towards Oriental despotism than their predecessors.

The success of reform, however, perhaps owed most to technological changes which brought Europe much closer to India and created broader possibilities for social transformation. Under Dalhousie, steam-shipping, telegraphs, and railways began to make a major impact. They facilitated a near-doubling in the number of Europeans working in India in the army, the bureaucracy, and the economy between 1830 and the mid- 1850s.[69] They also broadened the channels of trade. British imports into India, which had stagnated in the 1830s, took off again and doubled to an annual average of £7m by the end of the 1840s. Exports, especially westwards, were also stimulated and began a rise which was to carry them well past trade to the East by the early 1850s.[70] The economic depression lifted, albeit

[68] Edwin Arnold, *The Marquess of Dalhousie's Administration of British India*, 2 vols. (London, 1862–65).

[69] Metcalf, *Aftermath of Revolt*, chaps. 1, 2.

[70] Chaudhuri, *Economic Development*, p. 125.

patchily and slowly at first, and prospects of growth started to pressurize economic policy. Investment, rather than simple extraction, came back into fashion as a means of raising revenues and profits. Several large irrigation schemes, long proposed but never previously funded, were now undertaken. A new attempt was made to secure property rights in land, not only by reducing taxation but also by making ownership more alienable and separating it from blood-heritage. Discussions began on converting *inams* (rent-free landholdings) and tenancy contracts into real rights of property.

The reforms so forcefully implemented under Dalhousie nevertheless had problematic consequences, which checked Westernizing initiatives in the years following his retirement in 1856. Most obviously, they were involved in provoking the Great Mutiny and Civil Rebellion of 1857, which threw not merely Company India but the entire British Empire into turmoil. The revolt of the Bengal Army neutralized British power in the central Ganges valley, the heartland of northern India, and opened the way for widespread attacks by the civil populace on the institutions and symbols of Company rule. These rebellions, no doubt, had many discrete causes. But one, indisputably, derived from the way in which Dalhousie's eager Westernizing policies rubbed up against sets of vested interests built up under the previous neo-Orientalizing Raj.

This was clearest in the case of the military mutiny, where the Bengal Army's high-caste soldiers had acquired many privileges, not least that of avoiding flogging. When these were threatened with abrogation, as a new European officer corps sought to impose British military discipline, tensions exploded.[71] Dissatisfaction was further fed by Dalhousie's annexation of the Kingdom of Oudh in 1856, which led many soldiers on detachment from the Oudh army to lose their personal perquisites.[72]

It was true also of aspects of the civil rebellion, where Hindu and Islamic priesthoods, whose authority had been enhanced by the withdrawal of state control over them, responded to more intensive goading by an expansive missionary Christianity. They utilized the moment of collapsing British military power to seek revenge on their self-avowed religious enemies. It may also explain the attacks by residual peasant communities on various institutions—especially the courts and the revenue treasuries—which had strengthened the assertion of landlord proprietary right and threatened their continued occupation of the land.[73] The contradictions of British rule—caught between inventing an Oriental

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[71] J. A. B. Palmer, *The Mutiny Outbreak at Meerut in 1857* (Cambridge, 1966), chap. 2.

[72] Rudrangshu Mukherjee, *Awadh in Revolt, 1857–1858: A Study of Popular Resistance* (Delhi, 1984), chaps. 2, 3.

[73] Eric Stokes, *The Peasant and the Raj: Studies in Agrarian Society and Peasant Rebellion in Colonial India* (Cambridge, 1978), chaps. 3–5.

society and abolishing it—were manifested in many of the complex patterns of revolt witnessed in 1857.

After the Mutiny

These contradictions continued after the Mutiny, although taking on different forms. Technological transformation increased in intensity. Railways expanded greatly; new port facilities encouraged steam-shipping; factory production established itself in several urban centres. These developments enabled Indian primary products finally to find outlets on world markets. Product prices steadily rose, and occasionally, as during the American Civil War, the Indian economy enjoyed periods of 'boom'.[74] New policies of restraint on land revenue and rental demands—introduced more urgently after the terrors of the Mutiny—also permitted more resources to remain with agrarian society.[75]

Yet while material change suggested the possibilities of social change directed by market capitalism, the experiences of 1857 guaranteed that it would not be allowed to follow its most obvious logic. The army remained pivotal to British ambitions in India and continued to affect the character of the colonial state. Although military government was now more fully separated from and subordinated to civil government (not least, by the abolition of the Company in 1858 and the taking of India under the direct rule of the Crown), the presence of the army remained a dominant consideration of future Imperial policy. Further, the security problem revealed by the Mutiny created racial divisions and suspicions which were to last ever after. India was to sacrifice the prospects of both more rapid economic growth and political reform in order to be preserved as the British Empire's military barracks.[76]

This, in and of itself, ensured certain continuities with the Company's India. While, for example, the once-venerated martial prowess of the Bengal Army's Rajputs and Bhumihars now was denigrated, that of the Muslims and Sikhs of the Punjab Army, which had remained loyal in 1857, was raised and sanctified in its place. Punjab, in particular, became the Raj's favourite recruiting ground and was commanded to remain changeless, a society of peasants and feudatories, to serve the army's purposes.[77] Maintaining the 'martial races' of Punjabi society unaltered, by expending vast sums of money on irrigation projects aimed at preserving their 'traditional village communities', was to drain the Government of India's development budget for decades to come.[78]

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[74] B. R. Tomlinson, *The Economy of Modern India, 1860–1970* (Cambridge, 1993), chap. 2.
[75] Robb, *Ancient Rights*, chap. 10.
[76] Metcalf, *Aftermath of Revolt*, chaps. 3–5; see Vol. IV.
[77] Richard G. Fox, *Lions of the Punjab: Culture in the Making* (Berkeley, 1985).
[78] Washbrook, 'Law', p. 697.

In social policy too, the Mutiny added complications. After 1857 colonial rulers regarded the overt attack of the Dalhousie years on religious traditions and customs as the primary cause of revolt. They therefore eschewed further 'interference', leaving Indian society with its neo-Orientalist ethics and social forms frozen for all eternity. They also returned to many of the traditional institutions which Dalhousie had rejected. India's 'ancient aristocracy' was rendered immutable once again and bound to the British Crown as a pillar of the new Imperial establishment.[79] Hindu and Islamic priestly authorities also regained their status of sacrosanctity.

After the Mutiny, the Westernizing and Orientalizing propensities of colonial rule thus still remained in tension, although as the century advanced a new element also began to enter their relationship. The Brahmanic scribal gentries, whose social authority had been so greatly enhanced by British rule, began to consolidate themselves as a national intelligentsia and to seek the liberation of their nation from Imperial tyranny. But, as quintessential products of the contradictory processes by which colonial India had been made, they—no less than their British opponents—remained unclear of the direction in which true liberation lay. Indian nationalism was itself to be torn between attempts to pursue a modern Western future and to evoke a glorious, unchanging, and distinctively 'Oriental' Indian past.[80]

[79] Bernard S. Cohn, 'Representing Authority in Victorian India', in Cohn, ed., *An Anthropologist Among the Historians and Other Essays* (Delhi, 1990), pp. 632–82.

[80] Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (London, 1986).

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D. A. WASHBROOK, 'Law, State and Agrarian Society in Colonial India', *Modern Asian Studies*, XV (1981), pp. 649–721.

19

Imperial India, 1858–1914

ROBIN J. MOORE

The half-century between the crises of the Mutiny and the First World War, both of which threatened the very existence of the Indian Empire, was the long afternoon of the Raj. From 1858 India was governed in the name of the Crown. In 1876 Queen Victoria became Empress of India, the only possession to which such Imperial nomenclature was applied. The Queen's long reign seemed a symbol of Imperial stability and India was, as Benjamin Disraeli affirmed, the jewel in her Crown. There is an intrinsic and continuing interest, therefore, in pursuing some of the oldest questions in historical debate for this period. How did the Raj recover so effectively from the cataclysm of 1857–58 that India committed 1.2 million troops to the Great War? What was the rationale of the Empire in India? And what were the implications of British rule for the development of India?

The early sections of this chapter examine the post-Mutiny rehabilitation of the Raj and the relatively small adjustments to it during the late nineteenth century. On the whole, the government in London and India, as well as the military reconstruction, administrative arrangements, and financial organization, endured remarkably well, sufficiently satisfying Indian demand for participation in the regime. A later section explores the transformation that Victoria's last Viceroy, the authoritarian Lord Curzon, sought to effect in order to regenerate and remotivate an Imperial order that he found tired and complacent. Another follows the counter-revolution that, under Liberal governments from 1905 to 1914, was intended to re-establish stable relations between the Raj and Indians whom Curzon had alienated, and between Britain and rival European empires with interests in India's neighbours whom Curzon had sought to dominate. Final sections attempt to assess India's importance for the Empire, and the consequences of Empire for India.

Queen Victoria intended that her November 1858 Proclamation to the princes, chiefs, and peoples of India should be heard as the voice of 'a female Sovereign', speaking to hundreds of millions of 'Eastern people on assuming the direct Government over them after a bloody civil war'. She insisted that the Prime
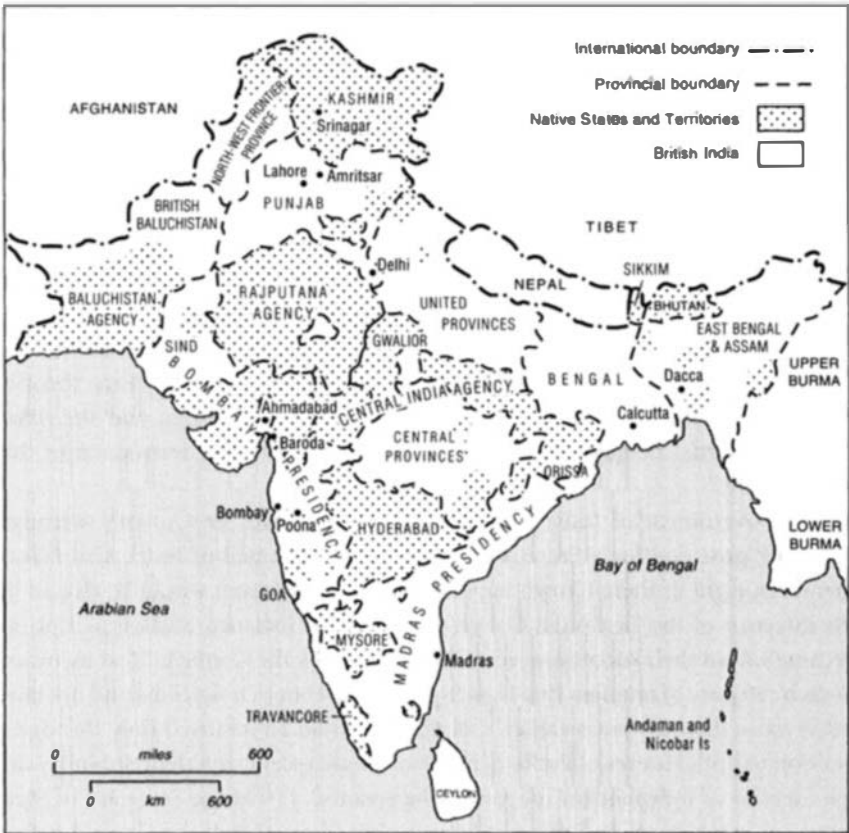
MAP 19.1. India: Political Divisions, *c.*1909

Minister write the speech himself, 'giving them pledges which her future reign is to redeem, and explaining the principles of her Government'.[1] The Proclamation appointed her first Viceroy and Governor-General, who would act in her name subject to the orders issued by her through a Secretary of State. It confirmed the employees of the predecessor authority, the East India Company, in their offices and accepted responsibility for the treaties that had regulated relations between the Company and the princes of those parts of India which had not been annexed: 'We shall respect the rights, dignity and honour of native princes as our own, and we desire that they, as well as our own subjects, should enjoy that prosperity and that social advancement which can only be secured by internal peace and good government.'[2] Subjects would not be favoured or disquieted by dint of faith or race, whether at law or relative to appointments. Land rights would be protected, ancient usages and customs respected. Imperial policies for change and development must sit uneasily with such reassurances, and a tension emerges when the Proclamation espouses the stimulation of 'peaceful industry', the promotion of 'works of public utility and improvement', and the administration of government 'for the benefit of all our subjects'. It has been recognized that the Proclamation thus 'encompasses two divergent or even contradictory theories of rule: one which sought to maintain India as a feudal order, and the other looking towards changes which would inevitably lead to the destruction of this feudal order'.[3]

The Government of India Act (1858) that established the Crown's sovereign authority provided for a Secretary of State, and a Council of India with fifteen members, eight of them Crown appointees. The other seven would be elected by the directors of the East India Company in the first instance, and as their places became vacant their successors would be co-opted by the Council. Most members in each category of member must have spent at least ten years in India and not have left it more than ten years earlier. Councillors could be removed only through a petition to both Houses of Parliament. Thus would recent experience of India and the exercise of independent judgement be ensured. It was the Secretary of State who sent instructions to India but he was obliged to consult the Council before issuing them, except where they related to urgent or diplomatic matters. Each member was entitled to register his opinion on, and record his dissent from, matters that the Secretary of State laid before the Council. The minister could

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[1] Queen Victoria to Lord Derby, 15 Aug. 1858, in C. H. Philips, ed., *The Evolution of India and Pakistan, 1858 to 1947: Select Documents* (London, 1962), p. 10.

[2] Queen Victoria's Proclamation, 1 Nov. 1858, in ibid., pp. 10–11.

[3] Bernard S. Cohn, 'Representing Authority in Victorian India', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 165–209, esp. p. 166. For this tension before 1858 see chap. by D. A. Washbrook.

overrule the Council, except where expenditure was involved, in which case he had to obtain a majority vote.

The provision for a quasi-independent Council alongside the minister of the Crown and his department (the India Office) is remarkable. It conformed to the principle of 'double government', which had emerged in the eighteenth century in the form of a government Board of Control to check corrupt tendencies in the administration of India by a self-interested commercial Company. When the Company lost its commercial interests in 1833 it was preserved, as Macaulay advocated, as a 'body independent of the government . . . not a tool of the Treasury, not a tool of the opposition', but 'an efficient check on abuses practised in India'.[4] When the Company's Charter was reviewed by Parliament in 1853 its most illustrious servant, John Stuart Mill, defended the 'forms' of double government as subjecting all Indian proceedings to review by 'two separate bodies independent of one another'.[5] Mill argued in his *Representative Government* (1861) that the 'government of one people by another . . . cannot exist', that 'direct' rule would pervert every right purpose of government, and that the utmost an imperial power could do was 'to give some of their best men a commission' to rule.[6] In 1858 the roles of the India Board and the Company were, in effect, reversed in their successor authorities, with the minister of the Crown now the initiator of policy and the Council now the check on Imperial self-interest.

The adjustment of the roles of Crown, minister, and Council took time to accomplish. The Queen evinced 'an extreme jealousy of the power of the Council . . . as being a check interposed between the Sovereign and the absolute government of India'.[7] At first she required the minister to obtain her consent to all important measures before bringing them before the Council. When Sir Charles Wood (President of the Board of Control, 1853–55) began his term as Secretary of State (1859–66) he advised the Queen that she was assuming 'a false position': the minister must fully consider all measures before placing them before the Queen and that involved consulting the Council as 'a necessary part of the machinery'.[8] Wood prevailed on this aspect of procedure but had 'no slight difficulty' in overcoming the Council's assumption of 'an independence which was a hindrance to public business'.[9] His 'hardest task . . . on becoming Secretary of State was to break in the old Directors from being masters into becoming advisers'.[10] Wood's

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[4] Cited by H. H. Dodwell, 'Imperial Leglislation and the Superior Governments, 1818–1857', *Cambridge History of India*, 6 vols. (Cambridge, 1932), VI, pp. 1–19, esp. p. 4.

[5] Cited in R. J. Moore, *Sir Charles Wood's Indian Policy, 1853–66* (Manchester, 1966), p. 30.

[6] J. S. Mill, *Representative Government* (1861; Everyman edn., London, 1944), pp. 384–86.

[7] Lord Stanley to Sir Charles Wood, 14 July 1859, in Moore, *Wood*, p. 35.

[8] Wood to Prince Consort, 30 June 1859, in ibid., p. 36.

[9] Wood to Lord Palmerston, 29 June 1861, in ibid., pp. 41–42.

[10] Wood (Lord Halifax) to Lord Ripon, 11 Jan. 1883, in ibid., p. 40.

past experience and manipulative skills enabled him to record that he won for the minister 'abundant power in one way or another of enforcing his views'.[11] He valued the Council as giving the minister 'the support requisite to resist the pressure of parties in this country—a pressure not always applied in a way conducive to the benefit of the people of India'.[12]

Wood's most eminent successor, Lord Salisbury (1866–67), resented the obstructiveness of the Council in opposing non-financial measures on the pretext that they involved expenditure. In 1869 its independence was curtailed by legislation providing for all councillors to be appointed by nomination and for their term to be ten years. For the next half-century the powers of the Council were unchanged and its influence depended largely upon the strength of particular Secretaries of State, and indeed Viceroys. However, the size of the Council was reduced—to ten in 1889 and eight in 1919–and also the period of tenure—to seven years in 1907 and five years in 1919. Two Indians were appointed in 1907. The Council did ease the difficult transition from Company to Crown, provide ongoing expertise to the minister and his department, and act as something of a watchdog, guarding against inappropriate expenditure from the revenues of India.

In India there existed in 1858 arrangements for the central government at Calcutta and the provincial governments of Bombay and Madras that resembled the 'double government' in London. At each location the Governor-General or Governor was obliged to consult, and was thus 'checked' by, councils whose members were entitled to record dissents. Decisions were taken by the 'Governor-General (or Governor) in Council'. With the mass of business swollen by the tasks of post-Mutiny reconstruction, Viceroy Canning (1856–62) found this collective or corporate procedure slow and cumbersome. He sought recourse to a portfolio system, with executive decisions to be taken by department heads in consultation with the Viceroy. By 1859 the composition of the Council suggested such specialization, for its members were the Commander-in-Chief, a military officer, a law member, a finance member, and two civil servants. The Indian Councils Act (1861) gave the Governor-General and the Governors power to conduct executive business on the portfolio system. It also provided for the expansion of the Executive Councils when they met to make laws. Up to twelve 'additional members' could be nominated by the Viceroy for two-year terms, half of them officials and half non-official Indians and British residents. The arrangements for Legislative Councils would be similar, though on a smaller scale, in the provinces. Wood emphasized that these 'Legislative Councils' had no separate existence or independence from the Executive Councils. All measures arising from

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[11] Wood's Memorandum on Procedure, n.d. [1869], in Moore, *Wood's Indian Policy*, p. 39.
[12] Lord Halifax, 13 May 1869, *P[arliamentary] D[ebates]* (Lords) CXCVI, col. 693.

the councils required the Secretary of State's approval. The government of India was 'a despotism controlled from home'. These arrangements endured until 1892, when the Councils Act was revised as a response to Indian claims for representation.

As distinct from 'British India', the jurisdiction of the central and provincial authorities in India did not apply to the internal governance of the Princely States, where over a fifth of the population resided. Until the Mutiny states had been annexed for persistent misgovernment and, under Governor-General Dalhousie (1848–56), for lapse of heirs upon the demise of princes. During the Mutiny some disaffected or displaced rulers had risen against the Company. It became post-Mutiny policy to attach the remaining Indian 'royals' to the Crown and there were no further annexations. The princes were accorded 'sanads of adoption', assurances that on failure of natural heirs the adoption of a successor would be recognized. For cases of misgovernment the remedy was often the temporary 'attachment' of the state to British administration, or sometimes the replacement of the ruler by another member of his family, or the education of a younger prince to ascend the throne when he came of age.

The reconstruction of the military forces in India was the largest and most urgent post-Mutiny problem. The forces had included three distinct structures: the East India Company's 'native army' in Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, which numbered almost a quarter of a million troops, commanded exclusively by cadres of British commissioned officers; the Company's European army, of some 21,000 officers and men, who enlisted for a lifetime's local service; and the regiments of the Queen's Army of the Line, whose number rose during the Mutiny from 24,000 to 77,000 officers and men enlisted for general service. There was an immediate need to slash the financial burden of 100,000 European and 250,000 Indian troops to affordable yet safe levels. It was agreed that the proportion of European to Indian troops must be raised above the pre-Mutiny level and a ratio of 1 : 2 was adopted as desirable. By the mid-1860s the numbers were set at about 120,000 Indians commanded from Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras, and some 60,000 Europeans.

The most pressing problem was the constitution of the European forces. The Viceroy and his colleagues in India and the Council of India urged that at least in part the Europeans should be raised for service only in India and stationed there permanently. However, the Queen declared 'her firm determination not to sanction under any form, the construction of a British Army distinct from . . . the Army of the Crown'.[13] For a time there seemed a likelihood of a compromise whereby part of the European forces should consist of local regiments permanently

[13] Queen Victoria to Lord Derby, 5 Feb. 1859, in Moore, *Wood's Indian Policy*, p. 208.

stationed in India and part of the Queen's Line regiments on temporary duty there. The matter was decided by a strike or 'white mutiny' within the Company's European army, some members of which refused to accept allegiance to the Crown as required by the Act of 1858. The case for a local European force was discredited. The European regiments in the new Indian Army would be drawn from the Line and stationed temporarily in India. The 2,000-odd British officers of the Indian regiments would, on the other hand, be recruited from the ranks of subalterns of the Line army and appointed to a Staff Corps, a separate cadre serving with Indian regiments throughout a career to the age of 55.

Sir Charles Wood was at pains to 'deregularize the Native army'.[14] This meant a sharp departure from the rule-bound, rigid structure of the Company's army, with large cadres of British officers empanelled on regimental lists but frequently absent on secondment to non-military appointments. He sought more opportunities for Indians as non-commissioned officers and the improvement of their relations with their British commanders. The relationship should be that of 'a Chief and his clansmen', an attachment 'more to persons than to rules'.[15] He sought to isolate the regiments from one another to avoid them feeling 'part of a large united or connected army'.[16] They would be raised in the districts, not centrally, so that they would each be 'a community, not an Army',[17] lacking a common element such as the presence of troops from Oudh throughout the rebellious Bengal Army: 'If one regiment mutinies I should like to have the next so alien that it would fire into it.'[18] Within regiments he would have every variety of race, caste, and religion, thereby countering 'fraternising and combining among the troops'.[19] He explicitly acknowledged that 'as regards Armies and Regiments in India, I am for "Divide et impera"'.[20]

The reconstruction of the Indian Army was a remarkable success. It was effectively segregated from political movements, and the principle of paternalism prevailed as represented by the expression 'man bap' (the British officer as 'mother and father' to his Indian troops). Far greater use was made of the 'martial races', especially the Sikhs and the Gurkhas, who had not joined the Mutiny. Whereas three-quarters of the gunners had been Indians, all field artillery was transferred to the Europeans. Where possible 'native police' were used instead of soldiers. The army remained unchanged in essentials until the First World War, though in 1893

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[14] Wood to Sir Hugh Rose, 3 Feb. 1862, in ibid., p. 223.

[15] Wood to Rose, 25 April 1862, and to Sir William Mansfield, 19 June 1865, in ibid., p. 222.

[16] Wood to Rose, 3 Feb. 1862, in ibid., p. 223.

[17] Wood to Sir William Denison, 8 April 1861, in ibid.

[18] Wood to Canning, 8 April, 1861, in ibid.

[19] Wood to Lord Elgin, 10 May 1862, in ibid., p. 224.

[20] Wood to Denison, 8 April 1861, in ibid.

the separate provincial commands of Bombay and Madras were abolished. Indians were not commissioned.

The selection of all officers from the same source, whether for the British army or the Indian Army, followed the principle of competitive recruitment that had already emerged for the Indian Civil Service before the Mutiny. The introduction of competitive examinations for the Indian Civil Service (ICS) anticipated by a year the adoption of the principle for the British Service pursuant to the North-cote–Trevelyan reforms (1854). The intention of the reformers, whose influence produced the abolition of the Company's civil patronage, was to recruit university graduates, 'gentlemen' of intellectual and social distinction from Oxford and Cambridge. In the first decade of competition Oxford and Cambridge men secured 181 appointments and other universities 198 out of a total of 458 places. With an expansion of employment opportunities generally, the recruitment of Oxford and Cambridge graduates became more difficult. In 1876, consistent with the original intention to appoint gentlemen scholars to India, the age limit for candidates was dropped from 21 to 19. The chosen candidates would proceed as probationers to university for two years, and by 1880 two-thirds of them were resident at Oxford colleges. While Indians were in principle accepted as candidates on an equal basis to the British, the practical difficulties they faced were substantial. The curriculum set, the location of the examinations in London, and now the lower age limit all militated against their selection. To a service of 1,021 members only thirty-three Indians had been recruited by the end of the century.

Only in the first five years, when over half of the appointments went to Oxford or Cambridge men, did the Indian Civil Service examinations fulfil the highest hopes of their advocates, including most notably Lord Macaulay, Sir Charles Trevelyan, and Benjamin Jowett of Balliol. As early as 1864 Trevelyan's son, George, was critical of 'the competition wallah'. Between 1860 and 1874 three-quarters of the recruits came from professional, middle-class backgrounds, over a quarter from the clergy, a tenth from each of government service and the medical profession, and 15 per cent from mercantile or legal families. Many did not have degrees. Most, having no Indian connections, signed on for a career of which they could know little. The ICS has been variously described as a *corps d'élite*, Platonic guardians of the Imperial mission, and a body of self-serving careerists preoccupied with their official and social status. They were the bureaucracy upon which the efficiency of the district and secretariat administration depended. They were sharply criticized as lacking capacity and commitment by an aristocratic Viceroy such as Curzon and, just before the First World War, by those peripatetic socialists, Beatrice and Sidney Webb: 'the more we learned about the Govt and the officials...the graver became our tone...Three months' acquaintance has... greatly lessened our admiration for, and our trust in, this Government of

officials ... Our impression is that the I.C.S. has succeeded fairly well in carrying out its ideals of Govt but its ideals are still those of 1840!'[21] In the course of their twenty-five years' expatriation, members of the ICS often lost touch with a culture of change and became unduly concerned for stability at the expense of innovation. At the pinnacle of the British community, they were also responsible for the assiduous cultivation of its racial distance from Indian society.

The conservatism observed in the Indian Civil Service appears starkly in the Indian Political Service, which was responsible for managing relations with the Princely States. It was recruited from the ICS and the Staff Corps of the Indian Army but its inferior conditions of service, in particular the poor salaries offered, made it unattractive to men of talent. No Indian was admitted before 1914. The senior appointments generally went to civilians. A recent study is somewhat iconoclastic in its correction of the self-image presented by the Indian Political Service itself: 'Prejudice against intellectual ability, emphasis on physical prowess, financial parsimony, and a lack of training in administrative skills combined to produce a service dominated by upright but slow-thinking and extremely unimaginative officers.'[22]

The Mutiny demonstrated the appalling cost in financial as well as human terms of an Imperial catastrophe. Between 1857 and 1860 India's public debt jumped by 70 per cent, imposing an additional annual interest charge of £2m upon the revenues, so that the deficits averaged £10m a year. Even before the Mutiny the balance of the Indian budget was precarious, but for almost a century there had been the option of territorial expansion as a basis for gathering additional taxes. The ongoing costs of the military reconstruction accounted for some 40 per cent of India's revenues, the whole of the yield from the major source of income, land taxes. While the cost of the enhanced British component in the army was high, so too was that of British civilian appointments generally. Before the Mutiny many large-scale works of improvement had already been launched. They were soon extended substantially and they would eventually generate additional taxable revenues. But in the short term railways, irrigation, navigation, and other projects required public investment. The budgetary problem indicated the need to economize on the cost of British administration by attracting less expensive Indians to the Imperial regime—in short, to attract Indian 'collaborators' to the service and support of the Raj.

[21] George Feaver, ed., *The Webbs in Asia: The 1911–12 Travel Diary* (London, 1992), 16–25 April 1912, pp. 339–40.

[22] Ian Copland, 'The Other Guardians: Ideology and Performance in the Indian Political Service', in Robin Jeffrey, ed., *People, Princes and Paramount Power: Society and Politics in the Indian Princely States* (Delhi, 1978), pp. 273–305, esp. p. 289.

There was, then, ultimately a financial calculus behind the reassurances that the Queen's Proclamation gave to the princes and the feudal order at large. Indirect rule through the princes of a quarter of India and the use of large landholders as coadjutors in judicial and revenue administration were more economical than the British bureaucracy (and, of course, the risk of alienating influential 'natural leaders' of the people would be avoided). The most remarkable example of the policy in a British province was the reinstatement as landholders and tax gatherers of the *taluqdars* of Oudh, whom the Raj had dispossessed. The most striking exemplification of the princes' association with the Empire was the Imperial Assemblage (or durbar) that Viceroy Lytton (1876–80) staged in Delhi in 1877. The emphasis of the occasion to mark the Queen's assumption in 1876 of the title 'Empress of India' was upon the role of the princes as the 'native aristocracy of the country, whose sympathy and cordial allegiance is no inconsiderable guarantee for the stability of the Indian Empire'.[23]

A more forward-looking body of collaborators emerged from British liberal policies of the 1830s. The adoption of Macaulay's famous Minute on Education (1835) gave precedence to the encouragement of Western rather than Oriental education. A largely service class of mainly high-caste Hindus fulfilled the intention of the westernizing reformers of the 1830s to create 'interpreters' between the British rulers and Indian society. Though attempts were made subsequently to reinforce vernacular education for practical ends, the Raj's dominant concern remained higher and professional learning in English, which was the basis for the recruitment of relatively inexpensive collaborators with the Imperial bureaucracy. Macaulay was also largely responsible for commencing the preparation of the Anglo-Indian law codes, which were only completed after the Mutiny. English was the language of the administrative and legal systems. The Western context of learning carried the assumption of India's advance towards constitutionalism and the enjoyment of civil rights. As a professional middle class grew in numbers, so political organizations appeared to exert claims to official employment and consultation on a representative basis.

The establishment of the universities of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras in 1857 was a turning-point towards the modern mode of collaboration. In the thirty years following 1857, some 60,000 Indians entered the universities, overwhelmingly in Arts, but some two thousand in Law. Of the 1,712 Calcutta students to graduate by 1882 over a third entered government service and slightly more entered the legal profession. Graduates of the three universities by 1882 accounted for some 1,100 appointments to government service. But, of course, below the graduate level

[23] Lord Lytton to Queen Victoria, 21 April 1876, in Cohn, 'Representing Authority', p. 188.

there were required subordinate appointments. By 1887 there were 21,466 govern-ment appointments in British India paying at least Rs75 per month, of which 45 per cent were held by Hindus, 7 per cent by Muslims, 19 per cent by Eurasians, and 29 per cent by Europeans.

The national turning-point in the politicization of the middle-class, profes-sional, and mostly high-caste Hindu collaborators was the creation of the first ongoing all-India organization, the Indian National Congress, in 1885. It built upon the foundations of provincial associations, religious and social reform movements, and more limited impermanent political organizations. Its leaders came mainly from the presidency cities, especially Calcutta, though its presidents included retired British officials. It lacked ongoing central organization, and the co-ordination of its activities amounted to little more than the passing of resolu-tions at annual gatherings in changing locations around Christmas time. The timing of its emergence is related to conflicts over Indian policies between British Conservatives and Liberals in the late 1870s and the 1880s. Salisbury's reduction of the ICS entrance age from 21 to 19 in 1876 was endorsed by Viceroy Lord Lytton, who thought 'the competitive system... wholly inapplicable to Native employ-ment and that if it ever ceases to be a farce it will become a serious danger'.[24] He favoured closing the ICS to Indians and forming a subordinate 'close Native Service' by 'selection' from 'that class of Natives whose social position or connex-ions give to them a commanding influence over their own countrymen'.[25] The Secretary of State vetoed the closure as a breach of British pledges to Indians, but a new Statutory Civil Service was created in 1879 to recruit men from socially prominent families by nomination. Lytton also imposed provocative restrictions on the freedom of the press. His Vernacular Press Act (1878) discriminated against newspapers in Indian languages by extending authority to require a bond from a printer or publisher to support a pledge to refrain from disseminating matter likely to excite disaffection. Gladstone himself entered the fray, condemning the Act as affecting 'a fundamental branch of the law relating to the liberty and general condition of the country'.[26]

When the Liberals won the 1880 election Lytton resigned and Gladstone replaced him with Lord Ripon (1880–84). There would not be another Conserva-tive Viceroy until the last year of the century. Ripon was the most doctrinaire Liberal of the late-nineteenth-century Viceroys. He repealed the Vernacular Press Act; sought, unsuccessfully, to raise the age limit for the Indian Civil Service examination in order to reopen the 'door of competition' to Indians; introduced

[24] Lytton to Salisbury, 10 May 1877, in Philips, *Documents*, pp. 545–46.
[25] Government of India to Secretary of State, 2 May 1878, in ibid., p. 548.
[26] W. E. Gladstone, 23 July 1878, *PD*, CCXLII (Commons), cols. 48–65.

elections and self-government at the level of local district and municipal boards; and, through a Bill associated with his Law member of Council, Sir Courtenay Ilbert, took a significant step towards civil equality by enabling Indian magistrates and judges to try Europeans charged with criminal offences in country districts. His purpose was to correct the impression conveyed by Lytton that 'in all ways... the interests of the Natives of India were to be sacrificed to those of England', to satisfy instead the 'legitimate aspirations' of Indians.[27] His radical resolution on local self-government asserted: 'It is not primarily with a view to improvement in administration that this matter is put forward and supported.'[28] Ripon did not have matters all his own way, and his success was limited by opposition within the Raj and in Britain. His policies were an encouragement to nationalism but they also drew explicit condemnation from British spokesmen for imperialism. Sir James Fitzjames Stephen spoke for the Raj in the British press in 1883. The Raj was 'founded not on consent but on conquest', implying the superiority of 'the conquering race'. Ripon's measures reflected 'principles inconsistent with the foundations on which British power rests'.[29] Britain's mission was to establish 'peace, order, the supremacy of law, the prevention of crime, the redress of wrong, the enforcement of contracts... [and] the construction of public works'.[30]

The main demands of the Congress in its early years struck at the fundamental bases of institutional reconstruction since the Mutiny. These were: the Council of India, which seemed out of touch with India's needs, and too protective of Anglo-Indian service interests; the Indian Councils, which required more Indian representatives and greater freedom of discussion; the ICS, which was too inaccessible to Indians; and the expensive, largely British, army. In 1892 Parliament amended the Indian Councils Act of 1861, which increased the Indian membership of the legislatures and widened the power of non-officials to question the executive. The Viceroy, Lord Lansdowne (1888–94), provided for a general discussion of budgets and framed rules to enable local self-governing bodies to elect provincial legislative councillors and for non-official councillors in the provinces to be elected members of the central legislature. The principles of election and representation were thus introduced, though elected legislators were still dependent upon the nomination of the Governor-General or Governor to ratify their membership. In 1893 Parliament declined to accede to the Congress demand for ICS examinations

[27] Ripon to Gladstone, 28 Oct. 1881, in R. J. Moore, *Liberalism and Indian Politics, 1872–1922* (London, 1966), p. 31.
[28] Resolution on local self-government, May 1882, in P. Mukherji, ed., *Indian Constitutional Documents* (Calcutta, 1918), pp. 638–51.
[29] *The Times*, 1 March 1883, in Philips, *Documents*, pp. 56–57.
[30] 'The Foundations of the Government of India', *Nineteenth Century* (Oct. 1883), in ibid., pp. 57–60.

to be held in India simultaneously with those in London, though the age limit was raised to 23. A sufficient response to the main demands of the early Congress had been made. Further concessions would not be forthcoming until George Curzon, Viceroy from 1898 to 1905, invited Congress to demand them by governing in the spirit of Fitzjames Stephen.

It is indicative of British Imperial priorities towards the end of Victoria's reign that George Curzon should have been appointed Viceroy of India. He was not yet 40 when he sailed for India and had served neither as a Proconsul nor a Cabinet minister. He had briefly been Under-Secretary of State for India (1891–92) and served as Salisbury's junior minister at the Foreign Office (1895–98). He had, in fact, written himself into the Viceroyalty, not with any book on India but with weighty works on *Russia in Central Asia* (1889), *Persia and the Persian Question* (1892), and *Problems of the Far East* (1894). The message of these volumes was the strategic necessity for an effective British defence of her Asian interests to the West and East of her pivotal Indian Empire. The danger in the West was Russia, which through the extension of transcontinental railways could, by the rapid movement of her armies, menace India's neighbours and the subcontinent itself. Curzon did not believe that Russia coveted India, but rather that the Russians wished to break into the Persian Gulf. Such access to the sea could elevate Russia as a naval power, a terrifying prospect as there was no barrier to her landward eastern advance through Central Asia. Russia was also the pre-eminent danger in the East, though the French expansion in the Pacific and Indo-China indicated the need for Siam as a buffer state. It was primarily the young Curzon who brought about Britain's occupation of Wei-hai-wei (1898) to counter Russia's presence at Port Arthur (Map 8.1). With Russia contained, Britain was secure in the Mediterranean and the Gulf, centrally placed in India to pursue prosperous relations with Persia, China, and Tibet.

Containment involved Britain's naval control of the sea-girt periphery of Europe and Asia, from Gibraltar to Hong Kong. It also involved strong frontier forces in the North-West tribal areas and friendly buffer states between them and Russian-occupied Central Asia. By study and travel Curzon had acquired an unmatched understanding of the problem of India's defence against Russia, at the very time that it became Britain's main anxiety about her Empire. Early in his Viceroyalty the South African War (1899–1902) replaced Russophobia as the central Imperial preoccupation. The risks and costs of resisting Russian expansion and advancing British interests in Afghanistan, Persia, and Tibet sorely troubled the Cabinet of A. J. Balfour. Curzon had his diplomatic successes, but his geopolitical outlook never won strong support. The members of the Cabinet were unable to subscribe emotionally or intellectually to his dictum that through 'the Empire

of Hindustan ... the mastery of the world [was] ... in the possession of the British people'.[31]

Curzon had a keen sense of the implications for twentieth-century India of the completion through competitive imperialism of the partition of the world among the Great Powers. He sought no territorial expansion of the Raj but rather to maintain and enhance freedom of access and trade in Asia. The spoils of imperialism in a fully partitioned world would go to the most efficient competitor: the weapon of Empire was no longer superior force but relative efficiency. As Viceroy, Curzon at once found the administrative systems of the Raj unequal to the challenge. The Imperial mission stood in need of rehabilitation: 'The English are getting lethargic and they think only of home. Their hearts are not in this country.'[32] The 'big problems' had been 'systematically shirked by every Viceroy for 30 years'.[33] He soon identified twelve important reforms and attended to them himself during his early years. They included: frontier policy and the creation of the North-West Frontier Province; the reform of the Civil Service leave rules, which he thought undermined administrative continuity; secretariat reform, for he found the discharge of business intolerably slow; the provision of a gold standard to ensure a stable currency; railway reform and the creation of a Railway Board; irrigation reform; the relief of agricultural indebtedness; the reduction of telegraphic rates; the preservation of ancient monuments; education reform (notably in the universities), for he believed that by decentralization government had abdicated its proper authority; reform of the 'rotten' police system; and policy towards the Native States and their rulers to make them worthy partners in government. Subsequently he identified and claimed completion of a second dozen reforms: the creation of a Commerce and Industry Department, and other measures of commercial and industrial development; land revenue policy; reductions in taxation; the institution of permanent financial settlements with the provinces; the foundation of agricultural banks and of an Agricultural Department and Institute; the commemoration of historical buildings and sites; the foundation of an Imperial Library; the reform of Chiefs' Colleges and the creation of an Imperial Cadet Corps for Chiefs; Mining Acts; new famine codes; and, remarkably, the prevention of smoke nuisance in Calcutta. During his last year in office he foreshadowed a further twelve reforms: the subdivision of Bengal into two administrative units; excise reform; the creation of the Imperial Customs Service; the reorganization of the Survey Department and a new Topographical Survey of India; the extension of the Imperial Service Movement in the Princely

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[31] George N. Curzon, *Problems of the Far East* (London, 1894), p. xv.

[32] Curzon to Alfred Lyttelton, 29 Aug. 1900, Chandos Collection, Churchill College Library, Cambridge, CHAN 1/2/4.

[33] Curzon to St. John Brodrick, 18 June 1900, Midleton Papers, B[ritish] L[ibrary] Add. MSS, 50074.

States; a game law; a technical education scheme; the reorganization of the Political Department; a Calcutta improvement scheme; a European Nursing Service; a tree-planting policy; and the encouragement of inland navigation. Curzon's reforms amounted to a revolutionary reconstruction of the administration. He complained of 'the inadequacy of our trained staff' for the task,[34] created special departments, and appointed experts: an Inspector-General of Agriculture, a Chief Inspector of Mines, an Inspector-General of Volunteers, a Government Architect, an Imperial Librarian, a Government Electrical Adviser, Directors General of Criminal Intelligence and Commercial Intelligence, a Sanitary Commissioner, a Director of a Central Research Institute, an Inspector-General of Irrigation. Where necessary, experts were brought from Britain on subjects as diverse as smoke abatement, education, railways, ancient monuments, and architecture.

Curzon significantly extended the sphere of government activity in the interests of development as well as efficiency. He assured the Bengal Chamber of Commerce that 'there is no object that is more constantly in our minds than the desire to deal both with promptitude and sympathy with every reasonable mercantile or industrial claim'.[35] He accepted the need for the Government of India 'to know everything about agriculture, commerce, emigration, labour, shipping, customs, the application of science to every form of production, the secrets of coal, iron, steel, salt, oil, tin, cotton, indigo and jute'.[36] In 1905 he observed that 'the days are gone when Government can dissociate itself from commercial enterprise'.[37] According to Curzon, it was absurd to separate government from commerce in India, where government built and worked over 26,000 miles of railways, controlled the sale of salt and opium, maintained 'gigantic' factories, manufactured its own cartridges, rifles, and guns (for it was policy to make India self-sufficient in armaments), and was the largest employer. India was 'merely at the beginning of its commercial expansion'.[38] Curzon's creation of a separate Department and Minister of Commerce and Industry in 1905 to develop the country, through Indian as well as British enterprise, symbolized his concern for commercial and industrial expansion. Other examples of this preoccupation may be found in his legislation and rules for tea planting and mining, grants for indigo research, opening new coalfields, despatch of trade missions, and new contracts with shipping companies.

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[34] Speech to Bengal Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, 12 Feb. 1903, in Sir Thomas Raleigh, ed., *Lord Curzon in India ... Speeches ... 1898–1905*, 2 vols. (London, 1906), I, p. 303.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Budget speech to Legislative Council, 20 March 1905, in ibid., p. 173.
[38] Ibid.

While Curzon professed the objective of an 'Anglo-Indian Imperialism' in which Indians would 'share in the glory',[39] he did 'not think that the salvation of India is to be sought on the field of politics at the present stage of her development'.[40] Constitutional 'reforms or concessions' were 'premature'.[41] Curzon actually reversed the conciliatory association of professional and Western-educated nationalists with the running of such institutions as universities and municipalities. Whilst he espoused economic, social, and intellectual progress he was concerned to associate the chiefs and 'native gentry'—the traditional 'aristocracy' rather than the Congress—with public life. In 1904 he spoke of the English as 'a people who combine a love of progress and a faculty for ordered change with a most passionate attachment to our ancient institutions and a scrupulous reverence for those forms and customs whose roots are embedded in our history'.[42] In terms of the Queen's Proclamation he emphasized the feudal—'Oriental'—mode of rule at the expense of the modernist. He claimed the prince as his 'colleague and partner', an 'integral factor in the Imperial organization of India'.[43] He pictured a future society in which the princes were 'trained to all the advantages of Western culture, but yet not divorced in instinct or in mode of life from their own people'.[44] At the 'apogee' of his Viceroyalty, his durbar at Delhi to mark the coronation of King Edward VII, the princes were elevated from their role of 'spectators' at Lytton's Imperial Assemblage to leading actors, paying homage to their King-Emperor—no longer 'architectural adornments of the Imperial edifice' but 'pillars that help to sustain the main roof'.[45] Significantly, the architectural style of his durbar was Indo-Saracenic, where Lytton's had been Victorian Feudal.

The years between Curzon's departure and the War coincided with the ascendancy of the Liberals in British politics. Partly for that reason, but largely because of Curzon's own miscalculations, there were substantial shifts or reversals in the policies that he had pursued. His paternalism, insistence upon administrative efficiency, concentration upon development in public works and commerce, his vigour in foreign policy on and beyond the frontiers of India: all were moderated. In December 1905 the President of the Indian National Congress, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, summed up the legacy:

[39] Curzon to Brodrick, 30 June 1902, Midleton Papers, BL Add. MSS, 50074.
[40] Budget speech, 30 March 1904, Raleigh, *Speeches*, p. 156.
[41] Curzon to Arthur Balfour, 11 Dec. 1908, Curzon Papers, India Office Library, MSS. EUR. F111/409.
[42] Cited by David Cannadine, *Aspects of Aristocracy: Grandeur and Decline in Modern Britain* (New Haven, 1994), p. 78.
[43] Speech at Gwalior, 29 Nov. 1899, Raleigh, *Speeches*, p. 237.
[44] Speech at Jaipur, 28 Nov. 1902, in ibid., p. 245.
[45] Speech at Bahawalpur, 12 Nov. 1903, in ibid., p. 248.

Militarism, Service interests and the interests of English capitalists, all take precedence today of the true interests of the Indian people in the administration of the country.... Now the Congress wants that all this should change and that India should be governed, first and foremost, in the interests of the Indians themselves. This result will be achieved only in proportion as we obtain more and more voice in the government of our country.[46]

Gokhale lobbied the incoming Liberal Secretary of State, John Morley (1905–10), on the need for constitutional reform: the enlargement of the elected membership of the Legislative Councils; the subjection of budgets to the processes of discussion, amendment, and the vote; the appointment of Indian members to the Executive Councils of the Viceroy and the Governors, and to the Secretary of State's Council.

Morley was disposed to a strategy of allying the liberal nationalists with Imperial governance. There were, however, tactical difficulties, for Curzon's last major act, the partition of Bengal, had complicated the political outlook. Regarding Bengal as too large for efficient administration, Curzon divided off its eastern region. The nationalist Bengali, Surendranath Banerjea, wrote: 'We felt that the whole of our future was at stake, and that it was a deliberate blow aimed at the growing solidarity and self-consciousness of the Bengali-speaking population.'[47] The Bengal Legislature, in which the Hindu Congressmen held most of the non-official seats, disappeared. As East Bengal was predominantly Muslim, the political and economic influence of Bengali Hindus there was diminished. Curzon was accused of pursuing a policy of divide and rule. Not only were Hindu-Muslim relations affected, but Congressmen were divided between Moderates and Extremists. The latter espoused the boycott of British goods as the likeliest means of securing the reunification of the province. Acts of terrorism evoked repressive legislation that limited freedom of expression and association. When Morley began to urge the Viceroy, Lord Minto (1905–10), towards constitutional reforms, Minto agreed on the need to 'recognize' the Congress and befriend 'the best of them', but warned that there was much that was 'absolutely disloyal in the movement'.[48] He thought India 'unsuited to Western forms of government'.

Minto sought constitutional changes that would accommodate the diverse interests in Indian society, not merely the professional middle-class Hindus who dominated the Congress.[49] He thought in terms of a balance of interests, of 'counterpoise', say a Council of Princes or a Privy Council of rulers and 'a few other big men', with 'different ideas from those of the Congress'. He was not averse to appointing an Indian to his executive, but not one of 'the purely Gokhale type';

[46] G. K. Gokhale's speech of 27 Dec. 1905, in Philips, *Documents*, pp. 156–59.
[47] Surendranath Banerjea, *A Nation in Making* (London, 1925), p. 173.
[48] Minto to Morley, 28 May 1906, in Mary, Countess of Minto, *India, Minto and Morley, 1905–1910* (London, 1934), pp. 28–30.
[49] Ibid.

rather, a man with a stake in the country, a 'Native gentleman' such as the Maharaja of Gwalior.[50] As for the Legislatures, the Government of India recommended that to provide 'the requisite counterpoise' to the professional classes there should be a separate electorate for the monied and landed classes. Minto wanted a scheme that would 'satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the most advanced Indians, whilst at the same time enlisting the support of the conservative element of Native society'.[51] He was thus sympathetic to the wish of the Muslims to safeguard their interests, for they had been slower than Hindus to embrace Western education and enter government service or the legal profession. In response to a deputation from eminent Muslims in October 1906, he gave what he regarded as a pledge that separate Muslim electorates would be established to 'safeguard their political rights and interests as a community' (thereby encouraging 'community-consciousness').[52] That December the All-India Muslim League was formed to provide a forum for the expression of Muslim grievances.

The 'Morley–Minto reforms' took until mid-1909 to complete. While Morley appointed two Indians to his Council in 1907, only two years later were Indians appointed to the executives of the Viceroy and the Governors. The idea of a Council of Princes or notables was set aside. There was a sharp change from Curzon's policy of demanding efficient administration from the princes, who were now reassured that they might rule in conformity with their own traditional practices. The Indian Councils Act of 1909 provided for enlarged representation in the legislatures and for full discussion of budgets. A majority of officials was preserved in the central legislature but non-officials predominated in the pro-vincial bodies. The Viceroy was empowered to regulate the electoral machinery, and he did so to ensure the balanced representation of the various interests and communities. Moderate Congressmen were disappointed that the regulations were less liberal than they had expected. The principle of responsible government was still wholly absent, with Morley denying before the House of Lords any intention to prepare India for parliamentary government. The reforms sufficed to enable the Moderates to retain control of the Congress, from which the Extremists were expelled in December 1907 at Surat. The split occurred when the session endorsed the Moderate insistence upon constitutional means of pursuing self-government. Next year B. G. Tilak, the Extremists' leader, formed a New Party of direct action and was jailed. However, by the outbreak of the First

[50] Minto to Morley, 5 July 1906, Philips, *Documents*, p. 75.
[51] Minto to Morley, 27 Feb. 1907, in Lady Minto, *India*, pp. 110–11.
[52] Minto's reply to Simla deputation, in ibid., pp. 46–47. On British encouragement of Muslim 'community-consciousness', see Peter Hardy, *The Muslims of British India* (Cambridge, 1972), esp. pp. 116–67.

World War even the Moderates had become disillusioned and they were losing the loyalty of the youth.

Morley maintained the partition of Bengal as 'a settled fact', the reversal of which would be seen as inconstancy of purpose. Where Minto had seen administrative and tactical advantages in the partition, his successor, Sir Charles Hardinge (1910–16), became convinced that the bitterness against it remained 'very widespread and unyielding' and that terrorism would not subside unless it was revoked.[53] In neither East nor West could the Bengalis exercise the influence to which their numbers, wealth, and education entitled them. In the reformed East Bengal and Assam Legislature the Bengali Hindus were outnumbered by the Muslims and the Assamese, in the Bengal Council by the people of Bihar and Orissa. Hardinge built a vision of India's political future upon the idea of reunifying Bengal. It was a vision of devolution, in which the Imperial capital would be moved to Delhi, leaving Calcutta as the provincial capital. The solution to the problem of political development was 'gradually to give to the Provinces a larger measure of Self-Government, until at last India would consist of a number of administrations, autonomous in all provincial affairs, with the Government of India above them all ... ordinarily restricting their functions to matters of Imperial concern'.[54] The Liberal peer who succeeded Morley, Lord Crewe (1911–15), supported the scheme and it was announced by King-Emperor George V at a coronation durbar in Delhi. For Curzon it represented a defeat. He saw in it the end of the strong and constructive central authority that was essential to India's development. Morley and Minto had neglected the involvement of government in industrial and commercial affairs in favour of 'a mid-Victorian mixture of laissez-faire and retrenchment'.[55] It seemed more than symbolic that their successors separated the seat of Indian government from the centre of its commerce.

Yet it was probably not the Liberals' jettisoning of his internal reforms that most chagrined Lord Curzon. It was rather the formation of an alliance with Russia, which he believed compromised British interests in Afghanistan, Persia, and Tibet. In 1907 Britain embraced its major Imperial competitor as its ally as it had done with its minor rival, France, in 1902. The Triple Entente was an admission that the British Empire's defences were overextended, but of course it left Germany with little choice but to align itself with Austria-Hungary and Turkey. Thus seen, policy for the defence of India assumes a significance in the diplomacy of the European powers that resulted in the conflagration that was soon to envelop the world.

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[53] Government of India to Secretary of State, 25 Aug. 1911, in Mukherji, *Documents*, pp. 453–66.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Stanley A. Wolpert, *Morley and India, 1906–1910* (Berkeley, 1967), p. 211.

The successful rehabilitation of British rule after the Mutiny contributed very largely to Britain's prosperity and power in the early twentieth century. The stability of India was essential to Britain's trade, investment, and security worldwide. India had become the fulcrum or pivot of the Empire in the East.[56]

Between 1870 and 1913 India rose from third to first place among Britain's export markets, as she doubled her share from 8 to 16 per cent of the whole. Some 60 per cent of India's imports came from Britain in 1913, with British textiles accounting for over a third of India's total imports. Between 1885 and 1913 India took two-fifths of Britain's total exports of cotton goods, on which low customs duties were manipulated to Lancashire's advantage. On the other hand, India's share of Britain's imports fell to about 10 per cent around the turn of the century. Whereas Britain took a third of India's total exports in 1890, twenty years later she was taking only a quarter, less than either Europe or Asia. Britain's favourable balance of trade with India was highly important, for India sustained a trading surplus with countries in Asia and Europe that enjoyed surpluses with Britain. India's export values grew fivefold between 1870 and 1914 as jute, cotton, indigo, and tea were despatched to Europe and rice to Asia. India's expanding trade nourished the wider Imperial economy. By 1907 India's aggregate exports to Asian and African ports, including Ceylon, the Straits Settlements, and Mauritius, exceeded her export trade with Europe. British merchants at Indian ports, principally Calcutta, marketed India's exports generally as well as British imports to India. One-tenth of the entire trade of the British Empire passed through India's seaports, more than a third of the total Empire trade outside Britain. The pivotal role of British merchants in India's world trade enabled them virtually to monopolize its shipping, insurance, and international banking activities. One example of the growth of banking from an Indian base is the expansion of the National Bank of India from its formation in Calcutta in 1863 into a far-flung and diversified investment enterprise with, by 1900, nineteen principal offices in India, Ceylon, Burma, and East Africa.

Britain invested heavily in the provision of the infrastructure that facilitated India's export trade. In the first eight years after the Mutiny 'the major movement of British capital was towards India, to transform the land with public works'.[57] By the 1870s some £100m had been invested in railways by 50,000-odd British holders of shares or debentures with government-guaranteed rates of interest. In 1870 £180m of a total of £785m of British overseas investment was in India. The sum ran to £270m out of a £1,300m total in 1885 and £380m out of £3,780m in 1913. Much of

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[56] Cf. P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914* (London, 1993).

[57] L. H. Jenks, *The Migration of British Capital to 1875* (London, 1938), pp. 206–07.

the investment in Indian industries and utilities was brokered by British merchant entrepreneurs through agency houses based in India's largest cities and with linkages to other Asian centres.[58] In the fifty years preceding the war some £286m was raised for India on the London stock market, 18 per cent of the total for the Empire. India became the fourth largest recipient of British investment overseas. A third of the funds flowed direct into railways, an understatement of the strength of the flow; government loans took almost half of the total and the funds went largely to railway construction. About 80 per cent of the total investment was lodged in fixed interest railway securities or public loans. The remainder supported tea and coffee plantations, mining, banking, and mercantile or managing agency enterprises. The building of the Nurski–Seistan railway was an example of government enterprise to develop Indian trade with adjoining countries.

The predominance of India in the scale of British Imperial commitments is most strikingly measured in human terms. Some 300 million people, three-quarters of the Empire's population, were concentrated in the subcontinent. The deployment of India's human resources for the development of the Empire, a great diaspora, has only recently received due attention. It has now been authoritatively established that by 1910 some 16,000 indentured Indians emigrated annually to other parts of the Empire, a total of over a million since the 1850s.[59]

The basis for the security of the Indian Empire and its outreach to East and West was the Indian Army. By 1910 it was a force of 74,000 British troops and 150,000 Indians, with 2,700 British officers. There were also 35,000 Native Reserve Troops, 33,000 Native and Eurasian Volunteers, and about 20,000 Imperial Reserve Troops. The total annual military expenditure charged to India amounted to some £20m. The British troops in the Indian Army represented a quarter of the total strength of the British army. The Indian Army, in effect, guaranteed the stability of Imperial trade and investment. In the later nineteenth century Indian troops served in China (1860), Abyssinia (1868), Perak (1875–76), Baluchistan (1876–79), Malta and Cyprus (1878), Afghanistan (1878), Egypt (1882), Burma (1886), Nyasa (1893), Mombasa and Uganda (1896), and the Sudan (1885; 1896–98). Some 13,200 British officers and men were sent from India to serve in the South African War. At one stage 30,000 British and Indian troops from the Indian Army were absent in South Africa and China (to which 1,300 British officers and men and about 20,000 Indian troops were despatched). Around the turn of the century it was agreed that India should not be charged the full cost of the Army's deployment beyond the subcontinent, but she was still to bear most of the costs of

[58] Stanley Chapman, *Merchant Enterprise in Britain: From the Industrial Revolution to World War I* (Cambridge, 1992), esp. pp. 107–28.
[59] See chap. by David Northrup, p. 91 esp. Table 5.2.

service in Egypt, Persia, the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Siam, and some of the costs of service in East Africa. By 1914 there were Indian troops in colonial garrisons in Egypt, the Indian Ocean, Singapore, and China. Indians were recruited for service in the Malay State Guards, in Hong Kong, and in Singapore.

In a lecture Lord Curzon delivered on 'The Place of India in the Empire' in 1909 he presented India as 'the determining influence of every considerable movement in British power to the east and south of the Mediterranean'.[60] It was for him the key to Disraeli's purchase of shares in the Suez Canal, the occupation of Egypt, resistance to Russian expansion, the South African War, British dominance in Mesopotamia, control of the Persian Gulf, her presence in Aden, the Arabian protectorates, and the connections with the Straits Settlements, China, Japan, and Java. Five years earlier he had given another address, upon receiving the freedom of the City of London, illustrating from his own recent experience the part that India was playing in bearing 'the Imperial burden':

If you want to save your Colony of Natal from being over-run by a formidable enemy, you ask India for help, and she gives it; if you want to rescue the white men's legations from massacres at Peking, and the need is urgent, you request the Government of India to despatch an expedition, and they despatch it; if you are fighting the Mad Mullah in Somaliland, you soon discover that Indian troops and an Indian general are best qualified for the task, and you ask the Government of India to send them; if you desire to defend any of your extreme out-posts or coaling stations of the Empire, Aden, Mauritius, Singapore, Hong-Kong, even Tien-tsin or Shan-hai-kwan, it is to the Indian Army that you turn; if you want to build a railway to Uganda or in the Soudan, you apply for Indian labour. When the late Mr. Rhodes was engaged in developing your recent acquisition of Rhodesia, he came to me for assistance. It is with Indian coolie labour that you exploit the plantations equally of Demerara and Natal; with Indian trained officers that you irrigate and dam the Nile; with Indian forest officers that you tap the resources of Central Africa and Siam; with Indian surveyors that you explore all the hidden places of the earth ... [Moreover,] India is a country where there will be much larger openings for the investment of capital in the future than has hitherto been the case, and where a great work of industrial and commercial exploitation lies before us.[61]

The great work of industrial and commercial exploitation was, of course, frustrated as the focus of Imperial concern increasingly became politics, internal and international.

The first generation of Indian nationalists alleged that the consequences of British rule for India's socio-economic development were dire. The case against imperialism was marshalled by Dadabhai Naoroji in his *Poverty and Un-British Rule in*

[60] George N. Curzon, *The Place of India in the Empire* (London, 1909), p. 10.
[61] Speech at the Guildhall, 20 July 1904, in Raleigh, *Speeches*, p. 38.

India (London, 1901) and R. C. Dutt in *The Economic History of India in the Victorian Age* (London, 1906). They draw upon the 'drain theory' to explain India's rural backwardness, widespread poverty, and recurrent famines. They asserted that India's wealth was being drained off to Britain, by the high costs of a foreign army and of civil administration, and in returns on British investments. It was argued that imperialism had warped and crushed the pre-colonial economy, largely as a result of British manufactures displacing Indian products. A process of de-industrialization was alleged. Modern scholarship has, while acknowledging the existence of 'the drain', been sceptical of its significance, believing it too small to explain the persistence of poverty. It has also found difficulty in testing the theory of de-industrialization: while manufacturing employment failed to rise, any fall defies accurate calculation. Some handicraft industries survived, while the emergence of factories for the manufacture of cotton goods was a success story.[62] By 1914 India had the fourth largest cotton goods industry in the world and its cotton spinning industry was three times the size of Japan's. India's cotton industry was predominantly owned and managed by Indians themselves, rather than by British agencies.

What is more certain is that under the Raj neither official nor private agencies injected sufficient funds to stimulate the economy at large. For reasons of national security fiscal policy remained conservative, leaving governments with only meagre capacity for expansive activity, although they might have directed their purchasing policies more to Indian suppliers. Concern for security and social conservatism also meant that governments were reluctant to countenance rural upheaval. In the Deccan (1879) and the Punjab (1900) there was legislative intervention to inhibit the alienation of land from agriculturists; elsewhere tenancy acts protected rights of occupancy. In 1900 almost three-quarters of male workers were employed in rural activities and the urban population was only about 10 per cent of the whole.

In 1914 as in 1858 the Raj was ultimately a despotic foreign regime dependent upon military power. The Morley–Minto reforms were consistent with the governing principle of the Indian Prince who consulted his notables in durbar while reserving his autocracy. Curzon's Viceroyalty revealed, however, that British rulers could not ignore the interests of Western-educated Indians whom their policies had encouraged. By 1914 governing India required the careful manipulation of co-operative Indians. The cultivation of support from princes, magnates, tenants, merchants, and urban notables had to be balanced by the representation of

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[62] Neil Charlesworth, *British Rule and the Indian Economy, 1800–1914* (London, 1982); B. R. Tomlinson, *The Economy of Modern India, 1860–1970* (Cambridge, 1993); and Colin Simmons, '"De-industrialization", Industrialization and the Indian Economy, *c.* 1850–1947', *Modern Asian Studies*, XIX (1985), pp. 593–622.

influential professional élites. In their pursuit of collaborators the British were apt to identify and extend constitutional recognition to communities in forms that divided the incipient nation, such as separate electorates for the representation of the 60 million members of India's previously uncoordinated Muslim communities. The process exacerbated the difficulty of Congress in achieving a broad basis of support. The political consequence of British policies for India was limited advance at the price of disunity. The First World War was to place the initiative in the hands of Indians, who might now more effectively accord the support that Britain required on terms of their own. The Congress and the League would soon reach agreement on political objectives. Lord Curzon himself would draft the 1917 Declaration that promised India eventual responsible self-government within the British Empire.[63]

[63] Robin J. Moore, 'Curzon and Indian Reform', *Modern Asian Studies*, XXVII (1993), pp. 719–40.

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The Evolution of Colonial Cultures: Nineteenth-Century Asia

SUSAN BAYLY

This chapter examines the phenomenon of 'invisible empire', that is, the many different encounters of the intellect and imagination which brought Asians and Britons together, often violently and contentiously, during the 'long' nineteenth century. Its aim is to ask what cultural differences British rule made to the complex societies of colonial Asia. Of course not all of these encounters were overwhelmingly important in the lives of Asians. Despite its apparent capacity to reshape minds as well as material environments in the age of the steam-powered loom, the railway, and the Gatling gun, colonialism was far from being an all-powerful agent of change in any extra-European society. Even where British power was exercised most intrusively, both through the use of military force and in the great Victorian enterprise of scientific data-collection, much of the colonial world was only lightly and unevenly touched by Western-style schools, laws, printing presses, and campaigns of missionary evangelism.[1]

These were, nevertheless, the agencies which Britons saw as bringing revolutionary transformations to their Asian subjects. Asian ways of life did change significantly in the age of high colonialism, though rarely as anticipated by Imperial social reformers and Christian evangelizers. The most far-reaching source of change for the big rural populations of South and South-East Asia was the collapse by mid-century of the many independent kingdoms which had survived the earlier phases of Britain's expansion. The destruction of such great

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[1] On South-East Asia particular use has been made of the following: Nicholas Tarling, ed., *Cambridge History of Southeast Asia* (hereafter *CHSEA*) (Cambridge 1992), Vol. II; Anthony Milner, *The Invention of Politics in Colonial Malaya: Contesting Nationalism and the Expansion of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, 1995); L. A. Peter Gosling and Linda Y. C. Lim, eds., *The Chinese in Southeast Asia*, Vol. 2, *Identity, Culture and Politics* (Singapore, 1983); Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Southeast Asia*, 2nd edn. (London, 1965); and C. M. Turnbull *A History of Singapore, 1819–1975* (Kuala Lumpur, 1977); for Hong Kong: Henry Lethbridge, *Hong Kong: Stability and Change* (Hong Kong, 1978); on colonial Calcutta, Sukanta Chaudhuri, ed., *Calcutta the Living City*, Vol. I (Calcutta, 1990); and for 'syncretistic' religion in India, Susan Bayly *Saints, Goddesses and Kings, Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society, 1700–1900* (Cambridge, 1989).

armed powers as Mysore (1799), the Sikh kingdom of the Punjab (1849), and the major polities of Ceylon (1815) and upper Burma (1885), was accompanied by campaigns to disarm the land- and sea-based warrior groups which had flourished on the margins of these comparatively fluid Asian realms.

The British were particularly assertive in their dealings with these 'predator' peoples. Early in the century Britain's attempts to suppress so-called piracy had a massive impact on Asia's armed seafarers. Southern China's roving maritime populations and the archipelago's 'sea nomads' or *orang laut* communities were among the earliest such groups to be dispersed or forced into dependent livelihoods as British sea-power was consolidated. Similar effects were felt on the land, as colonial officials and their favoured intermediaries promoted the expansion of arable frontiers in the fertile interior regions of South and South-East Asia. These trends fostered the forced settlement of pastoralists and hunter-gatherers, as well as the absorption of other unsettled or semi-sedentary peoples into a world of insecure wage labour and petty commodity production. As a result, armed 'aboriginals' like India's forest- and hill-dwelling Bhils, Gonds, and Nagas, or the 'wild' Iban and *orang asli* of Sarawak and upland Malaya, were stigmatized as headhunters and dangerous 'primitives' by colonial ethnographers, and harried as rebels and criminals when they resisted the loss of their lands and livelihoods.[2]

In India this process of 'peasantization' had profound cultural effects. As increasing numbers of Indian villagers were brought into contact with moneyed townsfolk and status-conscious colonial service élites, there was a general hardening of social boundaries. These developments gave new cohesion and importance to the two elements of the Indian social order which are most commonly thought of as its defining features. The first of these was the Hindu caste system. Under British rule, more of the subcontinent's peoples than ever before found themselves drawn or coerced into the schemes of ritualized social hierarchy which are now regarded as key characteristics of caste society. The second area in which this closing of boundaries occurred was the differentiation between Hindus and Indians of other faiths, especially Muslims. During the nineteenth century the real but often ill-defined distinctions separating Hindus from non-Hindus became much more clearly demarcated. This was largely a response to the teachings of the spiritual revivalists and other proponents of stricter pious norms who became increasingly influential during the nineteenth century. The actions of colonial policy-makers and their orientalist informants further heightened these divisions of faith and community.[3]

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[2] A. A. Yang, ed., *Crime and Criminality in British India* (Tucson, Ariz., 1985); Ranajit Guha, ed., *Subaltern Studies*, IV (New Delhi, 1985).

[3] Sandria B. Freitag, *Collective Action and Community: Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India* (Berkeley, 1989); Seema Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company: Tradition and*

Elsewhere too, most notably in regions which had possessed strong traditions of kingship and patrician lordliness, colonial rule brought a similar tightening of social and communal boundaries. Ceylon acquired stricter differentiations between Sinhalese Buddhists and Hindu Tamils, and an intensification of caste-like divisions proclaiming a moral difference between such people as Karava, whose caste name denoted lowly toiling origins, and the landed groups who styled themselves Goyigama, and wished to be seen as ritually superior to the island's servile populations.[4] The Malayan archipelago too became more sharply divided along boundaries which distinguished between Malay-speaking lord and peasant and Chinese entrepreneur and immigrant labourer groups. Almost everywhere British rule acted as a catalyst to changes which redrew and often strengthened the distinction between the public and the private, and tended to highlight issues affecting the status and conduct of women.[5]

Of course Asians were already experiencing profound intellectual and social upheavals long before the age of Victorian high colonialism. The cosmopolitan and culturally diverse peoples of the Empire assimilated influences from their colonial rulers and their fellow Asians at different rates and in different ways. Furthermore, the Empire's so-called collaborating élites often interpreted Western faiths and intellectual traditions in ways which astonished and discomfited their rulers and proselytizers.

Even so, in order to grasp the full complexity of Empire it is important to assess the interactions between Britons and their Asian subjects in the realms of religion, law, science, education, and modernizing social activism. This chapter therefore focuses on three main aspects of 'invisible empire'. The first of these is setting and context, that is, the basic facts of urbanization, literacy, and other forces shaping local cultural encounters. The second is religion, since it was in the arena of worship that the peoples of East and West had many of their most far-reaching confrontations. The third is the intersection of culture and politics, with the political defined to include public debates on the status of women as well as other 'modern' issues touching the definition of collective and individual rights and moral standards.

Transition in Northern India, 1770–1830 (Delhi, 1995), chaps. 1–2; Rosalind O'Hanlon, 'Historical Approaches to Communalism', in Peter Robb, ed., *Society and Ideology, Essays in South Asian History* (Delhi, 1993), pp. 247–66; for 'peasantization' see Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy in Colonial Malaya, 1874–1941* (Kuala Lumpur, 1977).

[4] John D. Rogers, 'Post-Orientalism and the Interpretation of Pre-modern and Modern Political Identities: The Case of Sri Lanka', *Journal of Asian Studies*, LIII, 1 (1994) pp. 10–23.

[5] For the emergence of a colonial 'bourgeois' public sphere, Sandria Freitag, ed., *Culture and Power in Banaras* (Berkeley, 1989); and C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information, Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870* (Cambridge, 1996).

Setting and Context: New Élites in the Colonial Milieu

Colonialism left its most visible imprint on Asian minds through the building of certain distinctive institutions and environments. There were the widespread economic changes, which were both predicated on and brought in their train a body of laws and public pronouncements proclaiming the virtues of public probity, free trade, and uniform contractual obligations. There were the great towns with their industrial workplaces, universities, and military cantonments; these were the milieux in which Asians most commonly met unfamiliar definitions of public and private space, as well as new standards of gentility, morality, and social refinement.

So what were the basic structural features of Anglo-Asian 'culture contact'? The British made English the language of law and upper-level bureaucracy in their most important Asian dependencies, but they were never systematic Anglicizers. For all their claims about the supposed backwardness of the 'Orient', Imperial officials were reluctant spenders, ever fearful that tampering with native laws, faiths, or learned traditions might undermine their fragile authority over large, and often turbulent subject populations. Indeed, by selecting certain indigenous languages for lower-level official use—Urdu and Hindi in much of India, Malay in maritime South-East Asia, Cantonese in the South China seas—the British helped to standardize both written and spoken forms of these Asian 'mother tongues'.[6] At the same time, the remarkable Victorian glossary *Hobson Jobson* records the lively circulation of neologisms and loan-words throughout the Asian Empire. These contacts brought the Indian caste name Koli to China, where it became 'coolie', and introduced the Malay term *kampong* to India, where it emerged as 'compound', an enclosure in which a house stands. Outside the Empire too, English became seeded with such terms as 'tycoon', a borrowing from Chinese through Japanese, and innumerable Indian loanwords, including 'mogul', 'pajama', 'thug', 'loot', 'juggernaut', 'shampoo', and 'tank', together with a rich vocabulary of Urdu-derived soldier's slang: 'bint' for girl, 'bundook' for firearm; and 'Blighty' (England), from *vilayat*, homeland.[7]

None of this added up to a shared sense of cultural purpose either within or beyond Asia. Britons did not subscribe to an ideal of French-style 'civilizing mission'.[8] Also few Britons made permanent homes outside Europe, unlike their Ibero-American and Afrikaner counterparts. But while there was no cultural

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[6] e.g. C. M. Naim, 'Prize-Winning Adab', in B. D. Metcalf, ed., *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam* (Berkeley, 1984), pp. 290–314.

[7] Arthur Coke Burnell and Henry Yule, *Hobson Jobson* (1883; Wordsworth Edns, Ware, 1996).

[8] Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca, NY, 1989).

master plan for the Empire, the great commercial and administrative centres, most notably Calcutta and Bombay, together with Singapore, Hong Kong, Rangoon, and other East Asian ports, were crucial arenas of the colonial experience. The most obvious signs of a common Asian colonial culture can be discerned in these populous cities with their Anglophone bureaucracies, Western business firms, and polyglot migrant populations. It was Asians themselves, particularly those advancing themselves in the newer commercial or professional callings, who gave this special vigour and volatility to the Empire's great towns.

Nothing in the French and Dutch colonies, or Russia's central Asian dominions, quite matched the mobile and assertive intelligentsias whose descendants still play a disproportionate role in the public life of Britain's former dependencies. Everywhere in British-ruled Asia there were people from modest trading and service backgrounds who made the risky leap into a 'modern' livelihood. The most successful of these 'respectable native gentlemen' pursued careers as lawyers, teachers, journalists, and doctors, as well as technical specialists and government functionaries. They included migrant Armenians and Baghdadi Jews whose forebears had made modest gains in trade and office-holding under Asian rulers, or as clients of the Portuguese and Dutch. Equally important were the Ceylon Burghers and other élite Eurasian groups whose ancestors had been patronized by earlier colonial powers, and the Malacca-based Chinese known as Christangs, after the local name for their modified Portuguese trading language. Many of these people's descendants learned English and became prominent in British-ruled colonial territories.

Other arbiters of the new colonial cultures were Bengal's rentier-descended urban service and professional population, the high-caste Hindus known as *bhadralok* ('good' or refined people) and their many regional counterparts elsewhere. These included India's Parsis, originally Persian-speaking Zoroastrian migrants who became prominent in both commerce and the professions in Bombay and the Far East. In the East Asian Empire, the most important 'native gentlemen' were the richer Hokkiens, Hakkas, and Cantonese-speakers, many of whose forebears had emigrated from southern China long before 1800. These people, who came to be known as Straits Chinese, achieved dominant positions in South-East Asia's major cities; most were of modest peasant origin despite their leading families' economic successes. There were also India's Bohras and Memons, together with the Hadrahmauti Saiyyids and other Arabic-speaking traders who operated everywhere from the Red Sea to the South-East Asian entrepôts, and other wide-ranging groups such as the Tamil Muslim *maraikkayars* who founded notable fortunes in Singapore and Penang.[9]

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[9] L. W. C. Van den Berg, *Le Hadhramout et les colonies Arabes dans l'archipel Indien* (Batavia, 1886).

In both India and Malaya, rentier groups and descendants of regional rulers formed the other important subdivision of this gentleman class. British attitudes to these 'traditional' élites were always ambivalent. The more conservative scholar-officials wanted such people to be conciliated and honoured on the grounds that 'Orientals' were culturally predisposed to revere the lordly grandees of their native land. More puritanical Britons condemned patrician rent-receivers as decadent and seditious. Indeed, as early as the 1820s such groups as Malacca's superior Eurasian and Malay rent-receivers, deemed 'useless' and unenterprising, were summarily deprived of their proprietary rights.[10] Elsewhere too, attempts to introduce uniform legal codes tended to bear heavily on these gentry lineages, suppressing their rights of ancestral or corporate land tenure in favour of simplified conceptions of private property and individual ownership.[11]

The Tensions of Respectability

The culture of Asia's new colonial environments forged connections between the world of the 'native gentlemen' and less exalted rural and urban peoples. Whether one looks at the material facts of architecture, language, and livelihoods, or the more elusive features of perceptions and mentalities, the great cities where most of these migrants were concentrated had more in common with one another than with the older court and market towns and their rural hinterlands. This was in part because of their newness, their great size compared to other Asian cities, and their remarkably rapid growth. India's two largest cities, Calcutta and Bombay, grew by nearly 300 per cent from the 1820s to the end of the nineteenth century, each having a population of nearly 800,000 in 1881. The colonial centres of East Asia, including China's treaty ports, also expanded dramatically: Shanghai, a small town in 1843, had over 400,000 residents in 1895.

Of course many older Indian towns had grown very rapidly in the centuries preceding the consolidation of British power. Those like Benares (Banaras) which had long combined commercial and pilgrimage functions retained much of their importance throughout the colonial era. But the newer ports and industrial centres grew to even greater size and often swamped their hinterlands. Calcutta's population was ten times that of any other town in nineteenth-century Bengal. Despite its social diversity, this city became the idealized focus for a new sense of regional ethno-linguistic identity. Even in the early nineteenth century it had become axiomatic among those who would once have looked for cultural reference points to a more diverse array of older market towns and Islamized courts,

[10] Brian Harrison *Holding the Fort: Melaka under Two Flags, 1795–1845* (Kuala Lumpur, 1986), p. 109.
[11] David S. Y. Wong, *Tenure and Land Dealings in the Malay States* (Singapore, 1977); Thomas R. Metcalf, *Land, Landlords and the British Raj: Northern India in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley, 1979).

that to be truly 'Bengali' was to partake of the forms of modernity to be found in Calcutta. Colombo, Rangoon, Hong Kong, and Singapore all played similar regional roles.[12]

These colonial towns were especially important to urbanizing commodity producers such as the Gujarati cotton-growers who were known by the caste name Patidar. These and other 'peasantized' smallholders became increasingly inclined to adapt their ideals of faith and morality to those which they observed in the lives of town-based traders and service people. The more influential of these urban groups had come in past centuries to follow traditions of Hindu spirituality which exalted the values of sobriety, thrift, and pious respectability. There had been comparable new syntheses in Buddhism and Islam in both South and South-East Asia, and here too it was traders and other townsfolk who often responded most enthusiastically to such teachings.[13] Well before the nineteenth century, these forms of religion had come to define the standards by which people with vulnerable livelihoods to protect could try to impress those who had reason to judge their worth and substance. Despite local variations, almost invariably the purity of dependent women was a critical test of this kind of respectability. And, in so far as there really were certain shared cultural traits within the Asian Empire, these ideas mattered particularly because they forged links between so many different kinds of urban and rural people under the anxious scrutiny of the colonial state.

British observers were ambivalent about these interactions between socially conservative city-dwellers, and the growing populations of industrious upper peasants who were coming to emulate them. Colonial officials generally preferred these people's notions of propriety to the licentiousness which they ascribed both to landed patrician groups and to the 'wild' martial peoples of the forests and remoter plains. But they knew too that these changes involved initiatives emanating from Asians themselves, and that such moves could provide a focus for anti-colonial 'resistance', as well as provoking unrest between their subjects. They particularly had in mind cases where people such as south India's newly commercialized Nadar cultivators placed themselves under the 'civilizing' sponsorship of evangelical missionaries, and then proclaimed their new-found respectability in ways which aroused opposition from insecure local élites. Many Nadars did this by adopting a form of modest female dress, the breast-cloth, which their higher-caste neighbours were seeking to reserve as a marker of their own superior status.[14]

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[12] D. K. Basu, ed., *The Rise and Growth of the Colonial Port City in Asia* (Santa Cruz and Berkeley, 1979).

[13] S. P. Sen, ed., *Social and Religious Reform Movements* (Calcutta, 1979).

[14] Robert Hardgrave, *The Nadars of Tamilnad* (Berkeley, 1969); David Ludden *Peasant History in South India* (Princeton, 1985), pp. 192–95.

These tensions of the urbanizing colonial milieu were also apparent in the Far East. Here the key cultural fact in Britain's colonial cities was the growing size and wealth of the Chinese immigrant populations. Hong Kong had a population of 300,000 Chinese and 20,000 Europeans at the end of the nineteenth century. In 1821 Singapore contained a mere 5,000 Malay, Chinese, and other migrants, and had grown into a metropolis of 185,000 in 1911. Rates of growth were spectacular: Singapore's population rose by 40 per cent between 1871 and 1881. In most Chinese-dominated South-East Asian towns, men greatly outnumbered women: the proportions were 8 to 1 in Singapore in 1911. The flow of transients was also enormous: over 200,000 Chinese indentured labourers landed in Singapore in 1900, and 250,000 in 1912.

These then were towns full of insecure newcomers which had grown haphazardly, without serious urban planning or significant expenditures on monuments and heroic adornments. They had in common the rigid separation between the airy suburbs or civil lines where the white expatriates lived, often adjoining the local military cantonments, and the densely populated 'native' quarters. These so-called 'Blacktowns' were subdivided by custom and sometimes by official ordinance into separate enclaves inhabited by different 'races' or 'communities'.

The non-white populations of these colonial cities were highly diverse and generally poor, though there were instances of spectacular wealth amongst such people as the great compradors and trader-bankers of maritime South-East Asia. There were hugely wealthy corporate institutions too, notably the Hong Kong and Singapore clan and service associations (*huis* and *kongsis*), to which many Chinese emigrants were affiliated. Many of these guild-like confraternities had occult membership rituals, and came to be known in English as triads or secret societies. Such covert networks came to be regarded by Western orientalists as a dark and mysterious force pervading the overseas Chinese communities both within and beyond the British-ruled territories. In 1857 both the abortive uprising in Singapore, and the attempted coup against Rajah Brooke's rule in Sarawak, were reportedly led by fanatical anti-Christian triads. This view of the secret society as an ineradicable fact of Chinese culture generated much orientalist writing. There were also numerous attempts to control triad activity through the imposition of curfews, pass laws, and other measures, including the Suppression of Dangerous Societies Ordinances in the Straits Settlements, Singapore (1869, 1885, and 1890) and Hong Kong (1872).[15]

[15] On other possibly mythical forms of Asian criminality, cf. Carl A. Trocki, *Opium and Empire, Chinese Society in Colonial Singapore, 1800–1910* (Ithaca, NY, 1990); John M. Chin, *The Sarawak Chinese* (Kuala Lumpur, 1981), p. 34; Gustave Schlegel, *Thian Ti Hwui: The Hung-league or Heaven-earth-league* (1866; Thornhill, 1991); Wilfred Blythe, *The Impact of Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya* (London, 1969); Mak Lau Fong, *The Sociology of Secret Societies* (Kuala Lumpur, 1981).

Asian Responses: Women and 'Oriental Vices' in the Colonial City

The big colonial cities were often turbulent, though the major insurrections, most notably India's 1857 Mutiny-Rebellion, originated amongst the hard-pressed peasantries, forest-dwellers, and townsfolk of the remoter hinterlands. Furthermore the greatest of this period's Asian upheavals, China's Taiping Rebellion (1850–64), and the Boxer Rising (1900), occurred outside the regions of formal Western rule. At the same time, the turmoil created by these mainland Chinese rebellions was important in prompting millions of distress migrants to seek new livelihoods in the docks, mines, and plantations of the Asian colonial centres. This powerfully affected South-East Asia's more established Chinese populations, whose richer families sought to adjust to this influx by claiming the status of cultural exemplars to 'backward' newcomers. Migration to these labour-hungry centres aroused contradictory reactions amongst Asians, even in localities where the migrants came from areas familiar with long-distance trade and pilgrimage. As early as the 1830s, Calcutta's celebrated Kalighat watercolourists were disseminating trenchant social comments on the experience of urban modernity, portraying this city of migrants and new experiences as a place of vulgar new wealth and corrupting temptations. Their stock images were of rootless young office-workers in awkward, semi-Europeanized clothes, and of young women depraved through exposure to the city's indecorous freedoms. Such women were shown emasculating and impoverishing their menfolk, making them neglect their righteous mothers in favour of demanding wives and grasping courtesans, and provoking them to acts of unholy violence, as in a famous Calcutta murder case which was widely depicted in these popular art-forms.[16]

Other colonial cities too acquired a rich popular culture which was closely linked to the spread of vernacular and English-language newspapers and other ephemeral media. This world of print and pictures made much of crime and sex scandals, both as a source of entertainment and as a means of promoting moralistic messages on behalf of an extraordinarily heterogeneous range of public commentators and would-be social reformers. These contributors to the debates about faith and morals which preoccupied so many of Britain's Asian subjects played a crucial role in creating a distinctive new political culture within the Empire. Its habits of speech and argument were forged by self-styled 'public men' (and significant numbers of women) who adapted Western concepts of

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[16] Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *The Making of a New Indian Art: Artists, Aesthetics and Nationalism in Bengal, c.1850–1920* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 18–32. A painting of the case in question c.1880 in which an outraged husband brutally murdered his unfaithful wife, is reproduced in P. J. Marshall, ed., *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 251.

citizens' rights and philanthropy to the new civic arenas of the Asian colonies. This culture was nourished on public platforms, in the press, and in the transactions of innumerable educational trusts, social uplift organizations, and other 'modernizing' voluntary associations. It drew too on conceptions of revived or rediscovered spiritual and political tradition, and therefore, as it acquired a capacity to express ideals of nationhood and patriotic mission, it had an impact far beyond the world of the anglophone colonial intelligentsias.[17]

Even outside areas of formal British control, the colonial societies loomed large, especially in the thinking of cultural élites in uncolonized kingdoms—Japan and Siam, Burma before annexation, and above all China. Thus, in the early nineteenth century China's Manchu authorities sought in vain to restrain migration to South-East Asia. In orthodox Confucian thought, emigration from mainland China to Nanyang (the southern Ocean), especially by women, had been represented for centuries as a disturbance of the social and environmental harmonies which both the Emperor and the Confucian mandarinate had a sacred duty to preserve.

These fears emphasizing the special dangers surrounding women in the corrupting colonial milieu came to loom large in the thinking of early Chinese nationalists and social reformers both within and beyond the imperial mainland. Of particular concern was the traffic in young girls, reportedly enticed in large numbers from South China to the vice dens of Shanghai and Hong Kong. The plight of these so-called brothel slaves, and of purchased Chinese household concubines, had originally been highlighted by such key Victorian philanthropic organizations as the Aborigines' Protection Society. Western social reformers saw these trades, like the forms of racketeering which prevailed in the recruitment of Chinese 'coolie' labourers, as products of age-old Chinese 'vices'. These they regarded as being reinforced by the secret societies whose agents were held to control all illicit enterprises in the Far East, including gambling, prostitution, and the opium trade.

To Chinese commentators, on the other hand, colonialism and modernity were to blame for these proliferating evils, the coolie and brothel recruiters being represented as kidnappers whisking innocent rustics from their villages by rail and steamer. The question, though, was whether Western moralists should be praised or resisted in their attacks on the supposed social failings of the overseas Chinese communities. Thus, there was much debate about whether concubinage was an old and benign custom of respectable households, or a new and vicious form of slavery which had been generated in the unsettled environment of the colonial

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[17] Douglas Haynes, *Rhetoric and Ritual in Colonial India: The Shaping of a Public Culture in Surat City, 1852–1928* (Berkeley, 1991); W. R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (Kuala Lumpur, 1967); Khoo Kay Kim, *Malay Society: Transformation and Democratisation* (Petaling Jaya, 1991); Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World* (New York, 1986).

cities. The debate about female foot-binding aroused equally strong emotions amongst Hong Kong and Straits-based pamphleteers and philanthropists.

Chinese thinkers who struggled with these issues had much in common with the educated Indians who were under pressure to pronounce on sensitive matters in their own societies. For the many Hindus who contributed to learned societies and press debates on matters of faith, morals, and science, the most painful controversies were about whether the high-status practices of female infanticide, pre-pubescent female marriage, and suttee (sati—the ritualized burning of Hindu widows) were as 'uncivilized' as the missionaries and other Western critics claimed.[18] If so, then Asian contributors to these debates felt it necessary to decide who was to blame, and how their culture should be purged of these defects. Some participants in these controversies opted for socially conservative solutions, focusing on organizations and causes which emphasized a rediscovery of past cultural glories and the preservation of established norms and values. In other cases one can see the first steps being taken towards the positions adopted by radical twentieth-century 'modernizers' and secularizers, most notably by socialists and revolutionary nationalists whose vision of the future involved a complete break with traditions which they perceived as bad, 'backward' and unprogressive.

These debates in the Anglophone and vernacular press, and in the new representative Assemblies which came into being in the Asian Empire, had an impact far beyond the colonial milieu. By the 1890s China's rulers were beginning to fear the potentially seditious influence of self-professed social reformers and anti-Manchu nationalists amongst the overseas Chinese populations, especially in areas of British control. The Manchus' response to this was to try to woo the 'modernity'-minded Straits Chinese élites, especially prominent Babas or Peranakans, Malay-speaking Chinese with a distinctive tradition of acculturation to Malay life. The richer Baba traders and professional men represented themselves as fervent Empire loyalists; some even preferred to be known as 'King's Chinese', to distinguish themselves from the mass of 'coolie' migrants. Nevertheless, from the 1890s the Straits Settlements' Baba activists campaigned to foster the learning of Mandarin as a means of discovering what they considered a lost bond of Confucian cultural values. In 1907 the Manchu government founded a Mandarinmedium school in Nanking for Chinese from the South-East Asian migrant communities, hoping to lessen threats of an alliance between home-grown antiManchu nationalists and influential Straits Chinese who were pressing Malaya's Babas to 'uplift' themselves through education and the abandonment of 'backward' practices (opium-smoking, foot-binding, and the wearing of the pigtail).[19]

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[18] L. Mani, 'Official Discourse on Sati in Early Nineteenth-Century Bengal', in K. Sangari and S. Vaid, eds., *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History* (New Delhi, 1989).

[19] Turnbull, *History of Singapore*, p. 107.

Capturing Western Skills and Knowledge

Since the British built their rule in Asia around the use of indigenous clerical and professional skill, those who aspired to advantage themselves in the colonial milieu responded eagerly to this demand for 'modern' educational qualifications. It was through literacy and particularly knowledge of English that Asians could aspire to the most lucrative opportunities. The big Indian and South-East Asian towns acquired larger concentrations of schools, colleges, libraries, learned societies, and other points of contact with Western learning and science than anywhere else in Asia. Between 1818 and 1867, 219 English and Bengali periodicals were published in Calcutta; Benares became an expanding centre of Hindi publishing, and printing in dozens of other Asian languages including Arabic and Chinese became a great feature of the British-ruled colonial societies.[20]

With the expansion of professional and clerical employment, education itself became a major industry. In the subcontinent English education was initially provided by missionaries, but in the 1860s the governments of India and Ceylon created Departments of Public Instruction with authority over a growing network of English-medium schools. Most of Hong Kong's seventy government-supported schools taught English by 1900. State-sponsored universities were established in Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras in 1857; new universities were founded in the Punjab and Allahabad in 1882 and 1887, and Rangoon's Government College (founded in 1873) was upgraded to a university in 1920.[21]

At the same time Asians took important initiatives of their own. The establishment of Muslim educational foundations (*madrasas*) with 'modernized' Koranic (Quranic) curricula was one of the chief expressions of Islamic reformism among such groups as colonial South-East Asia's élite 'new generation' Malays. Equally widespread was the endowment of Asian-run institutions with Western-style curricula: these were intended to counter the dominance of missionary-run schools and colleges as providers of English education to the aspiring colonial intelligentsias.[22]

Steady expansion in the size and influence of the Empire's English-educated classes fostered the large-scale migration of Anglophone clerks and professional men to distant parts of the Empire. Even the many Indian, Chinese, and Arabic-speaking Muslim traders who preserved the techniques of the 'traditional' Asian

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[20] Chaudhuri, ed., *Calcutta the Living City*, I, pp. 128–36.

[21] In 1901 there were over 23,000 Indian college students, and 634,000 secondary school pupils: H. H. Dodwell, ed., *The Cambridge History of India*, VI (Cambridge, 1932), p. 348; also Marshall, ed., *Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire*, p. 187; Philip Loh Fook Seng, *Seeds of Separatism: Educational Policy in Malaya, 1874–1940* (Kuala Lumpur, 1975).

[22] Kenneth W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 28–29.

family firm needed literate English-speaking clerks for their dealings with Western officials and merchants. Many Asian commercial men also invested in English education for their younger kinsmen so that they could represent themselves more directly in dealings with colonial courts and bureaucracies.

For most Asians, learning English was initially a matter of narrow occupational skill. But the results of such schooling were often unexpected and troubling, and not just for those with firsthand experience of Chinese mission schools or Western-style university curricula. Even the non-literate took an anxious interest in the big nineteenth-century controversies about whether or in what ways the colonial authorities should seek to educate the 'Oriental mind'. In the subcontinent the most influential of these debates concerned the value of 'Anglicist' learning as opposed to a socially conservative vision of Indian élites schooled in a 'traditional' manner. This meant an emphasis on the sacred scriptural works which many scholar-officials continued to defend as the core of true knowledge and culture. The debate was keenly followed by the many Indians with a personal stake in the status of Benares and other established centres of pious learning.

There were many important Asians whose cultural encounters with the West were positive and creative. The remarkable Calcutta polymath Raja Ram Mohan Roy (d. 1833) was proficient in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and English, as well as Bengali, Sanskrit, and Persian. He debated the concept of Christ's incarnation with Christian missionaries, and berated British officials in 1823 for being slow to instruct their Indian subjects in the 'useful sciences'.[23] The so-called Young Bengal radicals of the 1830s and 1840s went even further in embracing novel ideologies imbibed from their Western-style schooling, denouncing the Hindu scriptures in favour of Tom Paine and the French positivists, and shocking their cow-revering teetotal elders by publicly consuming beef and brandy. In contrast, however, even Singapore's richest Chinese trader, the famous 'Whampoa' (Hoo Ah Kay, d. 1880), who associated closely with the British and became the first Asian member of the Singapore Legislative Council, was incensed when his son returned from school in England in 1847 calling himself a Presbyterian and with his pigtail cut off.[24]

Throughout British-ruled Asia, such inter-generational battles were a notable feature of colonial 'culture contact'. But something approximating to Hoo Ah Kay's stance, a kind of negotiated arms-length encounter which both absorbed and contained the effects of 'modernity', was far more common than the radicalism of small groups like Young Bengal. Much more representative of the literate Indian's world-view in the later nineteenth century were the pious Hindu activists who formed associations for the preservation of orthodox faith (*sanatan dharm*

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[23] Chaudhuri, ed., *Calcutta: The Living City*, I, pp. 101–02.
[24] Turnbull, *History of Singapore*, pp. 55, 105.

sabhas). These groups' adherents preached revived orthodox Hinduism in a form which was at least partly shaped by Western conceptions of transcendent divinity, though these were synthesized with indigenous Hindu ideals of the transcendent. At the same time, these activists told believers to assert their Hinduness in the face of Christian teaching, and to recognize that adoption of the white man's ways and language could result in dangerous spiritual and moral contamination.

Nevertheless, knowledge of English spread very widely across the Asian Empire, especially among those who moved ever further afield in search of commercial and service posts. Furthermore, after mid-century members of Asia's 'respectable' élites were increasingly incorporated into the limited forms of local self-government introduced by such measures as the Municipalities Acts for India, Malaya, and Burma (1856–74), and the formation of quasi-representative bodies, including the Hong Kong District Watch Committee (1866) and the State Councils of the Federated Malay States.[25] These developments had far-reaching cultural importance. By mastering the committee procedures and other forms of institutional life which these measures introduced, men of wealth and education found new ways to achieve power and status within the colonial milieu. By the 1890s the prime expressions of this new political culture were to be found in the proceedings of organizations which were founded or taken over by Asians themselves. Among the most influential were those in which concepts of nationhood were forged and debated, most notably the Indian Social Conference, the Indian National Congress, and their 'modernizing' counterparts in Burma, Malaya, and Ceylon.[26]

These moves towards representative government forced Britons to debate how precisely to deal with such people as Parsi High Court judges, Chinese justices of the peace, Ceylon Burgher degree-holders, and other 'native gentlemen' who were held to be highly sensitive about social contacts with whites. Civil servants' manuals were detailed on these points, proclaiming it safe for British officials to offer non-alcoholic 'aerated waters' to educated 'modern' visitors, but warning that by 'tradition' Muslims were dog-haters who had to be protected from being fawned on by the British officer's pets. Above all, the well-meaning Briton should refrain from making polite enquiries about the 'gentlemen's' womenfolk.[27]

Those Asians deemed politically reliable were encouraged to perform 'modern' political tasks in a 'traditional' cultural idiom. In Victorian Hong Kong, the powerful Chinese notables who amassed fortunes as compradors for Western businesses acquired status by endowing large-scale philanthropic ventures. These charitable trusts became the colony's most important 'modern' institutions. The largest of these, the Tung Wah Hospital, was founded in 1870 at a time when

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[25] Tinker, *Foundations of Local Self-Government in India, Pakistan and Burma* (London, 1954). p. 32.
[26] See e.g. Haynes, *Rhetoric and Ritual*.
[27] *The Indian Civil Service Manual (Madras)* (Madras, 1931), pp. 40–47.

the colony's Anglophone press had been campaigning against one of the city's ancestor-tablet shrines, where indigents were allegedly left to die unattended and in great squalour. This press campaign was similar to India's colonial panics about the evils of *suttee* and so-called bathing-ghat deaths, this being the practice, supposedly common amongst pious Hindus, of taking ailing relatives to die on the banks of the sacred River Ganges. Hong Kong's new hospital was therefore a 'modern' venture funded by subscriptions from rich Chinese as a means of declaring their leadership in campaigns to eradicate 'backwardness' among their fellow 'Orientals'.

Although these ideas about the 'Orient's' supposed depravities were initially derived from missionaries and other Western commentators, many Asians reshaped them to fit their own definitions of morality or public conduct, and their needs for status and credibility in the eyes of colonial authorities. From the early 1880s, membership of the controlling bodies of these powerful associations, and especially a seat on Hong Kong's District Watch Committee, became critical marks of power and status for the city's Chinese grandees. All these organizations emphasized the duty of 'public men' to impose moral and physical controls on the turbulent lower orders. Although Hong Kong was a 'modern' city with Western-style civic government, the Chinese businessmen who became trustees of the Tung Wah and similar foundations were encouraged by successive British administrations to dress and conduct themselves like Confucian mandarins. Hong Kong's British-run Secretariat for Chinese affairs modelled its official documents on those of imperial China's Confucian bureaucracy. So while no official mandarinate existed in the British-ruled dependencies, here too there was an attempt to 'indigenize' colonialism by exalting what were supposed to be the 'essences' of a traditional Asian culture.

Religion and Modernity in the 'Invisible Empire'

As key informants in this quest for cultural knowledge, 'native' intelligentsias had a disproportionate effect on the formalizing of colonial thought about Asia's belief systems. It was largely from educated Asian 'gentlemen' that Western scholars derived their view of Eastern faiths as textually-based 'religions', defined both in the colonial law codes and electoral categories which they helped to frame, and by their own self-aware communities of believers on the basis of scriptural or moral codes. Thus, many of colonial Asia's most significant interactions between ruler and ruled occurred in the domain of religion. These involved many misperceptions on the part of the colonizer and Western theorizer, but also instances of creative adaptation of the white outsider's beliefs, languages, institutions, and value systems.

This can be seen particularly in the decidedly uneven impact of Christianity in Britain's Asian colonies. 'Responses' to the presence of evangelizing Christians in Asia were largely a matter of indirect and unintended influences.[28] Nevertheless, it was through interactions with missionaries and British scholar-officials that the idea of religion itself entered Asia, if by religion we mean a separate sphere of experience, requiring, for example, a distinction between the 'religious' and 'secular' aspects of a Hindu royal procession in which kings and gods are honoured by an assembled populace.

Even when the intention was to refute the so-called untruths of Asian faiths, from the 1830s onwards it was generally missionaries and evangelical scholar-officials who collected and published both vernacular and English editions of such important texts as the Ramcharitmanas, the Vedas, the Koran (Quran), and the texts of the Buddhist canon.[29] The irony was that Western orientalists made these scriptures far more accessible to Asians than had previously been the case. Indeed, it was largely through them that these texts became revered in virtually every Asian culture as the cornerstones of a standardized or 'modern' Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, or Confucian faith. This process involved much conflict between different schools of 'modernists' and 'traditionalists'. But from this period onward, large numbers of Asians actively spread a vision of their ancestral faiths as modern, revitalized bodies of truth deriving authority from revealed written texts. These were forms of belief which Asians themselves came increasingly to exalt, proclaiming them superior to the many pre-existing forms of theistic cult religion hitherto practised in India and South-East Asia.

In those relatively rare cases where Christianity took root, this almost always occurred through synthesis and accommodation. China's great Taiping revolt originated in an area of long-standing contact with Western power, and had its roots in a 'crisis cult' which amalgamated Protestant missionary accounts of Jesus as redeemer with an indigenous prophetic tradition proclaiming the imminent coming of the next Buddha, the Maitreya. In India too, most people whom missionaries claimed as converts retained a pluralistic vision of the divine, creating pantheons which amalgamated Hindu gods and Muslim cult saints with the saints and martyrs of Christianity.

On the other hand, Christianity did not remain harmoniously 'syncretized' with other Asian faiths. The religion of the British conqueror came to be widely perceived as depraved, subversive, and decidedly 'other'. In many different settings, for example, amongst China's Confucian élites at the time of the Boxer

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[28] A. N. Porter, *Atlas of British Overseas Expansion* (London, 1994), pp. 124–37.
[29] R. S. McGregor, *Hindi Literature of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Weisbaden, 1974).

Rebellion, Christianity was written and spoken about as a seditious, socially destabilizing heterodoxy, just as it was at the court of the Nguyen dynasty in present-day Vietnam in the face of nineteenth-century French expansion. By the end of the century the combative preaching of many Western evangelicals, their dissemination of Christian polemic in print, and their association with the expanding frontier of British power had evoked militant counter-polemics from educated Muslims and Hindus in India, from neo-Buddhist purifiers in Ceylon, and from pan-Islamist thinkers in virtually every Muslim locality from Egypt to Malaya. Whatever their theologies and linguistic traditions, pamphleteers and orators from very disparate backgrounds were uttering similar messages, reviling the Christian's faith as false and degenerate, and calling on fellow believers to embrace a new and formalized sense of union binding Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists as members of separate, self-aware 'communities'.

Spirituality and Anti-Colonial 'Resistance'

By the end of the century missionaries and colonial officials were increasingly preoccupied with the organized cults and movements of self-proclaimed spiritual 'revival', which were widely held to be a potent and dangerous force throughout the Asian Empire. In Burma the British occupation in 1885 of Mandalay, seat of the Buddhist Konbaung dynasty which claimed the status of *cakkavartin*, the world-conqueror whose task in Buddhist cosmology is to deliver the world from unrighteousness, was followed by waves of armed millenialism. These risings were led by Burmese monks and occult adepts, *sayas*, whose preachings about the imminent end of unrighteous British rule prefigured Burma's great anti-colonial Saya San revolt of the 1930s.[30] British observers saw equally alarming messages in the teaching of other purist revitalizers and sectarian prophets. This can be seen in reports on the Taipings and Boxers, as well as accounts of the Hindu and Buddhist puritan revivalisms of Ceylon and India. The same fearful note marked descriptions of Islamic insurgencies such as the Pahang War in Malaya, the Mat Salleh rebellion in North Borneo, and more broadly, discussion of the dynamic pan-Islamic movements which spread along the trade routes and devotional networks of maritime Asia from the later nineteenth century.

This side of the purist revitalization movements coexisted uneasily with the more self-consciously respectable forms of conspicuous piety pursued by members of the colonial intelligentsias and other native gentleman élites. Their munificence embellished maritime Asia's Hindu shrines, expanded the Buddhist

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[30] Michael Adas, *Prophets of Rebellion: Millenarian Protest Movements Against the European Colonial Order* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1979).

pilgrimage sites, and founded or re-endowed Islamic teaching institutions, thus contributing significantly to the new vigour and competitiveness of these faiths both within and beyond the British-ruled colonies. From the sophisticated intellectual environments of the Anglophone élites emerged a tremendous outpouring of theorizing and campaigning on spiritual matters. Only rarely did these people convert to Christianity; instead, they involved themselves in large and assertive movements of religious revival and purification.

The most important of these were the Arya Samaj or 'Society for the revival of Hindu Aryanism', and for Muslims, the pan-Islamizing organizations of South and South-East Asia. Ceylon's closest equivalent was the so-called Protestant Buddhist movement which rejected otherworldly detachment and exhorted lay believers to seek salvation in a life of active social engagement which placed particular emphasis on the education and moral uplift of women. Despite their manifold differences, these groups and their numerous rivals and allies told believers, in a language which many found convincing, that they lived in an age of decadent impiety. It was, they said, through knowledge of scripture, and the purging from everyday life and worship of so-called 'superstition' and moral laxity, that they could equip themselves to regain lost glories, and to thrive in a challenging and unpredictable 'modern' milieu.[31]

Some British missionaries, and the many colonial officials who perceived Empire as a providential achievement of Protestant Christian truth, looked approvingly at this so-called 'modernist' activity. But by about 1900 Western commentators realized that most activists who talked about spiritual purification and reinvigoration of their faith as Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, and Buddhists were ardently anti-Christian. Over the next two decades they also became closely tied to emerging anti-colonial nationalist organizations, most notably the Indian National Congress. Elsewhere similar links were forged with Burma's twentieth-century Congress-equivalent, the General Council of Burmese Associations; with the Ceylon National Congress; and with the militant pan-Islamists and Khilafatist campaigners of India and Malaya.[32]

For many educated South Asians, the central source of these militant formulations was Theosophy, the American-born cultural revivalist organization which claimed to offer humankind a path to spiritual liberation through the mystical insights of the East. Theosophy strongly influenced Ceylon's most important revivalist, Anagarika Dharmapala (1864–1933). This ascetic Buddhist teacher and polemicist sought to turn his vision of religious reform into a supra-national

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[31] David Kopf, *The Brahmo Samaj and the Shaping of the Modern Indian Mind* (Princeton, 1979); Steven Kemper, *The Presence of the Past: Chronicles, Politics, and Culture in Sinhala Life* (Ithaca, NY, 1991).
[32] On the GCBA, see Tarling, ed., *CHSEA*, II, p. 286.

regenerative force. From the 1890s he toured both hemispheres extolling purified Buddhism as a source of unlimited power for Asians, and promising his hearers that they too could learn the secret of self-aware spirituality which, he said, had enabled the base materialistic Europeans to advance themselves in the sphere of culture and morality.[33] Dharmapala had much in common with Burma's most celebrated activist monk, U Ottama, and with India's Hindu sage-polemicists, especially Swami Dayananda Saraswati (1824–83), founder of the Arya Samaj, and the Bengali seer Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902), whose advocacy of a spiritually informed path to national uplift anticipated much of Gandhi's philosophy.[34]

The vision of Asians invigorated and on the march through an exercise of spiritually inspired will-power fascinated and appalled the many British scholar-officials who had embraced the influential science of race–ethnology, and its related doctrines of eugenics and social Darwinism. What such commentators thought they were hearing from the prophets of revived Hindu nationhood, as well as from Malay and Egyptian pan-Islamists and Buddhist revitalizers in Burma and Ceylon, was an echo of key themes in the writings of Western race theorists. Of particular note was the view of global empire as the fulfilment of Aryan racial essences. To those who subscribed to these views, it was deeply unsettling to find Asians applying European ideas of nationhood and global struggles for mastery to their own expansive conceptions of faith, race, and nation.[35]

At the end of the 'long' nineteenth century Asians were beginning to act on these visions of assertive nationality. By the 1890s the major colonial towns had become a focus for complex new forms of social and political activism. These included constitutional nationalist organizations, as well as underground terrorist networks like those of western India's Poona-based paramilitary society the Chapekars, whose initial protests involved nothing more sinister than the vandalizing of cricket pitches. But in 1897 two of its members assassinated the region's British Plague Commissioner, a deeply hated figure during India's 1896–97 plague outbreak because of his power to send sanitary inspectors into the *purdah* quarters (secluded women's areas) of high-status urban households.[36] Elsewhere too, most notably in Burma, where the Young Men's Buddhist Association appropriated the propaganda techniques of the Anglo-American YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) to mount a vigorous moral critique of colonialism, new forms of

[33] Kemper, *Presence of the Past.*

[34] William Radice, ed., *Swami Vivekananda and the Modernization of Hinduism* (Delhi, 1998).

[35] Charles Morris, *The Aryan Race: Its Origins and its Achievements* (London, 1888); L. Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth* (New York, 1974); Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (London, 1992); Thomas R. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley, 1997).

[36] I. Catanach, 'Plague and the Tensions of Empire', in David Arnold, ed., *Imperial Medicine and Indigenous Societies* (Manchester, 1988); John R. McLane, *Indian Nationalism and the Early Congress* (Princeton, 1977), pp. 332–57.

anti-colonial militancy were nourished by views of European rule as an assault on customary faith and morality.[37]

Faced with all this, few of the professionally trained specialists who had come to dominate the fields of soldiering, administration, medicine, engineering, and missionary work could see themselves as presiding over an Empire of safely domesticated subject peoples. Britons pursuing these colonial careers were ever conscious of being surrounded by dangerous frontiers. Even at the end of the century, British scholar-officials continued to make much of the regions just beyond the heartlands of colonial hegemony where unsettled upland and forest peoples might suddenly erupt in revolts and murderous occultisms, born out of a memory of what British ethnographers conceptualized as the lost nationhood of the casteless tribesman.

More disturbing still was the vision of an inner frontier which was also constantly written and spoken about in colonial reportage. Underlying the intermittent colonial panics about *thuggee*, the famous but possibly imagined blood-cult of the goddess-worshipping Indian stranglers, or the supposed threat of fanatical Islamic *wahhabism*, was the fear that one could never know when another rebellion might erupt from within the colonial soldiery. Apparently safe, domesticated peasants and town-dwellers were also widely held to be easily 'aroused' by the teachings of prophets and other messengers of irrational or seditious spirituality.[38]

'Modernity' in education and culture was therefore not widely thought to have brought stability and social harmony to the Empire. By 1914 many Britons had realized that the more their Asian subjects travelled, prospered, and educated themselves, the less they were inclined to see themselves as living in a self-contained or uncontested world of British power and influence. Increasing numbers of Eastern peoples were known to be following a disquieting path that had brought the Empire's intelligentsias and cosmopolitan commercial intermediaries into new and dangerous company. Many Muslims in colonial India were known to be looking to pan-Islamists in Singapore and Dutch-ruled Sumatra and Java, or even further afield to the Ottoman caliphate, as symbols of Islamizing anti-colonialism.[39] There were even Malay Muslim purists who praised the Japanese for their love of *watan* (nation), and celebrated Japan's victory over Russia in 1905. Indeed, the industrial and military expansion of Japan was the other key stimulus to uneasiness about Britain's Asian subjects in an age when both East and West were apparently experiencing the force of so-called 'modernist' faith in a form

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[37] Robert H. Taylor, *The State in Burma* (London, 1987), p. 177.

[38] For a comparison with French views, Oscar Salemink, 'The Return of the Python God', in *History and Anthropology*, VIII, 4 (1994).

[39] P. M. Holt, Ann K. A. Lambton, Bernard Lewis, eds., *The Cambridge History of Islam*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1970), II. 6, pp. 170–81.

which was increasingly bound up with ideologies of racial awakening, and national self-assertion.[40]

'Orientalist' Encounters

In the early nineteenth century British plans for the Asian Empire had come temporarily to be rooted in a broadly modernizing premise. Until mid-century increasing numbers of British scholar-officials dismissed the orientalizing views of eighteenth-century 'nabobs' who had admired Asia's faiths, arts, and mores. With their insistence on ideals of individuality, westernizing social 'uplift', and modern citizenship, the most influential policy-makers of the early Victorian Empire were equally hostile to the Rajah Brooke tradition of colonial rule, with its attempt to build on indigenous South-East Asian princely culture.[41]

By the end of the century, however, the threatening new religious and political trends discerned in so many regions of Asia had radically changed British thinking about law, faith, and morality in their eastern dominions. The great paradox of colonial rule was that these fears and vulnerabilities ultimately made the British notably more conservative in cultural matters than their Asian subjects. Thus, at a time when many Asians were beginning to embrace socialism and other radically materialist ideologies, the British defended the validity of economic and strategic policies built on a conception of 'oriental' norms and 'essences'.[42] Martial race theory became the dominant principle in colonial military recruitment: later-nineteenth-century innovations in law and policing stressed collective racial and moral essences rather than individual rights. Thus, India's Criminal Tribes Acts of 1871 (revised and extended in 1911) empowered the state to define entire castes or communities as criminals by blood and genetic inheritance. In Malaya too, as northern Kedah and other frontier zones were opened up to mining, colonial officials became preoccupied with fears of 'dacoity' (organized brigandage) and a belief in the inherent criminality of certain so-called tribes or 'gypsy-like' racial groups.[43] Paradoxically, however, British officials also decided that in the more established colonial centres their surveillance techniques had successfully domesticated the secret societies, which could therefore be safely left to regulate the Chinese 'coolie' traffic.[44]

[40] Milner, *Invention of Politics*, p. 168.
[41] R. H. W. Reece, *The Name of Brooke: The End of White Rajah Rule in Sarawak* (Kuala Lumpur, 1982).
[42] For an ultra-conservative view, Sir Michael O'Dwyer: *India as I Knew It* (London, 1925), esp. chap. 21, 'Is India a "lost Dominion"?'
[43] David E. Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860–1940* (Basingstoke, 1994); for Burma, see Tarling, ed., *CHSEA*, II, p. 92. On policing: Cheah Boon Kheng, *The Peasant Robbers of Kedah* (Singapore, 1988), p. 16; Yang, *Crime and Criminality*.
[44] Trocki, *Opium and Empire*, p. 158.

In constitutional politics too, the Empire's ostensibly modern institutions were designed to reflect this same idea of the tribe, caste, or religious 'community' as the central element in Asian culture. Like governing bodies in many other colonial cities, the Rangoon Municipality became a predominantly elected body in 1882, but its members were elected as representatives of one of the city's specified ethno-linguistic populations—Burmese, Armenian, European, Chinese, Hindu, Muslim—much like the *kapitans* (designated community headmen) in the old East India Company trading enclaves. In India too the new electoral constituencies, created under the 1882 Resolution on Local Self-Government and the 1909 Morley–Minto reforms, were defined on the basis of collective interest or 'community', rather than any Western notion of one-person, one vote.[45]

Paradoxically, many of these constitutional measures coincided with moves towards the system of so-called indirect rule as devised for Fiji and colonial Africa. Ceylon's colonial Governor, Sir A. Hamilton-Gordon (1883–90), tried to do this by treating members of the island's Goyigama caste as a 'traditional' native aristocracy who could be vested with power like the 'paramount chiefs' of Lugard's Nigeria.[46] Even where landed patrician groups had lost materially and politically to more adaptable 'modern' élites, Britain, like other Western colonial powers, looked for ways to adopt the symbolic trappings of Asia's dynastic lordships. Like the French, the British sought to achieve this by means of the spectacular public rituals which they called 'durbars', and also through the creation of a colonial military culture which dressed white officers in the kind of archaic Oriental splendour which had become unthinkable for European civilians.

Archaeological research and the study of indigenous arts and literature were applied to the same purpose. By the mid-nineteenth century influential scholar-officials had deemed that India's most 'virile' cultural inheritance was the architectural style which they dubbed Indo-Saracenic. To create modern buildings which echoed the creations of pre-colonial Muslim conquerors was thus to assert both the permanence and the authenticity of British rule. From the 1870s, in the building of everything from new schools to railway stations, a 'nativized' pastiche was adopted, neo-Mughal in India, and quasi-Abbasid for the new town mosques and other public buildings of colonial Malaya. These conventions rapidly supplanted the neo-Georgian forms used by previous generations of Imperial architects.[47] The authorities' atavistic preoccupation with princely culture was also expressed in their commitment of scarce revenues to the support of schools and

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[45] Tinker, *Foundations of Local Self- Government*.

[46] Patrick Peebles, 'Governor Arthur Gordon and the Administration of Sri Lanka', in N. G. Barrier, ed., *British Imperial Policy in India and Sri Lanka, 1858–1932* (New Delhi, 1981).

[47] Thomas R. Metcalf, 'Imperial Towns and Cities', in Marshall, ed., *Cambridge Illustrated History*, pp. 224–53.

colleges catering to the sons of Indian and Malay patrician households. In such establishments as the so-called 'Malay Eton' at Kuala Kangsar, the sons of lordly rent-receivers were supposed to learn 'manliness' and enlightened moral principles in imitation English public schools stressing team sports and 'modern' deportment, while simultaneously deferring to their pupils' supposedly inextinguishable religious and cultural 'essences'.[48]

These encounters between Western and Asian modes of thought were therefore not truly 'colonial'. Throughout the nineteenth century there was much debate, exchange, and 'resistance' across the realm of culture, rather than any one-sided transfer of values or institutions. Indeed, it was Asians as much as Britons who shaped these developments in faith, knowledge, and perception. In the twentieth century it was Asians again who took the lead in dismantling the 'invisible empire', even though its influence can still be traced in the ideologies of so-called Asian values which may well establish themselves across the world as the twenty-first century's most potent cultural force.

[48] Metcalf, *Land, Landlords and the Raj*, pp. 321–27; Milner, *Invention of Politics*, pp. 73, 241.

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The British West Indies

GAD HEUMAN

The British West Indies in 1815 consisted of a large number of islands and territories acquired over two centuries. The original colonies established in the seventeenth century, Barbados, Jamaica, and the Leeward Islands, were still the most important British possessions in the region. During the eighteenth century Dominica, St Vincent, Grenada, and Tobago were added to this group as a result of the Seven Years War (1756–63). In the early nineteenth century the British gained St Lucia, Trinidad, and British Guiana. The British were also present in the Bahamas, in parts of the Virgin Islands, and in British Honduras.

These colonies were characterized by different forms of colonial government. The older colonies had their own legislatures, with elected Assemblies and nominated Legislative Councils. Although a Governor represented the Crown, the local Assemblies had significant powers of legislation and taxation. There were very different constitutional arrangements in the most recently acquired territories, St Lucia, Trinidad, and British Guiana. These became Crown Colonies, controlled directly from London, with much less local participation in their political affairs.

The levels of economic development of the British colonies also differed significantly. While all produced sugar, some of the early colonies had been doing so continuously for almost 200 years. Nearly all the land in Barbados, for example, was devoted to sugar; yet in Trinidad and British Guiana the large-scale production of sugar was a relatively new development. These differences would become more marked during the nineteenth century, especially as a result of emancipation and its aftermath.

The economies of the British West Indies in this period have been the source of considerable debate. In *Capitalism and Slavery*, Eric Williams argued that the declining economies of the British West Indies led to the abolition of the slave trade and of slavery. More recent research has rejected this conclusion; it is now clear that the colonies of the British Caribbean profited considerably during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. The collapse of the largest sugar producer in the Caribbean, Saint-Domingue, led to an increased output of sugar and

Scale:
0 — miles — 400
0 — km — 400

Labels on map:

Atlantic Ocean

Bahamas

Turks & Caicos Is

Cuba

Dominican Republic

Mexico

Cayman Is

Puerto Rico

British Virgin Is

Anguilla

Antigua & Barbuda

St Kitts & Nevis

British Honduras

Jamaica

Haiti

Montserrat

LEEWARDS

Dominica

St Lucia

Caribbean Sea

St Vincent

Grenadines

WINDWARDS

Barbados

Grenada

Tobago

Trinidad

Pacific Ocean

Panama

Colombia

Venezuela

Inset:

Venezuela

British Guiana

Surinam

French Guiana

Brazil

M A P 21.1. The West Indies

other staples throughout the British West Indies. Yet this boom proved temporary. With the end of the Napoleonic Wars, British colonies in the Caribbean faced difficult economic times: post-war deflation by 1820 led to a slump in the sugar market. Some of the older West Indian colonies had more difficulty coping with these problems than Britain's newer and less developed acquisitions.[1]

Although different in their economies and their political structures, all British West Indian colonies were slave societies. The institution of slavery is crucial to understanding the nature of these colonies. In general, a small planter class controlled a large number of slaves. The figures are revealing: at one end of the scale, British Guiana in 1823, the ratio of blacks to whites was 20:1. On the plantations of the colony, the numbers were even higher, often reaching figures of 60:1.[2] In the more settled colony of Jamaica, the preponderance of slaves was still significant, the ratio closer to ten slaves for every white. The exception in the British West Indies was Barbados, where a largely resident planter class remained in the island. Yet even there, the ratio of blacks to whites was 4:1.

Another general characteristic of West Indian society was a marked degree of absentee ownership of the sugar estates. Many whites regarded the West Indies as a place to make money; their hope was to make their fortunes and return to England to live off their estates. Most whites did not achieve this aim, but a significant proportion of the sugar plantations, generally the largest and richest, were owned by absentees. Although there were often significant white populations in the British West Indies, the absentee *mentalité* had an important effect on these societies.[3]

By 1815 another class in British West Indian society, the free people of colour, had grown in importance. Originally the offspring of whites and blacks, free coloureds in the early nineteenth century consisted of manumitted (freed) slaves as well as men and women born free. Largely mixed in colour and predominantly female, they suffered a number of political and economic disabilities. They could not vote, partake in political life, or testify in court against whites; they were also barred from certain occupations, including supervisory posts on the plantations. Yet the free coloureds were an increasingly important class numerically: in many of the West Indian colonies they outnumbered the whites. During the first few decades of the century the free people of colour sought to improve their legal condition in these societies. While many whites were still prejudiced against them,

[1] Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1944); Seymour Drescher, *Econocide: British Slavery in the Era of Abolition* (Pittsburgh, 1977).
[2] Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca, NY, 1982), p. 269.
[3] J. R. Ward, *British West Indian Slavery, 1750–1834: The Process of Amelioration* (Oxford, 1988), p. 13.

others believed it important to respond to their demands, especially in the face of attacks on the slave system itself.[4]

Unlike the free coloureds, the slave population in the British West Indies generally continued to decline in the early nineteenth century. This was a considerable disappointment to the humanitarians, who believed that the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 would lead to an improvement in the condition of slaves. The humanitarians argued that slaves would no longer be expendable as they had previously been, and consequently planters would look after them more carefully. Indeed, slavery itself might disappear as planters realized that free labour was cheaper and more efficient than slave labour.[5]

The reality was very different. All British West Indian colonies, apart from Barbados and the Bahamas, failed to maintain a positive natural increase in the slave population in the period 1816 to 1834. While there were some significant variations from colony to colony, the heaviest decreases occurred in those areas dominated by sugar plantations.[6] Barbados was an exception to this rule. There, the slave population was more creole (locally born) than elsewhere in the British West Indies. While 44 per cent of Trinidad's slave population consisted of Africans in 1817, only 7 per cent of the Barbadian slaves had been born in Africa. By the turn of the nineteenth century Barbadian planters were secure in the knowledge that their slave population was self-reproducing. Some Barbadian planters even supported abolition of the trade, seeing African slaves as more problematical than creoles and more likely to rebel.[7]

Notwithstanding their success in abolishing the slave trade, British humanitarians continued to monitor developments in the West Indies. Since they feared the possibility of illegal slave trading, the humanitarians succeeded in obtaining a system of public registration in the slave colonies. Beginning in 1817 and usually repeated every three years, the registration of slaves revealed that conditions for the slaves had not improved after 1808. As low birth rates and high mortality rates continued, abolitionists concluded that the planters were still mistreating their slaves and working them to death.[8]

The abolitionists therefore decided to establish a new organization and a new policy to deal with the problem of colonial slavery. In the spring of 1823, they

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[4] Gad J. Heuman, *Between Black and White: Race, Politics, and the Free Coloreds in Jamaica, 1792–1865* (Westport, Conn., 1981), pp. 3–51.

[5] Howard Temperley, *British Antislavery, 1833–1870* (London, 1972), p. 7.

[6] B. W. Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807–1834* (Baltimore, 1984), pp. 72–76.

[7] Hilary McD. Beckles, 'Emancipation by Law or War? Wilberforce and the 1816 Barbados Slave Rebellion', in David Richardson, ed., *Abolition and its Aftermath: The Historical Context, 1790–1916* (London, 1985), p. 86; Hilary McD. Beckles, *A History of Barbados: From Amerindian Settlement to Nation-State* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 77–78.

[8] Temperley, *British Antislavery*, p. 7. On mortality rates see Vol. II, chap. by Philip D. Morgan.

founded the Anti-Slavery Society; its leading members included prominent humanitarians such as William Wilberforce, Thomas Clarkson, and Zachary Macaulay. Thomas Fowell Buxton replaced Wilberforce in 1824 as leader and parliamentary spokesman. Although the Anti-Slavery Society sought to develop a gradual plan for the ultimate abolition of slavery, it also favoured an immediate improvement in the condition of the slaves.[9]

Accordingly, Buxton presented proposals to Parliament in May 1823 which included the emancipation at birth of all children as well as measures to ameliorate slave conditions. In response, the government submitted an alternate set of proposals agreed with representatives of the West India planters. These were designed to provide the slaves with more opportunity for religious instruction, prevent the break-up of slave families, end the flogging of women, and make possible compulsory manumission. Most importantly, the measures did not involve emancipation, and were to be formulated and implemented in the legislative colonies by the colonists themselves. The government was seeking to move slowly, being anxious to retain the constitutional relationship between the older colonies and Britain rather than exercise its authority over them.[10]

Yet even this moderate stance was too much for the colonists in the West Indies. In Jamaica the response was particularly defiant. A committee of the House of Assembly accused the government of accepting 'principles laid down by the enemies of the colonies'. The reaction in Barbados was more direct; a mob destroyed the Methodist chapel of the missionary William Shrewsbury, believing that he sympathized with the government's proposals. This resistance set the pattern for several years: the British government provided suggestions for ameli-oration which were met by strong opposition in the colonies.[11]

Angered by these delays, more radical members of the Anti-Slavery Society decided in 1831 to seek immediate emancipation. They established the Agency Committee, which was designed to mobilize popular support for their cause. The Committee also sought pledges from parliamentary candidates to back emancipa-tion and urged voters to support only those candidates who supported the abolition of slavery. In the face of this renewed pressure, the government revived an earlier Order-in-Council which recognized slaves as legal witnesses. To ensure compliance in the legislative colonies, the government promised a considerable reduction in sugar duties if the order was adopted in its entirety.[12]

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[9] Ibid., pp. 9–10. See above, p. 203.

[10] D. J. Murray, *The West Indies and the Development of Colonial Government* (Oxford, 1965), p. 107; Temperley, *British Antislavery*, p. 11.

[11] Temperley, *British Antislavery*, p. 12; Beckles, *History of Barbados*, p. 86.

[12] Murray, *The West Indies*, p. 188; Heuman, *Between Black and White*, p. 83.

When news of the renewed anti-slavery drive and the Imperial government's intentions reached the West Indies in the late spring and summer in 1831, the whites immediately protested. As in 1823, the protests in Jamaica were especially vehement. Colonists were not just objecting to the Order-in-Council; because of the actions of the abolitionists, whites now feared a slave rebellion. Seeing the government prepared to expose whites to this risk, colonists even threatened to reconsider their allegiance to the Crown.[13]

The problem for the whites was that slaves were aware of the activities of the Anti-Slavery Society and the local resistance to it. This had already led to serious outbreaks elsewhere in the British West Indies. In 1816 Barbadian slaves had become agitated about the Assembly's resistance to Imperial legislation concerning slave registration. Reports at the time equated the Registration Act with a plan for emancipation, and some slaves believed that freedom was being withheld from them. One literate domestic slave, Nanny Grigg, claimed that slaves were to be freed on Easter Monday 1816, but 'the only way to get it was to fight for it, otherwise they would not get it; and the way they were to do, was to set fire, as that was the way they did in Saint Domingo'.[14] When the slave rebellion did break out on Easter Sunday, it spread to a third of the island. Its leader, Bussa, an African head ranger on a plantation in south-east Barbados, timed the rebellion to coincide with the peak of the harvest season. The slaves made use of arson in an attempt to obtain their freedom; however, the rebellion proved short-lived and the repression was savage.[15]

There was a similar backdrop to the Demerara slave rebellion in 1823. Again, slaves believed that the local whites were withholding their freedom; in this case, the Imperial context of the rebellion was the formation of the Anti-Slavery Society and the beginning of the abolitionists' campaign in Britain. The rebellion broke out in August, involving thousands of slaves. Like the Barbados uprising it was repressed severely, with the death of about 250 slaves. The planters linked the rebellion to the work of the humanitarians and, more specifically, to the chapel in Demerara of the Revd John Smith, a missionary for the London Missionary Society. Found guilty of complicity in the rebellion, he died in prison while awaiting a reprieve from the Crown.[16]

As in Barbados and Demerara, slaves in Jamaica in 1831 concluded that they too had been freed, in part because of the whites' resistance to the 1831 Order-in-Council. When the rebellion broke out just after Christmas it was the largest

[13] Heuman, *Between Black and White*, pp. 83–84.
[14] Craton, *Testing the Chains*, p. 261.
[15] Beckles, *History of Barbados*, pp. 79–81.
[16] Craton, *Testing the Chains*, chap. 21, but see also Emilia Viotti da Costa, *Crowns of Glory, Tears of Blood: The Demerara Slave Rebellion of 1823* (New York, 1994).

outbreak Jamaica had seen. One report claimed that 20,000 slaves were involved; the uprising spread throughout western Jamaica and 226 estates sustained damages involving more than £1 million sterling. As in Demerara, missionaries were implicated; the rebel, Sam Sharpe, was a leader in the Baptist Church as well as a 'Daddy' in the Native Baptist Church. After the rebellion, which the authorities suppressed ferociously, whites attacked missionaries and tore down their chapels, blaming them for the upheaval. Indeed, the rebellion was called 'The Baptist War'.[17]

Jamaica's slave rebellion made it clear to many in Britain that slavery could not continue. The abolitionists were now seeking immediate emancipation, and after 1832 the reformed House of Commons was more responsive to popular pressure. One of the Baptist missionaries attacked in Jamaica after the rebellion, William Knibb, toured England, recounting the horrors of slavery and seeking its abolition. Since emancipation was now in the forefront of political concerns, ministers and officials began to think seriously about how to achieve it.

Officials in the Colonial Office were struck by the need to free the slaves while still retaining the basic structure of plantation society in the West Indies. In their minds, one of the potential dangers for the slaves was a reversion to 'barbarism' once they became free. Henry Taylor, senior clerk in the West India Department of the Colonial Office, therefore devised a plan based on the Spanish model of *coartación*. Under this system, the British government would declare the slaves free for one day; thereafter, slaves could use the proceeds of working on that day to buy further days of freedom. Taylor's superior, Lord Howick, the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, sought to solve the problem of labour in a different manner. His solution was to impose a tax on ex-slaves' provision grounds, which would force the freedmen to work for wages on the estates to pay the tax. Although neither scheme was eventually adopted, the rationale in each case was clear: freedom and continued sugar cultivation on the plantations were inextricably linked.[18]

The final act to emancipate the slaves was a compromise, worked out by the government with representatives of the Anti-Slavery Society and the West Indian planters. At its heart was the establishment of an apprenticeship system: slaves would be freed but become apprentices, working for their former masters for up to forty-five hours a week, and less for those who maintained themselves by provi-

[17] Gad Heuman, 'A Tale of Two Jamaican Rebellions', in Wim Hoogbergen, ed., *Born Out of Resistance: On Caribbean Cultural Creativity* (Utrecht, 1995), pp. 196–204. See also Mary Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society, 1787–1834* (Urbana, Ill., 1982), chap. 6; Craton, *Testing the Chains*, chap. 22; Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832–1938* (Baltimore, 1992), pp. 14–15.

[18] Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, pp. 45–47; Murray, *The West Indies*, p. 195.

sion grounds. The legislation separated field and skilled slaves, with skilled slaves ending their apprenticeship after four years while field slaves would do so after six. Children under the age of 6 were to be freed immediately, and special magistrates were to be appointed to oversee the workings of the system. Most important from the planters' point of view was a grant of £20 million compensation for the loss of their slaves. Although the legislative colonies were given the responsibility of passing the specific emancipation legislation, they did so readily since compensation payments were dependent on it. Two colonies, Antigua and Bermuda, decided to opt for full freedom immediately. In Antigua planters believed they could control their freedmen without the intervening apprenticeship; in Bermuda slaves worked in maritime occupations and apprenticeship was therefore less applicable.[19]

At midnight on 31 July 1834, 750,000 former slaves in the British West Indies celebrated their freedom. In general, observers reported calm; missionaries described full churches and peaceful celebrations to mark the end of slavery. But there were problems. In St Kitts the labourers on the plantations had resolved not to return to work without pay. Some of the apprentices said that 'they would give their souls to hell and their bodies to the sharks rather than be bound to work as apprentices'. The authorities declared martial law, rounded up the striking apprentices who had fled, and forced them all back to work.[20]

There were also longer-term difficulties. One immediate problem was an insufficient number of special magistrates established by London to monitor the apprenticeship system. Some islands, such as Nevis, Montserrat, and Tobago did not have any special magistrates at the outset of the system; St Kitts had one, and there were two for the whole of Trinidad. Yet one of these was too ill to work and the other died only six weeks after arrival. The special magistrates, many of them former military officers sent from Britain, were insufficiently paid; and apprentices often regarded them as biased towards the planters, even when that was not the case.[21]

The planters' perception of the apprenticeship system caused further difficulties. Some planters took a very exacting approach towards the apprentices, being no longer prepared to grant apprentices the allowances they had enjoyed during slavery. In certain instances planters withdrew food allowances formerly given to

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[19] William A. Green, *British Slave Emancipation: The Sugar Colonies and the Great Experiment, 1830–1865* (Oxford, 1976), chap. 5.

[20] Richard Frucht, 'From Slavery to Unfreedom in the Plantation Society of St. Kitts, W.I.', in Vera Rubin and Arthur Tuden, *Comparative Perspectives on Slavery in New World Plantation Societies* (New York, 1977), p. 384. See also Robert S. Shelton, 'A Modified Crime: The Apprenticeship System in St. Kitts', *Slavery and Abolition*, XVI, 3 (1995), pp. 331–45.

[21] Green, *British Slave Emancipation*, pp. 137–40.

slaves; in others, women who had given birth to six children and were therefore exempted from field labour during slavery were sent back to the field. Since all non-agricultural workers were to be freed in four years rather than six for agricultural workers, many planters sought to classify more slaves as working solely in agriculture. In Grenada planters persisted in classifying all apprentices as agricultural labourers, despite Crown rulings to the contrary.[22]

Abolitionists in Britain, who had opposed the establishment of the apprenticeship system, were aware of these problems and began an anti-apprenticeship campaign. Led by a wealthy merchant, Joseph Sturge, it gathered momentum after Sturge and one of his associates, Thomas Harvey, published an attack on the system, *The West Indies in 1837*, and continued despite government attempts to improve the workings of the system in early 1838. Bowing to this pressure, the West Indian Assemblies ended the system prematurely on 1 August 1838. Even in its abbreviated form the apprenticeship system was not successful; it did not establish a useful basis for a free society. Instead, it frequently brought bitterness and controversy and made the working out of freedom that much more difficult.

By ending the apprenticeship system early, planters in the British West Indies believed they would no longer be subject to further Imperial legislation. For the planters, it was important that they control local legislation; they did not envisage emancipation altering either the hierarchical nature of society or their political dominance. In the colonies with Assembly governments, this meant that whites sought to enact legislation limiting the rights of the ex-slaves, including vagrancy and police acts designed to restrict their mobility.

The Colonial Office, however, continued to see itself as the protector of the ex-slave population. Through the work of James Stephen, who was Permanent Under-Secretary for the Colonies between 1836 and 1847, the Colonial Office continued to monitor closely the legislation of the Assembly governments in the immediate post-emancipation period. As a result, the British government disallowed many of the Acts passed in 1838. Instead, Lord Glenelg, the Colonial Secretary, drafted a series of Orders-in-Council as well as specific instructions for colonial legislatures on a wide range of issues. The Orders-in-Council became law in the Crown Colonies; in the legislative colonies the instructions were models for legislation to be passed locally. Governors were to withhold consent from any measures which did not conform to these models.[23]

The Assemblymen in the British West Indies were indignant at this interference in their legislative autonomy. As so often, the Jamaican Assembly was especially

[22] Green, *British Slave Emancipation*, pp. 132–33.
[23] Ibid., pp. 164–65.

vehement in its denunciation. It had seen the home government disallow many of its laws during apprenticeship, and it had vigorously protested against the premature ending of the system. When Parliament legislated further in August 1838, providing a blueprint for reform and regulation of the local prisons in the West Indies, the Jamaican Assembly took strong action. It went on strike, declaring a moratorium on public business until the Prisons Act was withdrawn.

The issue was much wider than the Prisons Act itself. At stake was whether the British government or the local Assemblies would legislate for the freed population. In October 1838 Henry Taylor wrote an important memorandum attacking the West Indian legislatures and arguing for the adoption everywhere of Crown Colony government. In Taylor's view, the Assemblies were unfit to govern a free people; moreover, it was useless to attempt a great social experiment, emancipation, with a political system designed for a slave society. Taylor was arguing for a form of trusteeship, since the British government would look after the interests of the majority of the population.

Taylor's proposal met considerable opposition when presented to the Cabinet, and it was significantly watered down. Rather than suspend all the Assemblies, the measure was to apply only to Jamaica, for a period of five years. Given the weak state of the Whig government, even that proposal did not command sufficient support in Parliament. In the end the Jamaican Assembly survived intact, with the planter class remaining in power.[24]

Yet the planter class did face challenges to its political domination, especially from black and brown representatives to the Assemblies. As free coloureds and free blacks, they had achieved full civil rights in the early 1830s, in part because of the support of British abolitionists and the Colonial Office. Although not a single political bloc, black and brown Assemblymen generally supported Imperial government policies. Moreover, they could carry weight: in Dominica, for example, coloured representatives formed a majority in the Assembly. Their presence prevented the passage of harsh legislation against the ex-slaves which characterized many other West Indian colonies.[25]

In Jamaica the coloured and black members of the Assembly united to form the Town Party, a faction which opposed the planter-dominated Country Party. The coloureds favoured funds being spent on education, resisted expensive immigration schemes, and sought to counter planter attempts to restrict the franchise. Moreover, the coloureds also voted against measures to shift the burden of taxation almost entirely on to small settlers. Brown and black representatives

[24] Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, pp. 108–12.
[25] Russell Chace, Jr, 'Protest in Post- Emancipation Dominica: The "Guerre Negre" of 1844', *Journal of Caribbean History*, XXIII, 2 (1989), p. 119.

remained a minority in the Jamaican House of Assembly, but as their numbers grew, the planters became increasingly alarmed about the possibility of being outnumbered.[26]

Coloured and black politicians were not the planters' only opponents. European missionaries, notably the Baptists, were especially concerned about the plight of the ex-slaves. They attacked the harsh legislation emanating from the Jamaican Assembly and also wished to sever the connection between church and state in the colony. Led by William Knibb, the Baptists sought to organize the small settler vote. Wanting to elect Assemblymen committed to their programme, they therefore attempted to register large numbers of freeholders who would return suitable candidates. In the early 1840s, they were becoming a potentially important political force: Governor Charles Metcalfe regarded them as a political party with great influence over the ex-slave population. However, when his successor, Lord Elgin, called a surprise election in 1844, the Baptists were unable to affect the results significantly and declined thereafter as a political force in Jamaica.[27]

Baptist missionaries acted on behalf of the freed people in other ways, serving, for example, as advisers to ex-slaves over wages. In the aftermath of emancipation this was a highly fraught issue; consequently, Baptist missionaries supported ex-slaves in their strikes for higher wages and for better working conditions.[28] Ex-slaves also had to contend with a related problem: the development of the rent-wage system. Although as slaves they had enjoyed the use of provision grounds and their homes without any charge, after emancipation planters charged rents for these facilities. The rents were linked to work on the estates; if the work was unsatisfactory, the planters could threaten their labourers with eviction. For the planters, this system meant lower wage costs and a captive labour force; for the freed people, it meant a severe restriction on their freedom.

The rent-wage system differed from colony to colony. In Barbados, for example, work on an estate for five days a week entitled the tenant to live rent free. Those who worked less were subject to a fine, effectively a payment of rent deducted from the estate wages. This compelled the ex-slave to work on the estate. Elsewhere, as in Jamaica, rents were sometimes exorbitant; although they averaged 2s. a week, the rents could be as high as 6s.8d. per household, with each family member being charged. There was wide variation among the colonies when examining rents as a

[26] Heuman, *Between Black and White*, chap. 10.

[27] Robert J. Stewart, *Religion and Society in Post-Emancipation Jamaica* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1992), pp. 19–20.

[28] Swithin Wilmot, 'From Falmouth to Morant Bay: Religion and Politics in Jamaica, 1838–1865', unpublished paper presented at the Association of Caribbean Historians' Conference, Havana, April 1985, p. 1.

percentage of wages: in Barbados and Tobago rents were about 20 per cent of wages, in Grenada 35 per cent, and in Jamaica they were as high as 48 per cent.[29]

High rents and threats of eviction alienated many freed people. Where land was available and where planters could not restrict its sale, ex-slaves frequently left the estates to establish their own freeholds. The movement of freed people off the estates was therefore not an instinctive reaction to the horrors of slavery. Instead, 'it was a protest against the inequities of early "freedom"'.[30] It also had significant economic effects: freed people contributed to the growth of both export and local markets.

Missionaries aided the process of setting up villages. Often helped by British philanthropists, missionaries bought land from the planters for the purpose. Some of Jamaica's free villages were established during the apprenticeship period: the first such, Sligoville, was founded in 1835. During the next six years Baptist missionaries settled more than 3,000 people in Baptist villages, some with evocative names such as Buxton, Wilberforce, and Victoria.[31]

Not only missionaries but ex-slaves also organized free villages. In British Guiana former plantation headmen bought up estates on behalf of a larger group of freed people. For example, in November 1839, sixty-three people, many of whom were headmen, bought Northbrook Estate for $10,000; this was subsequently subdivided. A few years later four headmen purchased Den Amstel estate on behalf of seventy field workers. Villages were also established in some of the smaller colonies: in Antigua, by 1842, there were twenty-seven independent villages containing over 1,000 homes and 3,600 people.[32]

The establishment of free villages highlighted the problem of labour for the planters. Yet it was not just the flight from the estates which deprived plantations of their labour. Many freed people preferred to work on their own land or for themselves rather than on the estates. This was especially the case for women, many of whom ceased to work on the estates after emancipation. As women had made up more than half the field labourers during slavery, their withdrawal from the plantations inevitably affected the planters. Although less important as labourers, children also left the plantations in the wake of emancipation. Reflecting on the shortage of labour before a Select Committee of Parliament in 1842, an

[29] O. Nigel Bolland, 'Systems of Domination after Slavery: The Control of Land and Labour in the British West Indies after 1838', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, XXIII, 4 (1981), p. 596.

[30] Douglas Hall, 'The Flight from the Estates Reconsidered: The British West Indies, 1838–1842', *Journal of Caribbean History*, X/XI, (1978), p. 23.

[31] Philip D. Curtin, *Two Jamaicas: The Role of Ideas in a Tropical Colony, 1830–1865* (Cambridge, Mass., 1955), p. 115.

[32] Green, *British Slave Emancipation*, p. 302; Douglas Hall, *Five of the Leewards, 1834–1870: The Major Problems of the Post-Emancipation Period in Antigua, Barbuda, Montserrat, Nevis and St. Kitts* (Barbados, 1971), p. 53.

estate owner in St Kitts maintained that there was a sufficient number of labourers in the island, but not 'labour enough'. Ex-slaves were unwilling to provide the continuous labour which the planters sought, especially during the harvest.[33]

With fewer labourers, planters in some colonies sought to improve the technology of sugar-making. Throughout the West Indies agricultural societies were established to exchange information on sugar production and improve methods. The Governor of Jamaica, Lord Elgin, founded a Royal Agricultural Society, and agricultural shows became a feature of plantation life in the island. Planters made more use of the plough and harrow as well as of a new type of vacuum pan in the production of sugar. They also introduced steam engines in their sugar factories in place of cattle or windmills. In Trinidad and British Guiana, nearly all the plantations adopted steam, but it was important elsewhere. St Kitts had thirty-three steam mills by 1846, and a third of the mills in Tobago by 1849 were steam driven.[34]

These new signs of relative optimism among the West Indian plantocracy were accompanied by a shift in Colonial Office thinking. During the 1830s the emphasis in the Colonial Office had been on the emancipated population. Henry Taylor and James Stephen had scrutinized the legislation of the colonies to protect the ex-slaves. With the development of free villages and the significant increase in the number of small freeholders, Colonial Office officials became more concerned about survival of the plantations. Fearing that they might even collapse, officials adopted measures designed to preserve the estates. The new Colonial Secretary in 1841, Lord Stanley, embodied this change of policy. Unlike his immediate predecessor, Stanley responded more favourably to the arguments of the West Indian planters than to the complaints of the humanitarians.[35]

As a consequence, the Colonial Office was prepared to allow legislation which previously would have been regarded as inimical to the interests of ex-slaves. Taxation was one such area. During the 1840s Assemblies in the West Indies shifted the tax burden away from the planters on to the majority of the population by raising import duties, often on necessities. The franchise was another contentious issue. Most Assemblies in the 1830s sought to raise franchise qualifications, and deny blacks and coloureds the vote. Although the Colonial Office disallowed this legislation, it was prepared in the following decades to countenance a more restrictive franchise. The Barbados Assembly, for example, passed franchise legislation preserving a predominantly white legislature during this period. The

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[33] Hall, *Five of the Leewards*, p. 32.

[34] Douglas Hall, *Free Jamaica, 1838–1865: An Economic History* (New Haven, 1959), p. 27; Green, *British Slave Emancipation*, p. 212.

[35] Heuman, *Between Black and White*, pp. 137–38.

number of voters also remained small in the other West Indian colonies: for example, in 1854 Grenada had 191 electors, St Vincent 273, and Tobago 135.[36]

However, the planters' optimism did not last. In 1846 Lord Russell's Whig government passed the Sugar Duties Act, which was designed to equalize the duties on all sugar by 1851. Until then, the West Indies had enjoyed preferential tariffs on their sugar, and this protected market was crucial to the survival of many West Indian plantations. Since British West Indian sugar now had to compete with the slave-grown sugar of Cuba and Brazil, planters claimed that they would be ruined.

There is little doubt about the depth of the economic crisis caused by the move to end preferential tariffs. Coming at the same time as severe depression in Britain and Europe and a steep fall in sugar prices, the British government's actions led to the collapse of a large number of West India merchant houses. Estate values plummeted. In British Guiana an estate worth £50,000 in 1822 and £24,000 in 1842 was sold for £625 in 1849. Similarly, in Jamaica a plantation valued at about £80,000 during slavery sold for just £500 in 1849. The West Indian Bank, based in Barbados, suspended payments in December 1847, and the Planters' Bank in Jamaica found itself in a similar position a month later.[37]

The response of the planter class to the equalization of sugar duties was to put pressure on the British government to retain protection. In Jamaica and British Guiana legislators sought to reduce the costly colonial establishment and, specifically, to revise the salaries of the leading officials. The government resisted these attempts at retrenchment, but as in 1838–39, the Jamaican Assemblymen were again prepared to stop the revenues and to create a constitutional crisis. From their point of view, the planters had little to lose. On the one hand, many faced economic ruin; on the other, they were concerned about the increase in black and brown representatives to the House of Assembly. The planters were therefore willing to risk the survival of their Assembly to ensure their continued economic and political dominance.[38]

In the end, the British government responded by postponing the date of the equalization of duties until 1854. It also offered to guarantee the interest on loans up to £500,000, which the colonists could use for capital projects such as the railroad construction and the importation of labour. Although initially reluctant to accept the offer of guaranteed loans, the planters in Trinidad and British Guiana eventually took advantage of them. Immigrant labour proved to be an important element in the survival of many West Indian plantations in the years ahead.

[36] Green, *British Slave Emancipation*, pp. 176–77.
[37] Ibid., pp. 234–35.
[38] Heuman, *Between Black and White*, pp. 142–43.

The planters had sought to attract labour as early as the 1830s and were particularly interested in Europeans. Some of the early immigrants were Germans, who settled in western Jamaica. The planters expected European immigrants to do more than replace slave labour on the plantations: they were to offset the racial imbalance of West Indian society. Moreover, the planters envisaged European labourers occupying the highlands of islands such as Jamaica and providing a model for black workers.

However, the European migrants were badly chosen; many came from seaports and were unaccustomed to agricultural work. The preparations for their arrival were often haphazard, and many of the migrants did not remain on the estates. This was also the case for immigrants from Madeira in the 1840s, most of whom went to Trinidad and British Guiana. But they suffered very high mortality, and many survivors quickly moved off the estates to become shopkeepers and merchants. In general, European immigration proved to be a failure.[39]

The planters therefore turned to other sources of labour. Trinidadian and British Guianese planters tried to attract workers from the heavily populated eastern Caribbean, especially the Leewards and Barbados, much to the consternation of the local plantocracy. They also sought labour from Africa, especially among liberated Africans who been rescued from slave ships and sent to Sierra Leone. Planters even hoped for free blacks from the United States. Yet these schemes were dwarfed by those tapping the source of most of the nineteenth-century migrants to the West Indies, India.

Immigration from India began in 1838, with several hundred Indians attracted to British Guiana. Concerned about the conditions of the Indians on the plantations, British humanitarians succeeded in having the immigration stopped. However, with the Colonial Office thinking about the survival of the plantations and the great demand for labour, Indian immigration was revived in 1845 and continued until 1917. Initially immigrants were indentured for one year, although the British government regarded this as a concession in the light of the larger number of Indians who deserted their employers. Continued planter pressure led to the introduction of three-year contracts for indentured labourers in 1850, which were increased to five-year contracts in 1862. To qualify for a return passage to India, the immigrant was obliged to reside in the colony for ten years.[40]

There were serious problems associated with Indian immigration. It was difficult to attract female emigrants, despite efforts to increase their numbers, and the gender imbalance among Indians in the West Indies remained a significant

[39] Douglas Hall, 'Bountied European Immigration with Special Reference to the German Settlement at Seaford Town up to 1850', *Jamaica Journal*, IX, 1 (1975), pp. 2–9.

[40] K. O. Laurence, *Immigration into the West Indies in the 19th Century* (Kingston, 1971), p. 24. See above, pp. 90–93.

problem, often leading to violence in the Indian community. The high cost of importing Indians, much of which was paid by the ex-slaves themselves through general taxation, was a strain on the revenues of the West Indian colonies. Moreover, the presence of the indentured Indians reduced the wages of free labour throughout the West Indies. It was perhaps inevitable that free labourers and Indians would compete for work on the plantations; in the case of British Guiana, this resulted in racial confrontation. Generally, however, Indian immigrants remained physically and culturally separate from the blacks.[41]

Yet the Indian immigrants also had a significant effect on the sugar production. In the 1850s and 1860s immigration from India stopped the economic decline of British Guiana and Trinidad; by 1870 the immigrants had helped to sustain a substantial degree of prosperity in these colonies. Their numbers were considerable: nearly 250,000 went to British Guiana, almost 150,000 to Trinidad, and over 36,000 to Jamaica. In each of these colonies more than two-thirds of the Indians chose to remain rather than return to India.[42] Although Indian immigration benefited the West Indian sugar industry, it did little to improve the condition of the ex-slave population. Instead, the planters' focus on importing labour meant that the problems of the freed people were often ignored, with serious results. For example, in the aftermath of emancipation there was a lack of doctors available for the ex-slave population, planters were no longer obliged, as during slavery, to provide doctors for their labourers. Moreover, epidemics swept through the West Indies, often causing terrible loss of life. A cholera epidemic in Jamaica in 1850 cost 30,000 lives; it was followed by an outbreak of influenza as well as smallpox, and then a return of cholera. The disease also spread through the Lesser Antilles and Barbados; in 1854 upwards of 15,000 people died from its effects.[43]

Ex-slaves did not passively accept their condition. After emancipation, riots and protests throughout the region were not uncommon. In 1844 freed people protested violently in Dominica against the taking of a census. At first enumerators were assaulted, but then followed attacks on estate property and managers. A conspiracy four years later in western Jamaica was accompanied by a series of protests and riots in other parts of the island. Jamaica was also the scene of two riots in 1859, one directed against toll-gates in parts of western Jamaica. In 1862 a labour strike in St Vincent degenerated into a riot. Freed people assaulted estate managers and plundered planters' houses and shops over a wide area; the

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[41] Laurence, *Immigration into the West Indies*, p. 46; Brian L. Moore, *Race, Power and Social Segmentation in Colonial Society: Guyana After Slavery, 1838–1891* (New York, 1987). pp. 195, 210. See also Walter Rodney, *A History of the Guyanese Working People, 1881–1905* (Kingston, 1981).

[42] Laurence, *Immigration into the West Indies*, pp. 66, 26.

[43] Green, *British Slave Emancipation*, pp. 311–12.

authorities killed four people and wounded at least seven others in putting down the riot. There were two important riots in 1876, one in Tobago, the other in Barbados. The Barbados riots were the more serious: the issue was whether Barbados would be joined politically to the Windward colonies, and the disturbances resulted in the death of eight people.[44]

There were common grievances in many of these riots. One was low pay, made worse by irregular payments and arbitrary work stoppages. When linked to the truck system, in which estates had their own shops and created a type of debt peonage among their workers, the situation could become tense. Another serious grievance centred around the fear of re-enslavement; this was the motivating force behind the Dominica riots, and a factor in several others. In addition, the ex-slaves' desire for land was often an element in these disturbances. Freed people in Dominica believed that freedom implied more than a change in legal status; it also meant a grant of land.[45]

Several of these factors were prominent in the Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica, the most important post-emancipation outbreak before 1914. On 11 October 1865 several hundred blacks marched into Morant Bay, the principal town in the sugar parish of St Thomas in the East. Led by Paul Bogle, a native Baptist deacon, the crowd attacked the police station before confronting the militia and the parish authorities. In the subsequent mêlée the crowd killed eighteen people. Over the next few days local people killed two planters and attacked many plantations in the parish.

The government's response was swift and brutal. The Governor, Edward John Eyre, declared martial law in the eastern part of Jamaica, despatched British troops to the parish, and organized the Maroons to deal with the outbreak.[46] The month-long period of martial law resulted in the deaths of over 400 blacks. Because of the severity of the repression, the case became a *cause célèbre* in England. John Stuart Mill was among a group of radicals and Nonconformists who organized a campaign to try the Governor for his part in the suppression of the rebellion. In response, Thomas Carlyle, Charles Kingsley, and Charles Dickens helped to establish an Eyre Defence Committee. Although Eyre was never tried, the controversy surrounding his case raised important issues about the nature of colonial rule, martial law, and governmental accountability.[47]

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[44] Gad Heuman, 'Post-Emancipation Resistance in the Caribbean: An Overview', in Karen Fog Olwig, *Small Islands, Large Questions: Society, Culture and Resistance in the Post-Emancipation Caribbean* (London, 1995), pp. 123–34.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Maroons, formerly a community of runaway slaves, were an irregular and effective army of the colony.

[47] Gad Heuman, *'The Killing Time': The Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica* (London, 1994).

In Jamaica, Eyre made use of the rebellion to push for constitutional change. Since the Colonial Office had wanted for some time to abolish the House of Assembly, Eyre convinced a frightened House that they should opt for Crown Colony government. Despite some opposition to this change, the legislators ultimately accepted a nominated Council, consisting of six officials and three unofficial members, and the abolition of the 200-year-old House of Assembly. Apart from Barbados, the other legislative colonies in the West Indies followed suit, although colonies such as Grenada and Tobago were slow to change. By the mid-1870s, and with the continuing exception of Barbados, Crown Colony government was fully established in the British West Indies.[48]

Crown Colony government brought certain advantages. Unlike the system of representative government, with its often fractious Assemblies, there was less scope for serious political divisions in the legislature. Administration was smoother; there was effectively no opposition to the Governor. It was therefore possible to inaugurate long-overdue administrative changes.

Jamaica serves as an important example. There, the new Governor in 1866, Sir John Grant, was a retired Indian civil servant whose last appointment was as Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. Used to strong executive powers, Grant initiated a significant number of administrative reforms. Among these were a new system of district courts, the creation of a more modern police force, and the disestablishment of the Church of England in the colony. Grant also encouraged the immigration of East Indian labourers; roads were improved, new irrigation schemes developed, and more money devoted to education. Many of these projects had been debated by the House of Assembly but had been shelved because of cost or the lack of political will to carry them out.[49]

There were, nevertheless, also problems with Crown Colony government. Grant's reforms were expensive and taxes had to be increased. This was done without the involvement of the people or their representatives; one local newspaper described the system as one of 'paternal despotism'. In theory, the Crown was acting on behalf of the mass of the population, until the people became sufficiently educated for the exercise of representative government. In practice, the Colonial Office was not always well placed to act in this capacity. Its knowledge of local conditions was often fragmentary, and its distance from the West Indies frequently led to delays and misunderstandings. Because of the nature of work in

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[48] Ibid., p. 190; H. A. Will, *Constitutional Change in the British West Indies, 1880–1903* (Oxford, 1970), p. 11.

[49] Heuman, '*The Killing Time*', p. 177; Vincent John Marsala, *Sir John Peter Grant: Governor of Jamaica, 1866–1874* (Kingston, 1972).

the Colonial Office, its officials generally reacted to developments in the colonies rather than initiated new policies.[50]

During the 1870s hostility to Crown Colony government increased in Jamaica. Since the system excluded Jamaicans generally and was dominated by expatriate white officials, blacks, people of colour, and local whites all felt the loss of political offices previously open to them. Agitation against the system brought some modifications: in 1884 the Legislative Council was altered. Thereafter, it consisted of equal numbers of official and unofficial members; the unofficial, elected on a restricted franchise, could only be outvoted if the Governor declared the issue one of paramount importance. Similar changes took place in British Guiana. After 1891 members of the Court of Policy (effectively, the legislature apart from financial matters) were chosen by direct election. In general, however, Crown Colony government remained largely unmodified until after the First World War. It was this political system which had to deal with the economic crisis of the late nineteenth century.[51]

At the time of the Morant Bay Rebellion the sugar industry in the British West Indies, apart from Jamaica, was reasonably profitable. This was partly a function of improved technology; on many of the estates of British Guiana and Trinidad vacuum pans had been introduced in the production of sugar, increasing its quality as well its quantity. Output was undoubtedly aided by the continuing importation of Indian indentured labourers. It is also possible that the passage of the Encumbered Estates Act in 1854, facilitating the sale of insolvent estates, helped to expand production (see Table 21.1). As a result of this legislation, many estates were purchased by British merchant houses who specialized in sugar and had a highly commercial approach to estate production.[52]

Not only British Guiana and Trinidad did well. In the other colonies, where the traditional production of muscovado sugar was continuing, profits were also good. Between 1861 and 1871 sugar exports from St Vincent increased by 5,000 hogsheads. A planter in St Kitts claimed in 1872 that the colony's plantations were at the height of their prosperity. In the same period, Barbados was regarded as the most prosperous of the sugar colonies, with all of its 608 estates functioning and a plentiful supply of labour.[53]

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[50] Will, *Constitutional Change*, p. 3.

[51] Heuman, '*The Killing Time*', pp. 177–78; J. H. Parry and Philip Sherlock, *A Short History of the West Indies* (1956; 3rd edn., London, 1976), pp. 216–17.

[52] R. W. Beachey, *The British West Indies Sugar Industry in the Late 19th Century* (Oxford, 1957), pp. 41–42; Richard A. Lobdell, 'Patterns of Investment and Sources of Credit in the British West Indian Sugar Industry, 1838–1897', *Journal of Caribbean History*, IV (1972), pp. 44–45.

[53] Beachey, *British West Indies Sugar Industry*, p. 42.

TABLE 21.1. *Exports of sugar from the British West Indies, 1820–1899* (tons per year)

	Barbados	Leeward Islands	Jamaica	Windward Islands	Trinidad, British Guiana	Total
1820–29	11,946	16,910	72,051	32,495	50,846	184,248
1830–39	18,696	15,794	58,841	26,405	66,356	186,092
1840–49	17,353	15,789	32,158	17,061	50,606	132,967
1850–59	31,261	17,187	24,447	17,604	68,828	159,327
1860–69	38,216	19,776	25,766	17,842	101,910	203,510
1870–79	41,108	22,074	24,281	21,558	134,489	243,510
1880–89	54,789	29,048	19,974	16,067	164,911	284,789
1890–99	50,451	28,858	20,546	8,485	151,808	260,148

Source: Ward, *British West Indian Slavery*, p. 242.

In terms of sugar production, Jamaica was the exception in the West Indies: its sugar industry was declining in relation to other products. By 1865 about half of the 600 estates in the island at the time of emancipation had been abandoned. As a result, sugar comprised just over 40 per cent of Jamaica's total exports. Other commodities, such as logwood, cattle, and increasingly after 1870, bananas made up the remainder of Jamaica's output. But like the rest of the British West Indies, Jamaica's economy suffered considerably from competition with beet sugar.[54]

European beet sugar producers increased their production substantially during the second half of the century. By 1870 they produced nearly one-third of the total world sugar output. When Germany, the world's major producer of beet sugar, doubled bounties on its sugar exports in 1883–84, the effect on the British market was dramatic. There was a massive increase in beet sugar imports into Britain and, consequently, a collapse in the sugar price. During the 1870s and early 1880s the price of sugar had remained relatively steady at around 20 shillings per hundredweight; in 1884, however, it fell to just over 13 shillings per hundredweight. Since this was less than the cost of production on many West Indian estates, the distress there was immediately visible.[55]

As in the crises of the late 1840s, a number of West Indian merchant houses collapsed, especially those involved in the smaller islands. The production of West Indian sugar was drastically affected. For example, Grenada's output immediately dropped by more than half; two-thirds of the sugar cultivation in St Vincent had

[54] Ibid., p. 43.
[55] Lobdell, 'Patterns of Investment', p. 325; Beachey, *British West Indies Sugar Industry*, p. 59.

been abandoned by 1886. Jamaica's production was affected by the simultaneous exodus of thousands of labourers to work on the Panama Canal.[56]

A further consequence of the late-century economic crisis was the amalgamation of sugar plantations. Of the 150 estates in British Guiana in 1865, for instance, only fifty remained by the turn of the century. In Trinidad, where the first central factories were established in the West Indies, there was also a reduction in the number of estates, from 110 in 1865 to half that number by 1900. Numbers in Jamaica continued to decline, with only about 140 remaining in 1896. Overall in the British West Indies, estates declined in numbers by about a third between the time of emancipation and 1900. Yet this decline did not inevitably mean decreased production, since the larger units proved to be more efficient and often more favourably located. The economic crisis also had the effect of radically shifting the market for sugar. Since beet sugar was dumped into Britain's market, the West Indies turned elsewhere. By 1900 over two-thirds of British West Indian sugar was sent to the United States.[57]

The position of West Indian sugar worsened further when the French and Germans doubled their bounties on beet sugar in 1896, leading to a further drop in sugar prices the following year. West Indian producers claimed that they were threatened with extinction. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain, responded by despatching a Royal Commission to investigate the economic crisis in the West Indies. As a result of the Commission's report and the continuing economic difficulties, the Imperial government decided to confront the problem of sugar beet bounties. Although the Europeans agreed to cease bounties on their sugar from 1903, this did not immediately revive the West Indian sugar industry. The United States market dwindled, as Cuba now enjoyed a highly preferential tariff there, but Canada proved to be the one growth area for West Indian sugar in the early twentieth century. Other Imperial economic initiatives met with only limited success.[58]

The prolonged economic depression had repercussions for the working population in the West Indies. In response to the crisis planters reduced wages, which created considerable hardship for sugar-cane workers. There were reports of widespread destitution and malnutrition after 1884, as well as an increasing incidence of disease. As in the years following emancipation, the economic and social difficulties of the period were reflected in a large number of riots and disturbances.[59]

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[56] Beachey, *British West Indies Sugar Industry*, p. 59.

[57] Ibid., pp. 121–27.

[58] Ibid., chap. 8.

[59] Bonham C. Richardson, 'Prelude to Nationalism? Riots and Land Use Changes in the Lesser Antilles in the 1890s', in Hoogbergen, *Born Out of Resistance*, p. 206.

Violence erupted in Grenada in 1895, St Vincent in 1891, and Dominica in 1893. In 1896 strikes and demonstrations over the issue of lowered wages marked the beginning of the harvest season in St Kitts; during the subsequent riots two people were killed and many others wounded. A plantation riot among Indian indentured workers in British Guiana later the same year also led to five Indian workers killed and another fifty-nine injured when the police opened fire on the crowd. In addition to smaller outbreaks in Montserrat and Dominica, there were serious riots in Montego Bay, Jamaica, in 1902, difficult economic conditions being exacerbated by high taxes. Montego Bay was the target of the rioters for two days, and it took British forces from across the island to restore order. The 1905 riots in British Guiana linked urban workers and sugar estate labourers and were also a response to workers' declining living standards at the end of the century. As with many of these outbreaks, women in British Guiana played a significant role in the riots.[60]

The 1890s also witnessed the first organized workingmen's association in the West Indies. In Jamaica, skilled tradesmen created separate unions, beginning in 1898 with the establishment of the Artisans' Union. A decade later two others, made up of cigar-makers and printers, were also formed. Elsewhere, the Trinidad Workingmen's Association sought to bring together various trades within one organization. Unlike the unions in Jamaica, the Trinidad union had political objectives, such as the reduction of taxes and constitutional reform. But these unions either foundered after unsuccessful strikes or simply ceased to function; it was not until after the First World War that more permanent bodies were established.[61]

This period saw another important development: a reaction to the pseudo-scientific racism in British thought. One strand of British thinking in the mid-nineteenth century was reflected in the work of Thomas Carlyle, who regarded blacks as an inferior race and emancipation as the ruin of the West Indies. The Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica helped to strengthen these views, and the emergence of Social Darwinian ideas reinforced belief in white domination as well as the subordination of blacks. But not all blacks accepted these notions, any more than they did the Crown Colony government they seemed to justify. A Trinidadian, J. J. Thomas, in a book entitled *Froudacity* published in 1888, called for united action to uplift blacks and for a recognition of the links between the New World and Africa. Although some middle-class blacks in Trinidad undoubt-

[60] Ibid., pp. 208–09; Patrick Bryan, *The Jamaican People, 1880–1900* (London, 1991), pp. 271–74; Rodney, *The Guyanese Working People*, chap. 8.

[61] Richard Hart, 'Origin and Development of the Working Class in the English-Speaking Caribbean Area, 1897–1937', in Malcolm Cross and Gad Heuman, eds., *Labour in the Caribbean: From Emancipation to Independence* (London, 1988), pp. 43–50. In Vol. IV, see chap. by Howard Johnson.

edly rejected their racial heritage, a significant number were strong proponents of race consciousness. In Jamaica such views were reflected in a black colonizing scheme. In 1899 Dr Albert Thorne, a Barbadian, held a meeting in which he proposed to settle West Indian settlers in Africa, with the intention of improving the status of the African race. Thorne had some influence on Marcus Garvey, a black Jamaican whose ideas about black capability and self-worth became highly popular just after the First World War.[62]

As with these black challenges to racism, many of the changes in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries laid the groundwork for future developments. Politically, representative government gave way to Crown Colony administration, but there were already modifications to the system which would lead to a wider electorate. Attempts to maintain control of labour in the aftermath of emancipation met with considerable resistance; this not only led to riots and disturbances but also to the growth of a significant peasantry. Moreover, by the end of the nineteenth century Colonial Office officials and policy-makers had changed their views about the importance of the peasantry: sugar was no longer king and the idea of progress was not tied solely to sugar cultivation.[63] Much had changed by 1914, but more fundamental political and social developments in the West Indies would have to wait until the labour disturbances of the 1930s and the coming of political independence later in the century.

[62] Bridget Brereton, 'The Development of an Identity: The Black Middle Class of Trinidad in the Later Nineteenth Century', in Hilary McD. Beckles and Verene Shepherd, *Caribbean Freedom: Society and Economy to the Present* (Kingston, 1993), pp. 281–82; Bryan, *Jamaican People*, p. 258.

[63] Richard A. Lobdell, 'British Officials and the West Indian Peasantry, 1842–1938', in Cross and Heuman, *Labour in the Caribbean*, pp. 199–202.

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22

Ireland and the Empire

DAVID FITZPATRICK

The formal Union of the kingdoms of Ireland and Great Britain (1801–1922) masked a hybrid administration with manifest colonial elements, allowing variant interpretations of the character of Ireland's dependency. Was Ireland an integral part of the United Kingdom, a peripheral, backward sub-region, or a colony in all but name? These were the conflicting assumptions of unionists, devolutionists, and separatists respectively. The manner in which the contending parties specified Ireland's current status reflected, yet also restricted, their visions of its future condition. Underpinning these perceptions of the present and future were incompatible beliefs about the Irish past, reinforced and mobilized by historians and polemicists. Yet the sense of destiny associated with historical mythology, whether unionist or nationalist, was repeatedly challenged by external influences such as legislative reform and changing economic opportunities. Even unionists, pledged to defend the liberties conferred by the Glorious Revolution and incorporated in the Imperial Parliament, might contemplate rebellion against a 'radical' government should it tamper with the Empire. Even those who viewed Ireland as a vassal colony within the Empire might hope to benefit from employment in the Empire's service. Thus changes in the practical operation of the Union were capable of transforming Imperialists into rebels, and separatists into colonists. This chapter explores the involvement in the Empire of both Ireland and the Irish. Is it appropriate to depict Ireland under the Union as a colony? Why have historians found Ireland so difficult to place in their constructions of the Empire and Imperialism? In what ways did political conflict concerning Ireland's future intersect with broader issues of Imperial development? How important were the Irish themselves as colonists? And in what ways did Ireland and the Irish influence the Empire?

The Act of Union terminated Ireland's formal status as a 'Dominion' or dependent kingdom, a condition of colonial subjection inadequately ameliorated by the spurious independence granted to the Irish Parliament in 1782–83. The Union, though eventually accepted by that body, was universally interpreted as

annexation in response to the bloody conflicts of 1798. The formal amalgamation of the two kingdoms allowed Ireland substantial representation in both Houses of Parliament, with occasional opportunities to influence legislation when the major parties were closely balanced. The hundred-odd Irish members comprised about a seventh of the House of Commons, a proportion initially mean but eventually generous. In addition to twenty-eight 'Irish representative peers', some of them beneficiaries of the bribes which had secured the Act of Union, the House of Lords included many with English titles but Irish property. The spiritual lords also included a few Irish representatives until the religious Union was shattered by the disestablishment of the Protestant Church of Ireland (effected in 1871).

The parliamentary Union was not accompanied by economic or administrative integration. Free trade between Ireland and Britain was enacted only in 1824, separate currencies persisted for another two years, and excise duties and taxation remained sharply at variance until 1853. The systems of central and local taxation were never fully reconciled; and Ireland's 'Imperial contribution' to maintaining the armed forces and servicing the national debt was inequitable with respect to both its population and its wealth. The economic inequity was not invariably to Ireland's disadvantage. Until 1853 Irish taxation and excise duties were relatively light. For a few years after 1908, when the introduction of the old-age pension led to disproportionate Irish expenditure, the Imperial contribution became negative and, by some calculations, Ireland was 'under-taxed'. In most years, however, Ireland paid dearly for its incomplete Union. In addition to maintaining a large paramilitary police force under the guise of 'Irish services', Irish taxes often contributed several millions per annum to Imperial burdens—such as the upkeep even in peacetime of a sizeable military and naval establishment.[1] By the late nineteenth century Ireland was clearly disadvantaged by comparison with the formal colonies, which regulated their own taxes and duties, and were exempt from responsibility for Imperial services and the National Debt. In fiscal terms, colonial rule would have been less disadvantageous to Ireland than integration.

The Irish administration remained distinctively colonial in both form and function, despite the legislative Union. As in India after 1858, annexation was followed by direct rule under a 'Lord-Lieutenant' or 'Viceroy' (properly the Lord Lieutenant-General and General Governor of Ireland), whose powers remained ill-defined in the absence of a Parliament over which to preside. The preservation of this office, though largely ceremonial, was a perpetual irritant to virtually every faction: in 1871 Earl Spencer's own private secretary is identified as having declared

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[1] W. E. Vaughan, 'Ireland c.1870', in Vaughan, ed., *A New History of Ireland* (Oxford, 1989), V, pp. 784–94.

that 'the Lord Lieutenancy ought to be abolished as a mark of national inferiority and colonial dependence'.[2] The Viceroy's 'Chief Secretary' was the effective head of government, being usually, but not by entitlement, in Cabinet. An Under-Secretary supervised the Irish administration centred in Dublin Castle, without exercising any control over the armed services or the numerous Whitehall departments with Irish branches. By 1914 there were eleven of these, together with seven Irish departments controlled by the Treasury or Whitehall, and twenty-two boards or bodies under the formal direction of the Chief Secretary. The Lord-Lieutenant retained powers of patronage or veto over appointments to only twenty of these institutions.[3] The administration, in short, was a mess, with limitless opportunities for misunderstanding and collision between the Chief Secretary and the Lord-Lieutenant, the civil and military authorities, or the Castle, the Irish Office, and the Treasury. Despite reiterated demands for assimilating Irish and English laws and institutions, no government could bring itself to accept the full implications of the Union.[4]

In practice, the hybrid Irish administration differed significantly from those of England and Scotland: 'Irish government was remarkable for the extent to which centralization, uniformity, inspection and professionalism spread throughout the system before 1850.'[5] These attributes were evident in the training, arming, and central direction of the Irish Constabulary ('Royal' from 1867), the increasing subjection of local government and the magistracy to the Castle, the creation of a surprisingly successful system of National Education, and the staggering achievement of the Board of Works and the Poor Law Commissioners in mobilizing thousands of officials for famine relief (inadequate though it was) in 1846–47. Irish unrest provoked measures of repression and coercion unthinkable in Britain; Irish poverty justified welfare experiments and state intervention to a degree shocking to orthodox political economists. In these respects, Ireland was not only exceptional within the United Kingdom but akin to a colony, efficiency in government being valued above the liberty of the subject and the sanctity of property.

Pursuit of efficiency demanded active participation from a widening range of Irishmen hitherto excluded from public employment. Initially this was accomplished mainly through official patronage, whereby the Castle functioned as a

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[2] Alan J. Ward, *The Irish Constitutional Tradition: Responsible Government and Modern Ireland, 1782–1992* (Washington, 1994), p. 36.

[3] R. B. McDowell, *The Irish Administration, 1801–1914* (London, 1964), esp. p. 29.

[4] Henry L. Jephson, 'Irish Statute Law Reform', *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, VII, pt. 55 (1879), p. 376; cf. Thomas A. Boylan and Timothy P. Foley, eds., *Political Economy and Colonial Ireland* (London, 1992), p. 136. Though Ireland, unlike Scotland, had no distinct legal code, its statute law differed sharply from England's as a result of innumerable acts excluding or restricted to Ireland.

[5] Oliver MacDonagh, *Ireland* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1968), p. 31.

'proconsular despotism' in creating a bureaucracy unrestrained by the 'créole élite' (as Bayly pertly characterizes Ireland's Protestant 'Ascendancy').[6] Over the period of the Union, the Irish civil service was progressively opened to meritorious candidates without patrons, to Catholics as well as Protestants. This process was accelerated by the introduction of routine competitive examinations in 1871, although forty years later these accounted for only three-fifths of civil appointments. At least two-thirds of ordinary recruits to the Irish Constabulary were Catholics from its foundation in 1836; three-fifths of prison officers were Catholics in the census of 1901; and Protestants were barely in the majority among magistrates by 1912.[7] As in the shifting preference from Hindu to Muslim officials in inter-war India, the Irish administration gradually encouraged a burgeoning colonial élite (the Catholic bourgeoisie) to displace an established ally (the Ascendancy) as its chief mediator between government and people.

Yet the 'democratization' of the Irish administration and its sporadically benevolent conduct scarcely mitigated its colonial character. Even Augustine Birrell, most 'Irish-minded' of Chief Secretaries, acted the part of a District Commissioner when discussing an appointment to the Board of National Education: 'He *must* be a Catholic, & *ought* to be a Layman—I want a good sound sensible sympathetic Irish Educationist, not a representative of any *body* in particular— on the *Irish Language* Question he *should* be sympathetic—but no more than Reason and Patriotism demand.'[8] The Indian approach was made overt by Sir Antony MacDonnell, an Irish Catholic member of the Council of India who became Under-Secretary in Wyndham's Conservative executive in 1902. MacDonnell, who affirmed his 'strong Irish sympathies' when specifying conditions for his appointment, reminded Wyndham that 'for many years I directed administration on a large scale; and I know if you send me to Ireland the opportunity of a mere secretarial criticism would fall far short of my requirements'. As a prominent nationalist later complained: 'We are much oppressed by a gentleman of whom you know who moves in an Indian atmosphere, quite aloof from the fact of the situation in Ireland.... His idea appears to me to be to break up the Irish party machine and dominance in Irish politics and get a kind of Indian Council composed of...non-political businessmen.'[9] MacDonnell, humane though he

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[6] C. A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780–1830* (London, 1989), pp. 195–97.

[7] W. J. Lowe and E. L. Malcolm, 'The Domestication of the Royal Irish Constabulary, 1836–1922', *Irish Economic and Social History*, XIX (1992), pp. 27–48; R. Barry O'Brien, *Dublin Castle and the Irish People* (Dublin, 1909), p. 62; McDowell, *Irish Administration*, p. 116.

[8] Birrell to W. J. M. Starkie, 23 April 1909, Trinity College Dublin, MSS 9209, f. 30.

[9] MacDonnell to Wyndham, 22 Sept. 1902, quoted in Earl of Dunraven, *The Outlook in Ireland: The Case for Devolution and Conciliation* (Dublin, 1907), pp. 288–89; Dillon to Morley, 19 Dec. 1906, in F. S. L. Lyons, *John Dillon: A Biography* (London, 1968), p. 291.

was, had much in common with Sir Charles Edward Trevelyan, Assistant Secretary to the Treasury and ruthless regulator of relief during the Great Famine, before his return to India to apply similar fiscal precepts with equal severity. Ireland's rulers, whether grim or benevolent, tended to regard the Irish as a separate and subject native population rather than an integral element of a united people.

The colonial spirit was evident in what nationalists saw as a substantial 'army of occupation', in which the police performed paramilitary functions while the army offered vigorous 'aid to the civil power' in suppressing riots, affrays, illegal assemblies, and rebellions. In 1881 the Irish garrison of over 25,000 soldiers vastly exceeded that in any dependency except India, amounting to twice the size of the police establishment.[10] The police were largely Irish in origin until the massive enlistment of British ex-servicemen as temporary constables ('Black and Tans') in 1920–21. Their officers, however, included a sprinkling of British gentlemen (as well as Irish Protestants) who might otherwise have joined colonial forces. As Robert Baden-Powell told a succession of English audiences in 1907, the ideal type of the scout 'was to be found ... above all in the Canadian North-West Mounted Police, the South African Constabulary, Royal Irish Constabulary, British South African and numerous other police forces'.[11] English and Scottish soldiers were predominant within the Irish Command, especially after Fenian infiltration of the forces in the 1860s had reinforced the War Office's preference for stationing Irish units out of temptation's way, in Britain or beyond. Even in 1861 53 per cent of officers and men (excluding the militia) had been natives of Britain. Tommy's accent made 'occupation' manifest in the numerous garrison towns, though the occupying forces were popular enough with shopkeepers, publicans, and prostitutes.

Apart from Britishness visible in uniform, the evidence of physical 'colonization' was thinly scattered throughout the country. Ireland's British-born population trebled between 1841 and 1911, yet even by 1911 it amounted to only 55,000 women and 74,000 men (2.9 per cent of the ever-declining Irish population). Of these nearly half were clustered in the vicinities of Dublin and Belfast, reflecting the prominence of British immigrants in professional, clerical, and certain skilled employments.[12] The ancient dream of resettling Ireland with thrifty Scots and

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[10] Andrew Porter, *European Imperialism, 1860–1914* (London, 1994), p. 115.

[11] 'A New Scheme to Develop Good Citizens', in Robert H. MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire: The Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement, 1890–1918* (Toronto, 1993), p. 245.

[12] The occupational census for 1861 shows that the sectors in which British men were most over-represented were (in declining order) hatters, revenue officers, sailors, civil engineers, coastguards, engineers, army officers, merchants, land stewards, commercial travellers, and gentlemen. The most over-represented groups of British women were governesses, teachers, ladies, milliners, annuitants, and factory workers.

enterprising Saxons briefly revived after the Great Famine, when massive emigration rendered land temporarily accessible and the opportunities for capital investment seemed alluring. Otherwise, Anglicization was pursued through education in the English language (sometimes associated with campaigns for religious conversion in a 'Second Reformation'), rather than through renewed plantation by a superior race.

The prevalence and political consequences of racial 'stereotypes' are notoriously tricky to demonstrate, and clearly not all British administrators regarded 'the Irish' as a distinct and inferior race, intermediate between barbarism and civilization. Moreover, the assumption of Celtic inferiority was consistent with conflicting methods of government, depending on the relative weight ascribed to heredity and environment. If Celtic barbarism was inherent and therefore incorrigible, its menace could only be held in check by discipline, firmness, and recurrent coercion. If it resulted from poverty, ignorance, or religious delusion, then it might be eliminated through education and enlightenment.[13] This duality in British perceptions of Irishness was closely paralleled in Imperial attitudes towards the native peoples of Asia, Australasia, and Africa. However, explicit comparisons between coloured races and the Irish were usually insulting to both, and Salisbury was not alone in likening the Irish to the Hottentots (being likewise incapable of self-government). In 1892 Sydney and Beatrice Webb honeymooned in Dublin, reporting that 'the people are charming but we detest them, as we should the Hottentots—for their very virtues'.[14] At the nadir of the Anglo-Irish conflict in 1921, the army commander (General Sir Nevil Macready) denounced his republican opponents for 'acts of provocation such as would not be indulged in by the wildest savages of Central Africa'.[15] In the racial vision of British politicians and administrators, the Irish veered unpredictably between savagery and childlike dependency.

Most studies of Ireland under the Union have neglected its colonial elements.[16] This may be attributed partly to the scholarly practice of allowing formal constitutions rather than practical relationships to circumscribe political analysis.

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[13] L. P. Curtis, *Anglo-Saxons and Celts: A Study of Anti-Irish Prejudice in Victorian England* (Bridgeport, Conn., 1968); Curtis, *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Newton Abbot, 1971).

[14] Curtis, *Anglo-Saxons and Celts*, pp. 102–03, 63.

[15] David Fitzpatrick, 'The Overflow of the Deluge: Anglo-Irish Relationships, 1914–1922', in Oliver MacDonagh and W. F. Mandle, eds., *Ireland and Irish-Australia: Studies in Cultural and Political History* (London, 1986), p. 89.

[16] Joseph Ruane, 'Colonialism and the Interpretation of Irish Historical Development', in Marilyn Silverman and P. H. Gulliver, eds., *Approaching the Past: Historical Anthropology through Irish Case Studies* (New York, 1992), pp. 292–323. Ruane's strictures against historians of Ireland are undermined by his neglect of Mansergh, O'Farrell, and MacDonagh (discussed below).

Furthermore, the confusing amalgam of colonial and integrative processes in the British government of Ireland has discouraged most scholars from defining Ireland's place in the nineteenth-century Empire, although recent publications are likely to provoke further analysis from both Irish and Imperial specialists.[17]

The available analyses highlight the difficulty of incorporating Ireland within any colonial model of general application. Notwithstanding comparisons drawn between Ireland's experience and that of the white settler colonies, few historians have detected the germ of Dominion Status within the shell of the Union.[18] However, several have noted Britain's enduring disposition to govern Ireland like a Crown Colony. The Union itself had been largely prompted by fear of French invasion, and Ireland's proximity to Britain conferred it with a strategic importance comparable with that of Gibraltar or Aden. Governments became gradually less preoccupied with Ireland's strategic role 'as the Bonapartist threat receded'; and by the 1880s it was sometimes suggested that the Empire's strategic interests could be defended without military occupation of the western island.[19] Nevertheless, the imposition of martial law in response to the 1916 Rising, that 'stab in the back' of the British Empire, demonstrated that in wartime strategic calculations still outweighted political common sense in determining the government of Ireland.

It has been suggested that Irish and Indian administrators were equally ready in moments of crisis to apply coercion and suspend civil liberties, but less inclined in the Irish case to initiate 'radical departures from English norms' in matters such as land reform.[20] There is perhaps a parallel to be drawn between Ireland after 1801 and India after 1858, the imposition of direct control being followed in each case by economic spoliation.[21] A variety of 'Irish lessons' may have helped Indian and other colonial administrators 'to tighten the grip of the colonizers or to engender economic growth or social harmony by governing more or less in apparent conformity with established indigenous customs'.[22] There is, however, a subtler parallel between ambiguities in the management of Ireland and the non-European

[17] Bayly, *Imperial Meridian*, p. 12; Keith Jeffery, ed., *An Irish Empire? Aspects of Ireland and the British Empire* (Cambridge, 1996).

[18] Tom Garvin, *The Evolution of Irish Nationalist Politics* (Dublin, 1981), pp. 4, 213, 2; Nicholas Mansergh, *The Commonwealth Experience*, 2 vols., 2nd edn. (London, 1982), I, p. 225; Ward, *Irish Constitutional Tradition*, pp. 29, 30; Patrick O'Farrell, *England and Ireland since 1800* (Oxford, 1975), p. 37.

[19] Oliver MacDonagh, 'Introduction', in Vaughan, *New History*, pp. liii–liv; Vaughan, 'Ireland c.1870', pp. 791–92.

[20] O'Farrell, *England and Ireland*, p. 37.

[21] V. G. Kiernan, *Imperialism and its Contradictions* (New York, 1995), pp. 56–57.

[22] Scott B. Cook, *Imperial Affinities: Nineteenth-Century Analogies and Exchanges between India and Ireland* (New Delhi, 1993), pp. 29, 26.

colonies: 'The need to treat Ireland as a subordinate collided constantly with the policy of converting her into a component of an integrated society in the British Isles. It also vitiated the policy of converting Irishmen into outer Britons. These cross-purposes, strikingly manifested in Anglo-Irish relations, also characterized, more or less, Britain's relations with all her other dependencies at that time.'[23] Within the Empire, the government of Ireland was not unique in its confusion.

The problem of specifying Ireland's place in the British Imperial system remains unresolved, partly because of continuing disagreement over the character and rationale of that system. If, as John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson maintain, the Imperial impulse was served better by informal than formal annexation, it might also be served by formal absorption into the metropolitan power. Though Gallagher and Robinson make no attempt to incorporate Ireland within their taxonomy of Imperial forms, the Act of Union might be interpreted as a still more reluctant 'last resort' than colonial annexation in the pursuit of 'security for British enterprise (whether commercial, philanthropic or merely strategic)'.[24] Ireland, after all, was one of Britain's major trading partners, a fact obscured for most of the period of the Union by the predictable absence of statistics for movement of goods within a formally United Kingdom. When Irish industrial revivalism led to the publication of trade returns for Irish ports during the pre-war decade, it became apparent that the value of British trade with Ireland exceeded that between the United Kingdom and Australasia, rivalling commerce with British India. Britain's balance of visible trade with Ireland, as with most countries except India, was unfavourable.[25] By one interpretation, Ireland's 'colonial status' under the Union entailed its decline into 'a feudal agricultural slum in the immediate neighbourhood of modern middle-class England'.[26] Yet free access to the rapidly expanding British market encouraged marked if unspectacular growth in Irish agricultural output and productivity after the Famine, while industrial production in the Belfast region (mainly for export) expanded rapidly from the 1870s. Ireland's economic importance for British consumers was to be underlined

[23] MacDonagh, *Ireland*, p. 22.
[24] John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', reprinted in Gallagher, *The Decline, Revival and Fall of the British Empire: The Ford Lectures and Other Essays*, ed. Anil Seal (Cambridge, 1982), p. 16. In a more recent essay in that volume, Gallagher treats Irish unrest as a domestic problem, distinct from colonial conflicts: 'We have no Dublin Post Offices in our story' (p. 79).
[25] In 1911 the estimated value of British imports from Ireland was £63.5m, and that of exports £51.7m. Corresponding figures for Australasia (whose population considerably exceeded Ireland's by 1911) were £57.0m and £45.1m, and for British India £45.4m and £53.9m. The Irish statistics exclude exports to foreign and colonial countries (worth £1.6m in 1911) and Ireland's share of imports from outside Britain (worth £15.0m): *Thom's Official Directory* (Dublin, 1915), pp. 682–89, 776.
[26] E. Strauss, *Irish Nationalism and British Democracy* (London, 1951), p. 135. This passage refers to the mid-nineteenth century.

during the First World War, when Irish farmers filled much of the gap caused by the dislocation of transoceanic trade.

Little is known about the Anglo-Irish movement of capital, by some accounts a more significant motive for Imperial expansion than the exchange of goods. Calculations for the period 1883–1907 indicate that Irish-based stockholders played conspicuously little part in capitalizing firms registered in the United Kingdom but located in the Empire. The Irish, by this index, were insignificant as economic imperialists. Irish investors were scarcely more prominent in British-based firms,[27] and the net flow of capital was undoubtedly from Britain to Ireland. Though few attempts have been made to apply Marxian materialism to the Irish case, one has depicted Ireland as 'Europe's only capitalist colony' (serving the interests of the metropolis rather than the settlers); whereas another has chronicled 'the diminishing returns of Imperialism' as the rents, labour, and also taxes extracted under the Union steadily declined.[28]

It remains to be shown that nineteenth-century Ireland ever provided a major field for British capital investment. As the statistician Robert Giffen observed in 1886, British investment in Ireland was negligible compared with that in India or Australia.[29] Most of the rental income from Irish landed estates, though the distant outcome of massive past investment by English and Scottish settlers, was paid to landlords or rentiers usually resident in Ireland. Furthermore, the cumulative effect of the Great Famine and of subsequent land agitation and legislation was to reduce rents as a proportion of output, and eventually to induce the government to lend sufficient money to enable most occupiers to buy out their landlords. The extent and profitability of non-agricultural investments are even less well documented. Most insurance companies operating in Ireland in 1844 were London-based, while British investors were prominent in the formation of several major Irish banks and railway companies. Although 'the capital markets of Ireland and Britain were closely integrated', there was a substantial net movement of gilt-edged stocks from London to Dublin between 1818 and 1863 which subsequently petered out.[30] Another analysis of Ireland's 'provinciality or colonyhood' under the Union

[27] Lance E. Davis and Robert A. Huttenback, with the assistance of Susan Gray Davis, *Mammon and the Pursuit of Empire: The Political Economy of British Imperialism, 1860–1912* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 196, 209. The analysis refers to 126 Imperial firms (listed in the *Stock Exchange Official Yearbook*) with 39,680 stockholders, of whom 0.9 % were resident in Ireland compared with 7.6 % in Scotland and 8.5 % in the colonies.

[28] Raymond Crotty, *Ireland in Crisis: A Study in Capitalist Colonial Undevelopment* (Dingle, Co. Kerry, 1986), p. 62; Strauss, *Irish Nationalism*, pp. 196–205.

[29] Vaughan, 'Ireland, *c.*1870', p. 791.

[30] P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914* (London, 1993); Oliver MacDonagh, 'The Economy and Society, 1830–45', in Vaughan, *New History*, p. 231; Cormac Ó Gráda, *Ireland: A New Economic History, 1780–1939* (Oxford, 1994), p. 350.

also casts doubt on the usefulness of Ireland as an economic possession: 'If . . . economic "exploitation" is conceived of as a necessary element in colonialism, it is difficult to see what Britain gained from her Irish "possession" in the nineteenth century. . . . No matter what kind of balance-sheet we contrive, it would hardly show Ireland to have been profitable.'[31] It seems unlikely that Ireland under the Union was a significant asset to Britain, whether as a trading partner, a site for capital investment, or even a source of revenue from taxes and duties (except, perhaps, for a few decades after 1853). If so, Ireland probably shared its unprofitability with the Empire at large.[32]

The development of the National Education system after 1831 has justifiably been depicted as a classic example of 'cultural imperialism', directed towards the moral and intellectual advancement of a hitherto backward people. As the last (and only Catholic) Resident Commissioner observed of his predecessors: 'Archbishop Whately and his friends treated the Irish as the Kaffirs are not treated now. His real ambition, as was divulged after his death, was to destroy "the gigantic fabric of the Catholic Church", not by a frontal attack, but by discouraging the Irish language and national feeling, and by the dissemination of snippets of political economy and science, in the form of reading books.'[33] Until the turn of the century the Irish reading books paid little attention to Irish geography or history, instead giving detailed information on Britain's overseas colonies and their picturesque peoples. Australia's Aborigines were 'more like brutes than men', but even they might become civilized: 'What makes the difference between any of us Europeans and those poor creatures? . . . Evidently it is education.'[34] The inclusion of Irish pupils among 'us Europeans' was implicitly contingent upon continued school attendance. The preoccupation with Imperial rather than domestic geography (British as well as Irish) was deplored by P. W. Joyce, whose history readers were largely responsible for restoring Ireland to the schoolroom after the 1890s: 'It is strange to find a class of children acquainted with the minute features of the map of Asia or of Africa, and yet ignorant of the course of the Shannon or the Thames.'[35] Despite their disregard for local particulars, the lesson of the

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[31] Oliver MacDonagh, *States of Mind: A Study of Anglo-Irish Conflict, 1780–1980* (London, 1983), p. 52; MacDonagh, 'Introduction', p. liii.

[32] Patrick K. O'Brien, 'The Costs and Benefits of British Imperialism, 1846–1914', *Past and Present*, CXX (1988), pp. 163–200.

[33] W. J. M. Starkie, *The History of Irish Primary and Secondary Education during the Last Decade* (Dublin, 1911), p. 1.

[34] John Coolahan, 'The Irish and Others in Irish Nineteenth-Century Textbooks', in J. A. Mangan, ed., *The Imperial Curriculum: Racial Images and Education in British Colonial Experience* (London, 1993), p. 59.

[35] P. W. Joyce, *A Handbook of School Management and Methods of Teaching*, 15th edn. (Dublin, 1892), p. 255.

readers, even in Whately's vision, was that Irish children had the potential to become metropolitans and colonists instead of colonials.

The broader question of colonial qualities in Irish thought and imagination, which has recently provoked vigorous if opaque debate among literary critics and 'cultural theorists', lies beyond the range of this chapter. Said's specification of 'Ireland's colonial status, which it shares with a host of non-European regions: cultural dependence and antagonism together', is based upon a premiss incapable of historical verification. Said assumes that 'Irish people can never be English any more than Cambodians or Algerians can be French', finding confirmation in the record of Irish protest against British government.[36] As argued in the next section, the political expression of Irish attitudes towards the Empire was far more various and discordant than this allows. Ireland had its rebels, its 'mediators' and 'collaborators' or 'shoneens', its Imperialists, and its unselfconscious metropolitans. The battlegrounds of Anglo-Irish and intra-Irish conflict are littered with the ghoulish shards of incompatible images representing the Empire, and Ireland's place within it.

For republicans and separatists, Ireland's colonial subjection to a foreign force of occupation was an article of faith. Republicanism rested on the belief that the Irish nation had remained essentially intact through centuries of oppression, requiring only reawakening to cast off its veneer of Anglicization. Not only did republicans long for the destruction of the British Empire in war, but they also viewed Imperial conflicts as providing an opportunity for rebellion. The spirit of 1798 was re-invoked in 1916, despite powerful evidence that war had argumented the oppressor's coercive capacity rather than weakening it. Just as the Fenians had prayed for war with America or Russia, so their successors saw Germany as a potential saviour. As Maeve Cavanagh wrote in 'Ireland to Germany':

> I watch the red flame fiercer grow,
> The tide of war, its ebb and flow,
> And see the nations writhe and strain—
> I, who my freedom strive to gain,
> The while I pray 'swift fall the blow
> That lays the tyrant England low'.[37]

Even nationalists hopeful of a constitutional settlement were inclined to relish the alternative path of Imperial collapse, as in the case of a Cork emigrant writing from Australia in 1887: 'Myself and Pat often come to the conclusion that nothing will

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[36] Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London, 1993), pp. 266, 275.
[37] Copy, with music by Cathal Mac Dubhghaill, in National Library of Ireland, Ir 780p23.

save Ireland but a home legislature or otherwise a war that will rake Ingland from one of her dominions to the other, May God send either of the two.'[38] For a few Irish nationalists all of the time, and for many occasionally, the Union was tantamount to colonial annexation and the promise of freedom lay in its destruction. This interpretation shaped the behaviour not only of Irish rebels, but of many subsequent 'anti-colonial' movements for which the Irish experience provided a 'pathfinder'.[39]

The manifest failure of successive rebellions and conspiracies between 1798 and 1916 fostered various less adventurous and more tactical programmes of nationalism. The movements for dual monarchy, repeal of the Act of Union, Home Rule, federation, and devolution all stopped short of demanding full separation, while deploring the economic, social, and moral consequences of the Union. One of the curiosities of Edwardian nationalism is Arthur Griffith's pre-revolutionary Sinn Fein programme, with its demand for restoration of an idealized version of the Irish constitution of 1782, under a system of dual monarchy modelled on Hungary's supposed autonomy in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.[40] Despite its formal adherence to monarchy, Griffith's nationalism was bitterly anti-Imperialist in its assault upon the Anglicization of Irish culture. This qualification did not apply, in general, to the Repeal or Home Rule movements. Daniel O'Connell was a powerful advocate of the application of English liberties, enlightenment, and culture to backward Ireland. Isaac Butt, founder of the Home Rule League in 1873, demanded metropolitan status for Ireland within a federation which would 'consolidate the strength and maintain the integrity of the Empire'. The Irish, having 'paid dearly enough' for the acquisition of Imperial possessions since the Act of Union, were 'entitled to our share in them'.[41] In 1880 J. L. Finegan, Parnellite representative for Ennis, could refer in the same speech to 'the present unjust and tyrannous system of government in Ireland' and the 'great and noble Empire', to which Ireland had contributed so much blood and muscle. Parnell's party included several members with close Indian links, who variously campaigned for fairer Irish representation in the Indian Civil Service or for self-government in both countries.[42] Frank Hugh O'Donnell, whose brother Charles James became a Commissioner in the Indian

[38] Phil Mahoney (Footscray, Victoria) to Lar Shanahan (Lurrig, Co. Cork), 18 Aug. 1887: David Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation: Personal Accounts of Irish Migration to Australia* (Cork, 1995), p. 264.

[39] MacDonagh, *Ireland*, p. 95.

[40] [Arthur Griffith], *The Resurrection of Hungary: A Parallel for Ireland* (Dublin, 1904), concerning the *Ausgleich* of 1867.

[41] H. V. Brasted, 'Irish Nationalism and the British Empire in the Late Nineteenth Century', in MacDonagh and Mandle, *Ireland and Irish-Australia*, pp. 85–86.

[42] Alan O'Day, *The English Face of Irish Nationalism: Parnellite Involvement in British Politics, 1880–86* (Dublin, 1977), pp. 161–65.

Civil Service, regarded Irish nationalists as the 'natural representatives and spokesmen of the unrepresented nationalities of the Empire'. He himself attended the Indian Constitutional Reform Association's inaugural meeting at Tagore's London house in 1883, and campaigned unavailingly for the nomination of Naoroji for an Irish constituency.[43] Like many nationalists, O'Donnell viewed the struggle for Home Rule as part of the broader demand for devolution of power throughout the Empire.

John Redmond, nationalist leader between 1900 and 1918, looked forward to 'a measure of legislative autonomy similar to that enjoyed by any of your self-governing Colonies or Dependencies. If you want an illustration look at Canada, look even to the Transvaal.'[44] Redmond's admiration for the forms of colonial self-government was perfectly consistent with his own and his party's indignant denunciation of the war against the Boers, drawing upon what the police termed 'a seditious and treasonable spirit towards England which, in its extent and intensity, has surprised many who believed they had the fullest knowledge of the people'.[45] Recurrent Imperial wars reminded the Irish of their own history of coercion and annexation; yet in its more benign aspect, evolving towards a 'Commonwealth', the Empire seemed to many nationalists to offer the prospect of an acceptable condition of self-government sheltered by Britannia's protective shield. The relevance to Ireland of the Canadian precedent was repeatedly affirmed by advocates of Home Rule, recurring in the Anglo-Irish agreement of 1921–22. Gladstone presented Home Rule as being 'strictly and substantially analogous' to Canada's status in the Empire, a comparison vigorously denied by unionists.[46] Viscount Milner, when privately discussing the possibility of future unionist acceptance of some form of Home Rule, insisted that Ireland's autonomy should be restricted to that of Quebec within Canada rather than of Canada within the Empire.[47] In reality, the scope of the three Home Rule Bills fell far short of the Canadian settlement of 1867, and responsible government on colonial lines was never a serious option before the First World War.

The compatibility of autonomy and participation in the Empire was central to the many proposals for federal devolution, within either the British Isles or the Empire as a whole, which won adherents in all parties from the 1840s onwards.

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[43] Mary Cumpston, 'Some Early Indian Nationalists and their Allies in the British Parliament, 1851–1906', *English Historical Review*, LXXVI, 299 (1961), pp. 281–85.

[44] O'Brien, *Dublin Castle*, pp. 420–21.

[45] Inspector-General, R[oyal] I[rish] C[onstabulary], Monthly Confidential Report for Oct. 1899, in National Archives, Dublin.

[46] Ward, *Irish Constitutional Tradition*, pp. 62–63, 79–84.

[47] Milner to Balfour, 17 April 1910, in John Kendle, *Ireland and the Federal Solution: The Debate over the United Kingdom Constitution, 1870–1921* (Kingston, Ontario, 1988), p. 112.

O'Connell toyed with Sharman Crawford's proposal in 1843 for subsidiary Irish, English, and Scottish parliaments; Butt considered that under a 'Federal Union' Ireland might 'enjoy all of self-government and distinct nationality which would be necessary for the full development of her national life'; Earl Grey and the Earl of Selborne, former Governors-General of Canada and South Africa respectively, advocated a modest devolution of powers to parliaments in Ireland, Scotland, England, and Wales.[48] The Earl of Dunraven, whose programme of conciliation had been briefly but spectacularly effective in facilitating the purchase of farms by tenant occupiers, also advocated federal devolution as a means of strengthening rather than disintegrating the Empire. Dunraven maintained that the attempt in Ireland 'to obliterate distinctive characteristics and usages, and to produce absolute homogeneity by force', was a negation of the principles which had rendered the Empire successful. Though 'Ireland cannot be anglicised', its well-being required 'the force and backing of a great Empire'.[49] No scheme for an Irish settlement based on federal devolution aroused substantial popular or political interest, partly because the broader design of Imperial federation never became practicable. Nevertheless, the underlying aspiration to find a place for a free Ireland in a reformed Empire appealed to a surprising range of nationalist thinkers, as well as Imperial visionaries.

If nationalist attitudes towards the Empire were diverse and responsive to changes in its organization, 'loyalist' opposition to any form of devolution became ever more uncompromising. Though the abolition of the Irish Parliament had been deplored by many Irish Protestants as subverting the Ascendancy and opening the way to Catholic Emancipation (belatedly enacted in 1829), the Union once established was promptly redescribed as the most effective bulwark against further unwelcome reforms. More significantly, adherence to the Union was widely perceived as offering commercial advantages to both capitalists and their employees, and as protecting Protestant tenant farmers from predatory Catholic neighbours. For a large minority of the Irish people, liberty resided in the reinforcement of the Union rather than its dismemberment. Despite Joseph Chamberlain's early support for a devolved Irish administration and the federalist dreams of many Tory grandees, it became extremely hazardous after 1886 for Conservative politicians or Irish Protestants to question in public the desirability of perpetual integration in the United Kingdom. The expedient alliance between Conservatism and 'Ulster' in the campaigns against Home Rule reinforced the

[48] Ibid., pp. 9, 12–13, 107–09, 180–82. Grey advocated federal devolution in the United Kingdom as a necessary prelude to Imperial federation.

[49] Dunraven urged devolution along the lines of Quebec within Canada, the provinces within India, and the Channel Islands, Canada, and Australia within the Empire: Dunraven, *Outlook in Ireland*, pp. 195, 201–02, 264–65.

conviction of Irish loyalists that they were metropolitans rather than fringe-dwellers, let alone colonial subjects.

Nor did most Irish Protestants accept the nationalist innuendo that they were mere 'colonists' or settlers, proud though they were of the doughtiness of their distant ancestors who had admittedly performed those roles.[50] Instead, they pictured themselves as full citizens and redoubtable defenders of the Empire. Like the Marquess of Salisbury, they believed that 'to maintain the integrity of the Empire must undoubtedly be our first policy with respect to Ireland': the survival of the Union and the Empire were inseparable.[51] Though it has been claimed that the Imperial element in Ulster unionism was a fabrication of the Diamond Jubilee and the South African War, its imprint was obvious from 1867 in the triennial meetings of the Imperial Grand Orange Council.[52] Orangeism, the fraternity at the heart of Ulster unionism, provided a microcosm of Ulster's Protestant diaspora through its interlocking networks of lodges in Ireland, Britain, North America, and Australasia. The ceremonious conferences of the Imperial Grand Orange Council symbolized the Ulsterman's dual role as metropolitan and empire-builder.

Irish Protestantism produced several outstanding exponents of poetic imperialism, including the Munster clergyman Richard Sargint Sadleir Ross-Lewin. In a scruffy volume published in 1907, he affirmed 'our' metropolitan status:

> But our little western island
> Could never stand alone,
> And we share in the greatest Empire
> That the world has ever known.
> To Celt and Scot and Saxon
> That Empire was decreed,
> Twas won by Irish soldiers
> Of the grand old fighting breed.

Ross-Lewin had only contempt for 'the Little England Pygmies', who 'left the empire making to men like Cecil Rhodes', while idly watching 'the Tottenham Hotspur wipe out some rival team'—an arresting repudiation of the games ethic as a foundation of imperialism.[53] The Irish Imperial vision was further amplified

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[50] The tag 'settler (unionist) population' recurs in Gretchen M. MacMillan, *State, Society and Authority in Ireland* (Dublin, 1993), p. 147.

[51] L. P. Curtis, Jr., *Coercion and Conciliation in Ireland, 1880–1892: A Study in Conservative Unionism* (Princeton, 1963), pp. 59, 355.

[52] Alvin Jackson, 'Irish Unionists and Empire, 1880–1920', in Jeffery, *An Irish Empire?*, p. 135.

[53] *Poems by a County of Clare West Briton* (Limerick, 1907), pp. 8, 86–87. Ross-Lewin called upon the loafers to forego football and 'attend at rifle practice, like men of martial mien'. Ross-Lewin echoed (or

in rhyme by Edward Coyle, a Belfast doctor, in 1905. Though devoting stanzas to each of the overseas colonies, Coyle alluded to Ireland only once, when reflecting that:

> Erin's moon would shine afar
> O'er west'ring seas to distant lands
> Where fair Columbia folds her hands.

Coyle's 'Homeland' was 'these British Isles', for which 'England' was the most suitable equivalent term ('for poetic purposes'). Like J. R. Seeley's, his vision transcended the formal possessions: 'The term "The Empire"... is used to connote all the English-speaking nations, and thus we include the United States, which, although having an independent and different form of government is really one with us in race, in language, in religion, and in laws.'[54] For Irish unionists, belonging to the Empire signified attachment to English civilization, not subjection to an external authority.

Irish responses to the Empire were modified through the nineteenth century by changing perceptions of its character and likely future evolution. The possibility of movement towards a devolved Commonwealth made many nationalists optimistic that membership might eventually be reconcilable with freedom. Yet the recurrence of punitive wars against subject peoples simultaneously reinforced the separatist conviction that the Empire was intrinsically oppressive. For unionists, the extension of the Imperial quest from strategic domination to cultural proselytism gave even greater force to their sense of being metropolitan participants. Interpretations of Ireland's status, whether metropolitan or colonial, were also influenced by the practical consequences of Imperial legislation for various sectors of the Irish population. Altered perceptions of the relative benefits and costs of continued attachment were reflected in seeming inconsistencies of rhetoric, whether on the part of ex-Fenians becoming Home Rulers or devolutionists becoming intransigent unionists. Irish thinking about the Empire thus mirrored the broader complexities and uncertainties of the Anglo-Irish connection.

Among the attractions of the Empire were the associated opportunities for employment. Colonial services provided a significant outlet for educated Irishmen, Catholic as well as Protestant. The introduction of competitive examinations for the Indian Civil Service met with a vigorous Irish response—Trinity College,

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perhaps anticipated) Kipling's contemptuous reference in 'The Islanders' (1902) to 'the flannelled fools at the wicket or the muddied oafs at the goals': *A Choice of Kipling's Verse: Selected with an Essay on Rudyard Kipling by T. S. Eliot* [1963] (London, 1990), p. 130.

[54] Dr Edward Coyle, *The Empire: A Poem* (London, 1905), pp. 10, 5–6; W. J. Reader, *At Duty's Call: A Study in Obsolete Patriotism* (Manchester, 1988), pp. 46–47.

Dublin, being uncharacteristically alert in immediately offering crash-courses. Trinity College alone provided 180 recruits between 1855 and 1912, by contrast with its futile attempts to prepare candidates for the Royal Engineers and the Royal Artillery. Other Irish colleges soon followed suit, and a quarter of entrants between 1855 and 1863 were Irish-born. This proportion declined sharply thereafter, but Irish recruits remained prominent in the Indian medical service. Although Protestants with professional fathers were predominant, about a fifth of the Irish recruits to Indian posts seem to have been Catholics.[55] Prominent among these were James McNeill from Antrim, a Commissioner in the Bombay Presidency until 1914 and subsequently Governor-General of the Irish Free State; and Sir Michael O'Dwyer from Tipperary, who as Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab after 1913 secured half a million recruits for the wartime forces. O'Dwyer had two brothers in the Society of Jesus, while McNeill's brother Eoin was the titular Chief of Staff of the Irish Volunteers who attempted to abort the Easter Rising in 1916.[56] Irish candidates were less successful in penetrating the Sudanese political service after 1899, and shrill complaints of discrimination by the Provost of Trinity 'only confirmed' the administrators 'in the wisdom of preferring Oxford and Cambridge'.[57] At a lower level of administration, Irish Catholic emigrants became prominent in the public service in both Australia and Canada. In 1867 the Conservative Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, claimed credit for that achievement in Canada: 'What Irish Catholic ever held office above the rank of a Tide Waiter or Messenger, until I did them justice?'[58] Among senior colonial administrators, however, Catholics failed to disturb the dominance of Protestant Englishmen, Scots, and Irishmen.

The armed services provided a still more important Imperial outlet for Irishmen of all religions and classes. For Irish as for Scottish university graduates, openings in the Indian Army offered them 'a stake in defending national, that is to say British, interests'.[59] Protestant Ireland was over-represented among officers in the Bengal Army between 1758 and 1834,[60] as also in the British army. Census returns indicate that in 1851 Irishmen accounted for over a quarter of all regular

[55]   Scott B. Cook, 'The Irish Raj: Social Origins and Careers of Irishmen in the Indian Civil Service, 1855–1914', *Journal of Social History* (hereafter *JSH*), XX, 3 (1987), pp. 507–29; R. B. McDowell and D. A. Webb, *Trinity College Dublin, 1592–1952: An Academic History* (Cambridge, 1982), p. 538, n. 38.

[56]   T. G. Fraser, 'Ireland and India', in Jeffery, *An Irish Empire?*, pp. 88–89; Sir Michael O'Dwyer, *India as I Knew It, 1885–1925* (London, 1925), pp. 1–15.

[57]   J. A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (London, 1986), pp. 83, 205, n. 33.

[58]   MacDonald to J. G. Moylan, 4 July 1867, in Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa, MG/29/D15.

[59]   Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism*, p. 330.

[60]   P. E. Razzell, 'Social Origins of Officers in the Indian and British Home Army, 1758–1962', *British Journal of Sociology*, XIV, 3 (1963), p. 250.

army officers born in the British Isles, a proportion falling to a seventh by 1901 but usually exceeding the Irish component of the population at large. Military commissions provided employment for members of most families of Irish gentry, the pool of officers remaining virtually closed to the middle classes and to Catholics until the First World War. The feats of Irish generals and heroes provided the basis for numerous affirmations of racial superiority in war. As Ross-Lewin boasted:

> Nor shall we now relinquish the prize of field and flood,
> Our share in glorious Empire won by our fathers' blood.
> Nor lack we still of heroes with Saxons to compete
> While Roberts rules our Armies, and Beresford our fleet.[61]

Both Roberts and Beresford chose Irish as well as colonial designations when accepting peerages; but in other cases Irish birth was incidental or even embarrassing to the heroes of Britain's colonial wars. Horatio Herbert Kitchener, 1st Earl of Khartoum and of Broome in Kent, may have been born near Ballylongford in Co. Kerry; yet he cared as little for his nativity as had the Duke of Wellington. As Birrell observed, 'Lord Kitchener was not a real Irishman, only an accidental one'.[62] Only occasionally did Irishness intrude upon military professionalism, as in the case of Sir William Francis Butler, son of a Tipperary landowner and Commander-in-Chief in South Africa on the eve of the South African War. Butler was a Catholic Home Ruler, whose sympathy (according to Milner) was 'wholly with the other side'.[63] In general, Ireland's military heroes were drawn from a stock equally alien to ordinary nationalists and unionists, and the Irish deeds that won the Empire were those of a caste rather than a people.

Natives of Ireland were slightly over-represented among 'other ranks' in the regular army, though notably deficient in the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, and merchant service.[64] Irishmen were only just outnumbered by Britons among soldiers enlisted in the Bengal Army between 1825 and 1850.[65] After the official admission of Catholics to the British army in 1799, natives of Ireland quickly became a sizeable component, reaching about two-fifths in 1830 and 1840, but falling to a quarter by 1872 and less than a tenth by 1911. This decline was mainly attributable to Ireland's rapidly diminishing share of the United Kingdom's

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[61] Ross-Lewin, *Poems*, p. 29.

[62] Augustine Birrell, *Things Past Redress* (London, 1937), p. 218.

[63] John Springhall, 'Up Guards and at Them!', in John M. MacKenzie, ed., *Popular Imperialism and the Military* (Manchester, 1992), p. 64.

[64] Census returns giving the birthplaces of men in the various services were tabulated between 1851 and 1921.

[65] Bayly, *Imperial Meridian*, p. 127.

population.[66] Though more than 150,000 men were raised in Ireland between 1865 and 1913, the Irish Command invariably provided less than its expected share of recruits; but this deficiency was outweighed by heavy enlistment of Irish emigrants in Britain.[67] The prominence of Irish servicemen in Imperial wars, particularly in South Africa, could produce strange juxtapositions, as at Ladysmith where two brothers from Co. Longford apparently lost their lives, one fighting for the Boers with Blake's Irish Brigade and the other for the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.[68] It could also lead to the bitterness expressed in a letter sent home to Newry by a private in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers: 'I was reading in the papers where the Irish people were subscribing for the Boers, and are backing them up; but the Irish people will want to be careful of themselves, or we will do the same with them as we are doing with the Boers.'[69] In addition to service in the Imperial forces, Catholics (mainly of Irish descent) were fully represented in colonial units such as the Australian Commonwealth Horse in South Africa.[70] Nationality did not effectively discourage unemployed Irishmen, mostly Catholics, from volunteering to fight the Empire's wars.

The most far-reaching contribution of the Irish to the development of the Empire was through emigration. Although most Irish emigrants made for the United States or Britain, there were nearly 300,000 natives of Ireland living in Canada in 1861 and close to a quarter of a million in the Australian colonies by 1891. As a proportion of the entire overseas-born population, the Irish were as prominent in Australasia and Canada as in the United States itself. In about 1870, for example, a third of immigrants in the United States were Irish, a slightly smaller proportion than in Canada. In Australia the Irish component exceeded a quarter, compared with less than a fifth in New Zealand. Even in the quieter period between 1876 and 1914, Canada and Australia each attracted over 90,000 emigrants from Irish ports. In the course of the century Irish emigrants scattered throughout the Empire. Census returns testify that in 1911 there were about 14,600 Irish natives in the Union of South Africa, 12,200 in the Indian Empire, 1,000 in the Maltese

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[66] Peter Karsten, 'Irish Soldiers in the British Army, 1792–1922: Suborned or Subordinate?', *JSH*, XVII, 1 (1983), pp. 31–64; H. J. Hanham, 'Religion and Nationality in the Mid-Victorian Army', in M. R. D. Foot, ed., *War and Society: Historical Essays in Honour and Memory of J. R. Western, 1928–1971* (London, 1973), pp. 57–69.

[67] David Fitzpatrick, ' "A Peculiar Tramping People": The Irish in Britain, 1801–70', in Vaughan, *New History*, p. 641; Fitzpatrick, ' "A Curious Middle Place": The Irish in Britain, 1871–1921', in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley, eds., *The Irish in Britain, 1815–1939* (London, 1989), p. 23.

[68] RIC, Crime Special Branch, file 21831S (carton 16), in National Archives, Dublin. Irish army casualties during the South Africans War amounted to 133 officers and 2,961 men, about a tenth of the total: Donal P. McCracken, *The Irish Pro-Boers, 1877–1902* (Johannesburg, 1989), pp. 123–24.

[69] Ibid., p. 126.

[70] W. N. Chamberlain, 'The Characteristics of Australia's Boer War Volunteers', *Historical Studies* (Melbourne), XX, 78 (1982), pp. 48–52.

islands, 400 in Ceylon, 250 in the Straits Settlements, and 160 in the Federated Malay States. In almost every Imperial possession, Irish colonists had become a significant element of the settler population.

Irish emigration to the more distant colonies was facilitated by state subventions, without which the much cheaper British or American options would have seemed irresistible. About half of all emigrants from the United Kingdom to the Australian colonies up to 1900, and the large majority of Irish settlers, received some public assistance. For the 160,000 convicts transported there between 1788 and 1867, of whom over a quarter were Irish-born, settlement at public expense was involuntary though not always unwelcome—during the Great Famine, the impulse to escape Ireland was sufficient to induce paupers to petty crime in the hope of being sentenced to transportation. Until the 1830s the system of convict labour was surprisingly efficient in satisfying colonial demand for domestic and outdoor service, compensating for Australia's lack of slaves.[71] Voluntary emigration was encouraged by a variety of schemes, mostly funded from colonial land revenues with supplementary contributions from the emigrants or from private sponsors already in the colonies. Nearly a quarter of a million Irish settlers were assisted to Australia between 1836 and 1919 (a third of the total from the British Isles), and 30,000 were shipped to Vogel's New Zealand during the 1870s. The most lavish scheme involved the removal to Australia of 4,000 female 'orphans' from Irish workhouses between 1848 and 1850, outfit and passage to Plymouth being provided by the Boards of Guardians while the full cost of shipping was paid from colonial funds. Most subsequent assistance was contingent on the nomination of emigrants by colonial sponsors, creating a form of subsidized chain migration which the Irish exploited far more methodically than did the English, Welsh, or Scots.

Irish movement to Canada and sometimes southern Africa was accelerated by promises of land grants, though seldom by direct payment of transportation costs. Despite recurrent demands for systematic colonization of Canadian or other wastelands by the 'surplus' population of rural Ireland, the vast cost of Peter Robinson's pilot scheme of 1823–25 discouraged further experiments. With support from Wilmot Horton in the Colonial Office, Robinson had shipped 2,300 people in family groups from a dozen densely populated and restive Munster estates to Upper Canada (Ontario), at a cost of no less than £20 per capita. Subsequent official assistance to North America was largely restricted to supplements, worth about £5, which enabled some 45,000 paupers to leave Ireland (mostly for Canada) between 1849 and 1906. Local Boards of Guardians again provided outfit and transportation within the British Isles for paupers whose

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[71] Stephen Nicholas, ed., *Convict Workers: Reinterpreting Australia's Past* (Cambridge, 1988).

passages had been funded by previous settlers. The bulk of Irish emigrants to Canada received no official subsidy, many proceeding to the United States after taking cut-price passages to Quebec or New Brunswick. This applied particularly in 1847, when nearly 100,000 passengers, many already emaciated and feverish, were shipped to Quebec from Irish ports and Liverpool (often at the expense of their landlords). About one in six died aboard or shortly after arrival, prompting understandable Irish aversion to vessels bound for Canada, and eventually generating more rigorous regulation of passenger shipping. The reduced flow from post-Famine Ireland to Canada was once again dominated by Ulster Protestants, already a tight-knit and powerful element of rural society in Ontario. Whereas state subsidies and therefore quality controls shaped Irish colonization of the most distant dominions, the drift to Canada was fitful and mainly governed by private decisions.

Despite colonial objections to the shovelling out and dumping of Irish paupers and papists, often at colonial expense, only Ireland proved capable of supplying the required blend of agricultural workers and domestic servants. Ireland's greatest comparative advantage as a source of colonists was the absence of effective restraint upon female emigration. The dearth of non-agricultural employment in Ireland pushed out men and women with roughly equal force, while the Famine emergency had overwhelmed parental resistance to exposing young girls to the moral and physical perils of transoceanic travel. Whereas men vastly outnumbered women in British emigration, the sexes were evenly balanced in movement from Ireland after the 1840s. Though young unmarried women were usually offered preferential assistance to the woman-starved Australasian colonies, the official agencies had great difficulty in enticing English or Scottish girls with prospects of domestic service and marriage in rude colonial surroundings. Only the Irish fulfilled Wakefield's requirement for a successful colonization: 'an equal emigration of the sexes'.[72] By about 1870 Australia (like Britain and probably the United States) had an almost equal number of Irish-born men and women. Whereas the majority of Irish emigrants to Canada were Protestants, the proportion was less than a quarter in Australia, despite energetic official attempts to encourage settlement by Ulster Protestants. New Zealand had a larger component of northern Protestants, exemplified by the Tyrone Orangemen and their families who colonized Kati-Kati or 'New Ulster' in 1875, under the leadership of George Vesey Stewart. Initially concentrated in the menial sectors of service and labour, Irish settlers in Australasia and Canada rapidly colonized a broad range of occupations such as farming, mining, shopkeeping, policing, and the civil service. By contrast with the American Irish, they showed no marked propensity to cluster in urban

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[72] Fitzpatrick, 'Emigration, 1801–70', in Vaughan, *New History*, p. 573.

enclaves or indeed to settle in cities.[73] As 'human capital', Irish voluntary colonists proved no less sound an investment than their convict brethren.

Irish colonization of the Empire had the further effect of stimulating a substantial reverse migration. Admittedly, only about 8,000 natives of the British possessions and the Indian Empire (in roughly equal numbers) were enumerated in the Irish census for 1901. Yet between 1895 and 1913 some 18,400 Irish nationals 'immigrated' to the United Kingdom from British North America, 11,300 from Australasia, and 14,900 from British South Africa.[74] Though some of these were doubtless tourists or business travellers rather than returning emigrants, their colonial experience brought the realities of the Empire closer to many Irish homes. Their presence reinforced the already extensive coverage of Imperial affairs and conditions of life in the Irish provincial press, popular novels, and (above all) personal letters from emigrant friends and relatives.[75] Migration in both directions, mainly voluntary and often undertaken with enthusiasm, gradually entangled the Irish with all the nationalities of the Empire. If most of Ireland eventually wriggled out of the Imperial embrace, many of its people did not.

Ireland's influence on the Empire cannot be precisely assessed, since the impact of particular Irish men and women was only partly and dubiously attributable to their ethnicity. Journalistic attempts to chronicle the achievements and 'contribution' of the expatriate Irish were commonplace in the later nineteenth century, serving to defend Irish and often Catholic prestige against British and colonial sniping.[76] The following sketch is confined to institutional, legislative, political, and religious echoes or imitations of Irish models. Ireland's importance as a colonial model was enhanced by its own ambiguous status as a 'colonial' element within the United Kingdom, which generated many exportable experiments in social and political control. Moreover, Irish techniques of resistance to British authority were occasionally appropriated by colonial nationalist movements. Though to some extent reciprocal, the balance of trade in colonial structures and techniques was overwhelmingly favourable to Ireland.

The centralization of Irish elementary schooling and policing, introduced in 1831 and 1836 respectively, had obvious implications for colonial administrators.

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[73] See Donald Harman Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer* (Toronto, 1993); David Fitzpatrick, *Irish Emigration, 1801–1921* (Dublin, 1984).

[74] Board of Trade, annual *Statistics and Tables of Emigration and Immigration*, in House of Commons Papers, *passim*.

[75] See Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation*; Cecil J. Houston and William J. Smyth, *Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement: Patterns, Links, and Letters* (Toronto, 1990), pt. 3.

[76] James Francis Hogan, *The Irish in Australia* (Melbourne, 1888); Nicholas Flood Davin, *The Irishman in Canada* (London, 1877).

The English model, in which local interests controlled both services, was unappealing to governments attempting to harness or break the power of local élites. In territories with large native populations, centralized education and policing provided twin means for Anglicizing and subduing subject peoples. Even in the Australian colonies, the rapid expansion of white settlement, and the proliferation of 'currency lads' and lasses born in the colonies, created an unruly and scarcely civilized population which generated similar administrative challenges and responses. The Irish system of National Education, designed to inculcate universal literacy and numeracy through a vast network of elementary schools funded by the state, became a significant model for primary education in the Australasian colonies. As in Ireland, a common curriculum and system of inspection was applied to state primary schools. The impassioned debates over state funding of denominational education in Ireland had powerful echoes in the Empire, although colonial governments often proved less willing to support schools under clerical management. The exemplary function of the Irish system was also evident in the export of millions of Irish National readers and textbooks (amply studded with information about the overseas Empire) to colonial schools. They carried the appealing message that education could redeem the ignorance and incompetence of even the Irish people, providing a pathway towards metropolitan culture and status for those not resident in Britain itself.

Colonial administrators were besotted with the Irish Constabulary, an armed force under semi-military discipline but civilian control which occupied 'barracks' throughout Ireland (outside Dublin). The successful management by mainly Protestant officers of 12,000 'native' constables of humble origin, mostly Catholics, heartened Imperialists everywhere. In order to restrict entanglement with local interests, constables were regularly relocated and marriages discouraged. Initially a paramilitary force alienated from a lawless population, the Irish Constabulary gradually secured a more comfortable social niche, despite the intimidating effect of its uniforms and weaponry. It remained responsible for the suppression of occasional riots and rebellions, sometimes in combination with military detachments acting 'in aid of the civil power'. It used to be generally accepted that the Irish Constabulary was the model for almost all colonial police forces, during what Jeffries termed the 'second phase' of militarization (following initial improvisation and preceding the creation of civilian forces). Jeffries identified direct Irish influences in the nomenclature, training, and paramilitary functions of forces ranging from Ceylon and India to the West Indies and Palestine. After 1907 all cadets for colonial forces were trained at the Irish depot in Phoenix Park, Dublin. These influences were reinforced by the numerous former officers and members of the Irish Constabulary who became colonial policemen, and also by the legion of

Irish-inspired Indian officers who helped establish forces elsewhere.[77] Though Jeffries confined his account of the 'Irish model' to the policing of colonies with large native populations, other studies have detected Irish influence in the centralized forces serving the Australasian and Canadian administrations.[78] Despite recent demonstrations that the diversity of colonial policing defies reduction to a single model, that the London Metropolitan Police was also imitated, and that many aspects of Irish practice were ignored, the strength of Irish influence in Imperial policing remains incontestable.[79] The Irish case had shown the Empire that a relatively small and dispersed armed force could subdue a large and recalcitrant population over a long period.

Imperial attempts to regulate and modernize peasant societies also drew from Irish experience. Before 1870 state interference in the Irish land market had been designed to reinforce the rights of landlords by facilitating eviction, restricting subletting, promoting the sale of heavily encumbered estates to solvent purchasers, and replacing ill-defined entitlements by explicit contracts. As in India, where confirmation of the property rights of the *zamindars* aroused growing resentment from insecure peasant holders, Britain's attempt to create a free market in Irish land collapsed in the face of collective tenant resistance. Gladstone's recognition of customary entitlements in 1870 signified the state's acceptance that the principles of English land law were not universally exportable. This discovery had already affected Indian administration, and the reform campaign preceding the Irish Act of 1870 was strongly influenced by Indian recognition of the customary entitlements of the *ryots* (peasant cultivators). In turn, Indian legislators were influenced by subsequent Irish legislation providing for controlled rents or 'dual ownership' (1881–82), which set in motion the gradual collapse of landlord power. The Bengal Land Tenancy Act of 1885 drew heavily on the Irish reforms, following a campaign involving Irish officials such as Charles James O'Donnell and Sir Antony MacDonnell. Yet the *zamindars* also had their influential Irish supporters, including the Viceroy (the Marquess of Dufferin).[80] Of all Irish exports, conflict was the most ubiquitous.

Echoes of Irish struggles between landlord and tenant also reached the Australian colonies, where the equivalent battle involved 'squatters' against 'selectors'. Most colonies implemented 'Selection Acts' whereby industrious farmers with

[77] Sir Charles Jeffries, *The Colonial Police* (London, 1952). For Indian echoes of the Irish Constabulary in Sind (1843), Bombay (1847), Madras (1855), Oudh (1858), and the entire subcontinent (1861), see Cook, *Imperial Affinities*, pp. 31–32.

[78] David M. Anderson and David Killingray, eds., *Policing the Empire: Government, Authority and Control, 1830–1940* (Manchester, 1991), pp. 3, 39, 56–57.

[79] Richard Hawkins, 'The "Irish Model" for the Empire: A Case for Reassessment', in ibid., pp. 18–32; editors' Introduction, pp. 3–4.

[80] Boylan and Foley, *Political Economy*, p. 156; Cook, *Imperial Affinities*, pp. 85–89, 111, 130–31.

little capital were given smallholdings of uncleared land, formerly claimed by the
'squattocracy' (Australia's ramshackle Ascendancy). Like Irish tenant purchasers,
the selectors were required to repay their debt to the state through annuities.
Despite the obvious disparities, the campaign for better terms of selection drew
heavily from Irish rhetoric, skilfully adapted to Australian conditions by Irish
emigrant politicians such as Sir Charles Gavan Duffy (the former Young Irelander
and agitator for tenant rights who became Her Majesty's impeccably loyal Premier
of Victoria). As in India and Ireland itself, the attempt to create a class of small
farmers with secure tenure betokened a broader vision of the colonial future, in
which civic virtue and patriotism would be reinforced by benevolent social
engineering. By restraining the arbitrary power of the filthy rich, colonial admin-
istrations would acquire popular legitimacy and so secure the fragile bonds of
Empire.

The broader political consequences of Irish colonization, expressed through the
actions and attitudes of countless settlers and their descendants, defy easy encap-
sulation. To many British and Protestant colonists, Irish Catholics seemed a
potentially subversive and disloyal underclass, always inclined to reapply their
Irish grievances to colonial agitation. Such apprehensions were strongest among
Ulster Protestant settlers, who used the international fraternal network of the
Loyal Orange Institution to proclaim their own loyalty and defend the colonies
against papist aggression. In South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada
the Orange lodges were rapidly assimilated into Conservative politics, the sons of
Ulster soon being outnumbered by local activists exploiting the efficiency and
popular appeal of Ireland's most sophisticated fraternity. Among the leading
Orangemen of New South Wales in the 1870s, for example, less than a third were
natives of Ireland.[81] The Canadian Orange Institution was particularly influential
in Conservatism, drawing prestige from its prominent role in resisting the feeble
Fenian 'invasions' of Canada in 1870 and 1871. Irish emigrants were also active in
the development of colonial Freemasonry, forming networks of lodges with
warrants from the Grand Lodge of Ireland rather than England or Scotland. The
'loyal institutions' provided a superb vehicle for Irish Protestant settlers sloughing
off the unwanted connotations of 'Paddy' and 'Mick', stereotypes applied indis-
criminately to Irish emigrants of all origins.

Irish fraternal expertise was also exhibited by Catholic emigrants, who pro-
tected their collective interests through friendly societies such as the Hibernian
Benefit Associations in Australasia, and the related Ancient Order of Hibernians in

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[81] Mark Lyons, 'Aspects of Sectarianism in New South Wales, *circa* 1865 to 1880', unpublished Ph.D.
thesis, Australian National University, 1972, pp. 423–30. For comparable Canadian findings, see Cecil J.
Houston and William J. Smyth, *The Sash Canada Wore: A Historical Geography of the Orange Order in
Canada* (Toronto, 1980), pp. 91–95.

North America. Though not primarily political in function, the Hibernian divisions helped mobilize lay Catholics as a social and potentially a political force. Irish nationalist organizations supporting Repeal and Home Rule received essential moral and financial support from equivalent colonial networks, drawing upon Australian Catholics as well as Irish emigrants. Yet colonial support for Fenianism and other movements favouring 'physical force' was minuscule by comparison with response in the United States. The former Young Irelander Thomas D'Arcy McGee, three years before his assassination in Ottawa in 1868, described Fenianism as 'the worst obstacle, the Devil has ever invented for the Irish, an *irreligious revolutionary society*, in which patriotism takes the garb of indifferentism, or hostility to religion'.[82] In Sydney, the demented Irishman who almost murdered the Duke of Edinburgh in March 1868 evidently acted without accomplices, despite the ingenious attempts of Conservative politicians to fabricate an Irish-Australian conspiracy.[83] The 'Catholic' (otherwise 'Irish') vote became a major factor in mainstream colonial politics, being generally aligned, as in Britain, with parties favouring liberal reform, and subsequently with parties representing the interests of trades unions. Labor Party candidates in pre-war New South Wales were disproportionately successful in constituencies with large Catholic components, although Catholics did not predominate in the federal Labor Party until the 1930s.[84] Careful to avoid challenging the legitimacy of the Imperial affiliation, Irish colonists and their Catholic descendants nevertheless made a distinctive contribution to the terms of democratic debate.

The Imperial influence of Irish institutions extended to the churches, which provided a surplus of highly trained spiritual managers for deployment throughout the Empire. This was most evident in the proliferation of Catholic priests ordained in Ireland, and in the rapid colonial extension of Irish-based religious orders providing educational and medical services. Irish Catholicism, though thoroughly 'Romanized' by the 1850s, was often at loggerheads with the established networks of French or English priests who had typically initiated diocesan organization in the colonies. Though Irish emigrants were at first their central concern, the army of Irish clergy rapidly extended their ministrations to the conversion of aboriginal peoples, the reclamation of godless colonials, and the care of Catholic emigrants from Britain and Europe as well as Ireland. Often ignored in studies of missionary Imperialism, the Catholic clerical diaspora was

[82] McGee to J. G. Moylan, 27 Oct. 1865, in Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa, MG/29/D15.

[83] Phillip M. Cowburn, 'The Attempted Assassination of the Duke of Edinburgh, 1868', *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal*, LV, 1 (1969), pp. 19–42.

[84] Celia Hamilton, 'Irish Catholics of New South Wales and the Labor Party, 1890–1910', *Historical Studies of Australia and New Zealand*, VIII, 31 (1958), p. 265; Declan O'Connell and John Warhurst, 'Church and Class', *Saothar*, VIII (1982), p. 49.

scarcely distinguishable in its aims and ideology from its Protestant counterpart.[85] In every colony the Catholic church worked assiduously to overcome its baneful Irish reputation and to affirm its Imperial patriotism. Though never ceasing to bemoan past Irish wrongs, the Irish-trained priests and nuns conveyed little hint of alienation from British rule when indulgently applied through the mediation of representative government.

Colonial Protestantism also had unmistakably Irish elements, though these were easily assimilated with the dominant English and Scottish strains. Trinity College, Dublin, was a major source of Anglican missionaries in India and elsewhere, producing doctors who could hold their 'own at tennis with the best in Bengal'. One such muscular Irish Christian would enlighten the heathen by 'getting the patients to squat down on the ground at the daily dispensary, and giving them a fifteen or twenty minutes' talk before the medicine was dispensed'.[86] Irish Protestants were also prominent in the Canadian and Australasian clergy, whether Anglican, Methodist, or Presbyterian. Among Presbyterian ministers recruited in the various eastern Australian colonies between 1823 and 1900, for example the Irish-born proportion ranged between a ninth and a quarter.[87]

The imprint of Ireland may thus be detected in virtually every colonial institution, ranging from schools and police forces to land law, fraternities, political parties, and the churches. Likewise, the imprint of Britain may be found in every Irish institution, signifying the ambiguity of Ireland's location in the Empire. Through the exercise of imagination, the nineteenth-century Irish might elect to play the parts of colonials (whether deferential or resentful), metropolitans, or colonizers. To be 'Irish' was, among other things, to face that unsettling choice.

[85] Edmund M. Hogan, *The Irish Missionary Movement: A Historical Survey, 1870–1980* (Dublin, 1990).

[86] K. W. S. Kennedy, *Fifty Years in Chota Nagpur: An Account of the Dublin University Mission* (Dublin, 1939), pp. 40–41.

[87] Malcolm D. Prentis, *The Scots in Australia* (Sydney, 1983), p. 136.

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23

Canada from 1815

GED MARTIN

In March 1815 news reached Canada that the war between the United States and the British Empire had ended with a peace treaty, signed at Ghent in modern Belgium. The War of 1812 had been fought and ended by the British. Indeed, Wellington's forces at Waterloo—only 24,000 of them British regulars—were dangerously weakened by the diversion of experienced troops to defend Canada. Colonial resistance to American incursions had been enough to found a patriotic myth, but only the British could effectively protect the northern half of North America. The small, scattered population could neither defend nor govern itself. Almost all administration was in British hands, subject to inefficient controls from London, and London was the sole source of minimal co-ordinating policy.

When Britain's security was again menaced by an invasion of Belgium in 1914, Canada proved not a liability but an asset. Population had grown tenfold to just over 8 million, including the separate colony of Newfoundland. With that sole exception, all the Imperial territories had coalesced into the transcontinental Dominion of Canada, a self-governing entity within the Empire. Canada promptly offered to send 25,000 men to Europe, and in October 1914 actually despatched over 30,000, probably the largest military contingent ever to cross the Atlantic. The preceding century had seen a remarkable political transformation, and well before 1914 the Canadian example was naturally studied for solutions of other Imperial problems. Yet the story seems incomplete, one of union and self-government achieved within a framework of arrested development. White settlers had served a seventy-year apprenticeship as 'ideal prefabricated collaborators',[1] but there was no indication that Canada was moving towards decolonization and full nationhood. The Dominion was presided over by a Governor-General (in 1914 a son of Queen Victoria). It had no foreign embassies, and was barely even agreed upon a local flag. Not surprisingly, those appealing to Canadian precedents elsewhere in the Empire often cited them in support of conflicting solutions.

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[1] Ronald Robinson, 'Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration', in Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe, eds., *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism* (London, 1972), pp. 124–25.

The simplest summary of the country's past might suggest that between 1815 and 1914 British North America had become Canada. Yet this would impose an unjustified coherence upon the British territories north of the United States: Imperial actions crucially shaped the fitful development of their east–west alignment. Major external boundaries remained in dispute with the Americans until 1846. Paradoxically, British territorial surrenders in Minnesota (1818) and Oregon (1846) reduced the likelihood of an alternative colonial nucleus developing west of the Great Lakes. Only as the Red River and British Columbia were shorn of potential hinterland did their future role emerge within an east–west system. The most notable British diplomatic success in 1842 was also vital to the formation of east–west links: had Americans claims been conceded in the Maine boundary dispute, United States territory would almost have reached the St Lawrence, leaving an impossibly narrow corridor between Canada and New Brunswick. Newfoundland apart, there thus emerged no Australia–New Zealand or South Africa–Rhodesia divide in British North America.

Although the Protestant Irishmen's Orange Order was using the term by 1830, the all-embracing label 'British North America' appealed mainly to outsiders, such as Lord Durham and J. A. Roebuck. In 1851 Sir Edmund Head could discern 'no enlarged view of the interests of New Brunswick as a part of British North America'. Indeed, another Governor reported that their only common element of identity as 'New Brunswickers' was that 'they all unite in hating & abusing Halifax'.[2] When existing provinces were federated in 1867, 'British North America' was rejected, notwithstanding the protest of one British minister that it was 'in the large language of the age', in favour of the 'familiar and important' name of Canada.[3] Certainly no sense of shared interests brought the colonies together. The province of Canada carried on less than 2 per cent of its external trade with the Maritimes, while the provinces most dependent in 1865 upon intercolonial trade—Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia—were the most reluctant to join a British North American union.

Science did more than commerce to create a British American identity, and extend it across the continent: London cartographer John Arrowsmith used 'British North America' in this sense in 1850. The absorption of California by the United States probably encouraged a mirror-image to the north. By the 1850s geologists and botanists were laying a scientific foundation for a transcontinental identity, one which appealed to the Victorian passion for undigested statistics

[2] 9 Dec. 1851, cited in D. G. G. Kerr, *Sir Edmund Head: A Scholarly Governor* (Toronto, 1954), p. 94; Gordon to Monck, copy, 8 May 1862, University of New Brunswick, Harriet Irving Library, Stanmore Papers, Reel 3.
[3] Minute by C. B. Adderley, 28 Sept. 1866, C[olonial] O[ffice] 42/656, f. 370; G. E. Buckle, ed., *Letters of Queen Victoria: Second Series . . ., 1862–1878*, 2 vols. (London, 1926), I, p. 392.

MAP 23.1. Canada, to 1905

indicating a vast potential heritage which the provinces might claim. Political union did little to overcome incoherent diversity. Even in 1891, six years after completion of the transcontinental railway, Goldwin Smith could dismiss the Dominion as 'four separate projections of the cultivable and habitable part of the Continent into arctic waste . . . divided from each other by great barriers of nature, wide and irreclaimable wildernesses or manifold chains of mountains'.[4]

In 1815 the disparate nature of the British territories was particularly striking. On the Atlantic seaboard, the Maritime colonies—Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Cape Breton (subsequently absorbed into Nova Scotia)—were geographically extensions of New England, from which the two mainland colonies had derived many of their inhabitants. Newfoundland was shaped by its origins as the outpost of England's west-country fishery. About 200,000 people lived in this region. Although usually grouped together, the colonies had different economies: the timber trade was beginning to dominate New Brunswick, agriculture was important in Prince Edward Island, while Nova Scotia had a more mixed economy, with an emphasis on Atlantic trade.

Their common feature was an orientation towards Britain and an almost total absence of commercial or cultural links with the St Lawrence valley–Great Lakes region, popularly known as 'the Canadas'. About 350,000 people lived in Lower Canada, at least 80 per cent of them descendants of the 55,000 French settlers absorbed into the Empire in 1763. The interior province of Upper Canada was growing rapidly and probably numbered 90,000 inhabitants. Gladstone later described Canada as a 'long and comparatively thin strip of occupied territory . . . between the States on one side, and the sterility of pinching winter on the other'.[5] He was wrong about winter: it engulfed all the colonies, but fortunately heavy loads moved more easily over frozen snow than colonial mud roads. What pinched Canada to the north-west was the Canadian Shield, a combination of rock and swamp stretching 800 miles from the backcountry settlements of Upper Canada to the vast interior plains which were not British colonies at all, but the Hudson's Bay Company's domain. Montreal fur-traders had challenged the Company's commercial control, providing a shadowy transcontinental outline much cherished by later historians as evidence of the 'Laurentian' inevitability of east–west political integration. Unfortunately it was short-lived. In 1821 the overextended Montreal fur-trade was swallowed by the London-based Hudson's Bay Company, and it was thirty years before an expanding Toronto revived Canadian westward ambitions.

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[4] Goldwin Smith, *Canada and the Canadian Question* [1891], ed. Carl Berger (Toronto, 1971), p. 4.
[5] Memorandum, 12 July 1865, in Paul Knaplund, *Gladstone and Britain's Imperial Policy* (London, 1966), p. 235.

A few thousand Europeans occupied trading posts across the West, and the only real settlement, at the Red River, faced an uncertain future: colonists sent by Lord Selkirk were attacked in 1816 by the Métis, an early indication that their mixed descent from native people and fur-traders would not make them enthusiastic intermediaries between old and new. Indigenous people were hardly more numerous: one estimate calculates 34,000 native people ('Indians') on the interior plains in 1809. While some, such as the Plains Cree, successfully adapted to change, native people overall were dangerously dependent on the buffalo. Further west, in a 'sea of mountains' 400 miles wide, lay the area which in 1858 became British Columbia, with a population of perhaps 80,000. Of the Inuit ('Eskimo') population in the far north, we can only guess.

Very little of this vastness was suitable for farming. Newfoundland had almost no agriculture. The Maritimes had pockets capable of supplying local demand. In the St Lawrence valley, soil exhaustion was a developing problem, and historians speak of 'agricultural crisis' in Lower Canada by 1815. Much land in eastern Upper Canada was poor, thanks to an outlying finger of the Shield which also created a series of rapids on the St Lawrence between Kingston and Montreal. Only in the peninsula between Lakes Ontario and Erie did settlers find truly prosperous farmlands. On the Plains in the 1850s explorers identified another strip, the 'fertile belt', running west-north-west from the Red River. Identifying fertile land was one thing; learning to farm it was another. Not until the early twentieth century did populations grow rapidly on the Canadian prairies. The sparsity of land fit for farming paradoxically helps explain why Canada grew in such jumps to become by 1914 second in land area only to Russia. In the first half of the nineteenth century the rush to strip British North America of its tree cover obscured the minimal utility of much of the land beneath, except in the fertile area of south-west Upper Canada. There is little truth in the stereotype that loggers cleared the way for farmers. The two activities were carried on in parallel, often by the same labour force in seasonal rhythms, and many areas were unsuitable for farming. Canada nevertheless remained predominantly agricultural. While almost 0.5 million people worked in manufacturing in 1910, one-third of these were in timber and food processing. Canada had only two cities with over 200,000 people, but even on their modest canvas, Montreal and Toronto were reproducing the horrors of old-world disease and slums.

Changes in the distribution of population reflected the unequal spread of fertile land. Upper Canada had barely counted 10 per cent of the British North American total in 1815. Renamed Ontario in 1867, it was by 1911 home to more than one-third of the Canadian total, with a population of 2.5 million. Immigration plus a high birth rate had pushed Lower Canada (Quebec since 1867) to 2 million. The three prairie provinces contained 1.3 million people in place of the virtual emptiness of

fifty years earlier. As the demographic centre of gravity moved west, the Maritimes' declining share pointed to political marginalization. However, even though the combined populations of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island remained short of 1 million people, the Maritimes (so often condemned as sleepy) still had more than twice as many people as British Columbia.

One explanation of the paradox of a predominantly rural population in an overwhelmingly infertile landscape lies in the slow development of Canadian mining. For instance, transcontinental railways faced the problem that there was virtually no coal between Nova Scotia and Alberta. The absence of large-scale mineral resources explains some key differences between Canada's experience and that of settler colonies in the southern hemisphere. Copper and nickel were discovered north of Lake Superior, but with a population of 12,500 by 1911, the Sudbury Basin was hardly Canada's Rand. The mainland colony of British Columbia in 1858 was created in response to a gold rush but, unlike Victoria or Otago, the influx of miners had little lasting impact. In the Yukon gold rush and the related Alaska boundary dispute the British displayed nothing of the aggressive expansionism seen in South Africa. Only two British North American politicians could be regarded as mining tycoons: newspaperman George Brown made money from shale oil, while Charles Fox Bennett of Newfoundland owned a copper mine. There was no Canadian Cecil Rhodes.

The tenfold increase in population in the century to 1914 was scarcely impressive on an Imperial scale. Although Canada contained the majority of the Empire's overseas white settler population, it was dwarfed by India's 300 million. It was hardly more important on the transatlantic stage. With a population just equal to that of Greater London by 1914, Canada sustained ten parliamentary systems, one each for Ottawa and the nine provinces. More positively, politics was brought close to the people thanks to a vigorous press: in 1856 Toronto's 35,000 people had a choice of fourteen newspapers, including two dailies. Unfortunately, bringing politics to the people did not necessarily produce just or effective government. Lord Dufferin deplored the treatment of Indians in British Columbia, where the provincial government simply ignored Native title to the land: 'the truth is British Columbia is hardly a large enough Community to have as yet developed a conscience.'[6] Legislatures were small and unstable: a few defections could unseat a ministry. Hence politics focused on the foreground of local interests, rather than the horizons of statesmanship. Healthy parliamentary government depended on the prospect of turning out one set of ministers and installing another, 'but in a small community there is difficulty enough in finding the materials even for a

[6] To Carnarvon, private, 21 Dec. 1874, in C. W. de Kiewiet and F. H. Underhill, eds., *Dufferin–Carnarvon Correspondence, 1874–1878* (Toronto, 1955), p. 125.

Ministry—much less can we expect to find the materials of a government and an opposition also'.[7]

The provinces did generate impressive political talent, but rarely in depth. The management skills of John A. Macdonald dominated Canadian politics throughout thirty crucial years, but his death in office in 1891 left a leadership vacuum at a time when the Dominion was under structural strain. In smaller political pits leadership choices were far more circumscribed, producing personalities such as the erratic William Lyon Mackenzie in Upper Canada or the bizarre Amor de Cosmos (born William A. Smith) in British Columbia. The Red River Métis barely numbered 5,000 in 1869 when they accepted the leadership of the 25-year old Louis Riel. Riel blundered in killing an obstreperous Orangeman, but otherwise led his people effectively, securing provincial status for Manitoba. When he returned to head a second uprising, in the Saskatchewan country in 1885, he had become deranged and led the Métis into millenarian disaster.

Small populations and unimpressive leadership underlined the social and political insignificance of the provinces in British eyes. In the 1840s emigration to Canada was 'a last resource to people who have ruined themselves at home'. The provinces contained 'three or four millions of labourers and small farmers, with scarcely a gentleman or a good income among them'.[8] Seventy years later, when the Irish nationalist Kevin O'Higgins was expelled from a seminary, his irate father told him he was 'only fit for the Canadian police'.[9] In contrast to the two returned Australian colonists in Gladstone's first Cabinet, British North Americans made no impact at Westminster. J. A. Roebuck, who spent his teenage years in Canada, was a maverick. T. C. Haliburton (MP, 1859–65) and Edward Blake (MP, 1892–1907) were ineffective. Andrew Bonar Law and Max Aitken (Lord Beaverbrook) were late exceptions, both products of the diaspora of the Presbyterian manse. No serving British Prime Minister visited Canada until 1927 and few Imperial statesmen had transatlantic experience. The British governing élite knew little of Canada, less of the Maritimes, and generally behaved with patronizing superiority towards the colonials. Hence Sir Edmund Head's belief that 'the presence of an English gentleman acting as Governor' could provide 'a wholesome check' on the corrupt tendencies of colonial politicians.[10]

Faced with such evidence, historians have had difficulty in explaining both why many people thought British dominance in Canada desirable, and how it was

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[7] Alice R. Stewart, 'Sir Edmund Head's Memorandum of 1857 on Maritime Union: A Lost Confederation Document', *Canadian Historical Review*, XXVI (1945), p. 415.

[8] Gordon to Aberdeen, 28 July 1845, in J. K. Chapman, *The Career of Arthur Hamilton Gordon First Lord Stanmore, 1829–1912* (Toronto, 1964), p. 6; *The Times*, 22 Oct. 1844.

[9] Terence de Vere White, *Kevin O'Higgins* (Dublin, 1986), p. 7.

[10] Stewart, 'Sir Edmund Head's Memorandum', p. 414.

maintained. Some have sought the answer in economic ties. In 1900 Britain provided 85 per cent of all external capital invested in the Dominion. However, this was hardly surprising, Britain being a major exporter of capital both within and notably beyond the Empire. More specifically, the carrot of a guaranteed (and therefore cheap) loan for canal-building helped secure Upper Canadian acquiescence in union with Lower Canada in 1840. A British offer in 1862 to underwrite the Halifax–Quebec railway provided the context rather than cause of the union of the provinces five years later: certainly, the British did not make cash conditional on Confederation. Loan guarantees were not simple tools of Imperial manipulation. Macdonald forced the British to guarantee a loan for the transcontinental railway in 1871 by threatening to block American access to Canadian inshore waters, and so sabotage the Treaty of Washington.

Government-endorsed loans probably encouraged Canada to embark on over-ambitious projects. However, such loans were exceptional. Much British investment came from individuals, such as Charles Stewart Parnell's widow, who unwisely entrusted her savings to the Grand Trunk Railway, and historians arguing for the manipulative power of investment capital have yet to identify the mechanisms by which such disparate private interests influenced Imperial policy. Nor was Canada entirely reliant on imported capital; even in the boom years after 1901 domestic savings were almost double external investment.

It is difficult to locate Canada clearly in either the formal or informal spheres of Empire.[11] Ambiguity is understandable since commercial ties, no less than financial, had varying consequences. In 1815 British North America formed part of an Imperial trading unit, and political subordination was justified by essentially mercantilist arguments. After 1846 the colonies were allowed to set their own tariffs, provided they did not discriminate against British manufactures. That restriction apart, there was much to justify Cobden's view that, under free trade, 'Canada is not a whit more ours than is the great Republic'.[12] However, there was an undercurrent of belief in Britain that an effective American tariff would be 'a dream—an utter impossibility, so long as England possesses Upper Canada', thanks to cross-border smuggling.[13] The process was briefly encouraged by the Reciprocity Treaty, which gave the provinces free access to American markets for natural products. However, Canada's politicians were not content to be hewers of wood for Americans. In 1859 the Canadian tariff was raised to encourage local industry. The smuggling argument was now inverted. British manufacturers

[11] John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', *Economic History Review*, Second Series, VI (1953), pp. 1–15.

[12] Cobden to Combe, 8 Feb. 1849, in John Morley, *The Life of Richard Cobden* (London, 1905), pp. 506–07.

[13] 19 June 1849 *Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), CVI, col. 481.

protested that their goods were taxed at entry ports, while American goods evaded tariffs along the inadequately policed border. Canada's finance minister, Alexander Galt, ingeniously argued that the tariff would effectively make British imports cheaper since the revenue was applied to improving internal communications. Any pretence of Imperial control over colonial tariffs had thus been abandoned prior to Confederation. The first Dominion tariff was set to accommodate free-trading Nova Scotia, but duties crept upwards to maintain revenue, and in 1879 protection was explicitly adopted. Aimed at creating an east–west Canada as an Imperial keystone, this 'National Policy' was directed mainly against the United States. Thus, in 1897 the French-Canadian Liberal Prime Minister, Wilfrid Laurier, simultaneously asserted his free-trading credentials and appeased imperialist critics by reducing duties on British goods without seriously denting the overall policy of protection.

Overall, to invoke investment or trade as devices to explain Imperial hegemony over Canada is to provoke more questions than answers. At most, such explanations may help to explain *how* Imperial influence was exercised over Canada. With the partial exception of the strategic importance of colonial timber until perhaps the 1830s, these arguments hardly tell us *why* British North America was important to the Empire. The answer lies in the essential non-Imperial context of British North America, that of its southern neighbour, the United States.

The 7 million Americans of 1810 had not merely doubled the area of their republic a century later but had rocketed to a population of 92 million. Moreover, rapid territorial growth was accompanied by political centralization, making the United States into a potential Imperial state. The unsuccessful war for Southern independence between 1861 and 1865 saw the Northern States emerge as the first modern fully mobilized and mechanized war machine, adding massive economic strength to the American ideological challenge to British monarchical institutions.

Why did British North America escape the 'event... which we all know must happen', as a Nova Scotian described absorption by the United States in 1824? 'Annexation' was 'an ugly word' that implied a destiny that would engulf the provinces whether they liked it or not.[14] Fortunately, there were only two periods when British North America lay athwart the westward movement of the American frontier. For two decades after 1815, south-western Upper Canada was a natural extension of Upper New York. Hunger for Canadian land fuelled border raids in 1837–38. Thereafter the main thrust of United States expansion bypassed the

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[14] T. C. Haliburton to P. Wiswall, 7 Jan. 1824, in Richard A. Davies, ed., *The Letters of Thomas Chandler Haliburton* (Toronto, 1988), p. 16; Smith, *Canada and the Canadian Question*, ed. Berger, p. 212.

limited pickings of Canada until the early twentieth century, when American settlement turned north into the prairies. Except perhaps in British Columbia, there were never significant fifth columns of Americans ready to subvert Canada as they had seized Texas, although instability at the Red River in 1869–70 aroused some American hopes. The slow spread of the quintessential American game of baseball from its original footholds in Ontario is one index of the relative weakness of US influences within Canada.

Only rarely was annexation seriously proposed. The best-known episode, the Annexation Manifesto of 1849, was largely a protest by Montreal merchants. Forty years later one signatory felt it necessary to deny that they 'had any more serious idea of seeking annexation with the United States than a petulant child who strikes his nurse had of deliberately murdering her'.[15] In provinces where expressions of loyalty to Britain dominated political discourse, it was dangerous to flirt with the Americans. William McDougall's veiled threat that discontented Upper Canadians would turn to the United States for support was used against Reformers in the 1861 election. Proposals for closer trade relations were rejected at the elections of 1891 and 1911, the cry of Imperial loyalty mingling with protectionist self-interest. Etienne Taché's warning that if they failed to unite, the provinces 'would be placed upon an inclined plane' towards annexation, tells more about the strength of anti-American feeling than the reasons for Confederation.[16] Ambitious or discontented Canadians found it far simpler to emigrate to the United States than campaign for annexation. By 1900 over a million of them lived south of the border, one in five of all the Canadian-born in North America. When the fictional mayor of Stephen Leacock's Mariposa announced that he would soon journey 'towards that goal from which no traveller returns', the townsfolk assumed he was moving to the United States.[17]

For their part, boastful orations apart, Americans made few efforts to absorb their neighbours. Unlike the earlier Articles of Confederation, the Constitution of 1787 contained no provision for the admission of Canada. A bill offering statehood, introduced into Congress in 1866, disappeared in committee. Perhaps wooing the provinces would have been tantamount to doubting the inevitability of 'Manifest Destiny'. Perhaps, too, American politicians did not think the Canadian prize worth British antagonism—unlike the easier pickings of Alaska and Hawaii. The Montreal annexationists also made Britain's agreement a precondition, but the British Prime Minister, Russell, wrote that 'I never could give my

[15] Joseph Pope, *Memoirs of the Right Honourable Sir John Alexander Macdonald* (Toronto, 1930), p. 74.

[16] *Parliamentary Debates on the Subject of the Confederation of the British North American Provinces* (Quebec, 1865), p. 6.

[17] Stephen Leacock, *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* (1912; Toronto, 1982), p. 138.

assent'.[18] As Trollope's Phineas Finn put it, British public opinion was determined 'that Canada should not go to the States, because,—though they don't love the Canadians, they do hate the Americans.'[19]

The diversity of British North America and the nature of change may be seen in the experience of five groups of people through the century: women, Native people, French Canadians, immigrants, and the locally born English-speaking population.

Given the contribution of women to pioneer life, it might be expected that they would throw off subordinate roles in a 'new' society: in 1875 Mount Allison College produced the first woman graduate in the British Empire. Moreover, in the formative years women were scarce: in early Vancouver there were almost two males for every female. In fact, women actually lost ground. Not being explicitly debarred, propertied women took part in elections in Lower Canada, 199 voting in Montreal West in 1832. The radical *Patriotes* deprived women of the franchise in 1834 to protect their 'natural modesty'. By 1851 the Maritimes had followed, and the only amendment Westminster made in passing the British North America Act was the insertion of the word 'male' in the definition of the right to vote. As late as 1908, New Brunswick's Premier promised that women would be given the vote 'when they wanted it'. Campaigns against drink and prostitution led some, mainly middle-class, women to seek the vote, but the members of a Halifax campaigning group were described, by a female journalist, in 1912 as 'essentially womanly women'.[20] Nor were Canadian women notably nationalist. Perhaps their most prominent organization, the Imperial Order of the Daughters of Empire was founded in 1900 to harness 'women's influence to the bettering of all things connected with our great Empire'.[21]

Limited economic opportunities opened in the later nineteenth century. Women established a foothold in office work: the twenty-four female Dominion civil servants of 1886 grew to 700 in the next twenty years, prompting the complaint 'women clerks claim the rights of men and the privileges of their own sex as well'.[22] Women, however, rarely received equal pay. The 'feminization' of the teaching profession probably tells much about the low status of schoolteaching. In his 1885 painting *The Meeting of the School Trustees*, Robert Harris caught the imploring body language of the female teacher pleading her case to a resistant

[18] To Grey, 6 Aug. 1849, University of Durham, Grey Papers.

[19] Anthony Trollope, *Phineas Finn: The Irish Member* (1869; London, 1968), p. 464, chap. 56.

[20] E. R. Forbes and D. A. Muise, eds., *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation* (Toronto, 1993), pp. 189, 202.

[21] Robert Craig Brown and Ramsay Cook, *Canada, 1896–1921: A Nation Transformed* (Toronto, 1974), pp. 42–43.

[22] John Hilliker, *Canada's Department of External Affairs*, Vol. I, *The Early Years, 1909–1946* (Montreal, 1990), p. 48.

group of homespun farmers. For rural communities, appointing a teacher was a way of importing 'a prime matrimonial prospect' into the district.[23] Overall, the most striking fact was the extent to which women were confirmed in Old-World roles. In rural Quebec, birth rates were as high in the early twentieth century as they had been in the eighteenth: 'nowhere else in the world was the Catholic ideal of a large family realized as effectively.'[24] Yet in 1871 the fertility rate among women of child-bearing age had actually been higher in Ontario. To quote an earlier observer, the immigrant father could expect that within a year of arriving in Upper Canada, 'all his sons will be *free* and all his daughters *confined*.'[25]

For Canada's indigenous peoples, the nineteenth century was a disaster. They had constituted at least one-fifth of the population in 1815 but by 1911 their total numbers halved to just over 100,000, barely 1 per cent of Canada's total. In Newfoundland, the Beothuk were extinct by 1829. A few groups, such as the Six Nations, remained important in Upper Canada at least until 1837, but most were brushed aside. The Mississauga, who had sold most of their lands north of Lake Ontario in 1805, were still seeking payment in 1905. With no organization to provide Native groups with a common front, only the white man's government could determine overall policy. The titles of legislation, such as the Gradual Civilization Act (1857) or the Indian Advancement Act (1884), are memorials to failure. Indians east of the Great Lakes were offered the vote in 1885. Few had accepted before the privilege was withdrawn in 1898.

West of the Great Lakes there were no Canadian frontier wars like those of the southern hemisphere colonies. Over-hunting of buffalo combined with alcohol and disease to render Indian resistance unlikely, if not impossible. One incentive in Treaties Number Six and Seven which extinguished native title across the southern prairies in 1871–77 was the provision of a medical chest on each reservation. Canada could at least guarantee order, thanks to the North-West Mounted Police, founded in 1873 and significantly modelled on the Royal Irish Constabulary. Few indigenous people were tempted to support Riel in 1885.

By contrast, French Canadians flourished. The 1911 census counted over 2 million, although for the first time their share of the total dipped below 30 per cent. Four-fifths of French Canadians lived in the province of Quebec, where they also constituted four-fifths of the province's population. Quebec's English-speaking enclaves were shrinking, but the province's largest city, Montreal, remained a stronghold of English power. Although French Canadians might see all of Canada as their homeland, their retreat into the Quebec provincial fortress was

[23] John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Scotch* (Toronto, 1964), p. 88.

[24] Paul-André Linteau and others, *Quebec: A History, 1867–1929* [1979], trans. R. Chodos (Toronto, 1983), p. 22.

[25] Ronald Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience* (Manchester, 1990), p. 106.

a by-product of the creation of a French-majority province in 1867. Out-migration from Quebec went mainly to the nearby United States. Consequently, Manitoba failed to develop into a second French-speaking province, and in 1890 began to dismantle the legal protection enjoyed by the French language. In the Maritimes, the Acadians formed their own cultural organization in 1881, and also looked more to exiled kin in New England than to Quebec.

Religion was almost as much a key as language to understanding Canada's French fact. Largely cut off from metropolitan France, French Canadians rallied around the Catholic church, whose distaste for the Revolution of 1789 further distanced them from their secular European cousins. However, while the church was undoubtedly a force for social control and Imperial accommodation, it is possible to overestimate its conservative role, as the rebellions of 1837–38 demonstrated. Excesses such as the Guibord affair, in which the ultramontane Bishop Bourget blocked the burial of a political opponent, were atypical. Laurier opened an ingenious route to compromise in 1877 by defining himself as a Gladstonian Liberal rather than a continental anticlerical. Outside Quebec, the church was a less reliable protector of French identity, especially where the Irish challenged for control: Bishop Michael Fallon was prominent in the attack on French schools in Ontario after 1910. The Vatican was usually anxious to defuse church–state clashes, notably forcing Catholics to accept substantial defeat over Manitoba Schools in 1897.

In public life the French language was barely audible: even the Quebec Conference of 1864, which designed Confederation, was conducted entirely in English. Francophone parliamentarians often spoke in English, and it was not until 1910 that the Quebec legislature required utilities to provide customer services in French. In 1914 Canadian stamps and banknotes—indeed, even the cheques issued by the Government of Quebec itself—were entirely in English. Yet language remained the core of French Canadian identity. Durham's dismissal of them as 'destitute of all that can invigorate and elevate a people'[26] goaded F.-X. Garneau into writing a four-volume history of French Canada. Anglicization was not simply a process of linguistic change. The use of French in the Canadian Assembly was legalized in 1848, but probably more significant was codification of Lower Canada's civil law, completed in 1866, which added to the attractions for the French-Canadian professional classes of re-creating their own province in Confederation.

Both the fact and the failure of armed revolt against British rule in 1837–38 enabled French Canadians to see collaboration with the Imperial power as a policy

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[26] C. P. Lucas, ed., *Lord Durham's Report on the Affairs of British North America*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1912), II, p. 294.

of accommodation rather than surrender. The real threat to a French and Catholic identity came from American democracy, which was threatening and close at hand. As early as 1846, the former rebel Taché proclaimed their allegiance to the Empire 'till the last cannon . . . shot on this continent in defence of Great Britain is fired by the hand of a French Canadian'.[27] However, talk of Britain as 'la Mère Patrie' was shallow. French Canadians showed little enthusiasm for Britain's other Imperial ventures, notably the Second Anglo-Boer War, and it was fortunate that the two European motherlands remained at peace throughout the century.

Studies of 'colonial nationalism' and new identities encourage the assumption that British North America's inhabitants became more 'Canadian' throughout the century. In fact, in demographic terms the people of Canada became steadily more British. Newfoundland excepted, in 1815 the dominant population groups were of French and American origin. Immigration thereafter came overwhelmingly from the United Kingdom. Well-known examples of non-British groups were statistically unimportant. Canadians were proud that blacks could find freedom, if not practical equality, on British soil, but by 1911 there were fewer than 17,000 black people in Canada, a total regularly surpassed by annual immigration from Britain. The Doukhobors, encouraged to move to Canada by the Russian writer Tolstoy, numbered barely 7,000. More significant were the 100,000 Ukrainians entering Canada between 1896 and 1914—but 150,000 people came from the United Kingdom in 1913 alone.

Although until 1910 the vast majority of British migrants headed for the United States, there were phases when Canada—with its relatively small host population—was overwhelmed. A third of a million came between 1826 and 1837, contributing to the dislocation underlying the rebellions. Two-thirds of a million followed between 1840 and 1857, fuelling Upper Canadian demands for 'representation by population' that challenged the artificial equality with Lower Canada in the Canadian Union. The fact that many migrants were young adults maximized their impact: the British-born constituted about one-quarter of the population of Upper Canada on the eve of Confederation, but made up 40 per cent of Upper Canadian legislators. Crossing the border in 1862, a correspondent of *The Times* noted that Canadians looked 'stouter and ruddier of hue' than Americans and many had Scots or Irish accents.[28] Immigration surged again in the 1880s, and from 1903. One and a half million immigrants entered between 1910 and 1914, almost half from the British Isles. In 1901 7 per cent of the population of Canada was British-born; by 1911 almost 11 per cent. Canada was becoming more British, not less.

[27] Jacques Monet, *The Last Cannon Shot: A Study of French-Canadian Nationalism, 1837–1850* (Toronto, 1969), p. 3.

[28] W. H. Russell, *Canada: Its Defences, Condition, and Resources* (London, 1865), p. 57.

Of course, British immigrants were neither socially nor culturally homogen-
eous. Scots were often divided by language—Lowlanders regarded Gaelic as
'gibberish'—and their predominant Presbyterian faith was quarrelsomely fissile.
Toronto Scots were organizing in support of the Free Kirk within four months of
the Disruption of the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh in 1843, although Cana-
dian Presbyterians reunited in 1875, half a century before ecclesiastical peace
returned to Scotland.

Irish divisions proved longer-lasting. The largest immigrant group until the
1850s came from Ireland. Unlike the more visible Irish of the United States, they
were rural rather than urban, Protestant rather than Catholic, and the Famine of
1845–49 was far less significant in explaining their migration. In fact, Irish migra-
tion virtually ceased after 1855 as Upper Canada began to run out of land for
settlement. The Newfoundland Irish were overwhelmingly Catholic, heavily
drawn from the hinterland of Waterford; Ulster Catholics were common in New
Brunswick, rare in Halifax. The Protestants who predominated among the Upper
Canadian Irish were by no means all from Ulster. The Baldwins in Upper Canada
and Uniackes in Nova Scotia, Cork Protestant families, led the demand for
colonial self-government, inspired by memories of Grattan's parliament rather
than any vision of future Commonwealth partnership.

The Orange Order, whose members were pledged 'to resist all attempts
to . . . dismember the British Empire',[29] was the most widespread social institution
in British North America: Ontario had 900 Lodges in 1870. Despite official hopes
that Orangeism would die out, the Order became Canadianized through resist-
ance to Catholic demands for publicly funded separate schools. Riel's murder of
an Orangeman brought the conflicts of seventeenth-century Ireland to the green
grassy slopes of the Assiniboine. Canadian Orangeism in turn fuelled Ulster
resistance. A disapproving Manchester Liberal regarded Bonar Law's 'Orange
fanaticism' as something he had 'brought . . . with him from Canada'.[30]

Orangemen had no monopoly on loyalty. Unlike Australia, Canada offered an
easy alternative for Irish Catholics who rejected the British flag: they could go to
the United States. American Fenians, seeking to liberate Ireland by attacking
Canada, only underlined that choice. D'Arcy McGee, a self-styled traitor in 1848,
was assassinated twenty years later because he had come to prefer colonial freedom
to republican democracy.

The colonial-born were the Empire's second-class citizens, part of a world
focused somewhere else. 'The Boston boy may become President of the United
States,' complained Joseph Howe, but 'the young native of Halifax or Quebec'

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[29] Cecil J. Houston and William J. Smyth, *The Sash Canada Wore: A Historical Geography of the
Orange Order in Canada* (Toronto, 1980), p. 120.

[30] Trevor Wilson, ed., *The Political Diaries of C. P. Scott, 1911–1928* (London, 1970), p. 403.

could hope only for 'some paltry office' in a local ministry.[31] Inspired by McGee's vision, in 1868 five Canadian-born government clerks formed Canada First, a pale equivalent of assertive nativism in Australia. Despite some indirect influence, the movement fizzled out within a decade. A handful of writers solemnly debated the nature of Canadian literature, but there was no answer to McGee's challenge: 'Who reads a Canadian book?'[32] Even twentieth-century Canadian Liberals such as Mackenzie King and Paul Martin were inspired by Morley's *Life of Gladstone*. By 1914 there were signs of the distinctive school of art that later emerged in the Group of Seven (two of whom were English migrants who had arrived in 1911), which drew inspiration from Canada's northern landscapes. Significantly, these rarely included any sign of Canada's peoples.

Although there were French words to 'O Canada' when Lavallée composed the stirring tune in 1880, it was twenty years before an English version hymned 'our home and native land', replacing the original land of altars. Many English Canadians preferred 'The Maple Leaf for Ever', which defined Canadianism as a British entwining of thistle, shamrock, and rose, and praised Wolfe's heroism. The composer was an Orangeman born in Scotland. In 1872 Lady Dufferin assumed that a Canadian flag must include a beaver and a maple leaf, but there was no such distinctive symbol in the Canadian version of the Red Ensign sanctioned in 1892 merely for use by merchant ships. As late as 1911, a Liberal politician declared that the Union Jack would fly over Canada until the end of time.

Evidently nineteenth-century Canada did not conform to a decolonization model of progression through stages of self-government to full independence. Its constitutional evolution is better seen in terms of three levels of government: Imperial at the top and colonial or (after 1867) provincial at the bottom, with an intermediate tier gradually forming in between. Rather than adopt the conventional divide of 'pre-' and 'post-Confederation', it is more helpful to consider the century in three phases, demarcated by divides around 1840 and 1880.

The Canadian rebellions of 1837–38 did not prove that the system of government was unworkable. They were rather incidents in the confrontation between the negative leadership of Papineau and Mackenzie and irresolute Imperial responses hinting at reforms the existing system could not deliver. Although worsened by economic depression, insurrection was localized. The colonial yoke may have seemed intolerable in Deux Montagnes but it did not provoke rebellion at Trois Rivières. Fighting broke out as much by accident as revolutionary design. There

[31] J. A. Chisholm, ed., *The Speeches and Public Letters of Joseph Howe*, 2 vols. (Halifax, 1908), I, p. 623.
[32] Francess G. Halpenny, ed., *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 13 vols. to date (Toronto, 1976), IX, p. 492.

was no revolt against the colonial system in Nova Scotia, where opposition rhetoric rivalled that of the Canadas.

The rebellions were suppressed by military force in Lower Canada, and snuffed out by a momentary local civil war in Upper Canada. Easy suppression misled the British into thinking they could impose their own solutions, but they were at least forced to focus on underlying issues of colonial autonomy and interprovincial co-operation. Generally, military Governors were replaced in the larger colonies by civilians who combined social status with political or administrative experience, albeit rarely at the highest levels of British government. The habit of command was replaced by an appreciation that in some form the Imperial factor must coexist with the people, not least because their Assemblies voted revenue needed for efficient administration. Until 1837 controversy over sharing political power between Imperial centre and colonial periphery had concentrated on demands to change structures, such as pressure for locally elected Legislative Councils. From the 1840s both Imperial policy-makers and colonial politicians adopted the more successful strategies of seeking their ends by subtle manipulation of existing institutions.

Although the Governor-General based in Lower Canada was technically supreme over all the provinces except Newfoundland, in practice there were no intercolonial co-ordinating structures. Some British policy-makers, Durham included, considered inserting a mezzanine level of government, between metropolis and colonies, to create a British North American buffer against the United States and conscript English-speaking colonists to control the discontented French. However, a union of all the provinces seemed impracticable; the British took the lesser but important step in 1840 of uniting Upper and Lower Canada into a bi-valved province, with an Assembly in which Upper Canada was given equal representation, despite its smaller population, in order to check the still-suspect French.

Historians have conventionally explained that colonial self-government was impractical in 1840 because free trade had not yet provided the necessary space for autonomy within the Empire. Another explanation may be suggested by considering the slow growth of state structures. The Governor of Upper Canada pleaded in 1836 that it was 'impossible' for him to consult his Executive Council 'on all subjects...unless they were to live with me at Government House and be morning, noon, and night at my elbow'.[33] The quasi-presidential rule attempted by Governors from Durham to Metcalfe only worsened the problem—and overwork helped kill two of them. Colonial government, in other words, was a form of

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[33] Sir Francis Bond Head to Glenelg, Private and Confidential, 27 April 1836, C[olonial] O[ffice] 42/ 429, ff. 451–52.

household administration, but the provinces needed a modern Civil Service. In 1842 the province of Canada employed a central administrative staff of ninety-five, with a further 342 employees scattered around the province. By 1867 the numbers had risen to 354 and 2,300. While Confederation was probably not caused by the need for administrative integration, it did make centralization possible. Nova Scotia, for instance, reduced its own civil service in 1867, recognizing that the real authority had passed to Ottawa.

The other requirement for self-government was the emergence of a cadre of professional politicians. Presiding over the new system in New Brunswick in 1848, Sir Edmund Head refused routine administrative work himself and insisted that if colonists desired effective responsible government, 'they must . . . pay the men who give up their time to the public service'.[34] Indeed, the last formal Imperial attempt to resist responsible government, Sir Charles Metcalfe's victory over the Reformers in 1843–44, was only possible because in W. H. Draper, the Governor-General had an alternative Premier able to manage the Assembly.

The advent of responsible government during the 1840s can be largely identified through two linked processes: decisions by the British to allow a larger measure of local autonomy, and the changing role of Governors from executive presidents to constitutional monarchs. The defining moment in the first was Gladstone's failure in 1849 to persuade the House of Commons to challenge the Rebellion Losses Act for Lower Canada. The principle of non-intervention was confirmed by this political test case rather than the constitutional division of spheres proposed by Durham ten years earlier. As Lord Elgin showed in Canada between 1847 and 1854, a Governor acting as constitutional monarch provided the basis for effective power-sharing between Empire and periphery.

Responsible government presupposed party politics, so that ministries might be sustained in the division lobbies but replaced at the polls. Unfortunately, early party alliances proved unstable: the 'Great Ministry' of 1848 fragmented within six years. Many of its French-Canadian supporters became 'Bleus' in alliance with moderate English-speaking Conservatives. The Reformers were perhaps victims of their own success: since secularization of the clergy reserves and modernization of land tenure, both carried in 1854, discharged key pledges in their programme of government. Conversely, defeat on these issues enabled Conservatives to abandon outdated ideological baggage and some, like Macdonald, proved effective at regrouping around practical issues, such as railway construction. Mid-century Canadian politics were therefore based on constant manœuvring for coalitions. However sordid the politics of railways, kaleidoscopic factionalism at least sometimes forced competing groups to co-operate. The only alternative means of

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[34] Kerr, *Sir Edmund Head*, p. 77.

building majorities—the politics of religion—entailed long-term divisions. Party
polarization around a major issue only returned in the late 1870s with tariff
protection.

Unstable party politics gave Governors-General scope to act on their own
initiative. Sir Edmund Head secured the choice of Ottawa as the seat of govern-
ment in 1857. His refusal to call a general election in 1858 barred the divisive Upper
Canadian Reformer, George Brown, from office. A similar refusal by Head's
successor, Lord Monck, in 1864 helped force Brown into coalition with his
opponents in order to tackle the constitutional issue. In 1867 Monck insisted on
commissioning John A. Macdonald as sole Prime Minister of the new Dominion,
thereby ending the system of dual ministries which had prevailed in the province
of Canada. Lord Dufferin played an independent hand in placating secessionist
tendencies in British Columbia. 'You said last night you are not a Crown Colony,'
Dufferin wrote to his aggrieved Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie after a
'stormy meeting' on the subject in 1876, 'but neither are you a Republic.'[35]

Canada by 1876 was not a republic but a Dominion. Visionary elements
notwithstanding, practical considerations rather than revolutionary nationalism
explained why Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia united to form a British
North American core in 1867. For Maritimers, Confederation meant that Cana-
dian money would subsidize the interest payments on the British capital available
since 1862 for a railway from Halifax to Quebec. That railway offered little to
Canadians, and union with small colonies to the east was not a precondition for
Canadian westward expansion. Rather, Confederation offered a painless transfer
of additional political power to Upper Canada's growing population, within a
framework guaranteeing the Catholic identity of French Canada. Above all, it was
acceptable to the British Parliament, which passed the necessary legislation.

Essentially, Confederation in 1867 was the extension of the union of the Canadas
over a larger area. The particularism of Maritimers and French Canadians
required the trappings of local Assemblies and ministries, although the main
agent for the government of the provinces envisaged at the Quebec Conference
had been the centrally appointed Lieutenant-Governor. Since Ottawa would also
appoint the Senators who were supposed to defend provincial interests in the
central legislature, it was clear the Dominion was to be the master. Not only did the
British North America Act allow the Dominion 'to make Laws for the Peace,
Order, and good Government of Canada', but Macdonald revived the Imperial
power of disallowance to strike down provincial legislation even in fields entrusted
to the lowest tier of government. In 1865 he privately hoped to see the provinces

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[35] Dufferin to Mackenzie, Private and Confidential, 19 Nov. 1876, in de Kiewiet and F. H. Underhill,
eds., *Dufferin–Carnarvon Correspondence*, p. 319.

'absorbed in the general power',[36] and his creation in 1870 of the 'postage-stamp province' of Manitoba, with its small area and limited powers, is suggestive. 'Confederation is only yet in the gristle,' Macdonald wrote in 1872, 'and it will require five years more before it hardens into bone.'[37] Had he not lost office in a scandal in 1873, he might even have emulated New Zealand, where the provinces were abolished altogether in 1875. Even the unhappy and divided Liberal administration of 1873–78 actually strengthened Dominion power by creating a Canadian Supreme Court. Indeed, the rise of the tariff issue promised to create both firmer party alliances and a more integrated Canadian state. 'Never since the settlement of the great questions of the Clergy Reserves and Seignorial Tenure', said the *Montreal Gazette* in 1876, 'have party lines been so distinctly drawn upon a clear and easily understood principle.'[38] The protectionist National Policy of 1879, carried by Macdonald after the Conservatives' return to office, and the completion of the transcontinental railway and the crushing of the 1885 rebellion seemed to set the seal on the physical unity of Canada.

It seems ironic that this centralist ascendancy was now challenged by a counter-attack from the provinces. Perhaps Macdonald's greatest mistake in the design of Confederation was to re-create Upper Canada as the fully fledged province of Ontario, thereby giving the Dominion's powerhouse an alternative political focus, an inconvenience which became evident after he lost control of it in 1871. Yet it may be that the provincial counter-campaign was a necessary corrective in so large and diverse a country. Canada's constitutional umpire, the London-based Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, certainly thought so, for from 1883 onwards it generally supported the view of Ontario's Liberal Premier, Oliver Mowat, that the provinces were supreme in their own sphere.

The provinces sought to extend their boundaries as well as their jurisdiction. Manitoba ceased to be a postage stamp in 1881. Ontario pushed its large claims west of Lake Superior, securing additional territory in 1884, and Crown rights over natural resources in 1888. Macdonald came to fear that Ontario and Quebec would acquire a 'vast preponderance . . . over the other provinces in the Dominion'.[39] 'Old Canada', as Goldwin Smith still called the core region in 1891, now felt it had regional interests contrary to those of the Dominion it had created.

In 1887 the Premiers of five of the seven provinces, all Liberals, held a symbolic conference at Quebec to argue that Confederation was the creation of the

[36] John A. Macdonald to M. C. Cameron (copy), 19 Dec. 1864, National Archives of Canada, Macdonald Papers, vol. 510.
[37] To Rose, Private, 5 March 1872, in D. G. Creighton, *John A. Macdonald: The Old Chieftain* (Toronto, 1955), p. 130.
[38] *Montreal Gazette*, 18 March 1876.
[39] Creighton, *John A. Macdonald: The Old Chieftain*, p. 484.

provinces, and to demand the abolition of disallowance. The attractions of a provincialist stance were underlined by the failure of Liberal assaults on the National Policy at the elections of 1887 and 1891. The party's opportunity came with the slow-burning fuse of the Manitoba Schools dispute. It mattered little that it was a provincial Liberal government that withdrew public funding from Manitoba's Catholic schools in 1890. Manitoba Schools revealed the inadequacy of Macdonald's attempt to square the sectarian circle in 1867, and his Conservative successors—four in the five years after his death in 1891—were unable to reconstruct the balance. Section 92 of the British North America Act had made education a provincial responsibility, but the Dominion was compelled by Section 93 to intervene to defend the rights of a threatened minority. The provision, designed to safeguard Quebec's Protestants, was successfully appealed to by Manitoba's Catholics. In 1895 the Judicial Committee ruled that Section 93 applied and so required the Conservative Prime Minister, Sir Mackenzie Bowell, Grand Master of the Orange Order, to impose a Catholic victory on the Protestant Manitobans. In the cross-currents of the 1896 election, Quebec voters apparently preferred the principle of provincial autonomy to Dominion intervention in support of the threatened Manitoba minority, and helped make Laurier Canada's first francophone Prime Minister. Three former Premiers joined his Liberal Cabinet: the provinces had captured Ottawa.

Thus, by 1896 the establishment of a middle tier of government at British North American level had not eroded the nether millstone of provincialism. Nor had the Dominion gone far in enlarging its powers at the Imperial centre's expense. When Dufferin departed, two books were written about his 'administration' of Canada. None of his successors played such a pervasive role in domestic politics, although Lord Aberdeen's hyperactive wife tried. It is revealing that while Dufferin (1872–78) and Lorne (1878–83) were adopted as names for Canadian boys, Stanley (1888–93) and Grey (1904–11) were remembered for their gifts of sporting trophies. However, the Governor-General continued to be the channel of communication with the British government. A Canadian High Commission, established in London from 1880, dealt largely with immigration and trade. The second High Commissioner, Donald A. Smith (Lord Strathcona), was appointed when 75 and remained in office for eighteen years. There was little pressure for independent representation in any other capital. Canadians were angered when the British failed to back them against the United States in the Alaska boundary dispute, but on balance preferred unreliable Imperial support to facing the Americans totally alone. A Department of External Affairs was established in 1909, with its tiny staff located in an office over an Ottawa barber's shop, but it represented little threat to Imperial diplomatic unity.

The withdrawal of British garrisons in 1870–except from Halifax and Esquimalt, where troops remained until 1906 to protect the naval bases—was a recognition that Canada could not be defended against American attack. The Dominion's 'Permanent Force' did little to fill the gap: in 1891, with Canada's population approaching 5 million, its establishment of 966 men was poorly trained and undisciplined. Whereas in 1870 Canada had relied on British redcoats to subdue the Red River, in 1885 volunteer militia smothered the Saskatchewan rebellion. Macdonald dismissed pressures to send troops to the Sudan in 1884, but Laurier was unable to resist in 1899. Even without a provocative appeal from Joseph Chamberlain, English-Canadian enthusiasm would probably have forced Laurier to prove his loyalty to the Imperial cause in South Africa, despite French-Canadian sympathy for the Boers. Whereas for Australia South Africa provided something of a surrogate war of national independence, Canada had to resort to hole-in-the-corner support. Laurier authorized the despatch of 1,000 men who would become the responsibility of the British once they reached Cape Town. His insistence that the compromise was not a precedent was rightly dismissed by Henri Bourassa.

Although the Dominion had established an officer-training college in 1876, Canada's soldiers continued to be commanded by British generals, some of whom chafed at such a career backwater. Like many Imperial enthusiasts, General the Earl of Dundonald equated disagreement with treason. Dismissed in 1904 for resisting the possible appointment of a Canadian as his successor, Dundonald's parting shot was an appeal to Canadians to 'keep both hands on the Union Jack!'[40] The appeal was hardly necessary. Canadian politicians rebuffed occasional demands for contributions to Imperial defence costs by pointing out that they had built the Canadian Pacific Railway. This argument, luckily never tested, assumed that transcontinental Canada was the capstone of Empire, linking the British naval bases of Halifax and Esquimalt.

Despite an initial bipartisan façade, Canada's political system did not respond effectively to the realization after 1909 that it was no longer possible to shelter under the world-wide protection of the Union Jack and the British fleet. Laurier's plan for a fleet of eleven warships, an auxiliary navy for an auxiliary state, was too little for Ontario and too much for Quebec, contributing to his defeat at the 1911 election. His Conservative successors were equally unable to carry through their policy of giving three Dreadnoughts to the Royal Navy. By 1914 Canada's 'tin-pot' navy consisted of two superannuated British cruisers, one at each end of the country.

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[40] Desmond Morton, *Ministers and Generals: The Politics of the Canadian Militia* (Toronto, 1970), p. 181.

Continental as well as Imperial pressures contributed to Laurier's defeat in 1911. Unexpectedly, the Americans offered an attractive free-trade agreement—so attractive that critics alleged that Canadian prosperity, even its membership of the Empire, would be at the mercy of the American Congress. The intersection of the naval issue with protectionist fears of American competition prevented Laurier from repeating the balancing act of 1899. The Liberals were engulfed on the crucial battleground of Ontario, winning only thirteen of the eighty-six constituencies. Yet in 1900 an identical popular vote had won them three times as many. Four-hundred thousand migrants had poured into Ontario in the interval, and recently arrived British migrants rallying to the flag figured largely in Laurier's defeat.

It is unlikely that the British Cabinet gave much thought to Canada as Europe moved towards war in July 1914. The Prime Minister, Sir Robert Borden, was urged by his secretary to abandon his holiday and return to Ottawa. As war approached, Borden assured London, through the correct channel of the Governor-General, that 'the Canadian people will be united ... to ensure the integrity and maintain the honour of our Empire'.[41] Only ten days earlier Canada had shown a different attitude to the integrity of the Empire when HMCS *Rainbow* had turned back to India a shipload of would-be Sikh immigrants.

Late on 4 August 1914 a telegram from London informed the Governor-General that war had broken out with Germany. Few were troubled that Canada had been committed without consultation: Laurier, leader of the Opposition, said Canadians had always known 'that when Great Britain is at war we are at war'.[42] 'England has always protected our liberties', Archbishop Bruchési told French-Canadian volunteers, urging them 'to do your utmost to keep the Union Jack flying'.[43] Laurier insisted—in language embarrassing to subsequent generations—that Canada, 'a daughter of old England', could only respond 'in the classical language of the British answer to the call to duty: "Ready, aye, ready"'. More remarkable still was the peroration, in which the French-Canadian statesman hailed a 'union of hearts' in Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Nineteenth-century Canada was coming to a close, not with a vision of national independence but with 'the hope that from this painful war the British Empire will emerge with a new bond of union, the pride of all its citizens, and a living light to all other nations'.[44]

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[41]   *Documents on Canadian External Relations*, 20 vols. (Ottawa, 1967), I, p. 37.
[42]   Arthur Berriedale Keith, ed., *Speeches and Documents on British Colonial Policy, 1763–1917* (Oxford, 1961), p. 358.
[43]   Brown and Cook, *Canada 1896–1921: A Nation Transformed*, p. 251.
[44]   Keith, ed., *Speeches and Documents on British Colonial Policy, 1763–1917*, pp. 362–63, 366–67.

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24

Australia and the Western Pacific

DONALD DENOON WITH MARIVIC WYNDHAM

After 1770 Captain James Cook and his publicists revealed to politicians, entrepreneurs, and missionaries a new oceanic world to conquer. The slow beginnings of that process have been sketched in the previous volume.[1] Even by 1815, while Britannia might claim to rule the Pacific waves, Imperial authority was still frail, especially on land. Few Western Pacific islanders and fewer indigenous Australians were yet aware of Britain, and most of the few British settlers had arrived involuntarily, as transportees. In every respect, however, the nineteenth century witnessed the complete overturning of this picture. By the 1860s, both in the islands and on the mainland, indigenous peoples were decimated and outnumbered by new, expanding societies of free British migrants; colonial authority, and Imperial naval power were firmly anchored in continental Australia (Map 24.1).

This transformation involved settlers' adaptation to the pastoral and farming opportunities of a dry continent. Their original beach settlements gradually became thriving entrepôts, sending wheat and wool from the countryside to Britain, and handling the migrants and the capital attracted by this new production. Gold and base metals, then railways, intensified the social and economic pattern whereby each hinterland was served by its port and each was largely independent of the others. Sydney (for New South Wales) and Hobart (for Tasmania) were the templates for parallel developments in Melbourne (for Victoria), Brisbane (for Queensland), Perth (for Western Australia), and Adelaide (for South Australia). Uniform culture and settlement experience failed to arrest the fragmentation of a continent into six distinct colonies.

The evolution of settler societies everywhere generated internal tensions, such as those between workers and employers, or in gender relations, irresolvable by simple application of metropolitan models. Political innovation was therefore essential. From the 1850s, in Australia as elsewhere, the major colonies enjoyed Responsible Government, which conferred great autonomy on recently created Assemblies elected by a broad manhood suffrage. The colonies subsequently

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[1] In Vol. III, see chap. by Glyndwr Williams.
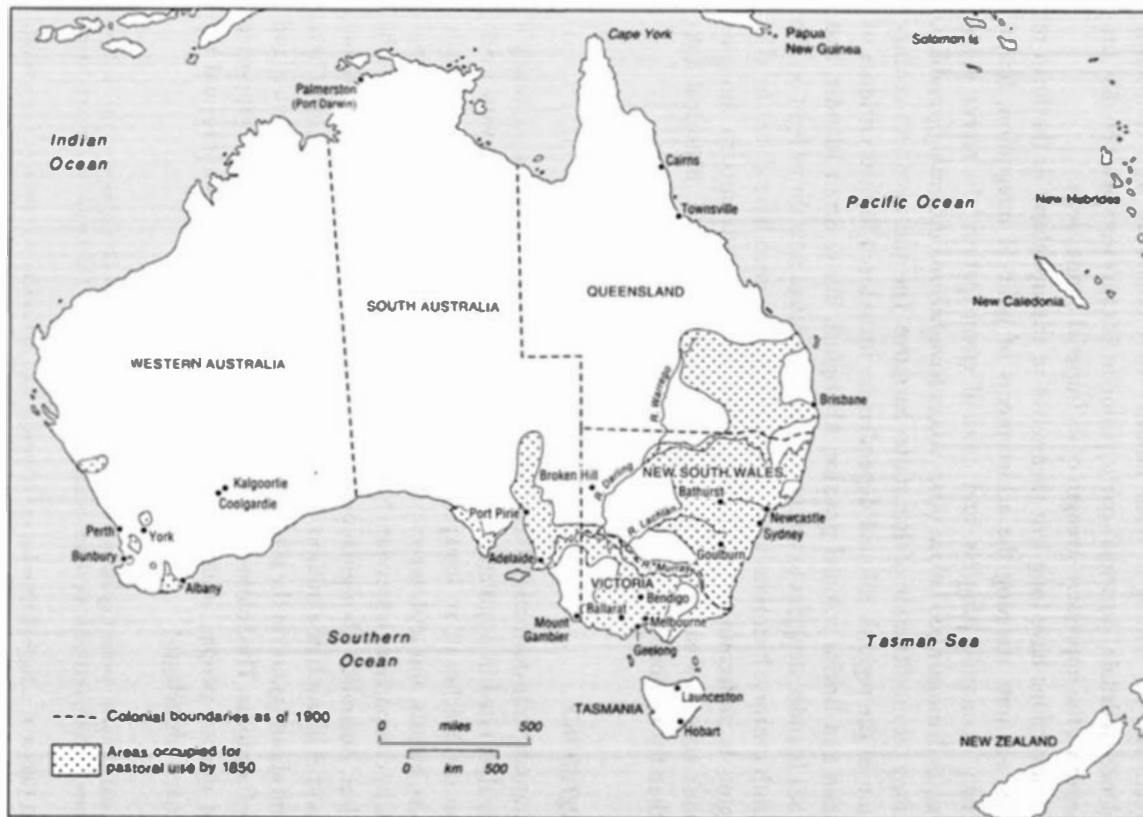
M A P 24.1. Australia: Colonies and Pastoral Settlement

agreed to delegate some of their powers to a new federal government, which was created in 1901 and addressed the related problems of defence, race, class, gender, and work. Its prescriptions—white Australia, racial hierarchy, the domestication of women, and the taming of trade unions—were bound up with continuing dependence on Britain. Australia's participation in Britain's wars between 1885 and 1918 measured the impressive strength of its Imperial connections.

These inversions have long lent themselves to triumphalism, in the form of historical accounts stressing the achievements of political integration, liberal democracy, economic progress, and cultural emancipation.[2] In recent years, however, as demonstrated below, other voices have become increasingly audible, compelling the modification of that master narrative. The mid-twentieth-century liberation of the region's colonial dependencies introduced limited critiques of Australian and British colonial practice; Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, and South Sea Islander struggles to remedy historic injustices now throw light on the nineteenth century; historians' recent discovery that women have always lived in the region is undermining some shibboleths; and new attempts to integrate Australia's economy with 'Asia' are encouraging the search for historical links other than the obvious British umbilical cord.[3]

Demographics

This dramatic transformation hinged on a demographic revolution, strikingly if roughly illustrated in population figures. In 1815 Sydney and Hobart were garrisons on the beaches of an unexplored continent and a scarcely charted ocean. Convicts, guards, and settlers comprised a mere 15,000 people. Indigenous populations, by comparison, were overwhelming and concentrated elsewhere. Since the First Fleet, Australia's Aboriginal population had declined by at least a third, but still stood at about half a million. Fiji's population, already in decline, may have been still about 135,000 in the 1870s. At least 90,000 people lived in the main island of New Caledonia. The Solomon and New Hebrides archipelagoes each supported at least 100,000 people, while at least 3 million lived in New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago.[4]

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[2] Donald Denoon, *Settler Capitalism: The Dynamics of Dependent Development in the Southern Hemisphere* (Oxford, 1983). For an earlier example, see Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Oxford, 1958).

[3] A. D. Gilbert, K. S. Inglis, F. Crowley, and P. Spearitt, eds., *Australians: A Historical Library*, 10 vols. (Broadway, NSW, 1987). For the Western Pacific, see Donald Denoon, Stewart G. Firth, and others, eds., *Cambridge History of the Pacific Islanders* (Cambridge, 1997).

[4] Norma McArthur, *Island Populations of the Pacific* (Canberra, 1967); for Australia, J. Peter White and D. J. Mulvaney, 'How Many People?', in Mulvaney and White, eds., *Australians* (Broadway, NSW, 1987). pp. 115–17.

These proportions and geographical distribution were swiftly reversed. The 1861 census counted over a million colonists, while Aboriginals had dwindled to perhaps 250,000 and many islands were ravaged. Natural increase made the colonies less dependent on immigration, and immigration became steadily less reliant on British magistrates with the ending of transportation between 1840 (Queensland) and 1868 (Western Australia). By 1911 4.5 million colonists outnumbered not only the 100,000 surviving Aboriginal Australians but everyone else in the region. Smallpox outran the people who introduced it, killing perhaps 60 per cent of Aboriginal people, destroying tradition and order along with their bearers.[5] Indigenous Australians declined to a nadir of 70,000 in the 1930s. In the Solomons and New Hebrides some societies were driven close to extinction: the New Hebrides as a whole lost half their people as venereal diseases and crowd infections devastated non-immune populations. Measles in Fiji in 1875 killed a quarter of the people.[6]

Local peoples, however, were affected in different ways. Although epidemics were fateful in 'virgin fields' unaccustomed to European diseases, some societies recovered quickly. Population increased in Fiji for several years following the measles epidemic; numbers then declined for twenty years, more slowly—but no less inexorably. Those who were dispossessed of their land suffered most.[7] In the labour trade which brought islanders to plantations in Fiji and Queensland the annual death rate declined from about eighty per thousand to about thirty-five, as workers became inured,[8] but some risks increased. Concentration itself was a hazard, whether on estates or in village congregations promoted by missionaries. Tuberculosis, dysentery, and pulmonary infections flourished in plantations, thence to be taken home when workers' contracts expired. Mission schools were so lethal that Kanaks called tuberculosis *christiano*, the disease of the Christians.[9]

New Guinea's people suffered less than Australia's, a million or more highlanders being untouched by the outside world until the 1930s. Europeans found Melanesia sickening and steered clear. Missionaries mainly sent Polynesian converts there as evangelists, where they often died as martyrs to malaria, and commercial frontiers reached Papua only in the 1870s. There colonial authority

[5] Noel Butlin, *Our Original Aggression* (Sydney, 1983).

[6] For fuller figures, see Donald Denoon, 'Pacific Island Depopulation: Natural or Unnatural Causes' in Linda Bryder and Derek A. Dow, eds., *New Countries and Old Medicine* (Auckland, 1995).

[7] Stephen Kunitz, *Disease and Social Diversity: The European Impact on the Health of Non-Europeans* (Oxford, 1994).

[8] Ralph Shlomowitz, 'Mortality and Workers', in Clive Moore, Jacqueline Leckie, and Doug Munro, eds., *Labour in the South Pacific* (Townsville, Queensland, 1990), pp. 124–27.

[9] Bronwen Douglas, 'Discourses of Death in a Melanesian World', in Donna Merwick, ed., *Dangerous Liaisons: Essays in Honour of Greg Dening* (Melbourne, 1994).

was asserted in 1884, but physical restraints persisted, and only a few Europeans tried to wrest a living from gold or coconuts.[10]

The immigrant population concentrated itself in the temperate south-east, whence settlement flowed south into Victoria in the 1840s, west across the dividing range, and north into Queensland and the tropics, especially after 1860. This pattern was replicated on a smaller scale from Perth in the west (from 1829) and Adelaide in South Australia (from 1836). Though based economically on farming and pastoralism, the new societies were from their inception highly urbanized. By federation in 1901, two-thirds of the immigrants lived in New South Wales and Victoria, and the same proportion in towns, especially Sydney and Melbourne which accounted for a quarter of all colonists.[11] The region's ancient pattern of dense tropical populations and sparse Australian settlement was thus overthrown.

Material Triumphs

Throughout the region settlers necessarily, even eagerly, enmeshed themselves in the evolving global market.[12] They herded sheep and cattle, grew wheat, sugar, and coconuts, dug ores, and raided marine resources, exporting and importing everything that could be shipped. Their regional neighbours were only marginally committed to exports, but colonists exported and imported goods to the value of £17m in 1861, and by 1913 exports and imports each topped £90m. Britain accounted for half of this trade, and capital investment also reflected the colonies' dependence on British markets. Significant agricultural capital began to arrive in the 1820s, but from about 1860 governments and companies courted capital assiduously; by 1891 their borrowings from abroad stood at £155m, or over £50 per head. Ebbs and flows in this tide spelt boom or bust. The 1880s were boom years, followed by deep depression in the 1890s when investors lost faith. As the tide turned again, £10m were invested in 1902, but twice as much was disinvested between 1904 and 1911.

Patterns of settlement and economic development depended on control of the land. Notwithstanding early experiments with land grants, Imperial policy aimed to secure almost all land for the Crown, preventing large-scale alienation to a few pastoralists until closer settlement became feasible, and making some rhetorical provision for Aboriginal access.[13] Settler response took the form of 'squatting', at first illegal but always uncontrollable; colonial authorities ultimately had to

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[10]   Donald Denoon, with K. Dugan and L. Marshall, *Public Health in Papua New Guinea, 1884–1984: Medical Possibility and Social Constraint* (Cambridge, 1989).

[11]   Wray Vampew, ed., *Australians: Historical Statistics* (Broadway, NSW, 1987), chaps. 1–2.

[12]   See above, pp. 32–36, 43–45, 48–50; 56, 63.

[13]   Henry Reynolds, *The Law of the Land* (Ringwood, Victoria, 1987).

recognize and licence their occupation. After 1836 there emerged a system whereby settlers and pastoralists either bought or leased land. Exotic merino sheep multiplied to 17 million in the 1820s, and to over 100 million by the end of the century, their increase interrupted only by drought. Selective breeding, fencing, and improved handling increased their value. Wool was the first and most enduring staple, providing between 20 and 40 per cent of exports throughout the century. A frontier of cattle complemented sheep, notably in Queensland and what became the Northern Territory, and from 1880 refrigerated ships began to carry butter and meat to London. However, they were equally vulnerable to climatic catastrophes, as pastoralists discovered during eight years of drought which descended in 1895, killing two-fifths of the national herd which exceeded 12 million at its peak in that year.

The coastal climates did not favour grain, but the 'opening up' of the inland plains by mining and railways provoked a massive increase in acreage under wheat after 1860. By 1913 more than 100 million bushels of wheat were produced on 9 million acres, and half was exported. New techniques (the stump-jumping plough, for example, and the combine harvester) made this possible, but European methods could trigger alarming declines in productivity, since irregular rain and thin soils often demanded greater care than farmers could afford. Their predicament also flowed from public policy which, from the 1860s, aspired to widen access to land and to settle a dense, white rural population. Land legislation enabled men, and single women, with little capital to select land, farm it, and purchase freehold title as their incomes grew.

Industry long meant little more than mining. By 1815 coal was already being mined at Newcastle, New South Wales, and South Australian copper followed in the 1840s; but the most dramatic development was alluvial gold, provoking a rush which swamped Victoria and New South Wales in the 1850s, offering to energetic and lucky white men a rare opportunity for opulence.[14] Victoria, uncolonized in 1815, sustained 500,000 settlers by 1861 (compared with 330,000 in New South Wales). Ballarat was the richest-ever alluvial gold-field, and news of gold had a magnetic effect—during the 1850s one-third of a million migrants landed in the colonies. Throughout the 1860s gold out-weighed wool in export values, and remained significant thereafter. Silver, lead, and zinc in western New South Wales was the base on which arose Broken Hill Proprietary Company (BHP) in the 1880s. South Australian ports were the nearest outlet and Port Pirie became the smelting site. In 1911 when these ores were exhausted, the Company turned to iron and steel, concentrating on Newcastle rather than South Australia, and creating at last the possibility of heavy industry and industrialization.

[14] Geoffrey Blainey, *The Rush that Never Ended: A History of Australian Mining*, 3rd edn. (Melbourne, 1978).

Colonial entrepreneurs regarded not only the continent but the ocean and islands as fields of opportunity. From the early nineteenth century whalers loaded victuals and crews at island anchorages. Island traders, mainly from Sydney, began carrying smoked bêche-de-mer (sea slugs) to China. Divers collected shell, while sandalwood provided other cargoes during the 1840s. As islanders' knowledge of the newcomers grew, so did the quantity and quality of trade goods they demanded, until profits were squeezed between declining prices in China and increasing rewards for chiefs. To secure islanders' co-operation, they were introduced to tobacco, alcohol, and firearms. An evolving triangular trade meant that islanders learned to smoke tobacco, exchanged for sandalwood so that Chinese could burn incense, so that Australians in turn could drink tea.[15]

From south-east Australia prospectors pursued the rainbow far and fast. Armed parties reached the tropical North in the 1870s and crossed the Coral Sea to Papua.[16] They concentrated on small islands until a state structure could offer protection against Papuans—if not malaria or dysentery. Investment was inhibited until the British New Guinea government, established in 1884, offered security. Then Sydney promoters exploited the convenient provision for 'No Liability' companies which tolerated stock market manipulation, insider trading, exaggerated assays, and generous rewards to promoters and vendors.[17] Gold became Papua's main export. Australians also discovered gold in New Caledonia in 1870, but the most significant discovery there was nickel: Rothschild, the London bankers, put nickel mining on a sound footing during the 1890s. There, as elsewhere in the islands, most white men were squeezed out except as artisans and supervisors of unskilled men.

When the American Civil War disrupted cotton production, Australians took up Fijian land under the patronage of chiefs who also mobilized labour. When Fiji's cotton bubble burst in the 1870s, coconuts stood alone as the crop requiring the least labour.[18] Copra (dried coconut flesh) became by far the largest export from islands under European influence. To ensure cargoes, traders bent their minds to acquiring land, instead of relying on independent production. As planters they then wanted cheap, regular, and plentiful labour. With islanders disappearing, the late nineteenth century was the heyday of Asian indentured

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[15] Dorothy Shineberg, *They Came for Sandalwood: A Study of the Sandalwood Trade in the Southwest Pacific, 1830–1865* (Melbourne, 1967).

[16] Hank Nelson, *Black, White and Gold: Gold Mining in Papua New Guinea, 1878–1930* (Canberra, 1976).

[17] W. A. McGee and G. R. Henning, 'Investment in Lode Mining, Papua, 1878–1920', *Journal of Pacific History*, XXV (1990), pp. 244–66.

[18] Doug Munro and Stewart G. Firth, 'Company Strategies—Colonial Policies', in Moore and others, *Labour in the South Pacific*, pp. 3–29. For more details see Brij V. Lal, *Girmitiyas: The Origin of the Fiji Indians* (Canberra, 1983).

labour. For example, over 60,000 Indians were introduced to Fiji between 1879 and 1916, mainly to work for the Australian Colonial Sugar Refining Company (CRS).[19] Perversely, since all employers preferred workers from elsewhere, islanders themselves embarked for plantations in Queensland, Fiji, Samoa, and New Caledonia precisely when Indians were arriving in the Islands (Map 24.2).

The western Pacific was itself transformed into a 'labour reserve' in the perception of planters once sugar became an export staple in tropical North Queensland during the 1860s. From 1863 until 1904 over 62,000 islanders worked in Queensland, most recruited from Vanuatu and the Solomons.[20] The first recruits were ill-informed, and often kidnapped. Kidnapping became rare after 1872, when Britain passed the Pacific Islanders Protection Act and Queensland enacted complementary legislation. The Royal Navy policed minimum standards, and Queensland vessels carried agents to ensure some measure of consent by recruits. The proliferation of missionaries reinforced these restrictions, although the refusal of French authorities to act in concert enabled French recruiters to perpetuate coercion. In any event, coercion became redundant: returning workers were persuasive, and so were tobacco and alcohol. In Queensland the islanders worked as field labourers until the turn of the century. By then the Colonial Sugar Refining Company had taken control of sugar production. While their Fijian enterprises rested on cheap Indian labour, their Australian profits were generated by capital-intensive technology which ultimately allowed growers to dispense with islanders altogether.[21]

Several islands produced fertilizers to compensate for the poor fertility of Australian soils.[22] The Pacific Islands Company, incorporated in 1897, gained access to phosphates on Banaba (Ocean Island) in 1900, through a 999-year concession, and a vital injection of capital when the British businessman William Lever bought out the Company's Solomon Island land claims for copra production. On the strength of the Banaban concession the company was restructured in 1902 as the Pacific Phosphate Company, and achieved market leverage in 1907 by securing similar rights in the German dependency of Nauru. In 1908 a deal with the Compagnie Française des phosphates de l'Océanie, involving Makatea, northeast of Tahiti, created a *de facto* regional monopsony.[23] Of all the catastrophes which befell islanders, phosphates were the worst. Rights were cheaply alienated;

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[19] See above, p. 91.

[20] Clive Moore, *Kanaka: A History of Melanesian Mackay* (Boroko, 1985).

[21] A. G. Lowndes, *South Pacific Enterprise* (Sydney, 1956).

[22] Maslyn Williams and Barrie Macdonald, *The Phosphateers: A History of the British Phosphate Commissioners and the Christmas Island Phosphate Commission* (Melbourne, 1985).

[23] Colin Newbury, 'The Makatea Phosphate Concession', in R. G. Ward, ed., *Man in the Pacific Islands* (Oxford, 1972), p. 185.
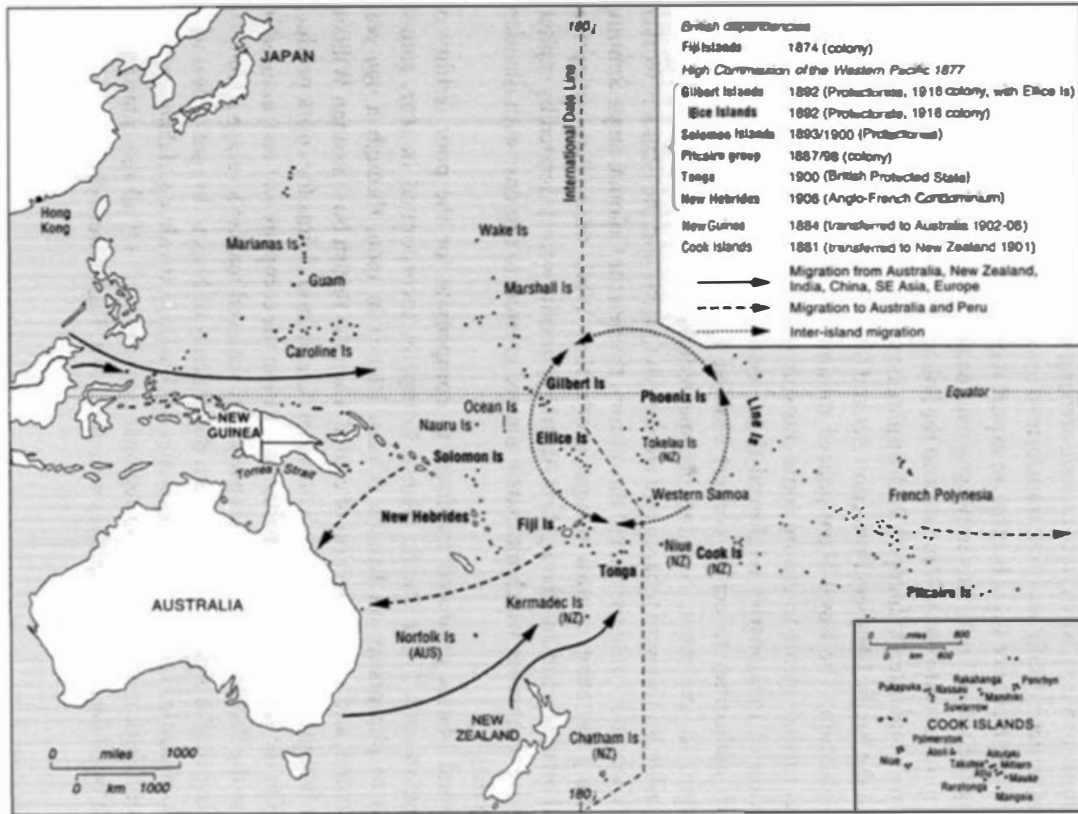
MAP 24.2. British Possessions and Inter-Regional Migration in the Pacific

Map labels:

JAPAN

Hong Kong

Marianas Is

Guam

Wake Is

Marshall Is

Caroline Is

NEW GUINEA

Ocean Is

Nauru Is

Gilbert Is

Phoenix Is

Ellice Is

Tokelau Is (NZ)

Solomon Is

Western Samoa

French Polynesia

New Hebrides

Fiji Is

Niue (NZ)

Cook Is (NZ)

Pitcairn Is

Tonga

Torres Strait

AUSTRALIA

Kermadec Is (NZ)

Norfolk Is (AUS)

NEW ZEALAND

Chatham Is (NZ)

Equator

International Date Line

Line Is

0   miles   1000

0   km   1000

Legend:

British dependencies
Fiji Islands   1874 (colony)
High Commission of the Western Pacific 1877
Gilbert Islands   1892 (Protectorate, 1916 colony, with Ellice Is)
Ellice Islands   1892 (Protectorate, 1916 colony)
Solomon Islands   1893/1900 (Protectorate)
Pitcairn group   1887/98 (colony)
Tonga   1900 (British Protected State)
New Hebrides   1906 (Anglo-French Condominium)
New Guinea   1884 (transferred to Australia 1902-06)
Cook Islands   1881 (transferred to New Zealand 1901)

→ Migration from Australia, New Zealand, India, China, SE Asia, Europe
⇢ Migration to Australia and Peru
→ Inter-island migration

COOK ISLANDS

Rakahanga   Penrhyn
Pukapuka   Nassau   Manihiki
Suwarrow
Palmerston
Aitoti Is   Aitutaki
Takutea   Mitiaro
Niue   Mauke
Rarotonga
Mangia

and there was no need to involve islanders in production, nor even to provide space for them.

Leviathans

The colonists' political progress matched their economic successes. Until the 1840s Australia's colonies were known to the world as penal settlements. By the 1860s most were self-governing democracies. That transformation reflected the end of transportation to New South Wales (1840) and Tasmania (1853), assisted immigration and the founding of non-convict colonies in Victoria (1835) and South Australia (1836), and the 1850s gold rushes. Beginning in the 1820s, power was transferred from autocratic Governors, 'first to appointed councils, then to councils elected on a property franchise, and finally to parliaments whose lower houses were elected by all men who were neither mad nor bad enough to be incarcerated'.[24] The Imperial government offered responsible government on the Canadian model through the Australian Colonies Government Act (1850), responding to colonists' growing wealth and numbers before their desire for local control became too importunate. Although Crown Lands and their revenues were temporarily withheld from the Assemblies in a vain bid to retain Imperial influence, most other powers were delegated, including the right to amend their electoral systems.

In the absence of widespread opposition, these new institutions and procedures developed smoothly. Governors learnt to limit themselves to advisory roles, civil servants reinforced continuity of policy, and a core of conservative politicians organized factions to ensure passage of legislation.[25] Commitment to the free-market economy had implied the replication of European social relations. Local distinctions emerged between 'sterling' (British-born) and 'currency' (locally born), and, deeply, between both and Aboriginal Australians. These crossed with the caste conflicts between convicts, emancipists (time-expired transportees), and free settlers. None the less, the settlers rapidly divided themselves into landholders, labourers, merchants, and administrators on a distinctly British pattern, with predictable political consequences. The structural opposition between pastoral squatters and farming selectors fuelled much of the colonial politics of the later nineteenth century. Catholics and Irish Home-Rulers resented the Protestant ascendancy and Imperial connection, but that passion was subsumed in mundane

[24] P. Grimshaw, S. Janson, and M. Quartly, eds., *Freedom Bound, I, Documents on Women in Colonial Australia* (Sydney, 1995), p. 36.

[25] T. H. Irving, '1850–1870', in F. Crowley, ed., *A New History of Australia* (Melbourne, 1974), pp. 124–64; P. Loveday and A. W. Martin, *Parliament, Factions and Parties: The First Thirty Years of Responsible Government in New South Wales, 1856–1889* (Melbourne, 1966).

debates about free trade and tariff protection, the accommodation of trade unions, and ingenious devices for attracting further British investment.[26]

In the Western Pacific islands, by contrast, British governments until the 1870s avoided responsibility, relying for influence instead on the navy informed by missionaries and consuls.[27] Missionaries from the London Society (especially in the Cook Islands and Samoa) and Wesleyan Methodist Society (notably in Tonga and Fiji), saw themselves representing British and Protestant civilization in the area, especially after the 1840s, when French intervention in Tahiti disrupted their activities. Other missions expanded from Polynesia into the Western Pacific in mid-century. Consuls were often one-time Protestant missionaries or their sons (W. T. Pritchard and John C. Williams, for instance), who exercised great influence in island affairs.

After severe discouragements, and largely through the agency of Polynesian teachers and evangelists, Christianity made massive advances.[28] The sandalwood rush had reached its climax here in the 1840s, followed quickly by the labour trade. Evangelization thus coincided with depopulation and other mounting pressures, such that Islanders could imagine the extinction of their cultural traditions, and even of their societies. Their willingness to embrace radical change is perhaps largely explained by this circumstance. The nexus between commerce and Christianity was most explicit among Protestant missionaries, supporting large families on small stipends, collecting and selling copra with mission boats. Through their responses to missionaries, and to beachcombers and traders, some island communities 'pre-adapted' themselves to commerce, and might, in happier circumstances, have enjoyed equal participation in the new economies and polities.

In 1861, for example, Consul Pritchard, one of a dynasty of missionary-trader-diplomats and latest in a line of foreign advisers to the chief of Bau (Fiji), described him as 'the most powerful, the most influential, the most dignified Chieftain of his race—the only Chieftain whose words and acts are circulated with any appearance of authority, and heard with any degree of authority and respect'.[29] On Pritchard's advice, Cakobau requested a British Protectorate. This was denied, and in 1871 he declared himself King of a united Fiji, co-opting other chiefs and traders as ministers. When British officials changed their strategy and demanded the cession

[26] G. L. Buxton, '1850–1890', in Loveday and Martin, *Parliament, Factions and Parties*, pp. 165–215.

[27] Deryck Scarr, *Fragments of Empire: A History of the Western Pacific High Commission, 1877–1914* (Canberra, 1967).

[28] Joel Bonnemaison, *The Tree and the Canoe: History and Ethnogeography of Tanna* (Honolulu, 1994); Douglas, 'Discourses on Death'; M. J. T. Spriggs, 'Vegetable Kingdoms, Toro Irrigation and Pacific Prehistory', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Australian National University, 1981; Oscar Spate, *The Pacific Since Magellan*, Vol. III, *Paradise Found and Lost* (Canberra, 1988).

[29] Consul W. T. Pritchard to Commissioner Smythe, 14 Jan. 1861, cited in Deryck Scarr, *The Majesty of Colour: A Life of Sir John Bates Thurston*, 2 vols. (Canberra, 1973) I, pp. 23–24.

of Fiji, Cakobau could only acquiesce. Cession, in 1875, occurred on relatively favourable terms. Fijian lands were largely protected, the islands were brought under one government, and an aristocracy was entrenched. Governor Sir Arthur Gordon was determined to avoid the dispossession characteristic of the Australian colonies, and devised a paternalist policy whereby chiefly authority was codified.

Imperial supervision was further formalized by the Western Pacific High Commission, created in 1877 to oversee British interests in the Islands but still reliant on co-operation from Islanders or the Royal Navy.[30] This device collapsed once the Berlin Congress in 1884–85 prescribed effective occupation as a criterion for recognizing colonies. The Protectorate of British New Guinea (i.e. Papua) was declared in 1884 in reaction to the abrupt announcement of German New Guinea (to the north), and on condition that the settler colonies covered its costs. The Protectorate over the Solomons (in 1893) was also conceived as a holding operation pending Australian federation.[31]

As it happened, however, most colonial administrators expected islanders to become extinct, and colonial policies were dilatory, unfunded, and repressive of islander initiatives. Unlike the settled mainland colonies, island governments had no capacity to borrow and relied, perforce, on private investors. Almost any concession would be made to attract them. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company in Fiji and Burns Philp in the Australian sphere both enjoyed political patronage and economic privilege.[32] Colonial governments were poorly equipped to regulate big corporations, even when so inclined. Fiji had promised well in 1875 and had a better-developed bureaucracy than most colonies, yet—as the merchant Morris Hedstrom explained in 1911—'the people who profit by the prosperity of the colony are the landowners and the merchants and capitalists, and these are the people who escape almost scot free under our present [taxation] system'.[33] In the Solomons, Commissioner Woodford expected islanders to die out, and adopted a strategy of plantation development rather than peasant production.[34] Deep-seated habits of consumption encouraged some islanders to sell land, yielding money faster than wage labour or copra. Woodford was delighted to see planters take up land, and in 1898 the Pacific Islands Company began to negotiate for Chartered Company rights and 'unoccupied' land. As matters turned out, Lever stepped in and accumulated 400,000 acres. Burns Philp and other Australians were also

[30] Ibid.; see above, pp. 192–93.

[31] Stewart G. Firth, *New Guinea Under the Germans* (Melbourne, 1983); Judith Bennett, *The Wealth of the Solomons: A History of a Pacific Archipelago, 1800–1978* (Honolulu, 1987).

[32] Munro and Firth, 'Company Strategies', p. 25.

[33] Fiji, *Legislative Council Debates*, 1911, quoted by Bruce Knapman, 'Capitalism's Economic Impact in Colonial Fiji, 1874–1939: Development or Underdevelopment?', *Journal of Pacific History*, XX (1985), pp. 66–83.

[34] Bennett, *Wealth of the Solomons*, pp. 125–49.

attracted by freehold and 999-year leaseholds. Only in Papua did government decree that non-indigenous people could only obtain land under lease. Everywhere revenue was raised mainly by head taxes, income and import taxes, and was never enough to transform living standards. Changes from new technologies, crops, and animals sometimes reduced islanders' workloads, but the common requirement to enter wage labour in order to pay poll taxes had the opposite effect.

External Affairs, Cultural Change, and Australian Federation

The interplay of colonial authority and Imperial interests was also shaped by the changing international environment. Before the penal colony, the only regular regional links were Western New Guinea's exports to Tidore; trade across Torres Strait; and annual visits by Makassans for bêche-de-mer. The first settlers were awed by a silent continent and an empty ocean: by the end of the century the ocean teemed with seemingly rapacious rivals. As settlers flourished, shipping became more frequent: British trade and an Australian connection with China was consolidated by the cession of Hong Kong in 1842. Trade then brought other foreign powers closer to Australia where, acutely aware of their isolation, colonists took alarm by turns against France, Germany, and Japan.[35]

Inspired by British example, French colonization was worrying even if markedly less successful. The navy annexed the Marquesas in 1841, Tahiti the next year, and New Caledonia ten years later.[36] Although the colonies depended on Australian supplies, Australian and French settlers began to compete for resources and each became anxious about the others' ambitions. Recruiting labour for the nickel mines in New Caledonia's New Hebridean labour reserve, the naturalized French entrepreneur John Higginson observed with dismay that Protestant missionaries were well established, and that Australians were urging the British government to annex. To forestall that outcome Higginson encouraged Catholic evangelization, created the Caledonian Company of the New Hebrides for plantation development, and in 1882 set out to buy the archipelago. By 1886 the Company had paper claims to half the land, and had begun to plant French settlers. Although when Higginson died in 1904 his Caledonian Company and much else had failed, interdenominational rivalry and the conflicting aims of Australian and New Caledonian settlers none the less required resolution. The metropolitan powers sought a minimalist solution, creating an Anglo-French Condominium in 1906 and hoping to hear no more from the islands and their turbulent missionaries.[37]

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[35] T. B. Millar, *Australia in Peace and War: External Relations, 1788–1977* (Canberra, 1978).

[36] John Connell, *New Caledonia or Kanaky? The Political History of a French Colony* (Canberra, 1987).

[37] Bonnemaison, *The Tree and the Canoe*, pp. 81–96.

Australian colonists also feared the expansion of German commerce based in Samoa. Few material interests were at stake in New Guinea, but German and Australian trading firms both recruited labour there, and local imperialist urges had manifested themselves by the 1860s. The Queensland government's 'annexation' of eastern New Guinea in 1883 failed only when Whitehall repudiated the action on the grounds that 'Our responsibilities are already heavy enough'.[38] Such restraint, however, was short-lived. When the next year Bismarck determined to 'protect' New Guinea, the British government itself stepped in to 'protect' Papua.

The emergence of Japan caused dismay even before Japan's comprehensive defeat of Russia in 1905. Most alarming to racially sensitive Australians was the arrival of Japanese entrepreneurs in Australia's north. Prostitution was the earliest industry, followed by pearl-diving from the 1880s. To the dismay of legislators, Japanese bought or built their own pearling luggers. Only racially restrictive licensing laws prevented them from outright ownership of the whole fleet.[39] Japan's alliance with Britain (from 1902), and the crystallization of alliances between European powers demonstrated that British and colonial priorities might not always coincide.

Such events constantly reminded colonists of their small numbers, their isolation, and dependence on the Royal Navy. In these anxious circumstances it is hardly surprising that Australians volunteered to assist the British Empire whenever it was threatened: in New Zealand during the Maori Wars of the 1860s; and even the remote Sudan in the 1880s.[40] The South African War provoked excitement and intense competition between the colonies to send the first and the most troops.[41] By 1914 there was already a vigorous tradition of fighting in Britain's campaigns. These diplomatic and defensive preoccupations formed the shifting background to processes of cultural change and, at the turn of the century, closer association of the colonies with each other.

On the other side of the world from 'home' and with a shoreline thousands of vulnerable-miles long to protect, Australians felt as keenly the tyranny of proximity to regional neighbours as the 'tyranny of distance' from the mother country. One nineteenth-century visitor from Europe noted that it was 'necessary to have been in Oceania to realise to what an extent neighbours seven to nine hundred miles away can be thought annoying'.[42] Fear of invasion and a siege mentality

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[38]   Brian Fitzpatrick, *The British Empire in Australia* (Melbourne, 1949), pp. 186–87.
[39]   Regina Gantner, *The Pearl-Shellers of Torres Strait: Development and Decline, 1860s–1960s* (Melbourne, 1994).
[40]   K. S. Inglis, *The Rehearsal: Australians at War in the Sudan, 1885* (Adelaide, 1985).
[41]   Laurie Field, *The Forgotten War: Australia and the Boer War* (Victoria, 1995).
[42]   The visitor was an André Siegfried, quoted in W. K. Hancock, *Australia*, 2nd edn. (Brisbane, 1964), p. 49.

permeated an emergent brand of popular culture and nationalism which, by the 1890s, bore distinctively xenophobic characteristics. More than 'love of country', it was 'pride of race' that held Australians, and in part the Empire, together. Their sense of insecurity served the interests of Empire well, helping to keep this most distant colony from straying too far towards independence. Australians sparred only gently with the mother country, reserving the sharp edge of their nationalism for their Asian neighbours, China and Japan in particular. The illusion that only the Royal Navy stood between themselves and the 'yellow hordes' stilled republican stirrings, even if the rhetoric often suggested otherwise.

That distinctive popular rhetoric was most vociferously expressed in the Sydney *Bulletin*, whose contributors favoured republicanism, a democratic franchise, land taxation, state education, and 'A United Australia and Protection Against the World'.[43] Banjo Paterson's ballads and Henry Lawson's short stories attracted a large, passionate readership, helping to make the *Bulletin* 'the Bushman's Bible'. Such was its force that a legend eventually grew of the 1890s as a pivotal decade in relations between Empire and colonists: the crystallizing 'moment' of the Australian as a type, separate and distinct from the old British stock, and the first blossoming of an Australian—radical—nationalism. The construction of Left historians mostly, this legend endowed Australians on the eve of Federation with a degree of political consciousness and a commitment to national self-definition that belonged in reality to a minute—intellectual—proportion of the population.

It was not intellectual but physical activity which above all marked the emerging popular culture, half-borrowed, half-new. Sport was critical in maintaining links with the Old World and lending familiarity to the new. Boxing and horse-racing were favourite spectator sports, and the leisure hours of boys and working men were occupied by cricket in summer and three codes of football in winter: only Australian Rules was a distinctly colonial code. The year 1861 saw the arrival of yet another British cultural icon, the Melbourne Cup, Australia's version of Royal Ascot. Sporting competitions, in boxing matches and on the cricket field, also provided local lads with a friendly context in which to pit new against old British stock. Pride in their sporting prowess early on emboldened the 'currency lads'. 'The young Australians', wrote one observer in the 1840s, 'think themselves unrivalled...and wish Lord's players would come out and be stumped out.'[44] Their wishes were eventually fulfilled in 1861, when the first English cricket team visited. Although the *Bulletin* thundered 'Australia for the Australians', the com-

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[43] 'Bulletin' entry, *Oxford Companion to Australian Literature* (Oxford, 1991), p. 123.

[44] Ward, *Australian Legend* (Oxford, 1983), p. 67; W. F. Mandle: 'Games People Played: Cricket and Football in England and Victoria in the Late Nineteenth Century', *Historical Studies*, XV (1973), pp. 511–35. 'Cricket and Australian Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, LIX (1973), pp. 225–46. D. H. Borchardt, ed., *Australians: A Guide to Sources* (Broadway, NSW, 1987), chap. 48.

mon threads of Australian identity were Imperial rather than republican. The real birth of a 'national sentiment' lay some years away in the exploits of the ANZAC troops in the Dardanelles.

Political federation of the Australian colonies in 1901 seems inevitable only in retrospect, because the pressures contributing to it at the time were for most colonists frequently weak and fitful. It did not, of itself, make Australia a nation; it only facilitated it. Each colony was more tightly integrated into British commerce than with each other, so that (for example) railway systems still linked hinterlands to entrepôts, but isolated each catchment area from the others. (A standard gauge was achieved only in 1995.) No powerful 'national sentiment' transcended loyalties to colony, city, or faction. Potent emotional ties to Britain remained. State loyalties in particular were strong and abiding, and led delegates at constitutional conventions in 1891, 1895, and 1898 to press constantly for protective measures against the Australian federal—not the British—government. The emerging popular culture and nationalism had minimal influence on federation or the process which led to it.

Conceived and executed from above, the drafting of the federal constitution, and the passage of the Commonwealth Constitution Bill through the Imperial Parliament in 1900 were the activities of a narrow élite of mainly urban, professional, liberal politicians. Labour politicians were distinctly under-represented in the process. The political campaign took its lead from men such as Sir Henry Parkes, Prime Minister of New South Wales, or the Victorian politician Alfred Deakin, and propaganda by enthusiasts such as those in the Australian Natives' Association. Even so, the colonies' delegates debated federation for ten years before conceding limited powers to a federal Commonwealth in 1901. Such momentum as the movement had was sustained by the economic difficulties of the 1890s, and discreet encouragement from Imperial politicians such as Joseph Chamberlain, who welcomed the Federal Parliament's early attention to national defence within an Imperial framework.

The Federal Inheritance: Landscape and Race

Although settlement, economic expansion, and federation were widely regarded as at least modestly successful, they also embodied a past as well as an agenda for the future which prompted rather different interpretations. The Commonwealth's agenda was not merely to resolve intercolonial tensions, equalize regulations and opportunities, and provide for national defence; it was to create a national identity distinct from 'Asia', clarify borders, and foster economic development through the 'New Protection', whereby high tariffs would protect organized labour's wages and conditions.

Historians, turning their gaze from gross domestic product and economic statistics towards the localities, can discover another picture. The triumphalist mode finds its apogee in histories of Australian exploration, where tales of intrepid, fearless explorers and their 'brave assaults upon the interior' of 'the last-found and 'least-favoured of continents' abound. Recently, however, not only have the reputations of individual travellers such as Matthew Flinders, Thomas Mitchell, or Charles Sturt been re-evaluated; increasingly, the 'advent of the white man with his ready-made civilisation' has also emerged problematic-ally.[45] Although it was less obvious, the resource-raiding of the ocean had its continental counterpart, and farmers and pastoralists were less willing, or able, to move on when they had transformed the landscape. Yet the introduction of millions of sheep and cattle (not to mention rabbits, foxes, pigs, goats, rats, and cats) was bound to have an impact on an environment which had never sustained sharp-hoofed creatures. The compulsive 'clearing' of bush to create pasture and appropriation of water for commercial agriculture were equally consequential.

One shire in New South Wales has been studied with sufficient care to reveal some of the immediate effects and further consequences of treating the Australian environment like a cut-rate, temperate British landscape. Settlers in the 1840s were delighted by the pastoral paradise of Narrandera, on the Murrumbidgee River of south-central New South Wales. Turning the grasslands to pasture, however, inflicted serious damage. Cattle ate out the most succulent grasses, exposing the earth to erosion by wind and rain. Herded animals trampled the ground, prevent-ing it from absorbing rain, drying up swamps and waterholes, and creating watercourses instead. The Wiradjuri had controlled scrub by firing the grasses; when they were prevented from doing so, the grasslands were rapidly displaced by pine. As native flora were eradicated, the landscape was transformed in ways radically reducing its value, even to the pastoralists who initiated the changes. Native fauna were equally threatened. A bounty was introduced to finance exterm-ination of the dingo, and in the 1880s settlers declared noxious the emu, bilby, and wedge-tailed eagle. They followed up by anathematizing kangaroo, wallaby, kangaroo rat, and raven. Unintended victims included koala, echidna, bandicoot, platypus, innumerable species of birds, and fish. Their places were taken by exotic animals representing a much more serious threat to pastoral profits: not only the obvious rabbits, but mice, feral cattle, goats, pigs, and horses. 'In short, an economic and social attachment to civilization and progress led Europeans to make war on the land', and then compelled them to make 'strenuous and expen-sive attempts to rescue the land from the consequences of their own improving'.[46]

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[45] e.g. Hancock, *Australia*, chap. 1, 'The Invasion of Australia', pp. 1–23; for exploration, Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Essay in Spatial History* (London, 1987).

[46] Bill Gammage, *Narrandera Shire* (Narrandera, 1986), chap. 13, quotation from p. 229.

Questions of race were no less persistent than problems of the physical environment, confronting Australia's colonists from within as much as, and for longer than, those from without. Although each prompted distinct responses, they shared two major features. Responses were led from above and were underpinned by an unquestioned assumption that to British invaders and their race belonged the sole right to own and occupy the island continent.

In the conquest of this continent, no treaties were made: colonists elaborated a doctrine of *terra nullius* which asserted that British settlement extinguished native rights to land. In the opinion of governments, courts, and colonists, land was also bought and sold without incurring social obligations.

The frontier settlers [were] revolutionaries, and the landscape reflects the success of revolutionary violence. It shows that settlement proceeded without concessions to traditional culture, settlement patterns or land use. The survey lines and the fences could run straight for hundreds of miles as though they crossed vast sheets of blank paper... Settled Australia has a landscape reflecting sudden and dramatic change, the complete and violent overthrow of one social and economic system, one mode of production, by another. [The landscape reflected] the success of the bourgeois revolution in Australia—one of the most prolonged, complete and successful in the world.[47]

Sweeping across the continent, pastoralists shattered Aboriginal communities; survivors became domestic workers and stockmen, or Native Police. White brutality carried special dimensions for native women, submitted to violent sexual encounters with white men on the frontier and to domestic abuse by white mistresses in the home.[48] Federation did not affect race relations directly, since Aboriginal affairs remained with the states, and Aboriginal Australians were neither accepted as citizens nor even enumerated in census returns. Queensland, therefore, empowered by the Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act of 1897, segregated the races and created reserves. As its title implies, the law was intended to segregate black from white Australians—and both from 'Asia'. Aborigines and their property rights, like Melanesians, were expected to disappear.

The strategy adopted by the Commonwealth Parliament is commonly summed up in the slogan 'White Australia'. Most immigrants were British, but in the 1850s one in ten was Chinese, until the hostility of white miners led to physical violence on the gold-fields and immigration restrictions. By the end of the century the separate colonies had legislated against further Chinese immigration. With the

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[47] Henry Reynolds, *Frontier: Aborigines, Settlers and Land* (Sydney, 1987), pp. 192–93.

[48] Recent feminist histories of Australian convict and colonial society emphasize the fact that it was a European—rather than European male—dispossession of Aboriginal peoples; P. Grimshaw, M. Lake, A. McGrath, and M. Quartly, *Creating a Nation* (Victoria, 1994); Introduction, pp. 1–5.

endorsement of all three major parties, this approach was consolidated and extended through a dictation test, explicitly designed to bar all non-Europeans. That strategy might be expected to yield a European—and overwhelmingly 'British'—population in short order.

Obstructing this vision stood an anomalous Melanesian frontier of sugar workers, whose presence offended the Commonwealth, although Queensland's legislature was divided on the issue, and had veered between migration and exclusion for a generation. The Commonwealth's Pacific Island Labourers Act (8 November 1907) determined, retrospectively, that islanders be repatriated by 1906. Sugar producers were forewarned. During the 1890s plantations yielded to family farms, while the Colonial Sugar Refining Company processed cane in central mills. The Commonwealth paid a bounty on sugar produced by white workers, so that the industry not only survived but flourished. Islanders did not: nearly 10,000 in 1901, by 1906 they numbered fewer than 5,000. Those whose long residence entitled them to stay found most jobs closed by the preference for white labour. They were largely excluded from white society, and with lower standards of living and less education, pressed always closer to the even more marginal Aboriginal population.[49]

The Commonwealth also turned its attention to Torres Strait and Cape York, meeting-points for Aborigines, Papuans, and Makassans, whalers, pearlers, and sandalwood-getters. European goods were carried beyond Torres Strait along trade routes encircling New Guinea, and more goods were scavenged from shipwrecks. Polyglot Thursday Island was the 'sink of the Pacific'. Some order was imposed by the pearl-shell and bêche-de-mer industries. Trading companies advanced the money with which captains bought luggers. The masters brought crews and shore parties already employed in Pacific pearling, and luggers relied on 'dress-divers' at the end of air pumps. Japanese divers demanded trusted tenders—preferably their kin. The Queensland government, 2,000 kilometres away in Brisbane, merely codified these conventions into regulations. More surprising was the tolerance of the Commonwealth, which exempted Japanese pearlers from the provisions of White Australia, thus preserving an enclave of nineteenth-century colonial labour practices.

Torres Strait islanders' knowledge of luggers and bêche-de-mer expanded when sailors settled among them, and again when they embraced Christianity. At the turn of the century missionaries and Queensland officials resolved to transform them into entrepreneurs, exempting them from the Aboriginal Protection Act, and conferring a civil status like that of the Kanakas—neither white nor Aboriginal. Officials imposed increasingly onerous obligations, partly to promote work-

[49] Moore, *Kanaka*, pp. 200–73.

ing habits, partly to raise revenue, and relations became vexed. Islanders who might have managed resources on a sustainable basis were excluded, in favour of captains who merely ransacked pearl and bêche-de-mer.[50] The regional economy entered a slow decline, but the islanders' legal status survived, and their lands were not expropriated.

From the perspective of the new Commonwealth, order was thus achieved on a remote frontier, and the circle of colonial authority, which included the British Protectorate over Papua and a Dutch administrative centre at Merauke (1893), finally closed. The white Australia immigration policy restricted Japanese to prescribed jobs, and brought Chinese immigration to a halt. With the repatriation of Kanakas, these measures amounted to gradual ethnic cleansing and tidying.

The Federal Inheritance: White Labour and Gender

White working men began forming trades societies in the cities as early as the 1850s. During the 1860s the failure of their industrial actions sharpened interest in the political process and especially in campaigns for an eight-hour day. Not until the deep depression of the 1890s, however, did these forms of organization move beyond urban artisans into the mass of the labour force. The new, militant unionism was exceptional in deriving its strength from unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Miners and transport workers were crucial, but even more influential were shearers and other pastoral workers. Bush-workers, organized by the Australian Workers' Union, were the largest groups 'in the great industrial disputes, amounting at times almost to civil war, between 1890 and 1894. It was they who bore the brunt of the battle, stood as symbols of its ideology, and renewed the struggle single-handed in 1894, when the transport workers and miners had admitted temporary defeat.'[51]

In the countryside, trade unions immediately attracted huge memberships, for reasons some of which were articulated by W. G. Spence:

Unionism came to the Australian bushmen as a religion. It came bringing salvation from years of tyranny. It had in it that feeling of mateship which he understood already, and which always characterized the action of one 'white man' to another. Unionism extended the idea, so a man's character was gauged by whether he stood true to Union rules or 'scabbed' it on his fellows ... The lowest term of reproach is to call a man a 'scab'.[52]

Spence's career is as revealing as his analysis. His family brought him from Scotland during the 1850s gold rushes, and he educated himself largely by studying the

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[50] Ganter, *Pearl-Shellers, passim.*
[51] Ward, *Australian Legend*, pp. 212–13.
[52] Quoted in ibid., p. 215.

Bible. As a miner he rose to become General Secretary of the Amalgamated Miners' Association, and President of the Shearers' Union founded in gold-mining Ballarat in 1886. His enthusiasm for unionism led him often to exaggerate its powers, so that the Maritime Strike of 1890 was a catastrophic failure. Despite that setback, he became the first Secretary (and later President) of the Australian Workers' Union in 1894, bringing together shearers and other rural workers.

Like the Maritime Strike, those involving shearers and miners in the same era were eventually crushed. Thwarted in industrial actions, thoughtful leaders turned to politics, creating Labor parties which contested elections with increasing success during the 1890s, introducing the idea (and sometimes the practice) of party discipline to Assemblies hitherto notable for fluid loyalties and parochial enthusiasms.[53] At the turn of the century a Labor party even, albeit briefly, formed a government in Queensland, and non-Labor parties were gradually induced to incorporate the interests of working men into their own programmes. Once again Spence's career is exemplary, entering the new Commonwealth Parliament as a Labor member, becoming a minister in the first Labor ministry—and being forced to resign from the Australian Workers' Union during the war owing to his support for conscription, and for the Nationalist ministry of Billy Hughes, by then *bête-noire* of the Labor movement.

The fruits of political power included labour legislation in most territories, enacting compulsory conciliation and arbitration, protecting workers from the worst excesses of arbitrary employers in lean times, and constraining their ambitions when conditions were buoyant. These institutions were capped by the creation of a Commonwealth Arbitration Court, and especially by the judgments of Henry Bourne Higgins, its President from 1907. The Harvester Judgment of that year became the benchmark for industrial policy thereafter. Higgins determined that the basic wage for unskilled men must provide for an average family of five, and satisfy 'the normal needs of the average employee regarded as a human being living in a civilized community'.[54] These criteria led to a daily wage of seven shillings, little more than the rate already prevailing, but it was the criteria which mattered. Minimum wages were laid down which would apply across the continent. They were available only through complex mechanisms of conciliation and arbitration which conferred broad power and influence on organized trade unions, since they were an indispensable element of industrial bargaining. To sustain these wage levels, tariff protection was absolutely essential—and tariff protection rested on a concept of civilization which in practice prohibited the

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[53] Brian Galligan, ed., *Australian Federalism* (Melbourne, 1989).

[54] Humphrey McQueen, 'Higgins and Arbitration', in E. Wheelwright and K. Buckley, eds., *Essays in the Political Economy of Australian Capitalism* (Sydney, 1983).

employment of coloured workers. The catch-cry of 'a workingman's paradise' thus glossed many inequities, but had some substance both in law and in reality by 1914.

Labor's emphasis on the 'mateship' of white men was not merely rhetorical. Early colonial Australia was literally a white man's country in that men greatly outnumbered women until the end of the convict era and the gold rushes. Women also concentrated more in urban areas than the bush, heartland of the white man's dreamtime.

Convictism branded the Australian colonial experience as unique, and its raw brutalities scarred society. Women convicts constituted the bulk of the female population of convict society, and bore extra burdens peculiar to their sex. Few had many options but to yield to the sexual advances of their masters, and for their troubles, few escaped the brand of loose women or 'damned whores'. With the end of transportation, conditions slowly began to improve. Transition from a convict to a colonial society called for dramatic changes in women's roles, and for cleaning up the image of womanhood. Marriage was a help. Rare in the early period, it became by mid-century a feasible goal for a majority of colonists. Yesterday's 'damned whores' were now called upon to be God's and the Empire's moral police in their new twin functions as wives and mothers.[55] Migration schemes ensured a steady supply of respectable girls from the mother country to feed a growing demand for governesses and brides. Among the most successful was Caroline Chisholm's Immigrants Home in Sydney; operating from 1841 to 1846, it placed hundreds of young unmarried women in good homes.

State and church authorities focused narrowly on the colonial woman's reproductive role, proclaiming it her primary duty to bear children. From government, pulpit, and press alike, voices urged 'populate or perish': Australia's wide open spaces were beckoning the 'yellow hordes'. That anxiety was inflamed by the sharp decline in birth rate towards the end of the century. In 1903 a Royal Commission on this decline was established in New South Wales, inquiring into the reasons why women were ignoring official instructions. The commission found selfishness at the root of the problem, 'driving ... the women to contraception and abortion in order to avoid the joys and delights of childbearing and the raising of children'.[56] Ultimately, there was little authorities could do to arrest the trend towards smaller families. Contraceptive technology was becoming available, although for financial, religious or moral reasons, few could afford it. For some time 'stratagems of desperation', such as the ghastly, illegal practices of abortion, infanticide, and

[55] For an elaboration of this view, see Anne Summers, *Damned Whores and God's Police: The Colonization of Women in Australia* (Ringwood, Victoria, 1975).

[56] Judith Allen, 'Octavius Beale Reconsidered: Infanticide, Babyfarming and Abortion in NSW, 1880–1939', in Sydney Labour History Group, *What Rough Beast?* (Sydney, 1982).

baby-farming remained widespread. Even so, the advent of artificial birth control had profound implications in recognizing women's need to control their reproductive lives. Payment of a maternity allowance or a 'baby bonus' was introduced in 1912 as an enticement, but proved futile.

Women's domain was the domestic sphere, but it was an increasingly contested one. They were early and thoroughly enlisted in the work-force, informally as wives or formally as employees, but lacked organization. They worked largely in areas where there was no union activity, and little will to accommodate them. However, the argument often advanced to explain the lack of trade-union support for females, namely, that women were not largely employed as skilled labourers, does not altogether hold true. By mid-century women were engaged in a wide range of jobs well beyond the stereotypes of teachers, nurses, and dressmakers. In the 1861 census the women of Castlemaine, Victoria—a new but 'flourishing, well-built city' with its own mayor and town council—appear also as 'merchants, printers and bookbinders, cattle dealers and saleyard keepers, quarry men and brickmakers, blacksmiths and whitesmiths, carriers and bullock drivers, shepherds and overseers, miners and puddlers'.[57] Their exclusion from trade unions meant working women lacked the collective muscle to represent their own interests. Nevertheless, progressive politicians' concern about conditions of women's work eventually led in 1891 to the establishment of a parliamentary Royal Commission.[58]

Women had virtually no input into public constructions of popular culture and nationalism, which essentially reflected the perspectives of one discrete segment of the population: white, male, urban working-class and of the Left. Women's contributions remained mostly hidden from the public, and their experience and perspective have been eclipsed, rather than encompassed, by the traditional 'universal' histories. Women painters, fiction and non-fiction writers, poets, and dramatists, it now emerges, had all along been helping to piece together the wider picture, and not always from a 'feminine' perspective. Barbara Baynton's *Bush Stories* (1902) tell a rawer tale of life in the Australian outback than do Henry Lawson's sketches in his celebrated collection *While the Billy Boils* (1896). But the time was then not yet ripe for recognition of women's contribution to the arts, literature, and public debate on Australian national identity. Public distinction was reserved for women of the respectable, educated middle classes, and mostly through charitable work.

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[57] P. Grimshaw, C. McConville, and E. McEwen, *Families in Colonial Australia* (Sydney, 1985), pp. 83–104, esp. p. 101.

[58] For women not members of trade unions, see Grimshaw, Janson, and Quartely, *Freedom Bound*, I, pp. 150–54.

The enfranchisement of women far ahead of Imperial Britain may seem anomalous in these circumstances. But in the Australian context, the impulse and the will to achieve female suffrage stemmed from a complex blend of conservative and radical forces, ranging from propertied males to leading feminists. South Australian women began to vote in 1894, and the last colony, Victoria, followed suit in 1908. Leading the campaign were temperance associations, the chief public focus of women's reformist enthusiasms. There was remarkably little resistance to female suffrage, which could be seen as entrenching and reinforcing women's civilizing role rather than foreshadowing new roles for women in the public domain. A leading feminist of the time, Rose Scott, welcomed the vote as an instrument of 'women's mission' which was 'to inspire man and to help him build up our young nation upon all that is righteous'.[59] Whereas the Labor parties' entries into parliamentary politics led directly to industrial legislation, the entry of women into the electorates led neither to their arrival in parliaments, nor to significant changes in their political and economic conditions. The Arbitration court not only implied in the Harvester Judgment a subordinate economic and social role for women: it determined quite explicitly that women's work was worth two-thirds of that of their brothers and husbands.

Recognition of such gender-based inequities was, by the turn of the century, tempering the triumphalist narrative. Side-by-side with celebrations of 'those brave pioneer mothers!' who toiled 'from morn till night, turning hands to anything, living in tents', performing 'splendid work in the development of Britain's Australian dependencies' were lamentations that, despite their toils, women in Australia were not getting their just rewards. Such sentiments even found their way into a volume of 'The British Empire Series' in 1900, where the chapter on 'Women of Australasia' argued forthrightly for the principle of equal pay for equal work, and claims were made of a national identity for Australian women.[60]

Dominion and Colonies

In formal terms British influence grew after 1815 from minimal to overwhelming, coming to rest upon the enthusiastic, but essentially voluntary, commitment of the settlers in Australia. By 1914 they were prosperous but still acutely conscious of isolation, aloof from both Asia and the Pacific, and dependent not only on British naval power, capital, and markets, but equally on English, Irish, and Scots cultural traditions. White Australia was British not only in the obvious senses of British

[59] Grimshaw and others, *Creating a Nation*, p. 185. For Rose Scott's comment, see *The Australian Woman's Sphere* (Dec. 1903), p. 379.
[60] Grimshaw and others, *Freedom Bound*, I, pp. 169–73. Mrs Hirst Alexander, 'Women of Australia', in *Australia, The British Empire Series*, IV (London, 1900), pp. 280–309.

descent, the aspiration of successful colonists to careers in London, and their yearning for Imperial honours or to take their retirement at 'Home'. Many programmes aimed to replicate British norms and procedures (through high and popular culture, schools and the new universities, selective immigration, and the affiliation of professional bodies and unions to metropolitan counterparts) or to improve upon them. Female suffrage and industrial arbitration were clearly advances on British practice, but were compatible with British traditions and progressive tendencies. The achievement of a prosperous, domesticated settler society entailed a highly defensive posture against the rest of the region. The 'New Liberalism' inspiring the makers of the Commonwealth and its first ministries was inexorably committed to the Imperial government for defence, to London for capital and trading partners, and to 'New Protection' with immigration controls to defend working men and their families from 'unfair' (that is 'coloured') competition. Governments and their constituents, in other words, welcomed foreign capital as ever but had come to reject a free market in labour and the free movement of people. There was a role for women, as almost-equal citizens, and for organized working people. But the rhetoric of mateship explicitly denied room in the future for 'Asians' (even for most Japanese, although they rejected Asia with equal vehemence); and there was no room at all for the original Australians, whose demise was anticipated with mixed regret and satisfaction.

King Stork in Australia behaved like King Log in the islands. Australian policy in Papua espoused plantations, but the ban on Asian labour, the requirement that vessels be manned by white crews, and shortage of funds, spelt few planters and small crops. Neighbouring German New Guinea, with Chinese indentured labour and subsidized shipping, sustained much more prosperous plantations. Australian interests in the islands preferred stability to the hazards of change. The colonial states were at best rudimentary. The British Solomon Island Police had to beg transport from planters and missionaries to fulfil their duties.[61] Even with two colonial governments, New Hebrideans were more likely to encounter missionaries, and to work in New Caledonia, than to deal with colonial officers.[62] All islanders became subject to Native Regulations which denied them the civil rights, training, and employment prospects of settlers. Policy and practice divided the region absolutely into settler and native realms, separate and unequal. Australian workers were unionized and politicized, while islanders were subject to indenture. Primary education was becoming compulsory for white Australians, whereas a very few islanders had to be content with mission schools.

Australia also served as an exemplar for French policy in New Caledonia, a convict settlement enriched by minerals and impoverished by the appropriation of

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[61] Bennett, *Wealth of the Solomons*, pp. 103–24.
[62] Bonnemaison, *The Tree and the Canoe*, pp. 52–80.

land for pastoralists, creating a colonial economy which did not rest on the labour of the Kanaks but excluded them and penned them into reserves.[63] Islanders themselves made rather different judgements of Australia, as is evident in the code of behaviour devised by New Hebrideans returning to Aoba from the Queensland plantations. Australia also served as a negative model. Although the Fijian colonial economy was underpinned by Australian capital, it was also the only British dependency in the region resting on a treaty of cession with islanders. Gordon and his successors created a structure of indirect rule and immigrant labour explicitly to save Fijians from the fate of Aboriginal Australians and native Hawaiians. The practices and traditions of the British Empire in Australia were mediated and modified by the settlers. In the Western Pacific more generally they were refracted through an Australian lens.

[63] Connell, *New Caledonia or Kanaky?, passim.*

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25

Southern Islands: New Zealand and Polynesia

RAEWYN DALZIEL

In the mid-nineteenth century New Zealand became the furthest frontier of the British Empire. It was not uncommon for writers to use the colony as a metaphor for distance; the New Zealander as an analogue for the stranger, the outsider with the puzzled gaze. Yet, as with all colonies of settlement, the purpose was to shrink distance, to eliminate strangeness, imposing British civilization and control on a land viewed as a wilderness and on an indigenous people seen as barbarous. Coming within the Empire at a moment of liberal humanitarianism, New Zealand experienced a colonialism and colonization less brutal than some. Maori, a tribal people who had occupied the country for over a thousand years, were settled agriculturalists with powers to resist, negotiate, and adapt. For years British control was fragile as the migrant aspiration for material prosperity and control conflicted with the Maori desire to retain land and autonomy. Nevertheless, annexation and colonization were acts of possession and dispossession, settlement and unsettlement. By 1914 New Zealand's humpbacked, mountainous, but fertile land had been traversed by Europeans, renamed, and domesticated. The radical transfer of ownership and control over land and resources, the creation of a grassland, exporting economy and a state system modelled on that of Britain seemed to prove the success of the colonial experiment. Their cost to Maori and race relations had been enormous.

New Zealand was annexed by Great Britain in 1840, at a time of supposed low interest in Empire. Direct rule followed some fifty years of contact by sailors, traders, missionaries, and officials, the advance guard of an Empire being fatally led, as Lord Melbourne said, 'step by step over the whole globe'.[1] While the violence of some early encounters and British antipathy to formal expansion in the late eighteenth century meant that the claims to parts of New Zealand made by Captain James Cook in 1769 were never validated, the British foothold in Australia ensured that New Zealand and its people would be incorporated into Imperial strategic and economic designs. By the 1790s British naval vessels were visiting

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[1] Melbourne to Howick, 16 Dec. 1837, cited in Peter Adams, *Fatal Necessity: British Intervention in New Zealand, 1830–1847* (Auckland, 1977), p. 110.
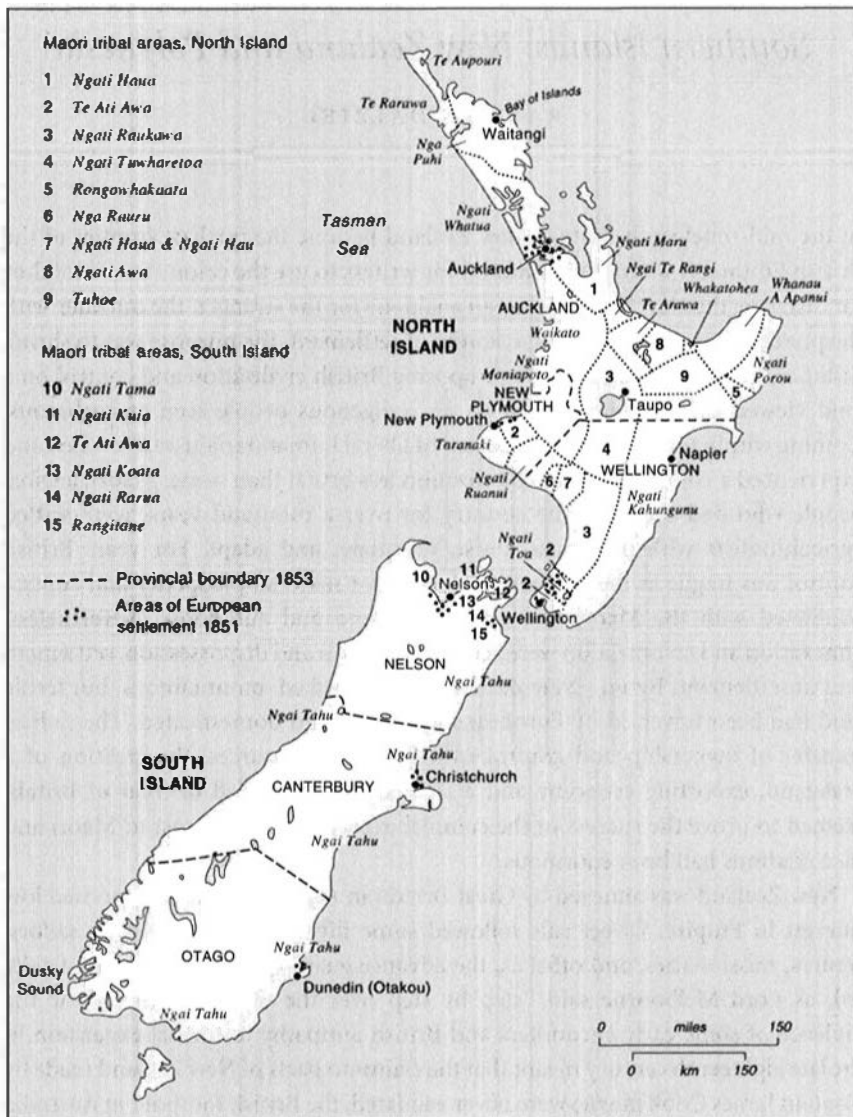
MAP 25.1. New Zealand: Native Peoples and White Settlers

northern harbours and taking cargoes of flax and timber. In 1792 two young Maori men of chiefly families were kidnapped and taken to Norfolk Island to teach flax-dressing to convicts. Mortified to learn that they knew nothing of the work, which, in Maori society, was a woman's skill, Lieutenant-Governor King sent the men, Tuki and Huru, home in November 1793 with pigs, maize, and potatoes. The indigenous agriculture was able to expand into a lucrative trade. Sealing and whaling also drew foreign economic interests to New Zealand. In 1792 crew from the *Britannia* sited at Dusky Bay on the south-west coast of the South Island killed 4,500 seals in nine months. However, regular expeditions to New Zealand, financed by Australian businessmen, did not occur until after the depletion of Australia's sealeries and the growth of a market for sealskins in the British hatting trade. Declining seal numbers from the late 1820s gradually ended the slaughter. The southern whaling grounds, long monopolized by the East India Company, were opened to independent American and British whalers at the end of the 1790s, and whales were hunted in the seas around New Zealand from just after the turn of the century. Australian firms became active from the 1820s. Whalers also stopped over in New Zealand for supplies and repairs and traded extensively with Maori. The first shore whaling station was set up at Te Awaiti in the Marlborough Sounds in 1827 and within a decade eighty shore stations had been established.

As a society which rapidly incorporated new technologies, trading practices, literacy, and religion into its own culture and proved a formidable fighting force, Maori commanded considerable respect from foreign visitors. They were themselves travellers, chiefs visiting Sydney and London, and younger men joining the crews of whaling and sealing vessels. Europeans were valued mainly for advantages they could confer in pre-existing tribal political and economic contests, and for the most part this meant providing access to literacy, tools, and guns. On a visit to England in 1820 Hongi Hika not only instructed Professor Lee in the Maori language but also collected together a small arsenal of weapons. Guns gave inter-tribal warfare a new and more deadly power.

Trading exchanges were well established by the time the church arrived in the Bay of Islands. Samuel Marsden, senior chaplain at the convict settlement in Sydney, was so impressed by his perception of Maori potential for civilization and conversion that in 1809 he brought Church Missionary Society (CMS) lay missionaries, William Hall, John King, and their families, to Sydney, bound for New Zealand. Racial tensions in the north delayed the work and when the missionaries were eventually located, along with schoolteacher William Kendall, at Rangihoua in 1814, they quarrelled, and lapsed into despair, jealousy, and doubt. Despite the establishment of a second station at Kerikeri in 1819, missionaries had little success in converting Maori until the Revd Henry and Marianne Williams began to reorganize the mission and to focus on the teachings of the church and

Bible in 1823. The Wesleyans established a mission in 1823 and Roman Catholics in 1838.

Until the late 1820s mission stations survived on Maori terms and under Maori domination. Even nominal conversions were rare, although missionaries became significant agents of change through their integration into Maori trading, agricultural, and economic life. Literacy also conferred a privileged status. The mission breakthrough came as European technology and disease made an increasing impact on Maori society. Throughout the 1820s tribes with guns went to war to avenge old defeats and insults. Peace returned when the balance of arms neutralized early advantages, but in some cases the loss of life and disruption to the traditional patterns of landholding and authority caused tribes to turn to missionaries as peacemakers. European treatments and prayers were also sought as possible cures for the diseases caused by rampant foreign viruses. Religion had a greater impact as the mission stations expanded: by 1839 the Anglicans had eleven stations and the Wesleyans six, located as far south as Kawhia and Rotorua. As inter-tribal fighting subsided, freed captives and slaves spread Christian teachings. Missionaries often found that both the gospel and literacy had preceded them.

During this period British control over its nationals in New Zealand was exercised spasmodically from Sydney, usually in response to complaints by Maori or to a beachhead disruption. In 1805, acting on a complaint from the chief, Te Pahi, about the behaviour of whalers at the Bay of Islands, Governor King proclaimed that his permission would be needed before Maori could be taken off shore. Serious incidents, such as the 1809 massacre of the crew of the *Boyd* and the revenge sacking of Te Pahi's settlement, caused an outcry but the authorities of Sydney could do little. In 1813 Macquarie issued an order extending British protection over Maori and requiring ships calling at New Zealand to post a bond for good behaviour. The next year he appointed Kendall a Justice of the Peace and empowered northern chiefs, Hongi Hika, Korokoro, and Ruatara, to enforce his orders.

With the establishment of the missions, calls for law and order became more insistent. The missionaries considered that unruly seamen, escaped convicts, and traders endangered their lives and work. Acting on reports of violence and disorder, the Church Missionary Society petitioned the Secretary of State for the Colonies for effective punishment of crimes committed in New Zealand and an 1817 Act empowered the courts to try cases of murder and manslaughter committed by British subjects outside British territory. In 1823 New South Wales courts were authorized to try offences committed in New Zealand.

This legislation explicitly recognized New Zealand's independence and British responsibility for the growing number of its offshore nationals. The power to exercise this responsibility was limited. In 1830 the Ngati Toa warrior leader, Te

Rauparaha, negotiated the transport of a war party to Akaroa on the *Elizabeth* in return for a cargo of flax. Te Rauparaha's Ngai Tahu enemies paid a fearsome price for the deal while an outraged Governor Bourke failed in his attempt to try the ship's captain. New Zealand had also attracted the interest of France. In October 1831 a French naval vessel called at the Bay of Islands, preceded by rumours that France intended to annex New Zealand. Unfounded though the rumours were, a missionary-inspired meeting of northern chiefs made a pre-emptive strike, petitioning the King to become 'a friend and guardian of these islands'. Concerned by these and other events, in 1832 the Colonial Office decided to appoint James Busby British Resident at the Bay of Islands. Busby's instructions were to prevent, as best he could, European violence towards Maori, to protect 'well-disposed settlers and traders', to apprehend escaped convicts, and to 'conciliate the good-will of native chiefs'.[2]

Such aspirations now seem bizarre, for Busby had neither police nor troops and the infrequent visits of a naval vessel to the Bay provided little support. He tried to enforce order by occasionally gathering together posses of local residents to pursue offenders, and hoped to persuade local chiefs to exercise a collective authority. In 1834 a meeting of chiefs established a ships' register and selected a national flag to fly over ships built in the embryonic shipyards of the Hokianga. Northern chiefs met again in October 1835 when it was claimed that a French adventurer, Baron de Thierry, planned to set up a state in New Zealand. This meeting led to a Declaration of Independence asserting the sovereign power and authority of the chiefs, while appealing to the King to be the 'parent of their infant State and ... its Protector from all attempts upon its independence'.[3] Busby collected signatures to the Declaration for several years, but the intention to hold an annual congress of chiefs came to nothing.

Busby's official presence significantly increased the information on New Zealand reaching Sydney and London. The news was often alarming. Early in 1837 a series of despatches warned Bourke that inter-tribal fighting was imminent and he ordered William Hobson, captain of HMS *Rattlesnake*, to the Bay to protect British subjects and shipping and report on the state of the country. Although Hobson discovered little danger, he proposed British authority be enhanced by factories (trading stations) headed by magistrates located wherever there was a sizeable British population, and by the appointment of a chief factor accredited to the united chiefs as a political agent or consul. British subjects would be required to register and the chiefs should be asked to sign a treaty recognizing the factories and protecting British subjects and property.[4]

[2] Bourke to Busby, 13 April 1833, C[olonial] O[ffice] 209/1.
[3] A Declaration of the Independence of New Zealand, Facsimile (Wellington, 1976).
[4] Hobson to Bourke, 8 Aug. 1837, CO 209/2.

Reports of discord and conflict contrasted with accounts of a mild climate, fertile land for the taking, and almost certain mineral wealth which created a picture of a southern utopia, inevitably attracting the attention of British promoters of emigration and colonization. The first attempt at a planned settlement, sponsored by a group of politicians and businessmen in 1825–26, was unsuccessful, but a number of the men involved later joined Edward Gibbon Wakefield's colonization scheme. Wakefield entered the emigration debate in the late 1820s and rapidly became one of its key figures. A creative thinker, articulate, and with influential patrons, he advocated 'systematic colonization' to solve the contemporary problems of wealth creation, surplus capital, and surplus labour. New Zealand, as Wakefield informed the Parliamentary Committee on the disposal of land in British colonies in 1836, was 'the fittest country in the world for colonisation'. Flanked by a bevy of politicians, financiers, and businessmen he launched the New Zealand Association, later floated as the New Zealand Company, at a public meeting on 22 May 1837. The Association proposed to promote legislation authorizing the annexation of New Zealand and empowering the 'Founders of Settlements in New Zealand' to purchase land cheaply from Maori, send out migrants, and rule the colony. A powerful vested interest in New Zealand had been created.

The Colonial Office was now listening to several competing voices on New Zealand. The missionaries and humanitarians wanted law and order but, consistent with contemporary views on the impact of culture contact, they feared a more formal British presence would bring settlement fatal to Maori. The New Zealand Association sought approval and protection for its colonizing venture. Officials in Sydney wanted peace. The Maori voice was interpreted in the main by missionaries, working within the framework of their own goals. By December 1837 the British government had decided that a policy of minimal intervention was no longer viable. During 1838 it decided to appoint a Consul and in December offered Hobson the position. As Consul-Designate, Hobson was told that he would be negotiating for the establishment of British sovereignty in areas where British interests were concentrated, offering protection over the rest of the country. These plans were later changed to extend sovereignty over part or all of the country, and Hobson's instructions made clear his role as a buffer between Maori and future settlers. Another decision, that future land purchases would require a Crown title to be valid, so concerned the New Zealand Company that it rapidly despatched a survey party to purchase land, and then a shipload of settlers.

The crucial event in negotiating the future of New Zealand was the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. The Treaty, eventually signed by between 530 and 540 high-ranking men and women and Hobson, became the founding document of New Zealand as a bi-cultural society. Although it was repudiated by some British

politicians, easily slipped from the consciousness of most settlers, and was ignored by the courts, it has always been regarded by Maori as a living document, a covenant of paramount importance in recognizing Maori rights and establishing a relationship with the Crown.

The Treaty has recently been the subject of extensive historical research. Whereas in the past it was seen as the product of the particular New Zealand situation conjoined with the humanitarian ethos expressed in the 1837 Report of the Committee on Aborigines, it is now clear that it had precedents in other parts of the Empire and that it drew on British constitutional and legal history.[5] The Treaty covered three essential conditions for the future relationship: the chiefs would accede to British sovereignty; the Crown would guarantee Maori possession of their land, forests, and according to the Maori text, treasures, and the English, fisheries, and become the exclusive purchaser of any land that Maori wished to sell; Maori would receive all the rights and privileges of British subjects. Unlike most earlier treaties, the Treaty of Waitangi was translated into the indigenous language, for many Maori had learned to read in their own language. Most chiefs signed the Maori version, which is now regarded as authoritative. There were significant differences between the two versions of the Treaty, causing much speculation as to the meaning intended by the translator, Henry Williams, and the understandings of the Maori signatories. Whether it will ever be possible to assign these meanings with absolute certainty is problematic, and the debate is now in the hands of linguists and lawyers rather than historians. It does, however, seem clear that Maori signatories expected that *tino rangatiratanga* or the powers of full chieftainship, guaranteed to them by the second clause of the Maori version, would enable them to exercise customary law and authority within tribal areas and over their land. This expectation was not seen by them, or necessarily by the other parties, as incompatible with the sovereignty or, as the Maori version stated, the *kawanatanga* (government) ceded to the Crown.[6]

The Treaty was debated vigorously at Waitangi. The initial opposition rising from fear of losing land, authority, and government control of commerce, was offset by the support of three powerful chiefs, Hone Heke, Patuone, and Tamati Waka Nene. They argued that European contact made the accommodation envisioned in the Treaty inevitable and that access to European technology, control over British subjects and friendship with Britain were positive steps forward. Reassembling on 6 February, the chiefs signed the Treaty, each signature

[5] M. P. K. Sorrenson, 'Treaties in British Colonial Policy: Precedents for Waitangi', in William Renwick, ed., *Sovereignty and Indigenous Rights: The Treaty of Waitangi in International Contexts* (Wellington, 1991), pp. 15–29.

[6] P. G. McHugh, 'The Lawyer's Concept of Sovereignty, the Treaty of Waitangi, and a Legal History of New Zealand', in ibid., p. 182.

accompanied by Hobson's optimistic remark, 'He iwi tahi tatou': we are now one people. Copies of the Treaty were subsequently taken to Maori tribes around the country for negotiation and signatures. Some tribes readily assented; others, such as Tuwharetoa, were never Treaty signatories. In the end the Treaty facilitated annexation, but control over the South Island was declared on the basis of discovery and the definitive step was taken by the gazetting of annexation in London on 2 October 1840.

The Treaty made promises and gave guarantees to Maori which the Colonial Office neither fully understood nor was strong enough to honour. James Stephen, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office, soon came to believe that whatever safeguards he tried to ensure or whatever benefits colonization might bring, the end result would be disastrous to Maori. By December 1846 Earl Grey was stating that, although injustices must be avoided, any acknowledgement of Maori right to ownership of uncultivated land must be regarded 'as a vain and unfounded scruple'.[7] Maori were rapidly disillusioned with British observance of the Treaty, Hone Heke expressing his frustration and anger by axing the flagpole at Kororareka twice and sacking the small town. Actions of non-signatories raised the issue of whether they were bound by annexation and British law. In 1842 Taraia, a non-signatory chief of Ngati Tama-Te-Ra in the Coromandel, attacked enemies on the east coast, killed and reportedly ate some, and took others captive. When Hobson sent officers to investigate and negotiate a settlement, Taraia challenged their right to interfere, sparking a debate over the parameters of government authority. The Colonial Office considered that all Maori were British subjects, although a blind eye could be turned to the practice of most traditional customs in inter-tribal relations.

At this stage Maori were in a majority and had military superiority, shown dramatically in the Wairau valley in 1843. Twenty-two Europeans, attempting to arrest Maori resisting the survey of disputed land, were killed. Robert FitzRoy, Governor 1843–45, with few forces at his command, decided that the settlers were wrong and refused to retaliate. When military action was attempted, as at Ohaea-wai in the north in 1845, it was a débâcle. Both Hobson and FitzRoy tried to assert authority instead by a policy of moral suasion, exercised through a Native Pro-tector, who was also a land-purchase officer. A Commissioner, William Spain, was appointed to investigate the pre-Waitangi land purchases and much of the land, especially in New Zealand Company claims, was returned to Maori. FitzRoy, critically short of funds, then tried to placate Maori, discontented at restrictions on land dealings, and settlers by waiving the Crown right of pre-emption.

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[7] Minute, 23 Dec. 1846, cited in W. P. Morrell, *British Colonial Policy in the Age of Peel and Russell* (Oxford, 1930), pp. 315–16.

Reviled by the settlers for his policy of conciliation with Maori and humiliated by the contempt with which Maori treated him, FitzRoy was recalled to England in September 1845. He was replaced by the young, ambitious George Grey. Grey's aim was 'Anglicization', bringing Maori within the settler social and political system, replacing the customs of 'barbarism' with those of 'civilization'. Maori men were to be integrated into the European economy as farmers, traders, and labourers; women were to become useful housewives. Chiefs were to be courted and made the instruments of British authority and children taught to read and write. First, however, Grey, who had an increased military force, had to establish his control. Although it now appears that the victory he claimed in the northern war after Imperial troops captured Ruapekapeka *pa* (fortified settlement), already strategically evacuated by its defenders, was spurious, resistance in the north weakened and Grey gained credit with the Colonial Office and settlers. He had similar propaganda successes in southern North Island in 1846 and 1847. Grey then used the injudicious personal land dealing of the Protector to destroy the Native Protectorate and bring Maori policy, administered by a Native Secretary, under his own control. In pursuit of the amalgamation of the two races, he attempted to introduce British law into Maori tribal areas through the 1846 Resident Magistrates' Courts Ordinance. This provided for the appointment of resident magistrates in tribal districts with powers of summary jurisdiction in cases between Maori and Europeans. In cases between Maori, the resident magistrate and two chiefs constituted a court of arbitration. The success of the system depended on the preceding consultation with local people and the role taken by the chiefs.[8] The courts were backed by an armed police force in which Maori men served under Pakeha officers.

Grey acknowledged Maori claims to tribal land, restored the Crown right of pre-emption, and resumed land purchases. Travelling extensively, he personally negotiated a number of land purchases, often alienating sellers by his manipulative methods. Reserves set aside for Maori, as in the South Island, were usually totally inadequate to their needs.

At the time of the Treaty-signing the European population of New Zealand was not much more than 2,000. The most recent estimates of the 1840 Maori population are between 70,000 and 90,000.[9] Musket warfare, increasing mortality rates, and declining fertility had taken a heavy toll. The Treaty then became a licence for settlement on a scale undreamt of by Maori. By 1858 the European population, at

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[8] Alan Ward, *A Show of Justice: Racial 'Amalgamation' in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand* (Auckland, 1973), pp. 74–86.

[9] Ian Pool, *Te Iwi Maori: A New Zealand Population Past, Present and Projected* (Auckland, 1991), p. 55.

over 59,000 exceeded the Maori population, estimated at about 56,000. The census of 1896 recorded 701,000 Europeans and just over 42,000 Maori. Thus colonialism marginalized Maori and ensured European dominance.

Until 1886 the European population grew mainly from a migration of epic proportions. Powerful motives and a massive logistic effort were needed to overcome the barriers of distance, expense, and uncertainty. Only the gold discoveries of the 1860s attracted a mass of unsponsored migrants. Immigration had to be organized and subsidized, migrants enticed by cheap passages, reduced-price land, and promises of employment and high wages. The New Zealand Company was the first to apply these techniques, later adopted by provincial and central governments.

Wakefield considered that the colonial social structure should reflect that of Britain, with a balanced ratio of men and women and a vertical slice of the home society minus the aristocracy and the lumpenproletariat. The success of his Company in persuading members of gentry families and university-educated lawyers, doctors, and clergymen to purchase land in New Zealand imposed an air of gentility on the colony. One later Governor was fond of describing it as the 'gentleman's colony', indicating his perception of its class and gender composition.[10] Such views masked the rural and working-class origins of the vast majority of migrants who were seeking work, decent wages, security, and an independency for their families. The European settlement of New Zealand was essentially a labour migration from the British Isles, with lesser numbers from Germany, Scandinavia, and other parts of western and southern Europe.

The gendered nature of migration meant that European men outnumbered women until the 1920s. However, New Zealand was always promoted as a colony for women. European settlement coincided with the full flowering of the domestic ideology that emphasized woman's role within the home and community, and her moral influence. No one was more aware of the power of this ideology than Wakefield, who proclaimed that 'A Colony that is not attractive to women, is an unattractive colony'.[11] Propaganda was designed to attract women migrants and women were offered cheap and free passages and domestic work on arrival. Women saw themselves as partners in the colonial enterprise.

The nature of migration and migration flows were determined primarily by economic and secondarily by social factors. Cash-strapped provincial councils tried to recruit migrants in the 1850s and 1860s, but only Otago and Canterbury were successful. Much of their effort was directed at single women to supply the market for domestic servants created by expanding pastoral and gold-mining

[10] Fergusson to Carnarvon, 12 March 1874, Carnarvon Papers, Public Record Office, 30/6/39.
[11] E. G. Wakefield, *A View of the Art of Colonization* (London, 1849), p. 156.

communities. In the 1870s central government sponsored large-scale migration of agricultural, construction, and domestic workers as the labour force for railway building, urban, and rural development. But behind the economic considerations there was a perception of the ideal society. Single male migrants were notoriously transient, moving in search of work. They served colonial labour needs but caused deep anxiety about instability and disorder. Government policy favoured the immigration of small family groups and women who would ensure the stability and respectability of the population. Assisted migrants required proof of their good character from employers and clergymen. The unfit, the unstable, and the idle were unwelcome. Stocking the country with sober and thrifty men and women able to work and breed were the priorities.

In 1840 the new settler colony was set up with a system of Crown Colony government, excluding all but an inner circle of male settlers from positions of power and influence in the public arena. Maori, occupied with tribal concerns, land alienation, and economic change, soon recognized their exclusion from this ruling structure and opted for their own institutions. But middle-class male settlers, who saw rule by a Governor and placemen as an affront to their nationality and their manhood, campaigned for inclusion in a familiar system of Westminster-style government.

With British policy moving towards self-government for colonies of settlement, it seemed that British men need not wait long for their rights. Stephen had noted in March 1839 that self-government should be introduced if it could be reconciled 'with allegiance to the Crown, and with the Colony moving in the same political orbit with the parent state—participating that is, in the Commercial, Diplomatic, Belligerant [*sic*] or Pacific relations of the Parent State'.[12] However, given Maori dominance, the Colonial Office hesitated, reluctant to risk government by a settler minority that might ignore the responsibilities of the Treaty and would certainly be unable to defend itself against any consequences of its policy. Self-government was denied until 1846 when a Liberal government divided the colony into two provinces, each with a Lieutenant-Governor and a bicameral Assembly, sending representatives to a General Assembly with responsibility for matters of common interest. Adult males who could read and write English gained the vote, leaving Maori men, whose literacy was restricted to their own language, unenfranchised. The constitution established a complex form of minority rule. Receiving Grey's advice that it was impractical and would endanger race relations, a more nervous British government suspended its introduction for five years.

Suspension cost Grey the co-operation of many leading settlers. They boycotted his nominated councils and formed Constitutional Associations to agitate for self-

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[12] Memorandum, 15 March 1839, CO 209/4.

government. A succession of colonial delegates lobbied in London for immediate action but the Imperial government, having bought time to devise a more appropriate structure and to allow Grey and the settlers to consolidate their hold on the country, refused to be pressured.

Between 1846 and 1852 the settler population doubled. Communities sponsored by associations inspired by Wakefield and based on religious affiliation were established in Otago and Canterbury. Their leaders included able advocates of self-government. Grey's increasingly optimistic despatches on race relations also implied that self-government could safely be introduced in 1852. The new Constitution Act, building on the 1846 proposals and adopting suggestions from Grey and the colonists, created six provinces based on the settler towns, each administered by an elected superintendent and a council, and a bicameral General Assembly. A liberal franchise gave the vote to adult males who owned or rented property. There were no racial distinctions, but only Maori holding land according to English tenurial conditions could vote. Although the General Assembly controlled most internal matters, including disposal of wasteland, legislation required the Crown's assent, and external and Maori policy and land purchase were reserved to the British government and the Governor. In 1857 an Amending Act made it clear that the colony had the power to change the constitution.

The colony had a quasi-federal system—'a most Brobdingnagian Government for a series of Lilliputian States', as one British politician complained—but the weight of power was intended to lie with the central government. Regional strength and needs ensured a contest. Provincial councils, meeting before the General Assembly, adopted extensive powers over land and development. A couple of years later the land revenue was localized, giving a strong financial base to the South Island provinces, where the government had rapidly and ruthlessly purchased huge blocks of land. The North Island provinces struggled on with a growing sense of grievance and an increasing reliance on central government for support.

The Constitution Act did not provide any clear indication of responsibility in the new order. Grey left the colony in December 1853 and an inexperienced administrator, Wynyard, opened the first session of Parliament and confronted demands for a ministry. Wynyard's creation, a hybrid of officials and elected members, caused a political storm, quietened only by Colonial Office instructions that the leader with a majority in the House should form the government. In 1856 the member for Christchurch, Henry Sewell, led the first responsible ministry. Defeated in the House within a month, he was followed even more briefly by William Fox, then by the centralist Nelson landowner, Edward Stafford. Fox and Stafford dominated politics for the next fifteen years.

From 1854 the high ground of politics was occupied by the men in Parliament and the male voters who elected them. They saw their responsibility as the creation of an environment in which settler society could develop and prosper. The preconditions for the fulfilment of this aim were the displacement of Maori from land viewed as unproductive, its clearing and cultivation by European farming families, the development of internal transport and communication with the outside world, and a stable social order. The tenuous European hold on the country was to be converted into a permanent occupancy.

In 1851 Grey expressed the view that the 'process of the incorporation of the native population into the European settlements has ... for the last few years been taking place with a rapidity unexampled in history'.[13] However, although Maori agriculture was thriving, Grey had not advanced genuine understanding between Maori and *Pakeha* (foreigner, expecially white settlers), nor brought Maori into government. Resentment against increased European settlement and loss of land was about to take an organized, supra-tribal form. In 1853 and 1854 *hui* (meetings) round the North Island discussed land sales, a union of tribes, and a Maori Assembly similar to the European Assembly. At Taupo in 1856 it was proposed that Potatau Te Wherowhero, a leading Waikato chief, become the Maori King. Two years later he was installed at Ngaruawahia.

The King Movement was an attempt by Maori tribes—mostly from the central North Island—to reassert chiefly mana, control over their lands and people, and to unite in resistance to further land sales. Although not all the tribes joined the federation, most shared its aims. As a forum expressing Maori claims to autonomy, the King Movement was seen by many Europeans as a fundamental challenge to the assumption that sovereignty over the country had passed into British hands. What to do about the King Movement became a major question for the Governor and ministers.

Before this issue was confronted a crisis was reached in Taranaki, where, although the context was sovereignty and control, the immediate cause was land. Visiting Taranaki in 1859, Governor Thomas Gore Browne was offered land at Waitara, an area coveted by settlers, by a minor chief. After a cursory investigation of the ownership and overriding the objections of the important chief, Wiremu Kingi, Browne ordered payment for the land and a survey. When the survey pegs were removed by Kingi's people, Browne declared martial law, and on 5 March 1860 troops occupied the Waitara. For nearly a year Taranaki was a war zone. Neither side emerged with a clear victory, but a sort of truce existed in which the British held Waitara and Maori regained Tataraimaka, previously in European possession.

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[13] Grey to Colonial Office, 30 Aug. 1851, CO 209/93.

Maori resistance in Taranaki indicated the strength of the challenge to settler and British authority. It is possible that if Browne had remained in office he would have immediately moved against the Kingites. But his fate was similar to FitzRoy's. Failure brought dismissal and Grey was reappointed to resolve the situation.

Grey was an austere, rigid man, determined to control a deteriorating situation. At first he responded to a call from an assembly of chiefs at Kohimarama in 1860 for involvement in lawmaking and administration. He supported the establishment of local *runanga* (councils) with powers to make by-laws and special mixed courts to enforce the law. Given a stable situation the *runanga* might have worked, but the situation was far from stable. A bungled attempt to exchange the Waitara for Tataraimaka led to renewed fighting, although another lengthy Taranaki war was averted. And the King Movement was gathering strength and feeding settler paranoia. Grey visited the Waikato in January 1863 and tried to persuade moderate factions to give up the King; by mid-1863 rumours of imminent attacks kept Auckland in a state of perpetual excitement. Grey secured extra Imperial troops, improved the roads into the Waikato, and on 9 July 1863 Maori living between the Waikato and Auckland were asked to swear an oath of allegiance to the Queen and to surrender their arms. Three days later troops entered the King's territory and within a week had fought the first action of the Waikato war. Fighting continued into the next year, with a series of battles in which Maori defended from near-impregnable *pa* sites in the Waikato and on the east coast. Finally the numerically stronger Imperial and colonial forces, in some cases aided by *kupapa* (friendly Maori), achieved a limited victory. The Kingites, severely weakened by losses of fighting men and declining stocks of food and ammunition, ended armed resistance and retreated behind an *aukati* (boundary) line.

During the wars the Imperial and colonial governments clashed over responsibility and the participation of British troops. As long as the Governor was responsible for Maori policy, the British government accepted a duty to defend the settlers and pay for the war. Yet the wars coincided with the withdrawal of British troops from around the Empire and attempts to shift internal defence and policy-making to colonial governments. New Zealand governments vacillated, wanting control yet afraid of it; eager to avoid paying for war but anxious to exploit any gains. Finally, in 1864 a ministry led by Frederick Weld accepted the necessity for self-reliance.

Except for one regiment, Imperial troops were withdrawn from New Zealand in 1865–66, but the fighting was not over. On the east and west coasts of the North Island, Te Kooti and Titokowaru, combining spiritual with military leadership, mounted guerilla struggles. They used tiny forces and an intimate knowledge of the land and bush to devastating effect, thwarting the colonial militia time after

time. Eventually, in 1869 Titokowaru lost his support, his leadership undermined by breaches of Maori propriety, and Te Kooti evaded capture by moving into the King Country which remained closed to Europeans.

The wars of the 1860s determined the question of sovereignty for the settlers, but not for Maori. The settler Parliament saw Maori in arms as rebels, justifying the confiscation of some 3.25 million acres of land in the Waikato, Taranaki, and on the east coast. This land-grab, eagerly advocated by Auckland speculator-politicians, has been described as the 'worst injustice ever perpetrated by a New Zealand government'.[14] Although about half the land was subsequently returned or paid for, the loss remained a major grievance to the tribes, to be addressed by periodic commissions, the latest being the Waitangi Tribunal in the 1990s. Thousands more acres passed into European ownership through the agency of the Maori Land Court established in the 1860s. The Court provided a process for certifying titles to Maori land, thus making it easier to sell and purchase. The 1865 Land Act stipulated a maximum of ten names on a title deed but in 1873 this was amended to require the listing and consent of all owners to the sale or lease of land. By 1892 Maori retained under 11 million acres as communal property, mostly in isolated areas of the North Island and nearly a quarter of it leased to Europeans.

In the aftermath of the wars Maori followed strategies of resistance, separation, and accommodation. Resistance often centred on a spiritual leader or prophet such as Te Kooti, Te Whiti, or later Rua Kenana, all figures in a tradition of visionary Maori leaders. Both Te Kooti, the spiritual founder of Ringatu, and Tawhiao, the second Maori King, who started the Tariao sect in 1875, borrowed from Pai Marire, a scriptural religion founded by Te Ua Haumene Tuwhakaro in Taranaki in 1862, with adaptations to the post-war situation of their people. Te Whiti founded the village of Parihaka on confiscated land in South Taranaki and preached passive resistance. Parihaka became a well-organized centre for Maori from a number of tribes and Te Whiti's monthly meetings attracted large crowds. However, eventually the government determined to take possession of the land, countered the resistance with arrests, and in 1881 imprisoned the Parihaka leaders and destroyed most of the village. The followers of Hipa Te Maiharoa who reoccupied ancestral lands in North Otago were also forcibly removed. After the wars the Kingite Maori organized their own political and social life behind the *aukati* line. Pakeha needed permission to cross the *aukati* until 1883, although Maori living near the boundary traded freely over it.

Some Maori participated in settler politics. In 1867 Parliament created four Maori seats in the Lower House. Donald McLean, former land-purchase Commis-

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[14] Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand* (Harmondsworth, 1959), p. 140.

sioner and later Native Minister, argued that the seats would help Maori 'feel they have a voice in the management of public affairs'.[15] Maori members, and those appointed to the Upper House, must often have doubted this as they became pawns in political games and failed to prevent legislation contrary to Maori interests. Repeated requests for extra seats, based either on population or tribal affiliation, were ignored. An alternative political strategy kept alive the spirit of the Treaty of Waitangi. Through *hui* and *komiti* Maori developed the idea of a separate Maori Parliament and a special relationship with the Crown. In the 1880s two Maori delegations, from Ngapuhi in 1882 and from Waikato, including the Maori King, in 1884, visited England to appeal to the Crown to investigate grievances under the Treaty and recognize a Maori Parliament. The Aborigines' Protection Society was friendly, but officially Britain refused to interfere in the colony's internal affairs. Disappointed with these responses, Maori leaders promoted a unity movement. A commitment to *kotahitanga* (unity) was forged at meetings in the late 1880s and the first full session of the Maori Parliament was held at Waipatu in June 1892. It continued to meet, without the Kingites who had their own council, for eleven years. A few younger Maori formed the Young Maori Party to reform social and economic conditions. The census of 1896 was the last to record a declining Maori population.

The last Imperial troops left New Zealand in 1870, after years of recriminatory negotiations between the two governments. The settler Parliament was split over the significance of withdrawal for future relations with Britain. Was this the beginning of separation from the Empire? Was it the ultimate triumph for Little England? Should New Zealand focus on becoming an independent nation state? Would it be better off joining the United States? Independence, separation, nationalism, Imperial federation, as immediate options and future policy, were discussed intensely. The settlers' need to extend and consolidate their territorial gains and to develop a sustainable economy, largely determined the outcome.

The New Zealand economy in 1870 was small-scale, regional, geared to the export of primary produce and importing most manufactured goods. Colonization had been premissed on the development of an agricultural economy. Wakefield rejected the large-scale pastoral farming of New South Wales and mapped out a future in arable farming. Intensive farming worked in some places—Nelson, for instance—but the domestic market was so small and labour so limited that whenever land and capital were available, pastoral farming was preferred. James FitzGerald stated this baldly in 1851 when he wrote, 'the only way to make money here is by sheep farming. Money may be literally coined in that trade. And it is eminently the profession of a gentleman. The sheep farmer may have his comfort-

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[15] *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates*, I, pt. 1, 1867, p. 457.

able house and gardens and a little farm producing all he requires, but his personal task is to ride about the country inspecting his vast flocks and giving directions for their management.'[16] While he understated the effort required to build a successful sheep station, FitzGerald was right about the potential profits from the industry. Wool was the major export throughout the nineteenth century, rivalled only by gold in the 1860s.

New Zealand's gold rushes followed those of California and Victoria and boosted incomes and population. Most of the gold was in the South Island, also the main pastoral region. The South, consequently, had a very different history from the North Island. Southern politicians, irritated by the way northern problems dominated the political agenda and drained the economy, occasionally floated the idea of separation. But despite the greater European population of the South and their access to resources, a separate destiny would have been difficult.

In 1870, facing the prospect of standing alone, fully responsible for domestic policy, the government decided to take decisive steps to shape the economic future. The 'sacred fires of colonization' as William Fox, Premier from 1869 to 1872, referred to European settlement, were to be rekindled through the agency of the state as the sponsor of migration, land purchaser, railway promoter, and road-builder. New Zealand would take advantage of new sea routes and technologies such as the telegraph to improve communications with Australia, the United States, and Great Britain. Farming families would be assisted to take up land and markets would be sought for New Zealand products. In 1870 Julius Vogel, the Treasurer, announced that the country would borrow overseas to finance this policy.

Between 1870 and 1914 central government policy was designed to create a modern state, with a balanced population structure, the infrastructure for a primary producing and trading economy, a streamlined political system, and the administrative and social institutions necessary for a maturing society. Such a state, it was believed, would fulfil the vision for a European polity in the South Pacific. It would enable settlers and their children to put conflict behind them and validate the experience of colonization. Maori figured little in these policies.

In 1874 Parliament agreed to abolish the old provincial councils and governments in the North Island. By 1876 they had gone throughout the country. The councils had effectively sustained regional rivalries at a national level and interfered with central government planning. The old institutions, weakened by the intrusions of central government into settlement and economic development,

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[16] Quoted in G. C. Hensley, 'Land Policy and the Runholders, 1853–7', in W. J. Gardner, ed., *A History of Canterbury*, 2 vols. (Christchurch, 1971), II, p. 32.

nevertheless resisted and regionalism remained a factor in politics. Borough, city, and county councils; road, education, and hospital and charitable aid boards were eventually established to carry out the specialized functions of local government. Politics became more democratic. In 1879 manhood suffrage was added to the existing property qualifications for voting and triennial Parliaments were introduced. During these debates Parliament considered a proposal to enfranchise women. Women's suffrage had been raised, pseudonymously, by Mary Anne Müller in *An Appeal to the Men of New Zealand* in 1869. Her call was taken up by political reformers, influenced by John Stuart Mill, but although legislation could occasionally command a majority in the House, a conservative adherence to the dogma of separate spheres sapped the will of government to pass this reform.

Government sponsored and prosperity-driven immigration helped double the European population in the 1870s. Surveyors, contractors, and labourers cut and dug their way across the countryside, removing the primeval forest and covering the land with roads and railways. The government was itself a contractor and promoter and encouraged business and enterprise, in some cases bailing out companies that failed.

The colony began to look to its relationships with offshore states. Links with the Australian colonies became important in the 1870s and 1880s as joint interests in shipping, cables, and defence emerged. There had always been an interchange of labour across the Tasman; politicians now participated in intergovernment negotiations and conferences. Preferential tariffs among the colonies were finally agreed to by a reluctant British government. An attempt to establish trade and diplomatic links with the United States, however, encountered American protectionism and British disapproval.

The British outreach of the first half of the century had encompassed the islands of Polynesia in addition to New Zealand. Missionaries from the London Missionary Society, the Church Missionary Society, and the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society were working in Tahiti, Tonga, and Samoa by the 1830s and in the Cook Islands (Map 24.2) from the 1840s. Complex political arrangements in the Hawaiian, Tahitian, and Tongan groups resolved themselves over time into kingdoms, often with successful rulers using Christianity as one of the mechanisms for consolidating their power. The Samoan Islands, where there was a strong tradition of local village control, did not produce a monarchy, but powerful families disputed dominance. Trade was well established by the 1840s with European exploitation of sandalwood, bêche-de-mer (sea-slug), coconut oil, pearls, and pearl shell.

British policy, established in 1845, was to ensure that its influence in the region was as great as any other foreign power and to strengthen the authority of indigenous rulers. Consuls were appointed in most Island groups to protect

British interests and cultivate local leaders. But the settlement of New Zealand created a new frontier with territorial ambitions of its own. From the 1840s a succession of political leaders and church- and businessmen saw the islands of the Pacific as their empire.

New Zealand interest in the Pacific grew from Bishop Selwyn's Melanesian mission in the 1840s and Grey's attempts to keep the French out of the region. For three decades the Pacific mission, although low-key in practice, was a marked feature of the rhetoric about the nation's future. Then from the 1870s, as French, German, and American interest in the Pacific escalated, politicians such as Vogel, Grey, Robert Stout, and Richard Seddon intensified pressure on Great Britain to annex Island groups.

Few of the islands of Polynesia were exempt from imperialistic New Zealanders. Persistent requests were made for Britain to annex Samoa, the Kermadecs, Tonga, the Cook Islands, and Rapa. In Melanesia offers were out on Fiji and concern was expressed over French interest in New Caledonia and the New Hebrides. Constrained by colonial status from acting on their own behalf, the annexationists attempted to influence British policy. In the early 1870s Vogel supported Auckland financiers and businessmen who dominated trade with the Islands. He believed that the flag would follow trade and hoped that government-guaranteed companies and steamer lines would be profitable to New Zealand and force British action. He offered to administer Fiji on Britain's behalf and to take over Samoa. An irritated Lord Kimberley supposed that the 'N. Zealand Govt. would have thought it as well first to get possession of the whole of *New Zealand* before undertaking to govern other territories. They will have enough to do in New Zealand for years to come without embarking on these Quixotic schemes.'[17] Grey, when Premier in 1879, told an eager audience that they were 'the proper future rulers and governors' of the Pacific.[18] In 1883 he shepherded through Parliament a Confederation and Annexation Act inviting Island requests to federate with the colony. Vogel argued in 1880 that New Zealand could not escape 'the responsibilities entailed upon [it] by geographical and natural laws'.[19] Pacific trade and defence should be in British hands, administered through New Zealand. He argued, less convincingly, that affinity between Maori and Pacific islanders and the New Zealand government's experience with Polynesians fitted it to rule. In 1884 and 1885, when rival dynastic factions began to war in Samoa, the Stout government instructed a steamer to stand by to intervene until warned off by the Colonial Office. When Britain finally decided to declare a Protectorate over the

[17] Minute, 28 Dec. 1873 on Fergusson to Colonial Secretary, 22 Oct. 1873, CO 209/230.
[18] *Otago Daily Times*, 1 Sept. 1879, cited in Angus Ross, *New Zealand Aspirations in the Pacific in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1964), p. 131.
[19] Vogel to Hall, 27 Jan. 1880, *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives* (1880), A–8.

Cook Islands in 1888 New Zealand promptly found the salary for a Resident. And in 1899, when Samoan factions were again embattled, Seddon offered both troops and the government steamer.

On occasion Australia and New Zealand co-operated over Pacific issues at home and through their representatives in London. Their constant lobbying had some impact on Britain's freedom of action. In 1886 New Zealand and Australian defence of their mission interests in the New Hebrides forced Britain to compromise with the French. Settlement colonies with imperial ambitions could prove to be inconvenient. They could not, however, prevent the European powers and the United States from carving up the Pacific according to their own strategic agendas, although before the First World War British acquisitions in Polynesia were limited.

During the 1870s New Zealand strengthened its economic relations with Britain. Development was largely financed by British investment. The Vogel migrants were recruited mainly from the villages and cities of Britain. British manufacturers supplied the tracks and rolling stock for the railways, machinery for the farming sector, and most requirements of the expanding consumer market. Whereas in the 1860s imports came almost equally from Australia and Britain, by the mid-1870s two-thirds came from Britain. Exports increasingly went directly to Britain: in 1877 84 per cent of exports, in the main wool, were destined for the United Kingdom. Business, land companies, and farmers relied on funds channelled through banks, stock and station agents, and finance companies with British connections, some, such as the National Bank, being entirely owned in Britain.

The linkages between the two economies came under strain from the mid-1870s when the government, nervous about growing public debt, started to retrench. Private investors and developers responded with a frenzy of land buying. In 1879 the collapse of the Bank of Glasgow heralded a withdrawal from colonial investment and falling prices for agricultural exports. New Zealand, so dependent on the depressed British economy, faced a long period of low returns, declining investment, and unemployment. Treasurers, notably Harry Atkinson from 1879 to 1884 and 1887 to 1891, were driven in search of new policies to ease the financial pressures. Atkinson tried a property tax and protective tariffs, but basically the country had to await the return of prosperity to its overseas markets.

The hard times of the 1880s thwarted hopes for economic progress and revealed social problems of a kind and on a scale that settlers had thought New Zealand would avoid. These were the structural problems of a developing society, exacerbated by recession—the elderly unable to support themselves, single women bringing up families in poverty, unemployed men tramping the countryside, deteriorating work conditions, neglected children, and rebellious youths taking over the streets. They were largely urban problems in a society that still placed a

premium on rural virtues. Divisions from within combined with economic difficulties to fracture the hope of creating a southern utopia.

When the men of the country cast their votes in the general election at the end of 1890 they registered a shift in public opinion, not obvious at the time, but which in retrospect marked a new political era. The ascendancy of the Liberals, who won a majority in the election and took office under the leadership of John Ballance in January 1891, lasted until 1912. More than anything else the Liberals were characterized by a will to respond to the demands of a wider constituency than their predecessors had listened to. Populist and progressive, the Liberals had a vision of New Zealand as the most advanced nation of the Empire, able, because of its newness, size, and natural advantages, to move ahead of the Old World. Their goal was to restore faith in the original migrant dream. It was supported by the return of higher agricultural prices from 1895 and capitalization on refrigeration which enabled frozen meat and dairy produce to be shipped to an apparently limitless market in Britain. The Liberals, who came to power on a policy opposed to overseas borrowing, soon returned to the money markets to raise funds for government investment in land and agriculture.

A major part of the Liberal vision related to land ownership and distribution. The notion that there was a 'land-hunger' in the towns and cities had become a staple of reform rhetoric in the 1880s. Large pastoral farms were portrayed as blocking economic progress and access to the land by new generations of aspiring farmers. Earlier governments had experimented with village settlements, various forms of leasehold, and cheap money for land purchase. Ballance, a prominent land reformer and a strong supporter of taxing the unearned increment, and other Liberals were determined to deal with land issues more effectively. During the 1890 election they had repeatedly referred to 'bursting up the great estates'; achieving a more equitable pattern of landholding among Europeans became a major policy through to the First World War. Under Ballance and the Minister of Lands, John McKenzie, a graduated land tax was imposed, the Land Act of 1892 introduced a variety of leases on Crown land, and under the Lands for Settlement Act 1.3 million acres previously held in large estates were bought by the government. McKenzie also resumed purchase of Maori land in the North Island, the government buying 3.1 million acres between 1891 and 1911.

The problems of labour were tackled by William Pember Reeves, first Minister of Labour, whose legislation governed working conditions in factories and shops and, most significantly, set up a system of industrial conciliation and arbitration. Reeves aimed to harmonize labour and capital by empowering the labour movement whose weakness had been demonstrated in the 1890 maritime strike. Industrial conciliation and arbitration were initially effective, expanding a union movement of about 20,000 members in 1889–90, but which had plummeted

after the strike, to about 50,000 by 1908. The conciliation and arbitration framework also contained strike action until 1908 when miners, waterside workers, and seamen moved outside its constraints to form the Federation of Labour. Industrial conflict returned to the country.

Democracy made further advances. In 1893, after an eight-year campaign directed by Kate Sheppard, the suffrage superintendent of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, women's suffrage easily passed the House of Representatives but was expected to be lost in the Legislative Council. The majority of two in favour of the bill was something of a surprise to the government, led, since the recent death of Ballance, by Richard Seddon. It meant that both men and women were to vote in the forthcoming election, a prospect Seddon, needlessly as it turned out, feared. The legislation enfranchised Maori and European women on the same basis as men of their own race. The suffragists had argued from the enlightenment view that a just society could not deny the vote on the grounds of sex and from the reform tradition that women's suffrage would bring political and social progress. Women were not given the right to enter Parliament (this came in 1919), but, on the grounds that women's status was an indicator of social progress, women's suffrage played a powerful role in the construction of the country as a progressive and civilized nation. The actual changes were less obvious: some social legislation and an increase in the political power of women's organizations, rather than a major shift in gender relations.

Whereas before 1891 politics had been largely parliamentary, political leaders stitching together coalitions of regional factions, interest groups, and individuals whose fads and ambitions could be indulged, the Liberals created a modern political party, linked to the electorate and with a cohesive organization. The Opposition, which did not even take a party name until it became Reform in 1911, was almost annihilated. This undoubtedly helped the Liberals remain in power, but their legislation attracted the most attention. In addition to the measures already mentioned, they introduced old-age pensions in 1898 and enacted legislation for child protection and equal divorce. Politicians prided themselves on having outstripped the Old World in their reforming zeal, a feeling reinforced by the enthusiastic verdicts of 'progressive' overseas visitors.

The Liberal period consolidated several trends in New Zealand development. It was a period when many implicit and explicit decisions about the future were made. A growing conviction about the country's uniqueness meant that it did not join the Australian colonies when they federated in 1901. The maturing of a native-born generation led to self-conscious attempts to express a new identity in Native Associations, nationalistic literary journals, and through competition in sport. Few seemed to see this nationalism as in any way contradictory to a continued dependence on British markets and British naval forces or an eager involvement in

the South African (Anglo-Boer) War. If asked, most settlers would have seen their exports as helping Britain rather than as creating a dependency. Protection was regarded as a right, although from the Russian scares of the late 1870s and the Australasian Naval Agreement of 1887, New Zealand had contributed to its defence. Nor was the notion of a distinct New Zealand people seen as contradicting support for Imperial federation, which was perceived as a way of New Zealand influencing foreign policy not at all at odds with the emergence of a nation state at home. A strident Imperialism and the presentation of New Zealand as a social laboratory for the new century were both attempts by a settler society to convince themselves and others that they had secured a home and an identity yet remained part of an important global community. Dissenting voices, among Maori who were still resistant to the process of assimilation, the labour movement, and to a lesser degree among women, were as yet low murmurs, heard but rarely listened to.

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26

Southern Africa, 1795–1910

CHRISTOPHER SAUNDERS AND IAIN R. SMITH

During the course of the nineteenth century the growing British presence pro-
foundly shaped South Africa. At the beginning of the century there was no
certainty that British rule would continue; by 1900 all of modern South Africa
had come under British rule, and British influence had spread far beyond the
borders of what, in 1910, became the Union of South Africa. But the extension of
British power and influence in the region, although pervasive, was not straightfor-
ward. It occurred on many different levels and by no means only as a result of the
decisions of policy-makers in London.

Seizing the Cape from the Dutch in 1795, for strategic reasons during the French
Revolutionary wars, Britain acquired a vast new possession in which a Dutch-
Afrikaans-speaking white minority, of some 20,000, dominated a much larger
black population, made up of over 25,000 slaves, 15,000 Khoikhoi, and in the
extreme east, a few thousand Bantu-speaking Africans, part of an African popula-
tion beyond the colony many times larger than the entire colonial population.[1]
The processes of colonization and dispossession, which by 1795 had been under
way for a century and a half and had decimated the Khoikhoi, were continued and
intensified when British rule replaced that of the Dutch East India Company. For
Britain not only established a strong military and naval presence on the Cape
Peninsula, as the pivot of its South African interests; it also became involved in
keeping the peace on the colony's porous and expanding frontiers of white
settlement far inland. The struggle between white settlers and African populations
for control of the limited well-watered land was marked by recurrent warfare, in
which British troops repeatedly intervened to play a crucial role in supporting
settlers who were unable on their own to displace African farmers. In the east,
British forces helped to clear Ndlambe's Xhosa people from the Zuurveld, west of
the Fish River, as early as 1811–12.[2] Throughout the nineteenth century the frontier

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[1] Cf. Richard Elphick and Hermann Giliomee, eds., *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652–1820*
(Cape Town, 1979), p. 360, Table 10.1.

[2] Ben Maclennan, *A Proper Degree of Terror: John Graham and the Cape's Eastern Frontier* (Johan-
nesburg, 1986); Noel Mostert, *Frontiers: The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa*

of white settlement expanded rapidly and forcefully into the South African hinterland, as the settler population grew and African societies were conquered or incorporated and their land expropriated. Within a few years of the arrival of British rule at the Cape, British missionaries, traders, and travellers were also to be found far beyond, as well as within, the colonial borders. Their presence often paved the way for the future extension of those borders, sometimes decades later.[3]

Only gradually did the full impact of the British presence make itself felt, although the relative efficiency of British administration soon made it more intrusive than Dutch East India Company rule had ever been. The new British rulers began by making few changes to the system of government at the Cape, and used Dutch-Afrikaans collaborators, some of whom gradually became Anglicized. For two decades there was doubt whether Britain would retain the Cape when the Napoleonic Wars in Europe came to an end. In 1803 the Cape was returned to the Dutch, and therefore had to be captured again in 1806, when war resumed in Europe. Finally, however, as a result of the peace settlement in Europe (1814–15), it was decided that the Cape Colony would remain in British hands. Thus, it was not until 1820 that large-scale British settlement began. In that year almost 5,000 British immigrants were settled in the eastern Cape, on land from which the Xhosa had been ejected, to help stabilize and defend that frontier. Immigration from Britain to South Africa during the first half of the nineteenth century lagged behind that to other parts of the Empire, however, and English-speaking whites at the Cape continued to be outnumbered by those who spoke Dutch or Afrikaans.[4] Various attempts were made at mid-century and after to establish a separate, English-dominated, Eastern Cape colony, but they failed, largely because such a colony would not have been able to defend itself in the continuing wars for control of the land with dense African populations along the colonial frontier.[5]

Having decided to retain the Cape, the British began to shape the colony to their own designs. The autocratic rule of Governor Lord Charles Somerset (1814–26) and the arrival of the 1820 settlers intensified that process, which was also assisted

People (London, 1992); Clifton C. Crais, *The Making of the Colonial Order: White Supremacy and Black Resistance in the Eastern Cape* (Cambridge, 1992).

[3] In the Tswana case, the first British expedition from the Cape arrived in 1801, missionaries of the London Missionary Society followed a decade later, but British rule was not extended, in part thanks to missionary pressure, until 1885. The role of the missionaries has been well covered, e.g. in Jane Sales, *Mission Stations and the Coloured Communities of the Eastern Cape* (Cape Town, 1975); the work of the traders has been little explored, but cf. R. Beck, 'The Legalisation and Development of Trade on the Cape Frontier, 1817–1830', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana 1987.

[4] In 1891 some 35% of whites in the Cape colony were of British origin. Of those, between 25% and 30% lived on the Cape Peninsula: A. Keppel-Jones, *South Africa: A Short History*, 3rd edn. (London, 1963), p. 85. On emigration figures from Britain see p. 47, Table 2.5.

[5] Basil A. le Cordeur, *The Politics of Eastern Cape Separatism, 1820–1854* (Cape Town, 1981).

by the presence of activist missionaries, most notably John Philip of the London Missionary Society. From the mid-1820s the colonial order, inherited from the Dutch East India Company, began to be reshaped in fundamental ways. Reforms in the system of administration, and in social and economic policy, were introduced in part for humanitarian reasons, but also to promote economic development. These reforms both gave the colony an increasingly British character and began to transform what had been essentially a slave-based, white settler society into one in which wage labour was increasingly important.[6] There was never any large-scale plantation slavery at the Cape and the total slave population was small compared to that of, say, Jamaica. During the eighteenth century most white-owned farms had had some slaves, but most had only a handful. In the rural areas, the indigenous Khoikhoi had become part of an underclass of labour, alongside the slaves, as land was appropriated by white farmers. Between 1806 and 1834 the institution of slavery was eroded as the size of the free labour force grew and the Cape became integrated into the world-wide trading system of the British Empire.

Formal discrimination against the Khoikhoi and 'other free persons of colour' was removed by Ordinance 50 of 1828, and in 1834 the slaves at the Cape, along with those elsewhere in the Empire, gained their freedom, but no great change in their socio-economic status.[7] In South Africa the abolition of slavery was thus directly linked to the expansion of British colonial rule and to the more effective and intrusive nature of the government which came with the British takeover. In this case, emancipation stabilized rather than disrupted the rural economy and resulted in some increase in economic production.

From the beginning the British experienced difficulties in ruling so large and complex a colony. Most Cape Dutch-Afrikaners disliked British rule, though only a minority disliked it enough to resist it actively, as at Slagtersnek in the eastern Cape in 1815. Throughout the nineteenth century, however, British immigrants did not assimilate into the Afrikaner population, as earlier French Huguenot and German arrivals had done. They came mostly from urban backgrounds in Britain and, in South Africa, they soon settled in the towns, many of which soon became predominantly English-speaking. They looked to Britain as their mother country and were proud to be part of the British Empire. Cape Dutch-Afrikaners, meanwhile, were descendants of an earlier pattern of emigration from Europe and were mostly farmers. There was little social mixing or intermarriage between

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[6] Cf. esp. J. B. Peires, 'The British and the Cape, 1814–1834', in Elphick and Giliomee, eds., *The Shaping of South African Society*, 2nd edn. (Middletown, Conn., 1989), pp. 472–511.

[7] Nigel Worden and Clifton C. Crais, eds., *Breaking the Chains: Slavery and its Legacy in the Nineteenth-Century Cape Colony* (Johannesburg, 1994). As elsewhere, the ex-slaves had to serve a four-year period of 'apprenticeship'.

Legend (inset, top left):
- Settlement up to 1804
- Expansion of white settlement, 1804–24
- Cape Eastern frontier 1848
- Trekkers' main lines of advance 1830s and 1840s

Inset labels: Limpopo R., Schoemansdal, Pietersburg, Ohrigstad, Lourenco Marques, Vaal R., Harrismith, Orange R., Lourenco Marques, Ramah, Bethulie, Great Harrel, Thlilo, Durban, Indian Ocean, Cape Town, Uitenhage, Port Elizabeth, East London

miles 200
km 200

Main map labels: SOUTHERN RHODESIA, Shona, Salisbury, Zambezi R., Ndebele, Bulawayo, BECHUANALAND PROTECTORATE, Limpopo R., PORTUGUESE EAST AFRICA, KALAHARI DESERT, Venda, SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC (Transvaal), Pedi, SOUTH-WEST AFRICA, Tswana, Mafeking, Pretoria, Delagoa Bay, Molopo R., Johannesburg, SWAZILAND, Vaal R., ORANGE, Griqualand WEST, Griqua, Kimberley, Bloemfontein, FREE, Zululand, NATAL, Orange R., Basutoland, STATE, Durban, CAPE COLONY, Mpondo, Thembu, Indian Ocean, Cape Town, Xhosa, East London, Port Elizabeth

Legend (bottom left):
- Boer republics
- ······ Boundaries
- ⊢⊢⊢ Railways

0 miles 300
0 km 300

M A P 26.1. The Expansion of British Control in Southern Africa

the two groups, outside Cape Town and a few other towns. The European population in South Africa thus became ethnically divided between Afrikaner and British during the nineteenth century, as happened between French and British in Canada. But whereas in Canada the British settlers soon outnumbered the French, in South Africa the Dutch-Afrikaners always predominated. By the end of the nineteenth century the Dutch-Afrikaner population in the Cape Colony still outnumbered the British by about three to two.

The Expansion of European Settlement

In response to the reforms of the 1820s and 1830s, some 15,000 Afrikaners, mostly from the frontier districts of the eastern Cape, trekked inland away from British rule and in search of new land between 1834 and 1840, on what became known as the Great Trek.[8] Individual pastoral farmers (*trekboers*) had long formed a continuously moving frontier of white settlement into the interior, where they retained no more than a vague allegiance to the Cape Colony. Now, with the mass migration of the Great Trek, the *voortrekkers* sought to break with Britain altogether and to establish their own republics. While there were those in London who wished to wash their hands of these 'emigrants', British governments found it difficult to do so. They acknowledged that instability and warfare in the interior, resulting from the seizure of African land and livestock by the *voortrekkers*, was likely to have repercussions on the Cape Colony itself.

It was with extreme reluctance, however, that British governments followed the Boer trekkers into the interior; and British rule was advanced there only by fits and starts. Imperial Proconsuls, the men on the spot, were often keener to extend British rule in South Africa than were their governments in London; but they did not always get their way. In May 1835, in the course of yet another frontier war, Governor Benjamin D'Urban annexed, as Queen Adelaide Province, the land beyond the existing colonial boundary, between the Fish and the Kei Rivers, the home of the Western Xhosa. When news of this reached London he was instructed to give up the territory: for both humanitarian and financial reasons, the British government did not welcome ruling large numbers of Xhosa. It feared that the area might have to be pacified and held by force.[9]

In 1847 D'Urban's successor, the swashbuckling Sir Harry Smith, used the new powers given him under the vaguely worded High Commission, to act again

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[8] It was known at the time as the 'emigration' of the frontier farmers. The classic account, not entirely superseded to this day, is Eric Walker, *The Great Trek* (London, 1934). Cf. Timothy Keegan, *Colonial South Africa and the Origins of the Racial Order* (Cape Town, 1996), esp. chap. 6.

[9] John S. Galbraith, *Reluctant Empire; British Policy on the South African Frontier, 1834–54* (Berkeley, 1963), pp. 128–54.

without prior approval from London.[10] In the aftermath of the War of the Axe, another expensive frontier war brought on largely by land-hungry settlers in the eastern Cape, he annexed more land and then succeeded in persuading the government in London that this would help to prevent future wars.[11] By the end of 1850, however, Britain was more deeply involved in war with the Xhosa than ever. When Sir George Grey, Governor and High Commissioner from 1854, wished, in the aftermath of the mass cattle-killing by the Xhosa (1857), to annex more territory, he was strictly forbidden to do so.

Meanwhile, Sir Harry Smith had also acted to extend British rule northwards, from the Orange to the Vaal rivers, through the establishment of the short-lived Orange River Sovereignty (1848–54). Here again, the British government ordered a retreat. By the Sand River (1852) and Bloemfontein (1854) Conventions, Britain recognized the independence of the *voortrekkers* north of the Vaal and Orange rivers respectively, and new Boer republics—the South African Republic (Transvaal) and the Orange Free State—were established beyond British rule. Until the 1880s Britain was the only European power with an interest in the region, and British paramountcy over it did not seem to require the extension of formal British rule in the interior, with all its accompanying costs and liabilities, especially if Britain controlled the coasts.

In 1843 Britain had acquired a second coastal colony in Natal. This had come into being as a short-lived Boer republic, and was annexed by Britain in order to secure Port Natal (Durban) and the coast for British interests and stabilize the area south of the Zulu kingdom. Its previous Boer settlers then moved on, into the Boer republics, and a further 5,000 British immigrants arrived in Natal in the late 1840s and early 1850s to form a new, 'very English' settler élite which dominated a very much larger African population. As in the case of the eastern Cape, their settlement on the land was not a success, and most soon moved into Pietermaritzburg and other urban centres, where they engaged in trade. When a system of representative government was inaugurated in Natal in 1856, the colonists there arranged that it would, in fact, be confined to whites; and the British government failed to block this. Although responsible government was not granted until 1893, the Natal colonists exercised an effective control over their own affairs long before that. Until the end of the 1870s, however, they remained dependent on the British for defence, especially against their powerful northern neighbours, the Zulu.[12]

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[10] John Benyon, *Proconsul and Paramountcy in South Africa: The High Commission, British Supremacy and the Sub-Continent, 1806–1910* (Pietermaritzburg, 1980); A. Harrington, *Sir Harry Smith: Bungling Hero* (Cape Town, 1980).

[11] Basil le Cordeur and C. C. Saunders, eds., *The War of the Axe, 1847* (Johannesburg, 1981).

[12] A. Duminy and W. Guest, eds., *Natal and Zululand: From Earliest Times to 1910: A New History* (Pietermaritzburg, 1989).

The area of South Africa under European settlement and control doubled between the mid-1830s and the mid-1850s. This greatly expanded territory was now divided between two Afrikaner republics in the interior and two British colonies dominating the coasts. Direct or indirect British influence usually preceded the extension of formal British rule, and continued even when it was removed. The land-locked Boer republics remained dependent on ports in Natal and the Cape Colony and were linked to the British colonies by trade and a network of cultural ties. As elsewhere in those parts of the British Empire where British immigrants had settled, the extension of British rule was accompanied by the practice of devolving administrative responsibilities on to local agents and by the aspiration to unite as much of the region as possible. Ironically, attempts to bring about unification in South Africa would lead British governments into increased involvement in the interior in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. At mid-century, however, the concern to limit formal responsibilities won the day, although British power was exercised repeatedly beyond the formal boundaries of its colonies in South Africa. By the time the British army left the Cape frontier in 1878, it had played a decisive role in defeating both major groups of Xhosa, west and east of the Kei River.[13] The following year it was to play an equally decisive role in Natal in defeating the Zulu.

Within the Cape Colony, liberal ideas introduced from England found a small local constituency among key officials, and it was with such local support that Britain granted a non-racial parliamentary franchise, with a relatively low qualification, in 1853. By the late 1860s the Secretary of State for the Colonies was keen that the Cape become fully self-governing, and take over its own internal defence, but High Commissioner Philip Wodehouse thought responsible government was premature for so relatively poor a colony. By 1872 the new prosperity brought by the expansion of agricultural production and the discovery of diamonds encouraged the British to grant, and the Cape colonists to accept, responsible government. This meant that here too the British government had in effect conceded to the colony's white minority the right to rule as it wished.

Britain's reluctance to acquire new responsibilities in southern Africa was again thwarted in 1868. To prevent the Boers of the Orange Free State absorbing all Moshoeshoe's territory and pushing thousands of Sotho over the Drakensberg on to the Cape frontier, Wodehouse claimed that it was necessary for him to annex Moshoeshoe's largely mountainous kingdom. Moshoeshoe himself was eager to bring his territory and his people under the protection of the British.[14] Once again

[13] Christopher Saunders, 'The Annexation of the Transkeian Territories', *Archives Yearbook for South African History, 1976* (Pretoria, 1978).

[14] Leonard Thompson, *Survival in Two Worlds: Moshoeshoe of Lesotho, 1786–1870* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 297, 301.

the British government was persuaded that British annexation of this territory, which came to be called Basutoland, was but a prelude to its incorporation within an enlarged Cape Colony. When the boundaries of the new acquisition were demarcated in 1869, the map showed that British rule now linked the Cape and Natal, which suggested that the territory between the Drakensberg and the sea, which remained under independent African rule, would in time likewise be brought under British rule and be included in one or other British colony, as Basutoland was in the Cape in 1871. The only possible port on that coast, St John's, was annexed for Britain in 1878, in the aftermath of the last frontier war, but the rest of the Transkeian territories were left for the Cape Colony to take over when it wished to do so. Not all Cape colonists welcomed the prospect of ruling the Transkei's large African population, however, and there was always the risk that the establishment of colonial control would mean further warfare, which the Cape forces would now have to handle on their own. The process of Cape expansion and annexation in this area, therefore, took until 1894 to be completed.[15]

Strategic considerations, concerning the coastal littoral of South Africa, remained of major importance to British governments throughout the nineteenth century, for the Cape sea-route retained its significance long after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. The British navy ruled the South African waters, and Britain dominated the external trade of the region in which wool was, until the 1870s, the main export commodity (Fig. 26.1). But compared with the other 'white dominions', South Africa's economic prospects seemed poor and it therefore failed to attract many British immigrants. With the discovery of first diamonds and then gold, South Africa's prospects were to change dramatically, so too would its importance in the minds of those who shaped Imperial policy.

Diamonds and the Failed Attempt at Confederation

Diamonds were found near the confluence of the Orange and Vaal Rivers in 1867. Once it realized the scale of the discovery, the British government was concerned to take over the area in the interests of stability and control. Outmanœuvring the Orange Free State, which also claimed the land, Britain stepped in and annexed Griqualand West (1871).

In the nine years before the Cape agreed to take over this territory, the economy of much of the region was transformed. Almost 25,000 new immigrants, most of them British, arrived from Europe between 1873 and 1883. Tens of thousands of migrant labourers travelled to Kimberley over great distances from the north and east. White and black farmers responded to the demand for increased food

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[15] Saunders, 'The Annexation of the Transkeian Terrikories', *passim*.
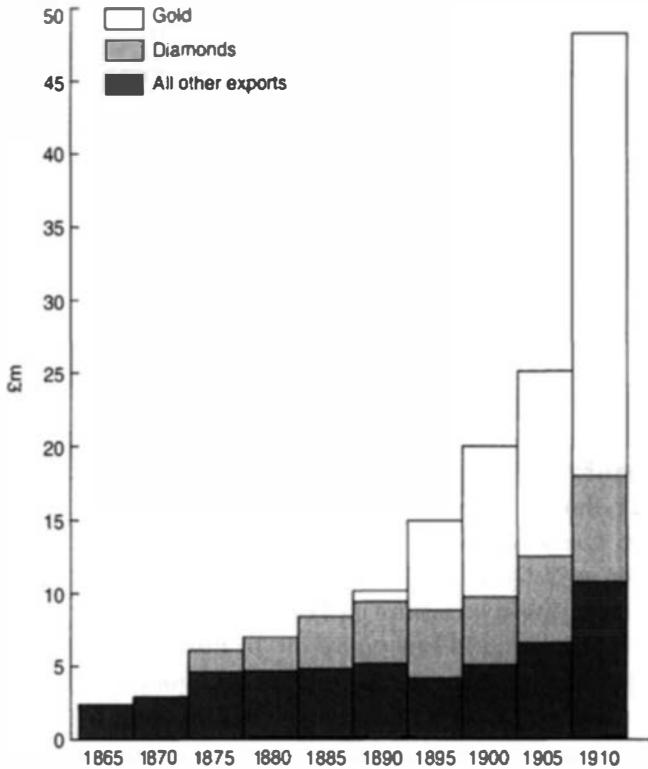
FIGURE 26.1 Exports of South African produce, 1861–1910 (average for five-year period)

Source: Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson, eds., The *Oxford History of South Africa* (Oxford, 1971), II, p. 18.

production by developing a more commercial agriculture. Imports through Cape Town more than doubled between 1871 and 1875. By 1886 the Cape had spent £14m on the construction of 1,000 miles of railways between its main coastal ports and the interior. Donald Currie's Castle Line joined the older Union Line in 1872 to provide a weekly steamship service from the Cape to England, and telegraph communication was established in 1880.

In the early 1870s the Cape was the largest, richest, and most populous settler state in Southern Africa, with 237,000 whites (more than twice the number in the three other states together) and half a million blacks. The British government looked to the Cape to take the lead in initiating a movement towards uniting South Africa into a British Dominion able to rule and defend itself, on the Canadian model. A unified economy and communications system would encourage foreign investment and development, facilitate the flow of African labour to

where it was most needed, and help to dissolve local conflicts of interest. A united South Africa would strengthen Britain's position in the world.

Federation had been proposed before, but Lord Carnarvon, Secretary of State from 1874, was more forceful than his Liberal predecessor, Lord Kimberley, and impatient to achieve in South Africa a confederation similar to the one he had inaugurated in Canada, through direct Imperial action if necessary. When his attempts to organize a conference of South African delegates to discuss a federation were rebuffed, he resolved to bring the Transvaal within the Empire. In Fiji, Malaya, and the Gold Coast of West Africa Britain had intervened to settle local crises in internal government and external relations; in South Africa, British intervention was primarily to further a federal cause.

After the rival claims of Britain and Portugal to the east-coast port at Delagoa Bay (Maputo) were settled in favour of Portugal in 1875, the Transvaal's dream of access to a nearby port outside British control suddenly became a reality. Whilst President T. F. Burgers attempted to raise money for the building of a railway to Delagoa Bay, Carnarvon sent Sir Theophilus Shepstone, a long-time Native Administrator in Natal, to the Transvaal. He found the government there in disarray. An inconclusive war against the Pedi, who retained *de facto* independence in the eastern Transvaal, had bankrupted the Treasury and the government had lost the support of many of the 30,000 burghers. Shepstone played upon their fear of the Zulu, claimed that the Transvaal would not survive as a state without the assistance of the British government, and annexed the country by Proclamation on 12 April 1877.

By then Carnarvon had appointed Sir Bartle Frere as High Commissioner at the Cape. A determined imperialist, who viewed South Africa narrowly in terms of what he conceived to be the interests of the British Empire, Frere sought quick results. Convinced that the power of the Zulu had to be broken, he demanded the disbandment of the Zulu army and then launched the British army, fresh from its success over the Xhosa, into an invasion of Zululand (January 1879). The result was the opposite of what he intended, for the destruction of a British regiment at Isandhlwana ruled out an early confederation. With the despatch of new forces, the British defeated the Zulu at Ulundi and divided Zululand into thirteen separate chiefdoms, and the British army then turned on the Pedi, who were also defeated (1879). Secured for the present from African threats, through the intervention of British troops, the Transvaal Boers were able to take up arms to regain their independence from Britain.

The series of African defeats in the late 1870s may not have brought confederation nearer, but they did mark the end of effective African resistance to the imposition of European rule throughout South Africa. Although many African polities remained independent for a while longer, British troops had

ensured that European supremacy in the region was firmly established in the region as a whole.

The Transvaal War (1880–81) and the German Challenge

In the last twenty years of the century conflict between the British and the Boers for supremacy grew in intensity. Far from advancing the cause of federation, the British annexation of the Transvaal provoked an anti-Imperial reaction which helped to destroy it. The British administration established in the Transvaal was tactless, authoritarian, and inadequately funded. Opposition to it was led by the Boer leader Paul Kruger, whose determination to recover and then maintain the independence of his country was the dominating purpose of his life. When he visited London—first to demand a plebiscite and then to deliver petitions which showed that a large majority of Transvaalers opposed the British annexation—he was told that the Transvaal could be self-governing, but only under the sovereignty of the Queen and as part of a South African confederation.

Open rebellion against British rule was postponed pending the result of the British general election in 1880, for in his Midlothian speeches Gladstone had denounced Disraeli's South African policy as contrary to the wishes of the people concerned and the product of a Conservative Party 'drunk with imperialism'. Once in office, however, Gladstone sought to achieve the South African confederation that had eluded Disraeli; and Kimberley, his Secretary of State for the Colonies, was eager to succeed where he had failed previously. Despite warnings from President Brand of the Orange Free State of the growing likelihood of a Transvaal rebellion, and the defeat of a motion proposing federation in the Cape Assembly, Gladstone insisted on the retention of British sovereignty over the Transvaal, thereby provoking the *coup de grâce* to the project of federation. By December 1880 a British Cabinet preoccupied with the Irish question found itself facing a Boer revolt against British rule in the Transvaal.

Having blundered into a war in the Transvaal, Gladstone's government sought to extricate itself through negotiations brokered by Brand, Sir Henry de Villiers (Chief Justice of the Cape Colony), and Sir Hercules Robinson (who had replaced Frere as British High Commissioner in South Africa). Kimberley told the House of Lords that he feared that Britain was in danger of creating another Irish Question in the Transvaal, and of uniting Afrikaners throughout South Africa against Britain. Peace negotiations were already under way when the self-willed Sir George Colley, acting against the spirit of his instructions, made a series of military blunders which culminated in a British defeat at Majuba Hill (27 February 1881). Like the failure to relieve Gordon at Khartoum, this battle came to be regarded as a blot upon the British Imperial record, which Conservatives pointed to as an

example of Liberal mismanagement. 'Remember Majuba' was to be the rallying cry when British soldiers again went into action against the Transvaal Boers in 1899. Yet, this humiliating defeat did not deflect Gladstone's government from the negotiated peace on which it was already set. An armistice was declared and peace was agreed by the Convention of Pretoria (March 1881).

This 'second yielding' by the British to Boer separatism was more limited than that of the 1850s, for now the Transvaal was given self-government under British suzerainty with continued British rights of over-rule in specific areas, which included foreign relations and the conduct of 'native affairs'. After his election to the first of four successive terms of office as President, Kruger returned to London and there persuaded Gladstone's government to replace the Pretoria Convention with the London Convention (1884). This restored the name of the South African Republic to the Transvaal, reduced the debt, removed the assertion of British suzerainty, retained British control over foreign relations, and allowed any future expansion of the state only to the north. This Convention was an attempt by the British government to return to a policy of minimal control over what was still a poor, land-locked, and ramshackle republic. It was also a conciliatory move by a British government preoccupied with Egypt, the Sudan, and Ireland, and deter-mined to limit its liabilities in an area of the South African interior of no obvious interest to Britain, at a time when Britain was the only Great Power on the South African scene.

The weakening of the British hold over the Transvaal did not mean that Britain had withdrawn from asserting her paramountcy over South Africa as a whole, or was less concerned to keep other Great Powers out. In 1884, mainly for domestic reasons, Bismarck challenged the 'sort of Munro [sic] doctrine' which Britain had assumed over South Africa.[16] Bismarck's sudden annexation of the coast from the Orange River to the border with Angola as a German protectorate in August 1884 struck at Britain's complacent supremacy, and aroused fears that it might be followed by German claims to areas of the east coast which might give the Transvaal a route to the sea. Further British annexations, including that of Zulu-land in 1887, were made to prevent that happening. Bechuanaland, which had previously been dismissed as worthless, suddenly took on a new importance as the wedge of territory between German South West Africa and the Transvaal Republic. In January 1885 Sir Charles Warren was despatched with a strong force to establish British control over the region. The area south of the Molopo River was eventually incorporated within the Cape Colony in 1895; the area to the north became a High Commission Territory (Bechuanaland), like Basutoland, which had reverted to

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[16] J. Butler, 'The German Factor in Anglo-Transvaal Relations', in Prosser Gifford and Wm. Roger Louis, eds., *Britain and Germany in Africa: Imperial Policy and Colonial Rule* (New Haven, 1967), p. 185.

direct Imperial control in 1884, after the Cape had been unable to suppress a Sotho rebellion there without calling for Imperial assistance.

While the German factor remained important in British considerations to the end of the century, British fears that Germany might exploit her position to become a potential patron of the Transvaal Republic were exaggerated. Considerable German capital was invested in the Transvaal, the concession to develop its railways was granted to a German-Dutch syndicate, and the Kaiser sent a provocative telegram at the time of the Jameson Raid; but although Kruger played the German 'card' from time to time, he had no intention of putting his burghers under German colonial rule. Britain made it clear to the German government that she would not tolerate a German challenge to her supremacy in an area of the world which she regarded as a British sphere of influence. Germany accepted this and, in August 1898, an Anglo-German Agreement was signed by which Germany effectively left to Britain the whole of South Africa.

The Impact of Gold-Mining

The discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886 dwarfed earlier gold finds in the Transvaal, and by 1898 the Transvaal was the largest single producer of gold in the world, accounting for 27 per cent of total production; by 1914 this had risen to 40 per cent. The development of the Witwatersrand gold-fields was one of the most dramatic examples of late-nineteenth-century capitalist enterprise. Much more capital was invested—£75m by 1899, £125m by 1914—and the technical challenges were greater than had been the case with the gold-mines of Australia or the United States. With the additional discovery of large deposits of coal in the Transvaal and Natal, a 'mineral revolution' occurred which transformed relations between the various South African states and led to the development of by far the most industrialized economy on the African continent. South Africa took on a far greater importance in the eyes of the world as its gold supplies contributed to the underpinning of currencies and international trade during the heyday of the Gold Standard.

Gold-mining depended upon huge numbers of African workers, who came from many different parts of southern Africa, though during the 1890s nearly half of them came from Mozambique. By 1899 the total number of African mine-workers on the Rand had reached 100,000. A large influx of European immigrants (Uitlanders), many of them British, were also attracted to the Rand, which acted as the new magnet for immigrants to South Africa. The total Afrikaner population of the Transvaal still outnumbered the Uitlanders by 1899, though there may have been more Uitlander than Afrikaner male adults. The Uitlanders were no monolithic group but a motley collection of individuals of diverse nationalities, divided

by class. Most were birds of passage, drawn to the Transvaal for a few years to make money before returning home, and few were eager to renounce their existing citizenship and take on that of the South African Republic. Most of them lived in and around Johannesburg which, as one of them put it, 'although a town in a foreign state, was enthusiastically British in its sentiments'.[17]

The cultural gap separating the materialistic Uitlanders from the poor, rural, God-fearing Boer population of the Transvaal was immense. Whilst many burghers regarded the Rand as a Sodom and Gomorrah in their midst, Kruger recognized the gold-mining industry as both an asset, able to rescue the Transvaal from its chronic poverty, and a liability, for the sudden influx of so many Uitlanders might threaten not only the Boer way of life but also the political basis of the state. Steps were soon taken to extend the period of residence required for naturalization and eligibility for the franchise from the two years required in 1881; by 1890 it was fixed at fourteen years. The Uitlanders complained about their exclusion from political power, the cost of living, the high rates of taxation, the poor provision of schools, and the inefficiency and corruption of the Transvaal administration. But until 1896 the British government deliberately avoided being drawn into supporting their grievances or those of a mining industry preoccupied with reducing its costs. The mine-owners were particularly critical of the Transvaal government's policy of granting concessions or monopolies in key areas such as dynamite, alcohol, and the railways.

Rhodes, Rhodesia, and the Raid

For a decade Cecil Rhodes played a crucial role in extending British influence in southern Africa. He had long seen immense possibilities in the north, where the acquisition of new territory for Britain might open up a second Rand, provide land for white settlement, and hem in Kruger's Transvaal. Prepared to use the vast wealth he had accumulated on the diamond fields for political ends, Rhodes was eager to promote British interests as local agent of the Crown. In this he had the support of successive British governments and of the Afrikaner Bond which, under Jan Hofmeyr, was able to make or break Cape governments through the giving or withholding of its support. Though sympathetic to the Afrikaners in the interior, the Bond remained loyal to Britain and, with its support, Rhodes became Prime Minister of the Cape Colony in 1890.

Rhodes's drive to open up and establish European settlement north of the Limpopo River was premised on the hope, shared by the British government, that the area which became Southern Rhodesia would join the other white-ruled

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[17] Maryna Fraser, ed., *Johannesburg Pioneer Journals, 1888–1909* (Cape Town, 1985), p. 58.

states in a united South Africa and ensure a British predominance over the two Boer republics. Rhodes's British South Africa Company (BSAC) was, however, granted a royal charter in 1889 to secure for British and Cape interests not only the area north of the Limpopo, but that north of the Zambezi as well. In 1890–91 a series of conventions demarcated British from German and Portuguese territory in Central Africa.[18] Because of opposition to the BSAC by both missionaries and the African Lakes Company, what became known as Nyasaland (later Malawi) became a separate Protectorate in 1891, not under the BSAC, and what became Northern Rhodesia (later Zambia) was only slowly brought under Company control in the 1890s.

The Pioneer Column, which set out in 1890 from the Cape Colony to occupy what was to become Southern Rhodesia (later Zimbabwe) was a risky enterprise, poorly prepared but well armed, expecting to fight its way into the country of the Ndebele and Shona. An invasion force of latter-day conquistadores in search of land and gold, it expropriated land and cattle wholesale from the African population, whose resistance, when it came (by the Ndebele in 1893–94; by both Ndebele and Shona in 1896–97), was put down with great severity. Rhodes's hope that a 'second Rand' would be discovered north of the Limpopo proved ill-founded, and his venture there consumed rather than added to his wealth. By 1894 it was clear that the future of gold-mining lay in the 'deep levels' of the Witwatersrand then coming into operation. The Transvaal was clearly the key to the future of the entire region.

Rhodes was convinced that the future prosperity and development of South Africa required a political federation of self-governing South African states, under British leadership, within the British Empire. As a first step towards this goal he sought a railway and customs union. This would end the rivalry which had developed between the various states (and especially between Natal and the Cape Colony) as railways were built between the coastal ports and the Rand, and a sizeable portion of state revenues came to depend on customs and freight charges. The Cape controlled 85 per cent of the Rand traffic. The Transvaal Boers, now surrounded by British territory, feared that, between the ambitions of Rhodes and the designs of the British government, even the qualified independence of their country under the London Convention was under threat. When the railway to Delagoa Bay was finally opened in 1895, Kruger attempted to challenge the Transvaal's dependence on the Cape line. The result was the Drifts Crisis, in which the British government backed the Cape government and threatened to use force if Kruger did not give way. When he did, British convictions that he would always back down if firmly challenged were reinforced, and Rhodes was

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[18] See below, pp. 639–41.

encouraged to proceed with the reckless gamble which was to ruin his career and set Britain and the Transvaal on a collision course.

In 1894 Sir Henry Loch, the High Commissioner, had proposed that an Uitlander uprising on the Rand might be assisted by an armed British expedition from the railhead at Mafeking. This was at once rejected by the Colonial Office, and Loch was recalled, but Rhodes adapted the idea and thereby secured the connivance of Joseph Chamberlain, the forceful and openly imperialist Secretary of State, who came into office under Lord Salisbury's Conservative government in July 1895. The external armed intervention from the Bechuanaland border would not be by British troops operating from British territory but by border police in the employment of the British South Africa Company, operating from a strip of territory along the border which the British government transferred to the Company for the purpose of extending the railway north from Mafeking to Bulawayo. Towards the end of 1895 it was common knowledge that an Uitlander revolt against Kruger's government was being planned in Johannesburg. But those plans began to fall apart before Jameson entered the Transvaal with his raiders, intent on stimulating a revolt there.

The fiasco of the Raid—for both raiders and Uitlander leaders were quickly arrested and imprisoned—shattered the alliance which Rhodes had constructed with the Afrikaner Bond, and polarized opinion throughout South Africa. Many Afrikaners outside the Transvaal felt a new surge of sympathy towards their kinsfolk within it. Rhodes, who had been at the heart of the conspiracy, was forced to resign as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony and, for a while, as a Director of the BSAC (the majority of whose Directors had been ignorant of what he had been up to). Official enquiries in Cape Town and London cleared Chamberlain and other British officials of any complicity in 'Rhodes's plot'. Rhodes accepted responsibility in return for the preservation of the BSAC's charter.

Kruger acted with skill and forbearance, releasing Jameson and his raiders into British custody, and commuting the sentences imposed on the Uitlander conspirators into fines. But Kruger and the Transvaal burghers never doubted that the British government, and Chamberlain in particular, had been behind the plot to overthrow their independence, and their suspicions were confirmed by the rapid rehabilitation of those who had taken part. From 1896, therefore, Kruger's government expected and began to prepare for further assaults on the independence of the Transvaal from 'British' interests within and without the country. The Uitlanders had demonstrated their disloyalty, so political control of the Transvaal state had to be kept out of their hands. The weakness and vulnerability of the Transvaal's defences had been revealed, and so a massive programme of defence works and arms' importation was undertaken in the next three years. By 1899 Boer commandos were equipped with the latest weapons imported from Europe.
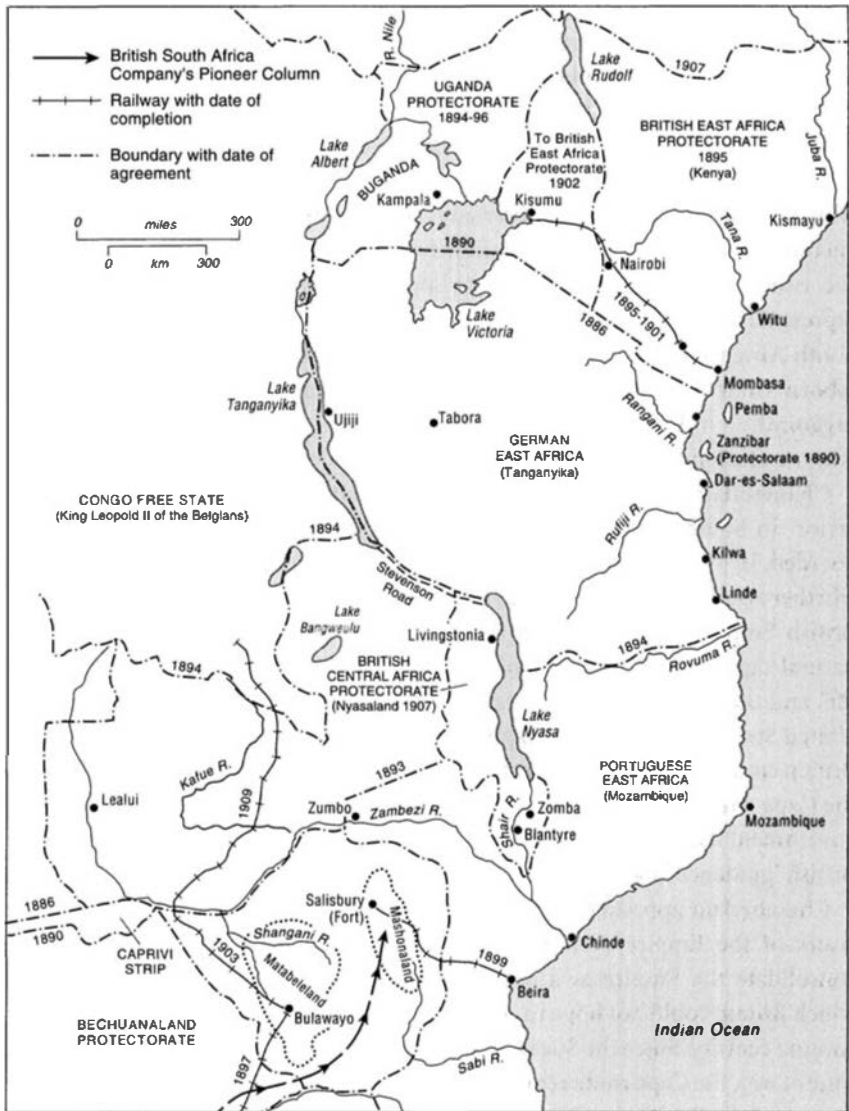
MAP 26.2. The Partition of East and Central Africa

Believing that the Uitlanders outnumbered the Boers in the Transvaal, and produced nine-tenths of its revenue, the British government hoped that their enfranchisement might still enable a peaceful takeover of its government to occur. Kruger was old, and after him a more progressive coalition of forces might come into power and preside over a peaceful transition to a reformed administration and the rectification of Uitlander grievances. This presented the last best means by which the British government could hope to attain its ends without a resort to war; it might also win the support of the British public. From January 1896 Uitlander grievances joined the strict observance of the London Convention as the basis on which the British government asserted its right to intervene in the Transvaal. This encouraged the politically active minority amongst the Uitlanders to unite behind the issue of their grievances and to look to the British government and its representatives in South Africa to press their case for them. During 1896–97 the South African League established itself in the Transvaal as a mouthpiece for the reborn Uitlander political movement. It also became an effective propaganda organization in Britain for educating British public opinion about South African issues and supporting Chamberlain's 'tough' policy towards the Transvaal.

Chamberlain believed that a reassertion of what Rhodes had called 'the imperial factor' in South Africa was necessary if British interests there were to be safeguarded. In March 1896 his right-hand man, Lord Selborne, raised the question of whether South Africa was going to develop into another United States, outside the British Empire, or into another Canada within it. He saw the Transvaal as 'the natural capital state and centre of South African commercial, social and political life', and the danger to be that, under its republican leadership and dominance, a United States of South Africa might emerge outside the Empire.[19] To prevent this, Britain could no longer rely merely upon intermediaries like Rhodes, the loyalty of the Cape Afrikaners, the reliability of Natal, and the passage of time. The British government itself would have to act to ensure that South Africa did not drift out of British 'guidance' and out of the Empire.

Chamberlain approached the problem posed by the Transvaal with the larger issues of the Empire ever in mind. He saw it as his task to strengthen and consolidate the Empire as a network of trade, influence, and defence without which Britain could not hope to compete with Germany or the United States in the coming century. Since the Suez Canal route to the East could not be guaranteed in time of war, the Cape route remained important, and the docking facilities at Cape Town and the British naval base at Simonstown were used more intensively as the century wore on. The wealth of the Transvaal could benefit the whole region.

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[19] Selborne Memorandum, 26 March 1896, quoted in Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher with Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism* (London, 1961), pp. 434–37.

Between 1896 and 1898 the British government was preoccupied elsewhere, but a government which was to commit itself to the military reconquest of the Sudan, and to face down the French at Fashoda (1897–98), was not going to see its supremacy challenged in South Africa without a fight. Chamberlain was determined to unite the region and establish British supremacy there on a firmer basis.

The Road to War

The appointment of Sir Alfred Milner as the new High Commissioner in 1897 strengthened the hand of Chamberlain and brought South Africa into new prominence in Imperial considerations. In Milner, Chamberlain found a single-minded imperialist and able collaborator, who saw South Africa as 'the weakest link in the Imperial chain' which he had to prevent snapping by uniting it under white minority rule and British predominance. The re-election of Kruger as President for a fourth term early in 1898, and the failure of the Transvaal government to act on the reforms recommended by its own Industrial Commission for the mining industry, convinced him that a confrontation with Kruger's government was inevitable and that this would result in either a further capitulation to British demands or a resort to war. Since he thought that a war would be short and an annexation of the Transvaal difficult to achieve otherwise, Milner faced the possibility of a war with equanimity. He therefore sought to 'work up to a crisis' utilizing the Uitlander franchise as the issue which would best unite not only the Uitlanders but also British public opinion behind a British intervention. War would provide the opportunity for the Transvaal to be reconstructed and integrated with the rest of South Africa, under British auspices. This would settle the South African problem once and for all.

The British government, however, did not set out in 1897 to conquer and annex the Transvaal as a British colony. Although Milner argued strongly for the strengthening of the British garrison in South Africa, he was at first told to play a waiting game. The Anglo-German Agreement, and the easing of Britain's situation internationally, encouraged Chamberlain to reassert Britain's claim to suzerainty over the Transvaal and support the mining industry in a challenge to Kruger's government over the dynamite monopoly at the beginning of 1899. The mine-magnates, like the majority of the British Cabinet, believed that Kruger would capitulate rather than fight, but by mid-1899 Kruger was convinced that Uitlander grievances, including the franchise, were not the real issue and that the British government would always find further grounds for a quarrel since it was a take-over of the Transvaal itself which it was after. Belated Colonial Office calculations suggested that, even under a generous provision, a continued Afrikaner predominance in the Transvaal Volksraad was likely. When Kruger and Milner

finally met, at the Bloemfontein Conference in June, Kruger moved some way to meet Milner's demands, but the conference failed. Chamberlain and the British Cabinet continued to believe that Kruger would capitulate at the eleventh hour. They therefore repeatedly refused to agree to the military preparations urged by the War Office, for fear of jeopardizing a peaceful settlement. Having abandoned hope of a peaceful resolution, Kruger's government prepared for war and hurried to declare it in October whilst the combined forces of the republics outnumbered the British forces in South Africa by four to one.

At least half of the £75 million invested in the Rand gold-fields in 1899 was British capital, and two-thirds of South Africa's trade was with Britain, making the region by far the most important area of economic interest for Britain in Africa. Yet Britain did not go to war because of its existing or future economic stake in the Transvaal, which was not thought to be at risk, but because it feared the political consequences of the growing economic power of the Transvaal for the region as a whole. The Transvaal, in turn, was dependent on the City of London, and this dependency extended into that whole network of financial, shipping, insurance, and technical services (including the refining of South African gold) which London was uniquely well equipped to provide. The difficulty encountered by Kruger's government when it attempted to escape the London network only emphasized the Transvaal's economic dependency. By 1899 German capitalists and traders—like their French, Dutch, and American counterparts—supported the reforms which Britain was determined to impose on the Transvaal. For them, Kruger's control of 'the richest spot on earth' was an anomaly, and they assumed that if Britain took it over a strong, free-trading, and effective administration would be established which would create better conditions for the expansion of trade and increased profits on foreign investment, and unite the region into a more effective whole.

So the British government did not go to war in 1899 to protect British trade or the profits of capitalists in the Transvaal. It was not only there that capitalists suffered at the hands of an inefficient and corrupt government. Political control of the Transvaal was not sought in order to control the gold-mines, nor to secure access to the supply of gold which would continue to flow to London, as the bullion and financial capital of the world, and underpin the Gold Standard whether the Transvaal remained a republic or became a British colony. There is no evidence that anxiety about the gold supply to London was ever a major consideration as war approached. The war was expected to be short and its outcome certain. Transvaal gold formed only a small proportion of the low level of gold reserves which was a deliberate feature of Bank of England policy before, during, and after the war—testimony to the still-awesome strength of the British economy and to the fact that sterling operated as an international currency

alongside gold. It was not gold that Britain was after in 1899, but the establishment of British power and influence over the Transvaal on a firmer basis, to advance the unification of the region within the British Empire.[20]

The South African War, 1899–1902

The South African War was the greatest test of British Imperial power since the Indian Mutiny and turned into the most extensive and costly war fought by Britain between the defeat of Napoleon (1815) and the First World War. It cost three times as much as the Crimean War and involved four times as many troops. What the British government expected in 1899 was a short campaign which might involve 75,000 troops, result in—at worst—a few hundred casualties, cost about £10m, and be successfully completed within three to four months. In the event, the war lasted for two years and eight months, cost £230m, involved a total of 450,000 British and Empire troops, and resulted in the deaths of some 22,000 soldiers on the British side, about 34,000 Boer civilians and combatants, and an unknown number of the African population which has been estimated at not less than 14,000. By March 1900 some 200,000 British and Empire troops were involved in a prolonged struggle with Boer commandos who never fielded more than 45,000.

At the outset of the conflict the Boer leaders hoped that, if their forces could advance deep into Natal and the Cape Colony, inflict decisive defeats on the 20,000 or so British troops already in South Africa, and raise a rebellion amongst the Cape Afrikaners against British rule, the British government might choose to negotiate a settlement, as in 1881, rather than despatch a massive expeditionary force—with all the complications this might involve elsewhere in the Empire. But Lord Salisbury's strong government was in no mood to follow in Gladstone's liberal footsteps and was determined that 'the real point to be made good to South Africa is that we, not the Dutch, are Boss'.[21] Despite its belated and inadequate military preparations, once battle was joined the British government became determined on a British victory and the annexation of the republics.

Mahdist, Zulu, Asante, and Afghan wars were no preparation for the sort of war which the British faced in South Africa. The Boers were mobile, resourceful, crack shots, used to life in the saddle, with an intimate knowledge of the country, and equipped with the latest Mauser and Martini-Henry rifles and some heavy artillery imported from Germany. During the first three months of the war they were able to inflict heavy reverses on the British forces, culminating in the Battles of Magersfontein, Stormberg, and Colenso during 'Black Week' in December 1899.

[20] Iain R. Smith, *The Origins of the South African War, 1899–1902* (London, 1996), pp. 404–23.
[21] Selborne to Milner, 27 July 1899, in D. George Boyce, ed., *The Crisis of British Power: The Imperial and Naval Papers of the Second Earl of Selborne, 1895–1900* (London, 1990), p. 92.

The British then developed a military operation of quite new dimensions under the fresh command of Lord Roberts. This British 'steam-roller' then advanced, the sieges of Ladysmith and Kimberley were relieved during February 1900, and after a major Boer defeat at Paardeberg, the way was open for the British occupation of Bloemfontein (13 March). After a serious typhoid epidemic, in which far more British soldiers died than were killed in the whole war, British forces advanced on the Transvaal and occupied Johannesburg (31 May) and Pretoria (5 June). Mafeking was relieved in a separate operation, and by September 1900 both the Orange Free State and the Transvaal had been annexed as colonies of the British Crown.

The war then continued as the first of the twentieth century's anti-colonial guerrilla wars. This involved the British army in a scorched-earth policy, the wholesale destruction of Boer farms and livestock (some 30,000 farms were burnt down), and the incarceration of Boer civilians in 'concentration camps' in which some 28,000 died from epidemics amidst overcrowding and maladministration. Since most of these were women and children, these civilian deaths—which far outnumbered the Boer combatants killed in the war and amounted to about 10 per cent of the Boer population of the two republics—cast a long shadow over Boer–British relations after the war was over. In its guerrilla phase the South African War revealed the difficulty and cost to a great power of bringing such a war to an end despite its possession of an army ten times the size of the commandos it was fighting. Only with the development, after March 1901, of Kitchener's gigantic grid of some 8,000 blockhouses and 3,700 miles of wire fencing, guarded by 50,000 troops, were the Boer forces gradually squeezed into increasingly restricted areas. By the beginning of 1902 the war was costing the British government £1.5m a week. This increased its readiness to contemplate a negotiated peace settlement rather than the 'unconditional surrender' which it had demanded in June 1900.

The South African War was an Imperial war in which thousands of volunteers from Canada, Australia, and New Zealand joined British forces in a common Imperial enterprise to conquer and incorporate two of the then world's smallest states as colonies within the British Empire. Although some Irish and other foreigners joined the Boer commandos—and 'pro-Boers' conducted a vociferous campaign in Britain—the war was initially widely supported in Britain itself and the government was returned with a convincing majority at the 'khaki' election in 1900. From the outset it was decided not to include 'coloured' troops from other parts of the Empire in what was regarded as 'a white man's war'. But both sides to the conflict depended upon the African population. Over 100,000 Africans acted as scouts, spies, patrols, transport drivers, messengers, and labourers on the British side. Lord Kitchener (Commander-in-Chief of the British forces, 1900–02) admitted arming over 10,000 but the total was probably closer to the 30,000

which Lloyd George estimated at the time. At the siege of Mafeking Africans fought on the British side, and they died in large numbers in separate 'concentration' and labour camps established for them by the British. For many Africans in Natal and the Cape Colony the war meant a boom in employment opportunities, with better pay and prices paid for agricultural produce, cattle, horses, and services of all kinds by the huge British army at a time when drought, rinderpest, and the closure of the mines had seriously affected the rural areas. In several parts of South Africa, Africans were armed by the British and encouraged to turn their territories into 'no go areas' against the Boers. In other areas, Africans took advantage of the war to extend the areas under their control—the Kgatla and Pedi were notably successful in taking over Boer land and cattle. Unlike the Boers, the British enjoyed widespread support amongst the African population, many of whom looked to a British victory to result in the extension to other parts of South Africa of the civil and franchise rights already existing in the Cape Colony.

Peace-feelers, extended by Kitchener at Middelburg early in 1901, had been refused but in April 1902, after preliminary discussions at Klerksdorp, the Boers agreed to open peace talks and, with British assistance, an assembly of sixty Boer representatives eventually met at Vereeniging in May. After two weeks of discussions, a peace settlement was signed in Pretoria. By fifty-four votes to six, the Boer representatives agreed to the surrender of the independence of the two republics and recognition of the British Crown in return for the promise of eventual self-government and an undertaking, by Article 8 of the Treaty of Vereeniging, that the question of extending the franchise to Africans in the ex-republics would not be decided until after the reintroduction of self-government there. British undertakings with regard to other matters—including an amnesty and economic settlement—were generous by the standards of the time.

Reconstruction and Unification

Now based in the Transvaal, Milner embarked upon the post-war reconstruction of a devastated country, assisted by a group of young Oxford graduates known as his 'Kindergarten'. Since he had always viewed the South African situation in terms of a struggle for supremacy between two rival imperialisms, Boer versus British, Milner brought to bear on his task a racial imperialism which led him to believe that South Africa would never be 'safe' for Britain and her Empire unless the Boer population was outnumbered by white people of British descent, brought about by extensive immigration and settlement—in the rural areas as well as in the towns. He also looked to the introduction of the English language and an English education system in combination with economic growth and modernization to denationalize the Afrikaners and remove the republican threat.

When he left South Africa in 1905 Milner considered that he had failed. His administration, however, helped to establish the infrastructure for the development of the modern South African state, with an effective administration, a commercial agriculture, and an environment favourable to the development of the gold-mining industry. After a slow start gold-mining developed rapidly, assisted by the introduction of Chinese indentured labourers (1904–07) to rectify the chronic shortage of African labour. Although some British soldiers remained behind after the war, Milner's state-sponsored settlement schemes failed to attract extensive European immigration: most British emigrants preferred to go to the better land and more settled conditions in Canada, the United States, or Australia, and few of those who did go to South Africa settled in rural areas. Afrikaner predominance therefore continued in the Transvaal, and both there and in the Orange Free State Milner's Anglicization policy only served to stimulate a new degree of Afrikaner national consciousness and self-assertion which resulted in an Afrikaner political revival after 1904.

The black élite had expected a British victory in the war to usher in a more liberal age, and were now bitterly disappointed. Given the racism of the dominant white minority in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, the provision in the Treaty of Vereeniging that the question of extending the franchise to blacks there would not be decided until after the reintroduction of self-government in the ex-republics ensured that there would be no such extension. After the war the Boer landlords were encouraged to return to their farms in the ex-republics, and African hopes of land redistribution were dashed. Most blacks now found themselves living under ever harsher rules, more strictly enforced. Even in relatively liberal Cape Town, Africans were forced to live in a location set aside for them in 1901. The 1905 report of the South African Native Affairs Commission, which Milner appointed to set out a 'native policy' for a united South Africa, laid the foundations for the development of South Africa into a racially segregated society during the twentieth century. The basis of this was thus established during the British 'moment' of supreme power in South Africa between 1900 and 1910.[22]

The Liberal Party, which took office in Britain in December 1905, was critical of the way the war had been fought, and soon granted the Transvaal and Orange River Colony not merely representative government, as the preceding Unionist government proposed, but full self-government, only five years after the end of the war. In the elections held in the Transvaal (1907) and Orange River Colony (1908) Afrikaner parties triumphed, and an Afrikaner Bond-led government was returned in the Cape Colony in 1908.

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[22] See Martin Legassick, 'British Hegemony and the Origins of Segregation in South Africa, 1901–14', in William Beinart and Saul Dubow, eds., *Segregation and Apartheid in Twentieth Century South Africa* (London, 1995).

The Liberals had hoped that a pro-British majority might win the Transvaal election, but the result was not disastrous, for the Generals Louis Botha and Jan Smuts now argued for conciliation between English and Afrikaners, supported the development of the mining industry, and believed in unification as 'the only alternative to Downing Street',[23] and the means to achieve the maximum self-determination within the Empire.

In the making of Union there were two thrusts, one Imperial, the other local to South Africa. Milner arranged a common railway tariff and customs union (1903), and the Kindergarten came to believe that in working for 'Closer Union' in South Africa they were establishing a model for the wider federation of the British Empire. The merits of Union were clearly set out in a document by Lionel Curtis (issued under the name of Lord Selborne, Milner's successor) sent to the various governments of the South African colonies and Southern Rhodesia in January 1907. But the Imperial role in the creation of Union was necessarily a secondary one, for otherwise the Afrikaner politicians would not have gone along with it.

In 1908 the four colonies sent delegates to an all-white National Convention to discuss the terms of Union. The talk by some white Natalians of remaining out of Union came to nothing, when the likely economic implications were realized. In 1909 the draft constitution hammered out at the Convention was sent to Britain to be approved by the British Parliament. The draft provided for a unitary rather than a federal state, for reasons of cost and because Smuts believed the federal system in the United States had encouraged disunity and civil war there, and for a racially exclusive parliamentary system. In a series of meetings in South Africa blacks had rejected the draft constitution, and in particular its colour-bar clauses and its failure to extend the non-racial, class-based franchise to the whole of the proposed Union. In 1909 a delegation of black leaders, led by W. P. Schreiner, former Premier of the Cape, went to London to try to persuade the British Parliament to reject the South Africa Bill in its existing form, but met with no success. The fact that the existing Cape franchise arrangements were to continue and be entrenched in the new constitution against easy repeal was enough for some supporters of the South Africa Bill. The British government regarded the new constitution as a South African product which could not be altered without jeopardizing the entire project for a united South Africa, which had for so long been a goal of British policy. A Union of South Africa within the British Empire, it was believed, represented reconciliation between Boers and British; it would promote economic development, and be in Britain's long-term strategic and economic interests. Increasingly preoccupied with the growing German threat in

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[23] J. Smuts to J. X. Merriman, 1 August 1907, quoted in W. K. Hancock and Jean van der Poel, *Selections from the Smuts Papers*, 7 vols. (Cambridge, 1966), II, p. 354.

Europe, the British congratulated themselves on what they regarded as a timely and successful solution to the South African problem.

In Britain it was widely anticipated that a united, confident, white-ruled South Africa would be more just in ruling its large African population than individual states acting on their own. Natal's brutal suppression of the Bambatha rebellion (1906–07) was often cited in this regard. The conditions laid down for the future incorporation in the Union of the High Commission territories—Basutoland, Bechuanaland, and from 1902 Swaziland—were also designed to help ensure that the Union government ruled its subordinate populations justly. It was assumed that in time these three territories and Southern Rhodesia would join an enlarged Union, but in the event British southern Africa was to remain divided into a relatively strong Union of South Africa and other much less powerful countries.

In 1909 the British government hurried to approve the South Africa Bill and welcome the inauguration of a Union of South Africa within the British Empire in which power was devolved to South Africa's white minority in a Union which was Boer-dominated. As Milner had foreseen in 1897, such a Union inevitably meant 'The abandonment of the black races . . .'[24] France had acted similarly in Algeria in 1905 and Britain was to do so again in Southern Rhodesia in 1923. In South Africa Britain followed the course already set in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, transferring power to the dominant ruling élite in order to preserve British interests in the area. The government of the new Union would be Afrikaner-led, but British interests were maintained and gold-mining was to boom in the new dominion, which was to remain in the British Empire-Commonwealth until 1961 and to return to it, after the collapse of apartheid, in 1994.

[24] Milner to Asquith, 18 November 1897, quoted in G. H. Le May, *British Supremacy in South Africa, 1899–1907* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 11–12.

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Great Britain and the Partition of Africa, 1870–1914

COLIN NEWBURY

Priorities

Africa's resources, of course, had been partitioned for millennia by dispersal, incorporation, and conquest among regional societies; and there were precedents for foreign empire in Algeria and at the Cape. This chapter, however, focuses on the meanings of 'partition' in the variety of techniques used to protect the interests of one power.[1] British politicians and officials had no clear territorial agenda for the continent as a whole by the 1870s; when speaking of Africa they used the language of Viscount Palmerston or Thomas Buxton on 'access' and 'reform' in specific regions. These were seen as components of Imperial strategies for the maintenance of a network of overseas markets and defence commitments. Africa was a base for action against the slave trade, an entrepôt for resources, a staging post to India and the East.

Differences between Liberals and Conservatives were matters of emphasis on methods of access and control at public or private cost. Annexations or abandonment were risky and unpopular. Before 1880 the details of regional policies were left to Secretaries of State and their officials, while Prime Ministers Gladstone and Disraeli concentrated on the power politics of Turkey's decline as a buffer against Russia. In Egypt, where Turkey's international weakness had African repercussions, Britain applied the diplomatic techniques used to minimize European conflict over the Ottoman Empire by internationalization of its financial problems.

Elsewhere, Britain applied two other techniques evolved from Imperial experience. One was the plan taken over from Lord Kimberley by Carnarvon, as Secretary of State for the Colonies, to consolidate the fractious colonies, republics, and African societies south of the Zambezi into a 'confederation' ruled from a self-

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[1] For general surveys, see Select Bibliography and E. Hertslet, *The Map of Africa by Treaty*, 3rd edn., 3 vols. (London, 1909). For other international factors and the politics and xenophobia of late-nineteenth-century British Imperialism, see Introduction and chaps. by Christopher Saunders and Iain R. Smith, and Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid-Marsot.

governing Cape Colony. The other was simply to continue public or private support for the work of British administrators, missionaries, merchants, and Consuls, carried on from enclaves in tropical Africa. Such an African Empire might not be cheap, as the expenditure of West African settlements demonstrated (Fig. 27.1). But in the coastal enclaves low taxes on imports and the practice of stipending chiefs and reformed slavers were all that was necessary. And costs
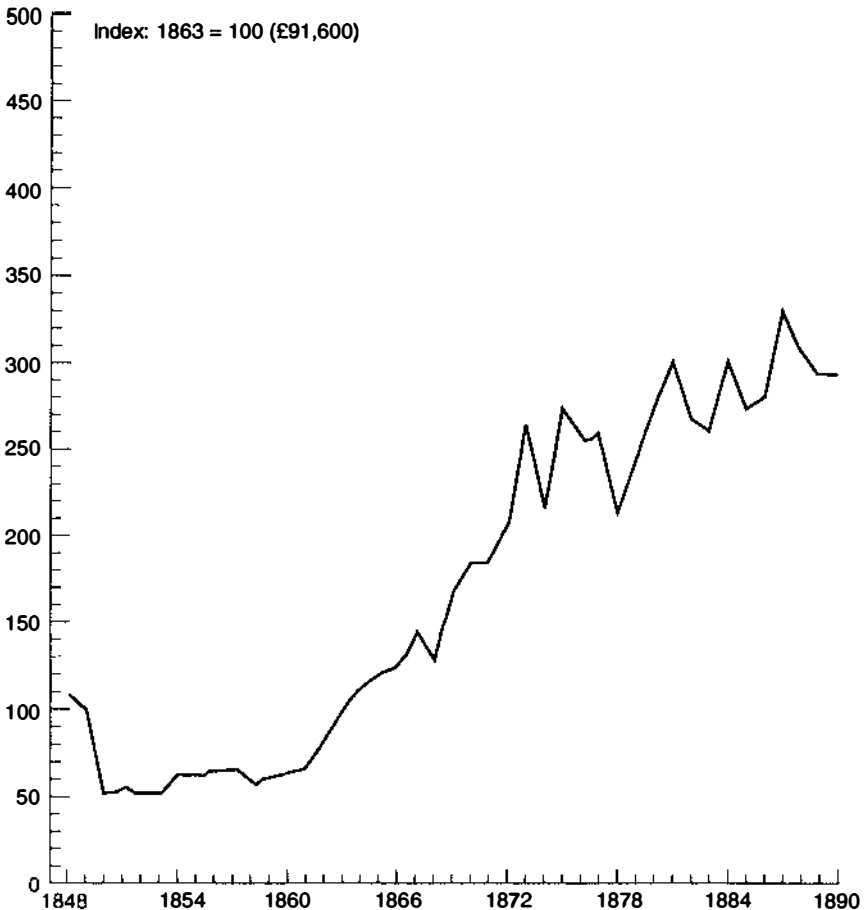
FIGURE 27.1 British West African settlements: expenditure, 1848–1890

SOURCE : C. W. Newbury, ed., *British Policy Towards West Africa. Select Documents, 1875–1914, with Statistical Appendices, 1800–1914* (Oxford, 1971), Table VII, pp. 621–25

Note: Excluding military expenditure, but including courts and Consuls under Foreign Office for Sierra Leone, Luanda, and Lagos, and special Parliamentary grants. In addition, the West Africa Squadron cost about £170,000 a year in the late 1850s.

elsewhere could be shared between settlers and the Imperial patron, as a 'regional power system' developed in South Africa.[2]

All three policies were flawed—the South African one seriously—because of assumptions about the stability of African states over a period of increasing external contacts. But taken together they reflected British priorities in protecting a world-wide trading system through regional defence and British subjects through treaties and consuls.

Those priorities were based squarely on an evaluation of Africa's importance for British overseas trade worked out in the late 1870s by the War Office, which took into account local exchanges and transit values through the Suez Canal and round the Cape.[3] The two poles of British commerce emerged clearly, then and subsequently, as Egypt and the Maghrib, and Southern Africa (Fig. 27.2). In addition, most of Egypt's bonded debt was held in Britain by 1878, serviced from earnings on trade predominantly with Britain and France.[4] In Southern Africa the Cape had a public debt of £1.5m raised in London as early as 1872 and heavy military expenditure at the end of the decade funded from loans. Direct private investment rapidly followed the diamond discoveries and the British colonies' adoption of joint-stock systems of company promotion. British trade easily survived a recession to expand again in the mining-led boom of the later 1880s.[5]

Elsewhere, British interests relied on public subsidies for posts in West Africa and the private enterprise of miscellaneous British subjects—missionaries, liberated Africans, traders, and merchants—justified publicly by humanitarian and commercial motives. To support these ends the four West African enclaves—the Gambia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, and Lagos Colony—incurred rising expenditure over the period 1860 to 1890. This was steepest in the 1860s and 1870s, when their merchants faced foreign competition, falls in commodity prices, expensive credit to African suppliers, and political conflict in African markets.

But at the outset of the accelerated partition of the 1880s considerations about trade and transit at Suez and the Cape most influenced decisions to administer Egypt's debt and to create a 'supremacy' in South Africa. The formula devised by the War Office for assessing defence costs and priorities was applied to Africa by

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[2] C. F. Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African Confederation (1870–1881)* (Cape Town, 1966); John Benyon, 'Overlords of Empire? British "Proconsular Imperialism" in Comparative Perspective', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* (hereafter *JICH*), XIX, 2 (1991), p. 172.

[3] Donald M. Schurman, 'Cape Defence in the Eighteen Seventies and Eighties: A Study in the Fractured Nature of an Imperial Problem', in G. A. Wood and P. S. O'Connor, eds., *W. P. Morrell: A Tribute* (Dunedin, 1973), pp. 37–49.

[4] *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Prints*, ed. David Gillard, Series B, Vols. VIII, IX (New York, 1984); Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800–1914* (London, 1981), pp. 136–38.

[5] S. Herbert Frankel, *Capital Investment in Africa: Its Course and Effects* (Oxford, 1938), pp. 50–59.
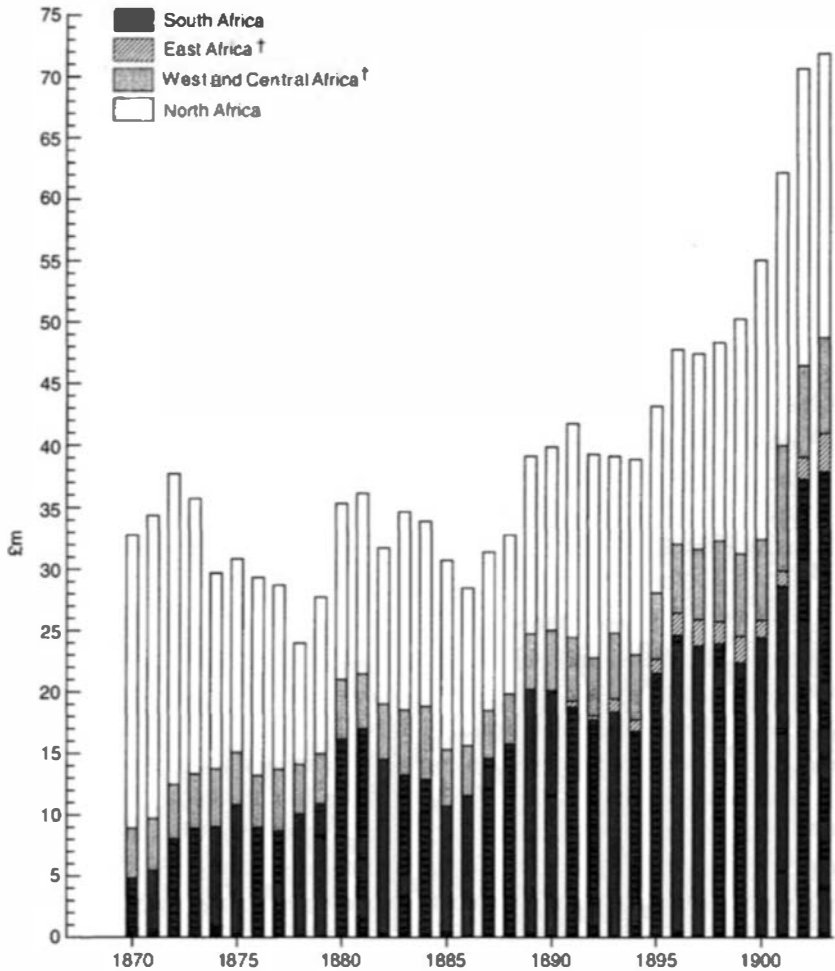
FIGURE 27.2 British trade with Africa, 1870–1903. British and foreign goods and African products [1]

Source: *Statistical Abstracts for the United Kingdom* (London, 1869–1879, 1879–1903).

[1] Total trade in current values, including imports of gold and diamonds, but excluding imports and exports of specie.

[†] Including British and foreign possessions and independent markets.

Carnarvon's Royal Commission in 1881. With an estimated £91m of British trade goods transported round the Cape and £65.6m through the Suez Canal in mind, the Commission found little comfort in any future possession of Port Said. Drawing on a confidential report on Egyptian defences, it concluded that if the eastern Mediterranean were lost to British sea-power, the Canal could only be

defended from Bombay.[6] For the Cape, however, a thousand or so colonial volunteers, plus the navy, were judged sufficient to safeguard harbour works, releasing the main Imperial contingents of some 3,000 men and African auxiliaries to secure the hinterland.

This, too, was in line with British experience of how 'defence' forces were actually used and with Carnarvon's view that Britain assumed a wide sphere of action in Egypt and the Cape interior 'as far as the Zambesi'.[7] The truth was, however, that after three committees and one Royal Commission the costs of paramountcy in the south could not be resolved, as Cape ministers and Natal colonists proved unreliable and impecunious clients. With no confederation in sight, the South African colonies were 'under large and indefinite obligations' to the Imperial treasury, after a series of wars, costing some £2.5m.[8] By 1880 it was well established that in British spheres of interest the politics of influence and control were expensive, and would become more so unless Egypt's finances were reformed to bear the burden of the country's defence under a consortium of powers, and the Cape became a key piece in a regional power system.

SOUTHERN AFRICA TO 1890

The economic, social, and political aspects of partition were manifest earliest south of the Zambezi. Access to resources since the late eighteenth century was conditioned by the huge displacement of Nguni-speaking peoples and by the intrusive settlement of Europeans in competition for land and water. Annexation of Natal and recognition of two Afrikaner states in mid-century had applied a form of territorial demarcation to the politics of southern Africa along the Vaal and the Orange Rivers, but left other marches open to contest, as the brief gold discovery at Tati and the more momentous discovery of diamonds in Griqualand West in the late 1860s amply demonstrated.[9] Partition of mineral resources was decided at first by British annexation of Griqualand West and a boundary adjustment to the detriment of the Griquas and Free State. An award by Lieutenant-Governor Keate of Natal in 1871 held back the western Transvaal frontier from lands disputed with the Tswana, leaving open a major trade route from the Cape to territory north-west of the Limpopo River (Map 26.1).

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[6] 'First Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Defence of British Possessions and Commerce Abroad', in *Proceedings of the Colonial Conference, 1887*, 2 vols. (London, 1887), II (Appendix), p. 299 (also *PP*); *Report* by Major-General Macdougal, 1876, in *British Documents*, VIII, p. 221.

[7] Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African Confederation*, p. 117.

[8] *Colonial Office Confidential Print African* (hereafter *CPA*), No. 183 A, p. 14; and Nos. 174, 227, 228, for costs of warfare in South Africa.

[9] A. E. Atmore, 'Africa on the Eve of Partition', in *Cambridge History of Africa*, VI, pp. 83–92; Leonard Thompson, 'The Subjection of the African Chiefdoms', in Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson, eds., *The Oxford History of South Africa*, Vol. II, *South Africa, 1870–1966* (Oxford, 1971), chap. 5.

But Crown rule was only resorted to when other methods failed. These were of two kinds by the late 1870s: subordination and incorporation into an existing colony, used extensively in the eastern Cape; and, secondly, forms of clientage relationship under the authority of the Cape High Commissioner, used in 1868 when Basutoland came under British protection and was partitioned with the Free State. Annexed to the Cape in 1871, the Sotho retained a High Commissioner's agent, loyally fought in the Phuti rising in 1879, but rebelled against the Cape's disarmament policy. Unaware 'that they had ceased to be under the personal control of the High Commissioner',[10] the Sotho came once more under Crown patronage in 1884, as an example of political and economic adaptation and missionary lobbying which Gladstone was forced to accept as the first South African Protectorate.

Within the two British colonies and the republics other forms of partition of resources continued relentlessly. At stake was something more than demographic demarcation, namely, a fundamental innovation in exclusive 'proprietorship rights' for settlers backed by political sovereignty.[11] Where the lines were drawn on the map was a matter of diplomacy and force. One of the arguments for annexing the Transvaal in 1877 was the failure of a bankrupt settler state to exercise such sovereignty over a frontier of 1,200 miles without the backing of the Cape and Natal and the authority of the High Commissioner. A second argument, recognized in the Colonial Office, was that economic change had upset the political balance between settler and African societies through the development of agricultural and mineral resources, the spread of cash earnings, and a market in firearms.[12]

To deal with this 'danger', the Cape Governor, Sir Bartle Frere, plunged into boundary investigations in 1878 and decided to 'force the fighting', if his demands on Cetshwayo's political sovereignty in Zululand were not met by acceptance of a Resident with jurisdiction over British subjects. This plan collapsed with British defeat at Isandhlwana; to regain the upper hand Sir Garnet Wolseley was sent in with civil and military authority over the Transvaal and Natal, and the Zulu kingdom was dismembered. Zulu alliance with Natal in the mid-1870s, cemented by arms and labour brokers, turned into a partition with beacons and boundaries 'absolutely fixed' in ways that left Cetshwayo 'speechless' during his interviews with Lord Kimberley in London in August 1882.[13]

By then, too, the Transvaal had inflicted severe defeats on the would-be patron's forces, ending in the compromise of the 1881 Pretoria Convention which defined

[10] Fairfield, 'Memorandum' [1880], CPA, No. 227.
[11] Fairfield, 'Memorandum on the Zulu Question', 20 March 1879, CPA, No. 164.
[12] Ibid.
[13] CPA, No. 247; and 'Report of the Zululand Boundary Commission' [1878], in Frere to CO, 16 Feb. 1880, in ibid.

the boundaries of an autonomous state, subject to a vague British 'suzerainty' and control of external affairs. A British Resident in Pretoria without jurisdiction or sanctions signalled influence without power.

The new High Commissioner who arrived to oversee this settlement was better versed in the art of patronage politics.[14] A Gladstonian in proconsular dress, Sir Hercules Robinson was at his best in Bechuanaland settling problems of territoriality by 'protectorate or wardship'.[15] In the face of Liberal indecisiveness and Cape ministerial opposition, the continuing need to save the Tswana from the establishment of 'robber republics' along the strategic route to the north brought about constructive co-operation between the 'imperial factor' and Cecil Rhodes as businessman and Cape politician. Collaboration was further encouraged by German imperial intervention at Angra Pequena from May 1883, which made Tswana territorial problems important in Cape and Transvaal competition for external support.

One solution was to make the High Commissioner a patron-administrator in February 1884, when southern Bechuanaland became a Protectorate and John Mackenzie was sent in as Robinson's deputy. Secondly, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Derby, struck a deal with President Kruger in the London Convention, lifting an Imperial veto on native legislation, dropping talk of suzerainty, but keeping a vestigial control on foreign relations. Police action by Sir Charles Warren, authorized by a divided Cabinet, cleared out Boer freebooters from Tswana territory and in 1885 established a Protectorate for Bechuanaland north of the Molopo and a Crown Colony to the south. The Tswana were thus partitioned between two Imperial agencies and partly incorporated into a settler state. The boundary with the Transvaal was confirmed, and an Order-in-Council for the administration of justice in Bechuanaland Protectorate set a precedent for similar extensions of Imperial authority in other British spheres of interest in Africa.

From the mid-1880s the struggle for Imperial influence turned on the same combination of official and private agencies from the Cape, as the balance of economic growth began to favour the Transvaal. In the east, when Swazi concessions to Transvaalers threatened partition of an African kingdom with access to the sea, the Colonial Office came round to Rhodes's view that the Swazi could be surrendered to the Boers, once Tongaland had been taken under British protection in 1887. High Commissioner Loch took a tougher line, demanding Transvaal accession to a customs agreement in return for a railway link to Kosi Bay. As a

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[14] Kenneth O. Hall, *Imperial Proconsul: Sir Hercules Robinson and South Africa, 1881–1889* (Kingston, Ontario), p. 19.

[15] D. Chanaiwa, 'African Initiatives and Resistance in Southern Africa' in A. Adu Boahen, ed., *General History of Africa*, Vol. VII: *Africa under Colonial Domination, 1880–1935* (Paris, 1985), pp. 207–13.

temporary bargain Kruger agreed to a convention, ratified in August 1890, for joint rule over Europeans in Swaziland, but postponed the customs union.

Gradually, Rhodes's colonial and business priorities to extend British influence prevailed over Imperial reservations. While the Bechuanaland solution might seem fitting to the Liberals and the humanitarian lobby, to Cape politicians rule over the Tswana was simply a means of access to other resources, as well as a buffer zone between Germans and Transvaalers. On this point Sir Hercules agreed with the colonials, and his policy of imperialism through colonialism matched Rhodes's plans for expansion on a grand scale by a chartered company.

The joint venture of concessionaires under High Commission patronage from July 1888 in Lobengulas's sphere in Ndebeleland proved irresistible to the British government, if carried out by 'capitalists in good standing'. The duplicity of the British South Africa Company's (BSAC) application for a charter on the basis of a concession it did not own was beside the main point, for at issue was not a clash between 'imperialism' and 'colonialism', but simply a common search for an effective agency.[16] Salisbury's government decided to admit Rhodes's monopoly into the vague sphere proclaimed by Britain in April 1888 from Bechuanaland to the Zambezi and 20 degrees East longitude, as a pre-emptive move against the Transvaal, the Germans, and the Portuguese.

Another partition of resources turned on the allocation of revenue from trade between the colonies and the republics. A complex system of railway tariffs and rebates changed from 1886 into a search for fiscal co-operation as an alternative to the Transvaal's policy of seeking an outlet through Delagoa Bay. While Pretoria rejected all customs harmonization, the Cape and the Free State moved into a customs and railway union in 1889 as the battle for railway extensions continued, and Rhodes enlisted local support for a Cape Bechuanaland Railway Agreement which the BSAC would finance and build.

By the late 1880s, then, the main territorial lines of British influence and control in Southern Africa had been laid down in a series of contests, alliances, and incorporations (Map 26.2).[17] Where not absorbed into the territories of the Eastern Cape or Natal, the resources of African states and societies were defined in terms of administrative control, or circumscribed as independent polities. The techniques of alliance and clientage, as alternatives to conquest, were widespread and provided the basis of more legalistic forms of Crown Colony and Protectorate. They owed much to the expansive use of the authority of the Cape Governor, as

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[16] Hall, *Imperial Proconsul*, p. 166; cf. Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, with Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism* (London, 1961), p. 239.

[17] John Benyon, *Proconsul and Paramountcy in South Africa: The High Commission, British Supremacy and the Sub-Continent, 1806–1910.* (Pietermaritzburg, 1980).

formal head of two British colonies with representative and responsible govern-
ments, or as a judicial authority and negotiator in the frontier zones of British
influence. The Transvaal resisted both occupation and informal control, though
the Free State was more susceptible to the mixture of financial and economic co-
operation offered by the Afrikaans and English-speaking Cape. The northern
republic was, therefore, contained rather than absorbed, although British and
Afrikaner boundaries with Ndebeleland, Damaraland, and Portuguese territory
were still provisional.

German and Portuguese factors were contingent to this basic competition in
settler and African societies for partition of resources. That process left the
Cape, Natal, and the two republics commanding land, minerals, and communi-
cations, the major ports, and sources of labour by the 1880s, though they had
not agreed how to share out revenue from trade and tariffs. That the small
German settlement at Angra Pequena became a 'factor' at all for the Cape is
testimony to Britain's reluctance to commit Imperial resources simply to control
of territory, without colonial willingness to share costs. Confrontation with
Portugal was another matter, as Rhodes's pioneers moved into Mashonaland
and the colonial agent threatened to become more belligerent by 1890 than the
Imperial power.

EGYPT AND THE SUDAN TO 1890

Britain's demarcation of Egypt in 1882 as a British sphere by unilateral naval
and military action has its origins in both the internationalization of the khedi-
vate's insolvency and the methods pursued by foreign agencies to cure that
condition (Map 28.1). At one level the Khedive was right to look on his country
'as part of Europe',[18] and therefore part of the more general problem of Ottoman
decline and naval strategy in the eastern Mediterranean. But at another level
Egypt's weakness stemmed from the ease of access for European commerce and
finance into a state with a patrimonial system of offices legitimized by the Turkish
sultanate, and extensive judicial privileges reserved for foreigners in consular
courts.

Although 'dual control' through financial officers was of more concern to
French investors, the Conservatives before 1880 took a close interest because of
the vulnerability of the Suez Canal. Britain's stake in Egypt, as Lord Salisbury
emphasized, was 'largely commercial', with 'political considerations' which
required intervention in partnership with France to the exclusion of other

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[18] Frederick Madden, ed., with David Fieldhouse, *The Dependent Empire and Ireland, 1840–1900:
Advance and Retreat in Representative Self-Government. Select Documents on the Constitutional History
of the British Empire and Commonwealth* (New York, 1991), V, p. 713 and note.

powers.[19] France could not be left to act alone; and Khedive Ismail could not be trusted to manage. Indeed, the Conservatives might well have gone further towards armed intervention in 1879, but for the military crisis in South Africa.

However, the more the controllers-general enforced debt-servicing, the more they interfered with local patronage exercised through the khedive's control of the Civil List, and offended sections of the Egyptian state's civil and military personnel. A rising, educated bureaucracy, owing appointments to the Khedive's family and court or to Turco-Circassian and Egyptian notables, resented importation of foreign officials; the corps of army officers was alienated by economies and became a focus for more general resentment; a third threat to European outsiders' regulation of the state debt lay in an indigenous movement for constitutional reform.

Through the late 1870s agents' reports accumulated on the operation of Egyptian administration as a gigantic tax farm, emphasizing the difficulty of influencing change in a system where public office 'from the Pashas downwards ... is a tenancy at will' held by intrigue.[20] When Ismail chose to defend this system in 1879, by siding with the army corps and dismissing European controllers, he was deposed by Britain and France in favour of the more malleable Tawfiq, with the Sultan's compliance.

Dual control was reinforced in 1880 by the Law of Liquidation, which eased the situation for French investors and gave London finance a stake in the probity of the regime. From then on, with the Liberals in office, British policy was sharply divided between the necessity for a continued mandate from the powers and pressure for unilateral action from within the Foreign Office and the Cabinet. By the end of 1881 Britain and France were committed to support the new Khedive. As the protest movement headed by the Egyptian Colonel Ahmad Urabi threatened to unite reformers, army, and bureaucracy against the foreign-controlled executive, they issued their warning Note of January 1882 followed by a demand for dismissal of officers. Talk of anarchy by British agents on the spot aggravated the Liberals' desperation, and the Alexandria riots in June 1882 were used to justify the despatch of the fleet, sending tremors through the London stock market. French withdrawal from the naval demonstration left Admiral Seymour free to bombard Alexandria's forts and land 40,000 men under Wolseley, in July–August 1882. In a wave of Gladstonian justification and City satisfaction, Parliament approved the official underwriting of a 'special interest' in trade through the Canal, investment

[19] Lord Tenterden, Memorandum, 10 Oct. 1881, *British Documents*, IX, pp. 13–14; Richard A. Atkins, 'The Conservatives and Egypt, 1875–1880', *JICH*, II, 2 (1974), pp. 190–205; Marvin Swartz, *The Politics of British Foreign Policy in the Era of Disraeli and Gladstone* (London, 1985), p. 130.

[20] Stephen Cave, n.d., *British Documents*, VIII, pp. 202; P. Currie, Memorandum, 17 Sept. 1881, *British Documents*, IX, pp. 22–25; Anouar Abdel-Malek, *Idéologie et renaissance nationale: l'Egypte moderne* (Paris, 1969); H. A. Ibrahim, 'African Initiatives and Resistance in North-East Africa', in Boahen, ed., *General History*, VII, p. 70.

of 'capital and industry', and protection of British nationals. These motives for the defeat of Urabi's forces at Tel-el-Kebir in September left Britain the task of patching up 'the great disintegration'.[21]

The dual watch on Egypt's accounts thus became a British watch on the Nile. The immediate problem for the self-appointed guarantor was to find a constitutional framework which allowed a measure of reform but kept control of finance with a supervised executive. Lord Dufferin's reports on Egypt supplied a blueprint, enacted 1 May 1883 by Tawfiq, setting up a limited representative system and a Council of State responsible to the Khedive.[22] Dufferin justified this dispensation by his analysis of the channels of authority in a patrimonial society. Egypt would have to be ruled more lightly than an Indian princely state, because Britain had no executive or judicial powers; but by nominating loyal Turco-Circassians, Copts, and imported Englishmen, efficient cadres might be built up and courts reformed. Indeed, British access to the levers of power and financial resources already operated in key departments where European officials numbered some 1,300 in 1882.[23]

International approval was, however, withheld, although further loans were guaranteed and a mandate was provided by Turkey in the Convention of October 1885 which, in effect, partitioned authority over the khedivate. Assurances of withdrawal within five years, in any case, divided the Liberal Cabinet on the problem of timing and Canal security. The Mahdist revolt in the Sudan and the destruction of the Egyptian army at El Obeid in 1883 removed whole provinces from Egyptian control and opened Red Sea ports to attack. A respite was secured by a British campaign up the Nile, too late to save Gordon at Khartoum, but sufficient to keep the Mahdists at bay, before Wolseley was ordered to retire from the Sudan in May 1885. Thereafter, the methods of India were applied in the field as in the secretariat: a Nile Frontier Force of retrained Egyptian troops and British regulars was formed by Sir Evelyn Wood, as Sirdar or commander-in-chief. In Drummond-Wolff's phrase, the British stayed on to exercise authority through 'management supported by material force'.[24]

By 1888–89 the Egyptian budget was managed into surplus; a plan for the issue of bonds for loans raised on public lands opened a new field for speculation, patronage, and influence by control of khedival family tenures and the Civil List.[25] Withdrawal became less likely than ever when the Conservatives returned to

[21] Granville to Dufferin, 11 July 1882, *British Documents*, IX, p. 64; Gladstone to Granville, 3 Oct. 1882, in Madden, ed., *Dependent Empire*, V, p. 720.

[22] Dufferin to Granville, 18 Nov. 1882, in ibid., V, p. 721.

[23] Lord Tenterden, 'Egyptian Civil Service', *British Documents*, IX, pp. 279–83; Owen, *The Middle East*, p. 135.

[24] Drummond-Wolff, Memorandum, 17 Aug. 1886, in Madden, ed., *Dependent Empire*, V, p. 746.

[25] *British Documents*, XV, p. 225.

power under Salisbury, especially after the failure of the Drummond-Wolff nego-
tiations at Constantinople in 1887. By then, the watch on the Nile had conse-
quences for British partition elsewhere on the continent.

EAST, WEST, AND CENTRAL AFRICA TO 1890

The resources and peoples of the rest of the sub-Saharan continent were also
subject to division well before European agencies began to accelerate the pace of
change. But south of the Ethiopian highlands, no African state emerged as a
contender for regional power over the vast area from the White Nile and the
interlacustrine kingdoms of the Great Lakes region to the Limpopo.[26] Britain
herself had few interests to defend. On the Somali coast, Egypt was used as a sub-
imperial agent until 1884, and the supervision of British treaty relations with
Somali clans was left to a consulate. She sought no patronage of Menelik,
recognized as Emperor of Ethiopia in 1882, and the Italians were encouraged to
occupy the strategic centre of Massawa in 1885 to exclude France.

South of the Gulf of Aden the sultanate of Zanzibar, and the commercial
networks created by shipping companies in the Indian Ocean and by Swahili
Arabs on land, became the mechanisms for European agencies. The sultanate
exercised commercial and financial influence over the region's slave trade and
staple exports, but had little administrative control. This weakness made it an easy
client state for Britain under treaties which outlawed the slave trade and initiated a
rapid change in the credit structure of commerce in cloves and ivory. However
superficial the authority of Sultan Bargash (and the influence of Sir John Kirk's
Consulate, 1873–87), there was a large measure of commercial cohesion through-
out East Africa imposed by the Swahili trading system. The general result for
British enterprise—exploring, commercial, and philanthropic—was to create
trading alliances, sources of mercenaries, and routes to the interior for Living-
stone's successors.

There was potential for conflict in this mixture of philanthropy and concession-
hunting, as the internal slave trade expanded to meet the need for armed expedi-
tions throughout the interlacustrine region and along the trading networks
between the east coast and the Congo basin. Farther south, the Portuguese were
seen in the late 1870s as another possible client state, possessing historic influence
in Angola and Mozambique but little territorial consolidation. Important to
Britain's southern African strategies as possessor of Delagoa Bay, Portugal was
an unpredictable factor in the Zambezi basin and at the Congo mouth.[27]

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[26] Ake Holmberg, *Tribes and European Agencies: Colonialism and Humanitarianism in British South
and East Africa, 1870–1895* (Göteborg, 1966).
[27] E. Axelson, *Portugal and the Scramble for Africa* (Johannesburg, 1967).

In western Africa the major trade routes from the Hausa-Fulani emirates to the Dyula and Mandinka markets of Upper Guinea and the Senegambia rivers were known but little penetrated, although disputed at the coast between French and British exporters. The second primary location of resources lay south of the savannah in the forest belt from the Gambia and Casamance along the coastal region to the Niger Delta and the Congo basin. In this region of specialist investment and very limited control, European factors depended on African middlemen for the movement of goods between forest and savannah, until British investigation of the Niger–Benue rivers, backed by naval protection from 1876.

Thus, British interests were identified with anti-slave trade measures, steam communications, and open access to primary resources in the coastal markets. The methods for promoting these interests were: retention of existing colonial posts; treaties of friendship with interior chiefdoms, backed by 'moderate (continual) bribery';[28] and, more hesitantly, the extension of jurisdiction in the vicinity of British Settlements and in consular courts to both protect and control British subjects.

From 1879 such methods were called in question by friction between French and British enclaves north of Sierra Leone and west of Lagos over expansion of customs for revenues and by indications that the commercial and political system which required merchants to work through African brokers in the Delta and Congo markets, but excluded Africans from the export trade, was under strain. British concepts of 'free trade' were threatened by French protectionism, just when capital restructuring of Niger and Congo firms increased competition in conditions of temporary recession. If the French military advance from the Upper Senegal swept eastward, could commercial treaties with chiefs in the interior of Sierra Leone, the Futa Jalon, or the Niger–Benue confluence provide a political defence? Treaty-making by de Brazza on the Congo in September 1880 also indicated an expansion of French Gabon, in competition with Leopold II of the Belgians' International African Association, the vehicle since September 1876 of the king's territorial ambitions. Doors kept open by naval action or by official and unofficial activities were beginning to close.

Britain responded with diplomacy and a search for additional clients. Negotiations with France in 1879–81 revealed that colonial tariffs were mutually discriminatory but were settled temporarily by territorial demarcation in the rivers north of Sierra Leone, leaving internal boundaries open, under the unratified Convention of 28 June 1882. Treaties and stipends were renewed in the interior of Sierra Leone, the Upper Gambia, and the Futa Jalon to keep trade routes open. Thought was given to using the newly formed National African Company as a political

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[28] Herbert, Minute, 1 Dec. 1871 C[olonial] O[ffice] 96/89; for collections of treaties, *CPA*, No. 332.

agent on the Lower Niger to counter French companies.[29] French claims to the navigable Congo, north of Stanley Pool in November 1882, aroused further misgivings in the Foreign Office's African department. Accordingly, negotiations to flatter Portugal's pretensions to territory north of Angola, in return for reform of discriminatory tariffs in East and Central Africa, were revived and completed in the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty, 26 February 1884, to block both France and Leopold at the Congo mouth.[30] In only four years the British government was driven to an unwelcome revision of techniques required to defend the concept of open access in tropical Africa.

The change is detectable in the policy formulations of permanent officials in the Colonial and Foreign Offices who stiffened the resolve of successive Secretaries of State and prepared papers on African expansion which Salisbury made a Cabinet responsibility from 1880. By 1883 French pressures at Porto Novo, on the Niger, and the Congo, and the likely failure of any negotiation for a general exchange of West African posts, set the Foreign Office in search of a refurbished treaty system leading to Protectorates. The Cabinet approved on 22 November 1883, and the Consul to the Bight of Benin, E. H. Hewett, set about gathering pre-emptive agreements with chiefs as far as the Cameroons, in parallel with the National African Company's agent, David McIntosh, as far as the Benue confluence.[31]

A second challenge came from German colonial interventions at Angra Pequena, in South Togo, and Cameroon, and from an attempted cession at St Lucia Bay, north of Durban. Bismarck's irritation at British procrastination in negotiating on South-West Africa was matched by British irritation at the reception given Afrikaner delegates in Berlin on June 1884.[32] A treaty of trade and friendship with the Transvaal smacked of German patronage in the most sensitive of British spheres. St Lucia was snatched back by raising the British flag at the end of the year, in the same month as Warren's expedition was sent to close off the hinterland in Bechuanaland.

Despite anxiety that Germany might become 'a South African Power',[33] the Cabinet concluded in July 1884 that Britain had no grounds to protest over South-West Africa, and was aware that Bismarck's annoyance was linked with the Congo and his objections to the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty. The chorus of international disapproval of that device was amplified by French opposition to the occupation

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[29] John E. Flint, *Sir George Goldie and the Making of Nigeria* (London, 1960).

[30] Roger Anstey, *Britain and the Congo in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1962); Wm. Roger Louis, 'Sir Percy Anderson's Grand African Strategy, 1883–1893', *English Historical Review* (1966), LXXXI, pp. 292–314.

[31] *Foreign Office Confidential Print*, Nos. 4825, 5064.

[32] *CPA*, No. 274.

[33] Ampthill to Granville, 25 June 1884, *British Documents*, VIII, p. 195; Bramston to Currie, 12 Sept. 1884, in ibid.

of Egypt; by a temporary German entente with France; and by a general mistrust of Portuguese administration of trade and taxes. Britain miscalculated in seeking a bilateral solution to the problem of international access to the Congo, leaving the way open for Leopold's intricate diplomacy which gained him the recognition of France in return for right of pre-emption over the Association's territories in April 1884, and Bismarck's acceptance of his sweeping territorial claims in August 1884. But if British tactics were questionable, her objectives remained the same: defence of preponderant commerce in Africa by the use of surrogates, with or without formal control through extended jurisdiction. Appreciating the larger danger implied by the Congo–French agreement, the Foreign Office accepted Bismarck's mediation, but reserved Britain's position 'as *the Niger Power*' through treaties and a chartered company, when agreeing to the Berlin West Africa Conference in October 1884.[34]

In the event, the conference conceded this claim, and Bismarck moved closer to the British representatives on the second question of a free trade zone across Central Africa including the lower Zambezi, in the teeth of French and Portuguese reservations. The price was British recognition of Leopold's Association, extracted by Bismarck for co-operation over Egypt (and the failure of the Foreign Office to question Leopold's self-proclaimed boundaries). On the final basis for the Conference protocols, Britain agreed to notification procedures for occupation of coastal territory, and went further than Bismarck required in the exercise of jurisdiction on behalf of foreigners in Protectorates. This was reviewed at length by Crown Law Officers, and provided a basis for an expanded system of consular courts in West Africa from 1885, administration of justice by chartered companies, and consolidation of the British Foreign Jurisdiction Acts in 1890.[35] There was less enthusiasm for the Brussels Conference and its humanitarian aims, 1889–90, when Salisbury's support for international controls was restricted to the maritime slave trade and spirits traffic.[36]

For the rest of the initial phase of the 'scramble' in West and East Africa, Britain relied on the agency of travelling commissioners, consular authority in the Niger Coast Protectorate from 1885, the commercial and political monopoly of the Royal Niger Company (RNC), from 1886, the expanded Political Agency and Consulate-General at Zanzibar, and Mackinnon's Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEA), from 1887.

[34] H. P. Anderson, Memorandum, 14 Oct. 1884, in C. Newbury, ed., *British Policy Towards West Africa. Select Documents*, 2 vols., Vol. II, *1875–1914* (reprint, Aldershot, 1992), pp. 185–86.

[35] Colin Newbury, '"Treaty, Grant, Usage and Sufferance": The Origins of British Colonial Protectorates', in Wood and O'Connor, eds., *W. P. Morrell*, pp. 69–84; Madden, ed., *Dependent Empire*, V, pp. 5–39.

[36] Suzanne Miers, *Britain and the Ending of the Slave Trade* (London, 1975), chap. 6.

None of this provided defence against the activities of Carl Peters on the Zanzibari mainland or French military advance in the western Sudan. At best, an Anglo-German agreement in November 1886 demarcated spheres in German and British East Africa, leaving the interior open and reducing Zanzibari claims on the coast. Similarly, in West Africa a boundary between Togo and the Gold Coast was arranged in 1887 as far as 'neutral ground' at ten degrees north; and a provisional agreement of 1888 settled the Lagos and Porto Novo boundary at the coast. Within that sphere behind Lagos Colony officials arranged treaties excluding other powers from Yoruba states, and arbitrated in local wars. But treaties with Mende and Temne and contact with the Almamy Samori Ture in the Guinea interior counted for little in Anglo-French negotiations during 1889; these confirmed the Gambia Protectorate's boundaries, the Dahomey boundary short of the Niger, ratified Gold Coast and Ivory Coast boundaries, and agreed some equalization of tariffs between Assinie and the Gold Coast and at Porto Novo. Foreign Office and French attention was focused on wider issues of revision of the Anglo-Tunisian Convention, Zanzibar, Madagascar, and the emerging French ambition for a zone from the Mediterranean to Lake Chad.

That expansive aim brought to a head Britain's relations with Germany on African issues. With Salisbury back in office, the period after the Berlin Conference witnessed Anglo-German accommodation at the highest level and hostility among officials in the Foreign Office and agents in the field. But by 1888 Salisbury's view of the importance of the interlacustrine region began to change, as the Congo State and the Germans launched expeditions to 'rescue' Emin Pasha from Equatoria, and the Italians moved into Ethiopia. The possibility that some power might control the Nile sources seemed to threaten Egypt's agricultural surplus, finances, and debt servicing.[37] Moreover, the alliance of Leopold, Stanley, and Mackinnon to carve out a concession in the guise of a rescue operation brought to a head the need for a territorial settlement in the marches south of the Sudan and in Uganda. 'Equatoria' took on a strategic significance for Salisbury, made more acute by his reliance on Liberal Unionists at home and the fall of Bismarck abroad. The relief of Emin in 1888 by Stanley and Peter's continued activity in Uganda in March 1890 in competition with the IBEA, therefore, precipitated a more general diplomatic settlement.

This was prefaced by informal partition between Leopold, Mackinnon, Stanley, and Salisbury in April–May 1890 (the Mackinnon Agreement, 24 May 1890), which gave Leopold access to the Nile valley in return for a strip of territory from Uganda to Lake Tanganyika. But in the bargain with Germany made in 1890, Salisbury sacrificed the corridor and the dream of 'Cape to Cairo' that went with it, and

[37] William L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890–1902*, 2nd edn. (New York, 1951), pp. 105–06.

ceded Heligoland in return for recognition o f a British sphere from the coast to the Congo State and to Italian Somaliland. Conceding German access through Damaraland to the headwaters of the Zambezi settled problems over Togo–Gold Coast and Rio del Rey boundaries and transit rights on the Benue. Britain's Zanzibar Protectorate was recognized, the German protectorate over Witu withdrawn. The effect was to eliminate challenges to British influence, according to Salisbury, from the Equator to the borders of Egypt.[38]

There was, however, a Portuguese claim to be fended off in Nyasaland, where the humanitarian and commercial work of Scottish and Universities missions and the African Lakes Company had come into conflict with Swahili Arabs along the Zambezi, Shiré, Nyasa trade routes leading to Livingstonia and Karonga. An anti-slavery campaign led by Captain F. D. Lugard rallied the missions and attracted the speculative attention of Cecil Rhodes and the Imperial initiative of Consul H. H. Johnston at Blantyre. Treaty-making (funded by Rhodes's BSAC) among the Shiré and Nyasa chiefs preserved for Britain the highlands to the west of the lake by the Anglo-Portuguese Convention of August 1890.

French reactions to these settlements were sharpened by differences over conversion of the Egyptian debt which brought evacuation no nearer, by British commercial advantage in Tunisia, residual rights in Zanzibar, and an accumulation of objections to the monopoly exercised by the Royal Niger Company. Of these however, only Zanzibar influenced Niger–Chad negotiations.[39] Salisbury agreed in July 1890 to the Say–Barruwa line, leaving Sokoto within the RNC sphere, and recognized French Madagascar in return for recognition of the British Zanzibar Protectorate.

Control and Conquest, 1890–1914

The 1890s thus opened with spheres of influence on the African continent outlined but imperfectly occupied. The Upper Nile was hardly demarcated at all outside the Mahdist Sudan. In East Africa, as in the West, Consuls, Commissioners, and unofficial agencies were still the principal pathfinders for British influence. If pre-emptive claims meant anything, then contested 'hinterlands' would have to be administered, so as to safeguard the interests of other nationals. From 1890 both the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office, secure in the legal basis provided by the Foreign Jurisdiction Acts, took a more relaxed attitude to exercising 'power to protect'.[40]

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[38] Langer, *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, p. 119.

[39] A. S. Kanya-Forstner, 'French African Policy and the Anglo-French Agreement of 5 August 1890', *Historical Journal*, XII, 4 (1969), pp. 628–50; Newbury, ed., *British Policy Towards West Africa*, II, p. 205.

[40] Hemming, 'Minute', 10 Nov. 1890, in Newbury, ed., *British Policy Towards West Africa*, II, p. 206.

The cartography of control, as recognized by European states, therefore, implied a measure of government, as well as access to resources; and both these aspects of partition provoked African resistance. From the early 1890s there was greater use of locally raised militias, 'frontier' forces, and Imperial troops, on the South African pattern, both as a response to French military expeditions and as a major commitment to securing territory and communications.

The assumption, then, that territory could be held by means of clients and informal agencies was steadily revised, to remedy the exposed position of Anglo-Egyptian administration, to repair the damage left by Rhodes's attempted coup against the Transvaal in 1895, and to rescue the Royal Niger Company and the Imperial British East African Company. Thereafter, revolts in West Africa, Company conquest of the Ndebele, occupation of the Sudan, and a civil war in South Africa put diplomatic partition in the shade. Compared with the results of contests for power over African states, Anglo-French 'confrontations' at Fashoda or on the Upper Niger diminish in significance. In the end, the problems of keeping a European peace through diplomacy were overtaken by the problems of Imperial control of African subjects.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

In 1890, with the Transvaal contained and Rhodes in office as Premier of the Cape, British interests looked secure, as Company pioneers moved into Mashonaland and the great 'amalgamator' worked to extend the Cape–Free State Customs Union of 1889. Railways from the south and patronage of Afrikaner Bondsmen in Parliament through shares and land grants would enable the Cape to undermine Kruger, restore the balance upset by the precocious development of the Rand, and leave the British South Africa Company free to expand into 'Zambesia' and beyond.

To the extent that the chartered agency was able to finance territorial imperialism, this strategy had a measure of success. A preliminary partition with Portugal along the line of the Zambezi and Sabi Rivers divided Barotseland, but drove Rhodes to buccaneering.[41] In this way most of Manicaland in Mozambique was taken over under an Anglo-Portuguese Convention of 1891. A concession of Barotseland in the same year created a sphere with land and mineral rights. Rhodes's patronage of Consul Johnston and purchase of African Lakes Company interests turned the Nyasa Districts into a Company protectorate. When this arrangement broke down in 1894 over the costs of Johnston's conquests and failure to endorse BSAC claims, there was a partition into the Central African Protectorate of Nyasaland and a Company sphere north of the Zambezi—Northern

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[41] Robert I. Rotberg, *The Founder: Cecil Rhodes and the Pursuit of Power* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 311–13.

Rhodesia. Revolt and conquest in Ndebeleland led to a further division of authority in 1898 with the Cape High Commissioner, Alfred Milner, which subordinated Company administration in Southern Rhodesia to a Deputy-Commissioner, in return for settler control of a legislature and all resources.

By then, Imperial confrontation with the Transvaal had reached breaking-point. As in other Imperial and African contests, the origins of that conflict can be understood in terms of the Republic's refusal of political subordination and economic integration. The difference lies in the scale of the interests contested by the British settler colonies and the republics, and in divisions between both Dutch and British at the Cape and Afrikaners, foreign workers (Uitlanders), and foreign companies on the Rand. At stake were the commercial and fiscal returns from trade, customs, and railways in a gold-dominated economy; and secondly, the rights of Uitlanders to representation. For both economic and political reasons, then, the game involved, first, accommodating the Transvaal with partition agreements in the early 1890s, followed later by intimidation and the deployment of force.

In 1890 and 1893 Swaziland became a pawn in this game, and was offered to the Transvaal in return for a customs union which did not eventuate. Cape annexation of territories between Swaziland and the sea, accordingly, cut off independent outlets except through Delagoa Bay. At the same time, railway strategies and provision of a loan in 1891 enabled the Cape to operate lines to Johannesburg and fix rates until 1894. A line through Bechuanaland reached Bulawayo in 1897. But the termination of the 1891 Agreement led to a tariff war in 1894, as German trade with the Transvaal and diplomatic support increased.[42]

The fiasco of Jameson's Raid (a result of Rhodes's scheme to remove the uncooperative Transvaal government), therefore, not merely polarized politics in ways that aligned Chamberlain, Selborne, and Milner with the partisans of political representation in the Transvaal, but aggravated the strain on Cape and Natal finances from loss of railway receipts. Trade and investment were diverted to Free State lines and to Delagoa Bay, which gained some 40 per cent of Transvaal's transit trade. This change lay behind the exaggerated prediction of the Selborne Memorandum in 1896 that the self-governing colonies would become satellites of the Transvaal, and raised doubts about the political loyalty of the Cape under Schreiner's pro-Bond ministry in 1898. If no agreement on the partition of political power and fiscal resources could be reached, deployment of military power became the final option.

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[42] J. J. Van-Helten, 'German Capital, the Netherlands Railway Company and the Political Economy of the Transvaal, 1886–1900', *JAH*, IX, 3 (1978), pp. 369–90; Kenneth E. Wilburn, 'The Climax of Railway Competition in South Africa, 1886–1899', unpublished D. Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1982.

In preparation, Salisbury was obliged by Chamberlain and Balfour to take advantage of German insistence on a future share-out of Portuguese territories, in return for abstention from interference in Transvaal affairs, under an Agreement of 30 August 1898.[43] Diplomatic isolation of the Transvaal coincided with German mining capital's misgivings over Kruger's policies in a British 'sphere' about to be reclaimed by force.

EGYPT, THE SUDAN, AND EAST AFRICA

British policy in Cairo after 1890 presented the two dominant trends of the 1880s and 1890s: reliance on methods of clientage in the relationship between the Consul-General and the khedivate; and an acceptance by 1895 that the defence of this position required military and diplomatic action in the Sudan and neighbouring territory. Both policies stemmed from Salisbury's conviction that security in the eastern Mediterranean depended as much on Cairo as on Constantinople, which made Egypt and the Nile prime factors in British African diplomacy for reasons of prestige and power.

Under Baring (Lord Cromer), reserves were built up, taxes were restrained, and Britons, Armenians, and Syrians replaced Egyptians. True, there was resistance in 1892 by the new Khedive Abbas, better educated and with a following from within a nationalist movement. But displays of pride and French competition for khedival loyalty were not a threat. Power lay with Sir Edwin Palmer, as financial adviser, and in Cromer's command of the civil service and the Egyptian Frontier Force. The Khedive ruled, but Cromer controlled the state 'as a sort of unrecognised Prime Minister'.[44]

Although this position came to be tolerated by European powers except France, the stalemate with the Mahdist Sudan and creation of a British sphere between the Congo state and East Africa entailed a partition of interests around the Upper Nile. The hollowness of the claim to the 'western Nile Basin—as a British interpretation of the Anglo-German Agreement of 1890—was exposed when Rosebery and Anderson in the Foreign Office tried to use Leopold's Congo state as a buffer on the western Nile under the Agreement of April–May 1894, and were frustrated by France and Germany. What could not be achieved in bilateral negotiation was claimed unilaterally in the Grey Declaration of March 1895, as French pre-emptive rights to the Congo state were renewed and reinforced by military missions.

Two other precautions were taken to defend the Upper Nile, by agency work in Uganda, and diplomatic work in Somaliland and Ethiopia. Profiting from the Anglo-German Agreement, the Imperial British East Africa Company sent in F. D.

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[43] J. A. S. Grenville, *Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy* (London, 1964), pp. 186–98.
[44] Cromer, 'Memorandum', 22 Aug. 1892, *British Documents*, XV, p. 278.

Lugard to hoist the Company flag at Kampala and make a treaty with Kabaka Mwanga in December 1890, in order to collect revenue and campaign against Muslims in north-west Buganda. In fact, the Company was too weak for such a programme, and the position was saved only by missionary propaganda at home and religious partition in the field to avoid civil war in 1892, when a new Agreement divided territory between Catholics and Protestants. Gladstone and Harcourt favoured evacuation; Rosebery inherited Salisbury's view of the strategic importance of Buganda, reprieved the IBEA temporarily, and arranged in 1893 for a suitable report from the Consul-General at Zanzibar, recommending retention. As the Company moved out, a deputy for the administrator of British East Africa moved in and used a new treaty as a basis for a colonial Protectorate. As a final security, Salisbury's railway from Mombasa to Kisumu, rejected by Parliament in 1891, was begun in 1895.

On the eastern flank in Somaliland, British encouragement of Italian aspirations in Africa, in return for the Mediterranean Agreement of 1887 and support in Egypt, was confirmed by demarcation of spheres from the mouth of the Juba to the Blue Nile and between Eritrea and the Sudan. This left military use of Kassala open to Italy; and Rosebery countered French moves inland from Jibouti by delimitation of Somaliland, 5 May 1894, opening Harar to Italian occupation. This cooperation survived Italian defeat by Ethiopia at Adowa, 1 March 1896. But twelve days after Adowa Salisbury set in motion a British reconquest of the northern Sudan, while actively contesting French influence with Menelik and arranging a treaty, of 14 May 1897, to divide Ethiopians from Mahdists in the coming struggle between Abdallahi and Sir Herbert Kitchener, Sirdar of Egypt's army since 1889.

Behind that initiative, which sent Kitchener's army to Dongola and Berber, lay Salisbury's concern at French penetration of a British 'sphere' by Marchand's expedition from the Congo; and behind that episode and others in West Africa was 'the relative status of Britain and France as Powers'.[45] Destruction of the Mahdists at Omdurman in 1898 enabled Kitchener to face down Marchand at Fashoda and obtain his withdrawal. More importantly, Salisbury was able from June 1898 to assert a claim to the Sudan as a joint Anglo-Egyptian sphere of occupation and lift the incubus of international intervention under a Condominium Agreement of January 1899. Thus, both the deployment of force, including naval mobilization, and the use of a client state put an end to French claims to the Bahr al-Ghazal and Darfur by the Agreement of 21 March 1899 and saved Salisbury's political reputation, before a greater conflagration absorbed British Imperial energies in South Africa.

[45] G. N. Sanderson, 'The Origins and Significance of the Anglo-French Confrontation at Fashoda, 1898', in Prosser Gifford and Wm. Roger Louis, eds., *France and Britain in Africa: Imperial Policy and Colonial Rule* (New Haven, 1971), p. 289.

WESTERN AFRICA

From 1890 the practice of extending British influence and control north of the coastal enclaves by treaties and jurisdiction worked well enough, as long as claims were not challenged by African resistance or by French expansion. In Gambia and Sierra Leone, administrative patronage of chieftaincies in the interior was formalized by Protectorates in 1893 and 1895 on the models of Bechuanaland and Zululand. In the Gold Coast, Asante refused such patronage and was taken under a Resident at Kumasi.[46] In the Lagos hinterland administrators extended clientage by treaty with Yoruba states, after minor annexations and a display of force against Ijebu in 1892. To the north-east, Lagos Colony contested influence with the Royal Niger Company in Ilorin; and to the east the Niger Coast Protectorate was forced into a boundary demarcation at Forcados, in return for assurances the Company would not operate in the Lagos hinterland (Map 27.1).[47]

The African challenge to this elementary partition for jurisdiction and control arose from changes in the credit structure and the monopolies of trading systems in the Niger Delta markets under consular authority and Company rule, or from taxation and legislation for concessions in Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast. Eviction of prominent African merchants, suppression of a rising by middlemen at Akassa in 1894, and reform of the Oil Rivers' courts at Old Calabar, removed political leaders and turned more pliant Igbo, Ibibio, and Efik traders into 'consul men'.[48] While European firms declined to move inland, these agents operated networks which rivalled German trade at the Cross River, and challenged the RNC, prompting a formal enquiry into its methods in 1895. For the rest of the decade the Company was on trial, as it tried to extend its control by armed intervention in Nupe and Ilorin and contested the French advance to Bussa. In Sierra Leone the Hut Tax revolt of 1898 warned against imposing the costs of administrative partition on to chieftaincies; and Gold Coast resistance to the Lands Bill, 1894–97, warned that concessions in West Africa might have to be treated on a different basis from those in East Africa.

While treaties and use of force could be adapted to deal with problems of control, the unresolved contest with France over tariffs and frontiers left vague in the 1890 Agreement sharpened after French conquest of Dahomey. Protectionism in French treaties worried British exporters and was taken sufficiently seriously by Salisbury and Rosebery to obtain informal concessions to British trade in

[46] Newbury, ed., *British Policy Towards West Africa*, II, pp. 270, 292–95.

[47] Flint, *Goldie*, chap. 11; W. I. Ofonogoro, 'The Opening up of Southern Nigeria to British Trade and its Consequences: Economic and Social History, 1881–1916', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1971.

[48] Kannan K. Nair, *Politics and Society in South Eastern Nigeria, 1841–1906: A Study of Power, Diplomacy and Commerce in Old Calabar* (London, 1972), pp. 203–04.

Legend:

▥	Gold Coast Colony 1874
▧	Gold Coast Protectorate, 1896
▨	Niger Districts Protectorate, 1885
⋯	Main area of Royal Niger Company operation, 1886-1900

- - - ▶ Division between Protectorate of Northern Nigeria (1900-14) and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria (1906-14)

——▶ Lines of British advance after 1884

– – ▶ Lines of French advance after c.1880

⋯⋯▶ Lines of German advance after 1884

Map labels: St Louis, R. Senegal, Nioro, Timbuktu, Gao, R. Niger, Agades, Lake Chad, Cape Verde, Dakar, SENEGAL, Kayes, GAMBIA, Segu, R. Gambia, Zinder, Barruwa, Bathurst, Bamako, Say, Sokoto, 1898-1906, Wagadugu, Hausa-Fulani, Kano, Bornu, Futa Jalon, 1882-95, 1898, Zungeru, Jos, PROTECTORATE OF SIERRA LEONE 1896, Nikki, Bussa, Yola, Freetown, 1893, Ilorin, R. Benue, Sherbro I., Asante, DAHOMEY, Ibadan, Lokoja, 1885-1907, LIBERIA, Kumasi, Yoruba, Abeokuta, Benin, 1894, Monrovia, Fante, Accra, TOGO, Lagos, Elmina, Cape Coast, Bight of Benin, IVORY COAST, Fernando Po, 1884

MAP 27.1. Britain and the Partition of West Africa

Melilla (Sp)

Ceuta (Sp)

Madeira (Port)

Canary Is (Sp.)

MOROCCO

ALGERIA

TUNIS

Mediterranean Sea

TRIPOLI

EGYPT

RIO DE ORO

SENEGAL

GAMBIA

GUINEA

Lake Chad

ROYAL NIGER COMPANY

WADI

ERITREA

MAHDI

SOMALILAND

ETHIOPIA

SIERRA LEONE

LIBERIA

IVORY COAST

GOLD COAST

TOGO

DAHOMEY

LAGOS

OIL RIVERS

CAMEROON

Fernando Po (Sp)

S. Tomé (Port)

FRENCH CONGO

Atlantic Ocean

IMPERIAL BRITISH EAST AFRICA CO.

CONGO FREE STATE

ZANZIBAR

CABINDA

GERMAN EAST AFRICA

CENTRAL AFRICA PROTECTORATE

ANGOLA

SOUTH-WEST AFRICA

Walvis Bay (Br)

B.S.A. COMPANY

MOZAMBIQUE

TRANSVAAL

MADAGASCAR

BECHUANALAND

SWAZILAND

ZULULAND

NATAL

O.F.S.

BASUTOLAND

CAPE COLONY

PONDOLAND

Indian Ocean

miles 0 ... 1000

km 0 ... 1000

- - - Boundary of Free Trade Zone established by Berlin Act, 1885

Turkish Suzerainty

Portuguese

British

French

Congo Free State

German

Spanish

Italian

MAP 27.2. Britain and the Partition of Africa, c.1891: International Boundaries and Areas of Effective Occupation

Guinea and the French Sudan in Anglo-French boundary negotiations for Sierra Leone, 22 January 1895. But trade rights remained an issue for both sides as diplomacy concentrated on reconciling territorial claims in Gwandu and Borgu with French claims to a port on the Niger.

Behind this contest in the west lay, too, the problem of Egypt. Kimberley might well have linked Niger territory to the Nile, after the collapse of the Anglo-Congolese agreement in 1894, but not to the extent of withdrawal from Borgu and self-denial in the Sudan.[49] The march on Dongola ruled out any such trade-off; and the evidence is that while Egypt continued to sour relations, the Nile provinces were excluded from negotiations over West Africa. At most the impending crisis over Marchand's advance to Fashoda served to concentrate diplomatic minds, before public rhetoric became too strident.

On the British side Joseph Chamberlain's arrival at the Colonial Office stiffened Salisbury and British representatives on the Anglo-French Niger Commission in Paris and allowed time to build up 'a small West African army' and back doubtful treaty claims by force.[50] Use of force against French patrols was sanctioned in 1897 for the region west of Sokoto, and advances from Lagos into Borgu were military precautions against diplomatic failure. The stakes were raised from February 1898, when partition and freedom of trade on the Niger were linked with wider tariff harmonization. Once this bargain was accepted in Paris, the last arguments about a port of access and the division of Borgu and Mossi were settled, leaving the most populous emirates to the British sphere.

The Anglo-French Convention of 14 June 1898 demarcated the frontiers of the Gold Coast and Northern Nigeria contiguous to French territories, and was complemented by an agreement on the neutral zone boundary with German Togo. It spelled the end of the RNC as a political agency; its tortuous background negotiations over a region of exaggerated worth risked political reputations and national prestige. As such, the Convention marked a climax in British official and unofficial chauvinism represented by Chamberlain and Goldie, as much as British moves to consolidate a hold on Egypt and advance on the Upper Nile marked the high point of a more subtle Imperial resolve in the style of Salisbury and Cromer.

Ratification of the 1898 Convention the following year and agreement by France to stay out of the Bahr-al-Ghazal and Darfur had a significance beyond Africa. In combination with increasing naval and industrial competition with Germany,

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[49] Anderson, Memorandum, 13 Oct. 1894, cited in Claire Hirshfield, *The Diplomacy of Partition: Britain, France and the Creation of Nigeria, 1890–1898* (The Hague, 1979), p. 65.

[50] Chamberlain to Maxwell, 4 June 1897, in Newbury, ed., *British Policy Towards West Africa*, II, p. 224.

these settlements unblocked the way to an accommodation with France and an approach to Russia to settle contests in Asia.

Before that could happen British policy survived international vulnerability during the South African War, because of naval command of the approaches to South Africa. By 1900 the isolation which Salisbury had used to advantage was recognized as dangerous in terms of continental naval combinations. Chamberlain and Balfour were willing to seek an approach to Russia through France, rejecting further overtures to Germany. The occasion for a rapproachement offered in North Africa, where France still refused recognition of the occupation of Egypt, exercising a veto over funds administered by the Debt Commission, and where both powers sought patronage over the sultan of Morocco. British influence weakened in Rabat and French leverage weakened in Cairo as Egypt's finances improved, resulting in Agreements (1903–04), which included toleration of British occupation in return for withdrawal from Moroccan customs control.[51] Diplomatically the Anglo-French Entente of 1904 led to support for France against Germany during the two Moroccan crises of 1904–06 and 1911. Acceptance of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium by Menelik in 1902, and abandonment of claims to the Sudan provinces by Leopold in 1906, rounded off two decades of British intervention by diplomacy and force on the Nile.

Partition did not stop there with lines on maps. The map was redrawn, of course, for some German territories after 1914. But cartography was only one aspect of the partition of peoples and resources. Reallocation of territory continued as access to land and minerals featured in provincial and district demarcations and concessions.[52] African revolts, 1900–06, in Asante and Zululand, and the conquest of Northern Nigeria, resulted in division of authority in both hierarchical and geopolitical terms, as major ethnic units were incorporated into colonial units. The clearest cases of resource allocation through internal partition were those favouring white settlers, which took place in Rhodesia in the 1890s, in Kenya's highlands from 1902, and continuously in South Africa over a longer period. Everywhere in British Africa partition 'changed the cultural landscape',[53] and left boundaries which testify to the results of conflict resolution between European powers and between the British and their successors.

[51] Pierre Guillen, 'The Entente of 1904 as a Colonial Settlement', in Gifford and Louis, eds., *France and Britain*, pp. 333–68.

[52] *CPA*, Nos. 537, 772, 869, 929, for partition of resources in East and Central Africa; Newbury, ed., *British Policy Towards West Africa*, II, pp. 519–93, for concessions in British West Africa; and for boundaries, A. I. Asiwaju and P. O. Adeniyi, eds., *Borderlands in Africa: A Multidisciplinary and Comparative Focus on Nigeria and West Africa* (Lagos, 1989).

[53] Antoine Jean Bullier, *Partition et répartition: Afrique du Sud, histoire d'une stratégie ethnique (1880–1980)* (Paris, 1988).

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28

The British Occupation of Egypt from 1882

AFAF LUTFI AL-SAYYID-MARSOT

Many contemporaries doubted neither the necessity nor the ultimate success of Britain's intervention in Egypt, designed to overcome the economic and political crisis of 1875–82. According to Sir Alfred Milner:

Here was a country... which during the last half-century had been becoming ever more and more an appanage of Europe, in which thousands of European lives and millions of European capital were at stake, and in which of all European nations Great Britain was, by virtue of its enormous direct trade and still more enormous transit trade, the most deeply interested. And this country, which the common efforts and sacrifices of all the Powers had just dragged from the verge of bankruptcy, was now threatened, not with bankruptcy merely, but with a reign of blank barbarism... And when at last we had overcome our conscientious, if ill-timed hesitancy, our action was beyond all anticipation prompt and effective. Let it always be remembered that Great Britain did save Egypt from anarchy, and all European nations interested in Egypt from incalculable losses in blood and treasure, to say nothing of the deep dishonour which those losses... would have brought on civilized mankind.[1]

Milner's account, published in 1892 immediately after his three years at the Egyptian Finance Ministry, was constantly reprinted to reiterate contemporary wisdom. Its thirteenth edition appeared in 1920, timed to remind politicians of Britain's achievement as they contemplated a new, post-war settlement of Anglo-Egyptian relations. It was, nevertheless, a study revealing more of the official class to which Milner belonged and the audience for which he wrote, than of Britain's interest in and impact upon the country which it virtually ruled.

That there was some truth in Milner's description of Egypt's position on the eve of Britain's invasion is clear from the broad outlines of Britain's nineteenth-century involvement with Egypt. Napoleon's Egyptian campaign in July 1798, his conquest of Alexandria and Cairo, and his advance into Syria, may now seem ill-calculated,

[1] Viscount Milner, *England in Egypt*, 11th edn. (London, 1904), pp. 13–14.

short-lived ventures. Napoleon himself returned to France in August 1799, and the French were finally driven out of Egypt by British arms in 1801. British officials, however, remained conscious of French ambitions to dominate the Mediterranean, their search for influence or territory in North Africa and the Levant, and the potential threat these posed, to Britain's own Mediterranean commerce which grew rapidly after 1840, and to the far greater interests which she was accumulating in India. During the nineteenth century nothing happened to calm these worries; if anything, they grew more serious.[2]

In Egypt itself, two sustained processes were at work. Under both Muhammad Ali and later khedives government policy aimed in various ways to exploit European resources—capital, communications, technical skills, and education—to establish Egypt's effective independence of Constantinople. This state-building exercise became entangled with the associated transformation of Egypt's economy, which took a direction contrary to khedival ambitions. Well before 1880 modernization, diversification, and industrial growth were being moulded by incorporation into a global economy, principally as a supplier to Europe of raw materials, notably cotton, and consumer of its manufactured goods.

Economic change had significant social and political consequences. Not only overseas connections but the numbers of resident 'foreigners' grew considerably, from c.8,000–10,000 in 1838 to some 90,000 by 1881. This polyglot capitalist community embraced not only Armenians, Jews, Greeks, and others from the eastern Mediterranean, but British, French, and Italians, newcomers as well as old. Indigenous élites also thrived: surviving members of the traditional Turco-Circassian ruling class increasingly integrated into Egyptian society; landed proprietors, from highly placed members of the extended royal and official families down to local village notables; and administrators with Western educations absorbed into the enlarged state machine. Blurring distinctions between 'foreign' and 'indigenous', 'European' and 'Egyptian', these groups lived together in uneasy relationships, at once co-operative and intensely competitive, participants in a kaleidoscopic medley of economic ambition and social, ethnic, or occupational bonds.

The careers of Muhammad Ali's successors after 1848 demonstrated how inadequate Egypt's own institutions were to the management of this rapidly expanding economy with its attendant social change and domestic political challenges. They also revealed that external impositions, in the shape of ever-freer trade and extraterritorial privileges for Europeans, while designed to remedy local 'deficiencies', tended simultaneously to unleash a tide of commercial rapacity which seriously exacerbated local problems, hindering the development of local indus-

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[2] See above, pp. 10–12.

tries and destroying the trust, confidence, and sense of proportion essential to sound exchange.[3]

Matters came to a head under the Khedive Ismail (1863–79). Fresh attempts at industrialization faltered without adequate local powers of trade protection, and financial problems arose from his involvement in construction of the Suez Canal. Constant borrowing, unchecked by internal government restraints, much of which was spent on public works and economic improvements but with some waste on unproductive investments, finally brought bankruptcy in 1875–76.[4] With commercial confidence temporarily shattered, the livelihoods of firms, business groups, and individuals of many nationalities were also threatened. External intervention therefore followed, led by private financial interests in Britain and France. A body known as the Caisse de la Dette Publique, organized by the four chief bondholding European powers, was set up to supervise the Egyptian budget and economy, and to make sure the bondholders were paid. A Dual Control (whereby two controllers, an Englishman and a Frenchman, came to control the Egyptian economy) was imposed in 1876. Stringent financial controls and economies provoked great discontent and disputes with the Khedive, which led the Powers to engineer his deposition by the Ottoman Sultan in 1879.

With European governments still anxious to limit their direct involvement, a full financial settlement, the Law of Liquidation, was devised and imposed on Ismail's weak son and successor, Tawfiq (1879–92). A Commission dominated by the British and French but also including Germany, Austria, and Italy, was established to manage the two-thirds of Egypt's revenues assigned to Debt repayment, but also with considerable influence over the revenues left in Egyptian government hands. More than 1,300 foreign officials were brought in at highly inflated salaries to do work previously done more cheaply by Egyptians. Resentment at such actions not only fuelled anti-European feeling but undermined the remaining prestige of the Khedive's government. This resulted in the Urabi Rebellion of September 1881, a military revolt led by the only four native Egyptian colonels in the army; with its nationalist slogan of 'Egypt for the Egyptians' directed at their Turco-Circassian rulers, it was broadly supported among élite groups, intellectuals, and the rural population.

This marked the final phase of the crisis, prompting British fears for the security of the Suez Canal and worry among Europeans that the Egyptian nationalists might renege on repayment of the Debt. The Khedive dreaded deposition by his army, which, with considerable civilian support, was demanding a constitution.

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[3] David S. Landes, *Bankers and Pashas: International Finance and Economic Imperialism in Egypt* (London, 1958); see above, pp. 149–53.

[4] Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800–1914* (London, 1981), pp. 127–28.

When an Anglo-French Joint Note was presented in January 1882 and a naval force was sent to Egypt in May, as gestures of support for the ruler, they only provoked yet more unrest and further weakened the Khedive. Riots in Alexandria in June, involving Europeans fearing massacre and Egyptians afraid of imminent occupation, resulted in the killing of about fifty Europeans and 170 Egyptians. Panic, arrogance, desperate concern for British strategic and economic interests, partial information, and biased reportage blended in a final confusion of thought and intention which has generated debate ever since about British motives.[5] Alexandria was bombarded by the Royal Navy. When the Ottoman Sultan refused to intervene, a military expedition was planned which the French also refused to join. With the Khedive's backing, British troops landed on 16 August and defeated Egyptian nationalist forces in the Battle of Tel-el-Kebir (13 September). Thus began the occupation of Egypt.

British government pronouncements suggested that Britain's occupation was temporary, its intention being to 'rescue' Egypt from 'disorder' and the Egyptian throne from a nationalist movement, dubbed a 'military mutiny', and then to 'retire'. There was in reality neither general agreement nor clearly conceived policy. While liberals anticipated rapid restoration of Egyptian political control, hardliners in Whitehall and men on the spot, notably Sir Evelyn Baring (British Consul-General from September 1883, later Lord Cromer), reasoned otherwise. The fundamental incompatibility between desire for rapid withdrawal and the time required to create the stability which was its precondition became ever more apparent, especially after Britain's forced evacuation of the Sudan in 1885 and her failure to secure the Convention negotiated with the Ottoman Sultan in 1887. Ever more strongly supported by the Foreign Office, Baring persuaded successive Imperial governments of the need to remain and reform not only Egyptian finances, which he returned to solvency by 1889, but a wide range of other institutions.[6]

Prominent in arguments for prolonging the occupation was the Suez Canal. British Military and Naval Intelligence became steadily more convinced that the security of Imperial routes required direct control; and a naval base like Alexandria, added to Malta and Cyprus, strengthened Britain's regional position. There were beneficial economic interests, evident before 1875 but growing steadily in importance after 1882 as a consequence of the measures to restore Egyptian solvency: Egyptian long-staple cotton for the mills of Lancashire, valuable markets

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[5] A. G. Hopkins, 'The Victorians and Africa: A Reconsideration of the Occupation of Egypt, 1882', *Journal of African History*, XXVII (1986), pp. 363–91.

[6] Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid, *Egypt and Cromer* (London, 1968); Alexander Schölch, *Egypt for the Egyptians* (Ithaca, NY, 1981).

for British goods, and opportunities for overseas investment.[7] Interwoven with other private preoccupations like careers and pensions, as well as genuine belief that Egyptians could not run their own country effectively, these interests came to seem increasingly vulnerable to a British withdrawal.

Politically, the occupation profoundly influenced Egypt's development. Local attempts between 1879 and 1882 to limit the Khedive's autocracy through constitutional reform were ignored. 'Good government' was exalted above 'self government', and British advisers were gradually placed in all departments to guide the Egyptian ministers. Their association with Baring as no more than 'British Agent and Consul-General' sustained the fiction of Cairo's subordination to Constantinople, but in practice Egyptian ministers who disagreed with advisers on what they designated 'important questions' were forced to resign. The Khedive, Tawfiq, accepted British rule to safeguard his throne, and appointed a series of Cabinet ministers likely to defer to British advice. The Egyptian army was temporarily disbanded before being refashioned under British officers, and British forces, financed from the Egyptian treasury, were stationed permanently in Egypt. This system, whereby the Egyptians supposedly ruled their own country, but were manipulated by British advisers responsible to no one save Baring, came to be known as the 'Veiled Protectorate'. As a form of Imperial political control, although evoking striking parallels with British administration in India, it remained *sui generis*.[8]

British contempt for Egyptians was perhaps most starkly illustrated in their handling of the Sudan. Conquered in 1822 by Muhammad Ali, it had revolted against Egyptian rule in 1880 under the aegis of a religious leader, known as the Mahdi (see Map 28.1). In 1883–84, after humiliating defeats by Mahdist troops, the Egyptians were prevented from further attempts at reconquest, and Gladstone's ministry accepted Baring's arguments that cost and security necessitated complete withdrawal. Reconquest of the Sudan only took place in 1896–98, and then according to Imperial diplomatic and military calculations with no intention of rebuilding Egypt's empire. From 1899 the Sudan was put under a condominium government in which ostensibly Egypt and Britain ruled jointly, but where in practice Britain ruled and Egypt paid.[9]

Cowed by a failed nationalist revolt, Urabi's court-martial and exile to Ceylon, and a foreign occupation, the bulk of the population followed the Khedive's lead, and for a decade remained more or less politically quiescent. In the early 1890s, however, a nationalist movement revived at the hands of young men who were, at

[7] See Table 28.1.

[8] E. R. J. Owen, 'The Influence of Lord Cromer's Indian Experience on British Policy in Egypt, 1883–1907', *St Antony's Papers*, XVII (1965), pp. 109–39.

[9] See above, pp. 643–44.

Legend:

- Approximate limits of Mahdist influence, mid-1894
- Lado enclave, leased to Leopold II, 1894
- International frontier, with date of agreement with Britain
- Railway
- Anglo-Egyptian conquest of the Sudan from 1896
- Line of French advance from Equatorial Africa
- Line of advance of Congo Free State
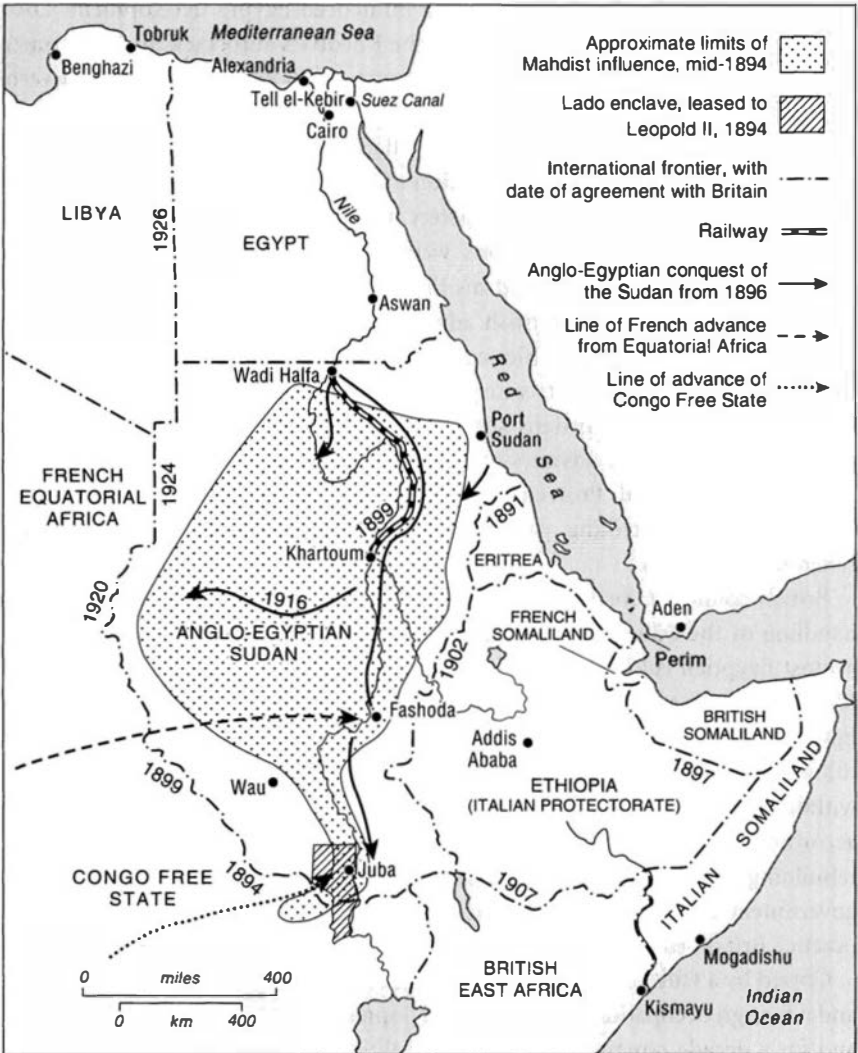
MAP 28.1. Egypt and the Sudan

first, aided and abetted by Tawfiq's successor, the Khedive Abbas II (1892–1914). When Abbas tried to rid himself of the restraints of British rule, in confrontations with Baring during 1893–94 over his choice of ministers and army issues, he was threatened with dethronement and exile, and his popularity rose markedly. The movement tried to rouse nationalist feelings among the wider population and so generate a groundswell of opposition to the occupation that would force an evacuation. It had variable success among the literate and educated young, particularly after 1900 under two very different leaders, the gifted orator journalist Mustafa Kamil, and the scholarly liberal constitutionalist Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid.

When Lord Cromer retired in 1907, his successor Sir Eldon Gorst was instructed by the Foreign Office to pursue a different policy, one of friendship with the Khedive in order to stem the rising nationalist current. However, the nationalists, after 1904 no longer hopeful of French support, had by then parted company with the Khedive. While apparently open to nationalist approaches, Gorst died in 1911 and was replaced by Lord Kitchener. Kitchener disliked and continued to alienate the Khedive, but his talks with the nationalists regarding independence from the Ottomans also produced no progress towards self rule before the outbreak of war in 1914. Britain's occupation thus deferred self-government, turning Egyptian authorities and officials into cogs in the wheel of a British-directed administration.

This process of tying Egypt more closely to the Empire was reinforced by international circumstances. The Ottoman suzerain, always needing British support against Russian infringement of his territories, acquiesced in the arrangement. The responsibilities of the Caisse de la Dette, which continued to oversee Egyptian revenues and secure interest repayments, allowed member Powers the possibility of vetoing measures touching economic matters. French and German opposition to British actions in many parts of the world was expressed through the Caisse by limiting access to funds, but this only intensified Britain's feeling that she should stay. After 1882 British officials—like their Egyptian predecessors and others elsewhere, such as the Chinese—found foreign nationals endlessly vexatious. Again according to Milner: 'the foreign residents, and especially the Greeks ... are obstreperous and exacting. The Capitulations remove them, to a great extent, from the control of the authorities, and their consuls are disposed to push foreign privilege to its extremest limits.'[10] Following Turkey's support for Germany in November 1914, the British at last unilaterally declared Egypt a Protectorate and imposed a new ruler.

British rule in Egypt was as authoritarian as that of the Khedives. One alien power, Britain, replaced another, the Ottoman suzerain, both intent on using the equally

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[10] Milner, *England in Egypt*, p. 318.

alien Egyptian royal family as their tool. British rule was more orderly and efficient, but no new institutions were established. The administrative arts of census-taking, statistical measurement, and policing were the system's forte, areas of responsibility such as education its Achilles' heel. Baring's reforms and administration concentrated above all on the technical and financial measures necessary to restore long-term solvency, and to minimize European intervention while cultivating local support. This involved stimulating agricultural exports, supporting essential public works, raising government revenues, and attracting foreign capital. These measures inevitably extended the occupation, produced drastic economic changes in both the agricultural and industrial sectors, created stronger bonds with British production, and gave a new direction to Egyptian society.

Well before 1882 Egypt had became a major exporter of cotton to England and a substantial importer of British finished goods. As the result of expanded irrigation works and an increase in the area devoted to cotton production to between 750,000 and 875,000 faddans, cotton provided 76 per cent of all exports by 1880. From the mid-1890s, under the British administration, growth recommenced still more rapidly; cotton farms occupied 1,700,000 faddans from a total cultivated area of 7.5 million between 1909 and 1912, and cotton exports reached 93 per cent.[11]

Symbolic of the link between this transformation and the new balance of political power were the Anglo-Indian irrigation engineers brought in by the new administration. Unlike their predecessors, in Milner's words, 'They do not sit at headquarters, but traverse the country from end to end. And they have a power behind them, which ensures their advice being followed... That is the root of the whole matter... European skill is useless without European authority.'[12] Agriculture the year round and over far wider areas followed completion of the Aswan Dam (1902) and other lesser works by 1908.

Trade with Britain reached 63 per cent of total exports and 38 per cent of imports in the late 1890s, and while trade with other countries also increased significantly, it did so in different proportions. Thus, in 1909, while the total trade with Britain reached £E13m, doubling that of 1885–89, that with France had also doubled, but only from £E1m to £E2m; trade with Turkey, which a century earlier had formed the bulk of Egyptian trade, increased by barely £E1,000. Because the cotton crop was so lucrative, the area devoted to other major food export crops (onions, rice, beans, barley, sugar) declined between 1886 and 1909. By then Egypt was in serious danger of becoming a single-crop economy. Eventually, even basic foods—cereals, peas, and lentils—had to be imported to meet the shortfall in local supplies.[13]

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[11] One faddan is slightly larger than an acre. A. E. Crouchley, *The Economic Development of Modern Egypt* (London, 1938), pp. 153, 259, 263–64.

[12] Milner, *England in Egypt*, p. 233.

[13] Crouchley, *Economic Development*, p. 169; Owen, *The Middle East*, pp. 110–16, 136, 218.

Agricultural lands owned by the khedivial family, known as the Daira Saniyya (Domain lands) and used as collateral on its various loans, were also sold off. With sales organized in parcels of over 50 faddans, the equivalent of a comparatively large estate, only the affluent—usually existing large landowners—could afford to buy them. Sometimes the buyers were foreigners, as in 1898 when unsold Daira Saniyya lands, some 108,122 faddans, were sold off to just four French and British nationals. By 1907 foreigners controlled roughly 12 per cent of the land. However, most went to existing local landowners, thus strengthening the notables on whom the British relied to keep order in the countryside. Such sales complemented the insistence on free trade, helping to ensure that cotton remained the favoured crop, and so guaranteeing the support of the landowners who sold their cotton crop to England (Table 28.1).[14]

These developments pressed hard on the peasants (fellahin). Although population grew from 7.6 to 12.3 million (1880–1914), peasant-produced food crops remained less financially rewarding than either cotton or rice, which were grown mainly by the medium and large landowners. This perpetuated a trend, evident shortly after 1821 when long-staple cotton was first discovered in Egypt, and paralleled in many parts of British India, whereby small landowners were slowly squeezed out of their holdings and obliged to sell to the large. Rising demand for land, which had become the major source of wealth in the country for Egyptians, brought increased land prices and rents and a marked decline in the average size of peasant holdings, thus bankrupting many of the less wealthy. Large estates, latifundia, grew at the expense of the middling and small owners and occupiers.

TABLE 28.1. *Egypt's foreign trade, 1885–1913* (annual averages, £E000)

	Imports				Exports	
	Textiles: cloth and thread	Cereals, flour and vegetables	Coffee, sugar	Total all imports	Cotton and cotton seed	Total all exports
1885–89	2,586	720	309	7,947	9,874	12,548
1890–94	2,981	736	323	8,872	11,322	14,494
1895–99	3,161	1,112	257	10,249	12,338	14,963
1900–04	4,898	1,672	318	16,297	17,779	20,583
1905–09	6,296	3,260	765	23,805	24,412	27,161
1910–13	7,178	3,321	838	26,238	29,675	32,652

Source: Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800–1914* (London, 1981), p. 241

[14] Asim Disuqi, *Kibar mullak al-aradi al-ziraiyya wa dawruhum fi-l mujtama al-Misri* [Large Landowners and their Role in Egyptian Society] (Cairo, 1975); Ali Barakat, *Tatawwur al-milkiyya al-ziraiyya fi Misr wa atharuh ala-l-haraka al-siyasiyya* [The Development of Agricultural Landownership in Egypt and its Effect on the Political Movement] (Cairo, 1977).

Growing numbers of poor or landless peasants then became part of a large reservoir of cheap labour for the cotton fields of the wealthy landowners. As the population grew, peasants relied more on cheaper but less nutritious staples such as maize. Furthermore, the turnover of the land from basin to perennial irrigation encouraged the growth of parasites in the irrigation canals, which infected more and more peasants, causing the debilitating diseases bilharzia and schistomiasis. The physical output of the peasant diminished, and the diseases eventually often killed him.

Changes in industry were just as drastic and were closely related to those in agriculture. Baring frowned on the establishment of local industries, especially any requiring economic protection, which was persistently refused. Only those relating to the processing of cotton or to those with 'natural advantages' (soap, sugar, bakeries) were allowed.[15] Whatever industries arose were often financed and owned by foreigners who benefited from the Capitulations by not being subject to Egyptian laws, and could avoid taxes paid by Egyptian nationals. Furthermore, all state enterprises set up by the Khedive Ismail were sold, many to new European immigrants, to pay off Egypt's loans. Entrepreneurs brave enough to set up industries linked to cotton-weaving were made to pay an 8 per cent tax on textiles produced locally, making them little cheaper than textiles imported from Britain that also paid an 8 per cent duty. Egyptians seeking to invest in industries found themselves battling against excess taxes and unrestrained international competition. There nevertheless emerged after 1890 a highly complex pattern of rival coalitions of local investors and business groups, a 'business oligarchy' of old residents and newcomers, nationals, resident and non-resident foreigners, whose investments spanned industry, trade, transport, and landed property. United not by simple ethnic or 'international capitalist' identities, but by substantial local interests and an entrepreneurial ethic, their members had increasingly to be cultivated by Cromer and his successors.[16]

In his two-volume work *Modern Egypt*, Baring justified his economic programme in Egypt by contrasting his fiscal rectitude with Ismail's 'spendthrift ways'.[17] Yet Egypt's foreign debt increased to £E116.6m over the two decades following the occupation, spent mainly on irrigation works and other improvements to the infrastructure similar to Ismail's expenditures. While 30 per cent of the country's exports went to pay the Public Debt, the remainder was spent on consumption, expatriated or reinvested in the export sector, leaving little for

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[15] Robert Mabro and Samir Radwan, *The Industrialization of Egypt, 1939–73* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 19–20.
[16] Robert Vitalis, *When Capitalists Collide: Business Conflict and the End of Empire in Egypt* (Berkeley, 1995), chaps. 1–2.
[17] Earl of Cromer, *Modern Egypt*, 2 vols. (London, 1908).

domestic investment (Table 28.2).[18] Egypt's evident economic well-being was the justification most frequently given for the continued British occupation of the country. Yet when financial solvency was pursued at the cost of destroying local industries, allowing trade and commerce to fall into British or other foreign hands, and denuding the majority of their country's wealth in favour of foreigners, the programme alienated Egyptians of all classes. Indeed, ending the transfer of Egyptian wealth into foreign pockets became a justification for ridding Egypt of the occupation. Baring only exacerbated Egyptian animosity when he claimed that there was no Egyptian nationality, as most of the country's wealth lay in foreign hands, and that all the nationalists meant to do was exploit their fellow countrymen. It was clear to Egyptian political and social élites that that was precisely what Britain was doing while claiming to protect the Egyptian peasant.

Egyptian society under the occupation was also to change in a number of ways. Past Egyptian rulers had tried to bring in European codes, such as the Code Napoléon, to replace the Sharia (law based in part on the teachings of the Koran, the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, and on analogy and consensus). According to Ottoman regulations non-Muslims were judged by their own religious sects, under the *millet* system. Ismail and his minister, Nubar Pasha, had tried to create a legal system that would allow commercial litigation between Egyptians and foreigners. This produced a new hybrid, the Mixed Courts, but the judges were mostly Europeans with but few Egyptians, and lawyers licensed to plead before these courts had to be Western-trained and cognizant of a foreign language. Baring, who was contemptuous of Islam and the Islamic laws of the Sharia, continued the process of Europeanizing the law. This resulted in the rise of a school for judges and a school for law, mostly taught in French since the legal system was based on the Code Napoléon.

TABLE 28.2. *Egypt's balance of trade and movements of capital, 1884–1914* (£E)

Period	Adverse balance of trade	Inflow of capital
1884–92	419,000	12,000
1893–97	1,268,000	1,065,000
1898–1902	2,723,000	2,144,000
1903–07	9,072,000	8,616,000
1908–14	2,550,000	3,150,000

Source: A. E. Crouchley, *The Investment of Foreign Capital in Egyptian Companies and Public Debt* (Cairo, 1936), p. 196.

[18] Mabro and Radwan, *Industrialization of Egypt*, pp. 19–20.

Knowledge of a foreign language increased the popularity of foreign institutions of learning which served not only to educate a new élite but also to distance or alienate them from their own language and culture. While Baring bemoaned the lack of education, he nevertheless refused government money for public schools, and the increasing limitation of Muslim establishments to purely religious learning evident before 1882, continued. The administration became crowded with Englishmen, Maltese, and Levantines, hired because they spoke English or French. Young Egyptians, educated either abroad or among the 60,000 or so in Egypt's private 'western' schools by 1910, were made subservient to equally young Englishmen. The latter, imported in growing numbers, helped to exacerbate nationalist feelings. The new taxes and legal system were totally incomprehensible to the workers and the peasants. When the latter lost their land for failure to pay taxes, they resorted to social brigandage—a phenomenon Cromer, like the often alien and absentee landowners, failed to grasp. Society thus became divided between the Europeanized administration and élites, and the masses whose culture remained Islamic and Arabic.[19]

The increasing numbers of foreign residents encouraged altered patterns of consumption. Changes in fashion and consumption already begun under Ismail accelerated under the occupation. In major cities, traditional artisanal workshops made way for new-style department stores, owned and run by wealthy outsiders. These sold European goods, encouraging fashionable changes in lifestyle for the affluent Egyptian who built new Italianate-style villas, apartments, and government buildings, designed by Italian and Greek architects. Furniture changed from *a la turca* to European, as did *objets d'art*. In brief, everything European from food to musical instruments was adopted by élites desperate to show their occupiers how westernized they had become. This displaced numerous local workers in favour of Greek, Italian, Armenian, and Maltese immigrants, who took over significant areas of production, only occasionally using Egyptians as their apprentices.[20]

Lastly, many women also experienced further changes in their position. Women in the eighteenth century had had considerable opportunities. According to Islamic law they were free to own property, invest widely, and sue in the courts over financial or personal matters, supported by the *ulama* (clerics). Under a more centralized regime beginning with Muhammad Ali, they were isolated and pushed out of professions they had previously practised. Muhammad Ali had monopolized all money-making venues and allowed only males who served him to benefit

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[19] Robert L. Tignor, *Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882–1914* (Princeton, 1966), pp. 319–30.
[20] J. Beinin and Z. Lockman, *Workers on the Nile* (Princeton, 1987), pp. 33–35.

from them.[21] The development of new interest groups in the course of the nine-
teenth century had eroded their position still further, but in the 1880s and 1890s
women were encouraged to become educated in the European fashion and con-
sequently became avid consumers of European goods.[22] Cromer, like many others,
pointed to the position of women as an indication of the backwardness of Egypt
and hence its unfitness for self-rule. To belie this accusation, élites hurried to
educate women in foreign-language schools, most opened by missionaries and
religious orders. Where in the past élite women, a whole strata of whom were alien,
spoke Turkish, using Arabic only for religious activities, now an entire generation
of indigenous élite women arose who spoke better French than Turkish or Arabic,
and were better acquainted with European culture than their own. This reduced
still further the possibility of managing their own economic affairs, and kept them
just as dependent as before on males.

The immediate outcome of the occupation was to limit the income-generating
possibilities of the average Egyptian, and to displace many by non-Egyptians. It
entrenched a new class system, composed of large landowners, a business oligar-
chy, and small middle class of government bureaucrats, and a large class of workers
and peasants. It exacerbated the chasm between the élites and the masses by
encouraging foreign elements in the administration, and created groups with
totally different world outlooks as a consequence of different kinds of education
and cultural upbringing. Last, but not least, it inhibited industrialization and the
search for alternative sources of wealth while entrenching a large landowning class
depending for its income on the sale of cotton to Britain. For Imperial Britain, the
occupation provided a naval base and strengthened control of an indispensable
passage to Asia. It provided a market for British goods and a guaranteed source of
raw materials for British industries. Lastly, it acted as a safety valve for surplus
youth, allowing young men to find positions overseas that they could not have
found at home.

   Colonial occupations have invariably prompted the rise of nationalist move-
ments underlining the economic, legal, and political discrimination inseparable
from foreign rule. Egypt was no exception either in this or in the willingness of its
people after 1914 to overturn 'efficient' government in favour of a less 'efficient'
one, to escape colonial subordination and conscious alienation. Nationalist move-
ments, however, are born not only of resentment and resistance, much as events
such as the shocking British retribution for the Danishway (Dinshawai) incident

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[21] Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, *Women and Men in Eighteenth-Century Egypt* (Austin, Tex., 1995), p.
140.
[22] Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 113.

of 1906 lived on in Egyptian memories.[23] They are also the creation of Imperial rulers' never-ending search for collaborators, of the cultural and political adaptation found necessary by rulers and ruled to sustain government and promote social and economic improvement. Cromer's caution, his capable but unimaginative administration, his inflexibility, and genuflection towards Indian precedents, often caused offence. But they also embodied values akin to those important to Ahmad Lutfi's People's Party in the years immediately before 1914, the civic virtues, Western education, rule of law, and the reformation of Islamic society, appropriate to the independent Egypt which emerged after 1918.

[23] al-Sayyid, *Egypt and Cromer*, p. 173. In a confrontation between local villages and British officers out shooting at Danishway, one officer was killed and several injured. A special tribunal summarily sentenced four Egyptians to be hanged and fourteen to be flogged, in public.

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Cultural Encounters: Britain and Africa in the Nineteenth Century

T. C. MCCASKIE

Encounters between cultures are complex, ambiguous, and unstable transactions, simultaneously events in time and works of the imagination. Their leitmotif is a tangled knot of realities and representations. This is difficult to untie, for it clothes issues of cause and effect in projections and fantasies. Motive and purpose then become hard to tease out of an already complex factual record that reveals the process of encounter between cultures as a constantly shifting kaleidoscope of give and take. Tension is implicit in this quotidian incommensurability between cultures. Thus, imperatives to imposition and acculturation by one side invoke strategies of negotiation and inculturation by the other. The historical result is an ever evolving cultural hybrid in which imagined, willed, and contingent acts are densely interwoven.[1]

Irrespective of disparities in power, cultural encounters between Britain and Africa in the nineteenth century conformed to the model just described. It is important to acknowledge this, for it is all too easy—but profoundly misleading— to equate the achieved territorial substance of the British Empire in Africa with a hegemony in areas other than the geographical. The image conjured up by this misreading supposes a nineteenth-century retrospect in which an ascendant Britain stamped its cultural imprint ever more forcefully upon passive or otherwise cowed Africans. Leaving aside the issue of Britain's purposes and her own understanding of them, this is simply untrue. The British encounter with African cultures in the nineteenth century—as indeed in the twentieth—was never a direct, one-way road leading from London. This is not to deny the potency of British influence. But it is to situate it in a dialogue. On both sides of this conversation, cultural encounters commonly led to unforeseen or unintended

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[1] Compare Gananath Obeyesekere, *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook: European Mythmaking in the Pacific* (Princeton, 1992), with Marshall Sahlins, *How 'Natives' Think: About Captain Cook, For Example* (Chicago, 1995). For the early history of the British in West Africa, see Vol. I, chap. by P. E. H. Hair and Robin Law, and Vol. II, chap. by David Richardson.

consequences. Britain assimilated readings and misreadings of Africa to her own concerns with the continent. Africa reciprocated, interpreting the historical substance of the encounter to its own purposes. Even when one partner in the dialogue raised its voice to an Imperial shout, no earlier than the mid-1870s, this changed the tone rather than the fact of conversation.[2]

This latitude of response on both sides needs to be seen in the light of a simple fact. Until the last quarter of the nineteenth century Britain encountered very few African cultures, because the British presence in tropical Africa was perfunctory and equivocal. For much of the century the British presence was confined to small coastal enclaves, to intermittent expeditions or embassies into an unknown interior, or to the offshore influence of the Royal Navy. Britain was a power only of the littoral, with an often precarious tenure and a limited commitment in—and to—Africa. The rest was imagination. In this dispensation the West African coast between the Senegambia in the west and the Niger delta in the east was of singular importance. Here, in West unlike East Africa, the British had an established physical presence—notably on the Gold Coast—going back to the seventeenth century. It was along this West African coast, the hub of British activity in the transatlantic slave trade, that interests were concentrated at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is here, in what is now Sierra Leone, Ghana, and Nigeria, that we must start with the history of cultural encounter in the nineteenth century. The account given is necessarily complex, and involves much toing and froing between actions and ideas.[3]

The ideas and ideologies that were in play between the epochal Mansfield decision in the Somerset case of 1772 (which prohibited the restitution of former slaves in Britain to their masters) and the emancipation of slaves in Britain's colonies in 1834, were of prime importance in redefining British attitudes and policies towards Africa. In the aftermath of the Mansfield decision the abolitionist Granville Sharp took the lead in organizing the repatriation to Africa of ex-slaves and black refugees from the War of American Independence. Sharp's impulse was evangelical and moral. It was also prescriptive. It presumed that Britain, having unilaterally liquidated slaving, knew what was best for the improvement of Africa. Sharp wanted a Christian colony in Africa, and to this end he and his associates

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[2] A readable overview is J. D. Fage, *A History of Africa*, 3rd edn. (London, 1995). On key aspects, John Lonsdale, 'States and Social Processes in Africa: A Historiographical Survey', *African Studies Review*, XXIV, 2/3 (1981), 139–225.

[3] For western African societies in the era of the slave trade, Philip D. Curtin, *Economic Change in Precolonial Africa: Senegambia in the Era of the Slave Trade* (Madison, 1975); B. Barry, *La Sénégambie du XVe au XIXe siècle: traite négriere, Islam et conquête coloniale* (Paris, 1988); Robin Law, *The Slave Coast of West Africa, 1550–1750: The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on African Society* (Oxford, 1991); J. C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730–1830* (London, 1988).

drew up a constitution for a self-governing community of yeoman farmers. This 'Province of Freedom' was to be planted in Africa, a donation from the morally enlightened to the spiritually impoverished. It would act as beacon and inspiration, casting its Christian light and self-improving example over the surrounding darkness. Britain had abolished the slave trade but still knew best. The 'Province of Freedom' was to be sited in the Sierra Leone estuary (where the British had traded since the sixteenth century). Government fell in with this plan to export an undesirable black community from Britain, and in 1787 some 400 settlers reached Sierra Leone. Land was secured from the uncomprehending Temne of Koya by an agreement rich in irony. Britain's attempt to improve Africa had as its foundational act the first instance, in West Africa, in which sovereign rather than tenant rights were transferred by treaty.

The 'Province of Freedom' foundered. It was unable to sustain itself economically by farming, and mortality rates were high. Interested idealism had to compromise with harsh reality. The venture was taken over and refinanced by a shareholding company (1791–1808) and thereafter by government. In the process it lost its autonomous status and was administered by London bankers and then by the Secretary of State. Despite these vicissitudes numbers grew. In 1792 the company recruited 'Nova Scotians' (escaped American slaves), numbers of whom were already literate Christians, and in 1800 these were joined by Jamaican Maroons (runaway slaves, predominantly of Gold Coast Akan origin). All these repatriated communities joined together in forming a distinctive culture (sometimes termed Euro-African), albeit not exactly on the model formulated by Sharp. They were enterprising traders rather than subsistence or export farmers, urban rather than rural dwellers, but imbued with ideologies of Christian improvement and material advancement. Their settlement—Freetown—was laid out on the North American colonial grid model, with substantial European-style dwellings sited on large plots. This town became the fount and hub of an emergent culture that was to be replicated elsewhere in West Africa. Its citizens were certainly Christians who placed a premium on literacy and education, but they also modelled their consumption patterns after those of the British middle classes and saw their future in terms of commercial profits and reinvestment in urban property.

The Freetown population was much increased by British measures to implement the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. After 1808 the Royal Navy patrolled West Africa in order to intercept slave ships under the provisions of a series of bilateral treaties. Captured slavers were arraigned before a Court of Mixed Commission in Freetown and their cargoes, known as Recaptives or Liberated Africans, were settled in Freetown and its peninsular hinterland. By 1820 these freed slaves greatly outnumbered the original settlers, and they continued to arrive

until mid-century with a peak in the 1830s to 1840s. By birth Recaptives originated from the entire West African coast, from Senegambia down to the Congo and Angola. But the majority were Yoruba speakers (from present South-West Nigeria), enslaved as a result of the political anarchy, population movement, and endemic warfare that accompanied the protracted collapse (from the 1790s to the 1830s) of the Oyo empire. Recaptives were initially integrated into Sierra Leone's settler society as servants, soldiers, or smallholders. But Governor MacCarthy (1814–24) saw in their numbers an opportunity to revive something of Sharp's original vision of an exemplary Christian community that would cast its civilizing light over African peoples. In short, he proposed to Christianize them and then send them 'home' to serve as models for their countrymen. The Recaptives were settled in villages around Freetown and there exposed to missionary instruction from Anglicans (the Church Missionary Society, arrived 1804) or Methodists (the Wesleyan-Methodists, arrived 1811). Missionaries, always few in number, were joined in this enterprise by already established Freetown settlers.

The Christianizing of Yoruba Recaptives in Freetown was a decisive moment in the cultural encounter between Britain and Africa. Cast up on an alien shore and with a functioning model of a new society placed before them, the Recaptives adopted Christian salvation as a spiritual counterpart to their secular emancipation. Trauma and disorientation must have played a part in this, but so too did the willing embrace of a new life furnished by providence. Recaptives learned English, and took on European names, dress, habits, and tastes. They prized Christian education, the redemptive cornerstone of their own second chance in life, and insisted upon it for their children. But Recaptive Christianity and westernization had specifically African cultural initiatives and components. Yoruba veneration of and identification with ancestors (as in the masked spirits of *egungun*), the spatialized notion of religion in the community (as in the sacred centre—*akata*—of a town quarter), the hierarchies of seniority and authority (as in the institution of the king—*oba*—and the mass of subordinate title-holders), and a host of other cultural signifiers were all assigned reformulated significance in the light of Christian belief. It is a moot point as to what extent Recaptive Yoruba were born again into a new life or familiarly encountered themselves in another guise in the pages of the Bible. Be that as it may, Recaptive cultural norms were syncretically fused together with evangelical precepts and the British understanding of the achieving individual. Important in this syncretism was the widespread concept of the 'big man'—found among Yoruba speakers, but also among the Igbo and the Akan—by which understanding a successful Christian was also required to manifest traditional, if modified, norms of attainment: the public accumulation, display, enjoyment, and conspicuous consumption of wealth; the possession of a following of clients, conferring esteem, prestige, and weight in the community; the

scrupulous provision of goods in exchange for services from lineage kin and other dependants; and the fitting conclusion to the well-lived life in the form of elaborate funeral obsequies and fervent commemorations. To variable degrees all these customary norms shaped and informed Recaptive life. Some, such as competitive pieties in adherence and giving, chimed in with evangelical sensibilities. Others, such as the lavishing of money on big houses or on imports to furnish ostentatious weddings, offended them deeply. Recaptive Christianity was a mobile dialogue between cultures, an equipoise by turns sustained, interrogated, or overturned.[4]

Like their settler predecessors the Freetown Recaptives took to trade, forsaking farming. This disappointed British evangelicals and industrialists alike, for each interest hoped for an export agriculture, either to sustain settlement or to provide raw materials. But trade offered high returns and surpluses for reinvestment. In 1842, for example, the Nupe Recaptive and Methodist John Ezzidio visited Britain, established trading contacts there, and returned to Freetown to create an import–export business that eclipsed all of the British firms in the town. Money from trade was certainly spent on consumption and property, but *rentiers* also invested in Christian education. In 1827 the Church Missionary Society (CMS) established Fourah Bay College east of Freetown, intended to train missionary teachers for the purpose of spreading the Gospel throughout West Africa. Eventually supported by Society grammar schools, Fourah Bay College became the Christian educational forcing-ground of Freetown society. It had a particular impact on Recaptives and their children. In 1839 a group of Yoruba Recaptives, inculcated with the idea of proselytizing among their own people and wishing to see home again, sailed to Badagry, a major slaving port for the illicit Yoruba trade. Government refused their petition to establish a British colony there, but their example had important consequences. Other Yoruba Recaptives and Creoles, the term that came into use to identify the Freetown community, followed these pioneers. Returned Yoruba were known as Saro (a local corruption of Sierra Leone). They induced the CMS and Methodists to establish among them and they were at the cutting edge of bearing the Christian message—and their culture—into the Yoruba country. Outstanding among them was Samuel Ajayi Crowther, born at the Yoruba town of Osogun about 1806, enslaved in the war that destroyed his home, recaptured

⁴ John Peterson, *Province of Freedom: A History of Sierra Leone, 1787–1870* (London, 1969); Arthur T. Porter, *Creoledom: A Study of the Development of Freetown Society* (London, 1963); A. Wyse, *The Krio of Sierra Leone: An Interpretive History* (London, 1989). On Yoruba cultural history, J. D. Y. Peel, *Ijeshas and Nigerians: The Incorporation of a Yoruba Kingdom, 1890s–1970s* (Cambridge, 1983); Karin Barber, *I Could Speak Until Tomorrow: Oriki, Women and the Past in a Yoruba Town* (Edinburgh, 1991). On Asante, greatest of the Akan states, Ivor Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century: The Structure and Evolution of a Political Order* (Cambridge, 1975; reprinted with a new 'Preamble', 1989); T. C. McCaskie, *State and Society in Precolonial Asante* (Cambridge, 1995). On Igbo, Richard N. Henderson, *The King in Every Man* (New Haven, 1972); Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of the Igbo People* (London, 1976).

and landed at Freetown by the Royal Navy, and the first pupil of Fourah Bay College. In 1864 he was created Bishop in the Church of England, and thereafter headed a CMS Mission to the Niger peoples.

Freetown Saro opened the first Christian church in Lagos, and it was that coastal settlement that became the centre of Victorian Yoruba Christian life after intervention (1851) and annexation (1861) by the British. By 1870 approximately 1,500 Saro had made their homes in Lagos, involving themselves in the palm-oil trade and contributing to the building and governance of the town. The Saro impact on Yoruba culture generally was profound, but it is difficult to give a succinct evaluation. This is because, apart from their transplantation of Freetown cultural syncretism to the Niger, and their role in spreading Christianity, the Saro and those who followed them played a fundamental role in the (re)construction of a usable Yoruba 'national' identity in the second half of the tumultuous nineteenth century. If they are memorialized in the churches and dwellings of Victorian Lagos, then their devotion to a specifically Yoruba identity inclusive of Christianity and education is commemorated in their writings. Supreme among these, and indispensable to historians, is the monumental, late-nineteenth-century history by the Yoruba divine and 'nationalist' the Revd Samuel Johnson.[5]

As Creole society became embedded in Freetown its goals extended beyond the worlds of missionary Christianity and trade to encompass middle-class, professional education. In time Fourah Bay College came to accept students for general higher education; eventually it was affiliated to Durham University in 1876 so that it might confer British degrees. Secular education in Freetown, and increasingly in Britain herself for the wealthy, opened the doors to law, medicine, journalism, scholarship, and other professional opportunities. Thus, in 1859 the Creoles J. A. B. Horton and W. B. Davies qualified as doctors in Britain. Both served in the army in West Africa as medical officers, and Horton published books on scientific and political topics. The Freetown lawyer and politician Samuel Lewis was knighted for services to the colony. Behind these leading figures stood a host of others. Like their evangelizing counterparts they sought employment along the West African coast in towns where their skills were esteemed and remunerated. The flourishing of later-nineteenth-century Gold Coast and Nigerian newspapers had a significant Freetown Creole input. So too did the legal and medical professions in British West Africa. By the second half of the nineteenth century Freetown was at the centre of a diaspora extending from the Gambia to the Bight of Benin and to Britain herself.

[5] S. Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate* (London, 1921); J. F. Ade Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841–1891: The Making of a New Elite* (London, 1965); E. A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842–1914: A Political and Social Analysis* (London, 1966); Kristen Mann, *Marrying Well: Marriage, Status and Social Change among the Educated Elite in Colonial Lagos* (Cambridge, 1985).

This linked together expatriate Sierra Leoneans in a network that also included the emergent Victorian middle classes of the Gold Coast and Nigeria.[6]

Developments on the Gold Coast paralleled but were distinct from those in Freetown and in the Yoruba country. Here the British presence was stronger than anywhere else in tropical Africa. Competition over the slaves and other resources of the Gold Coast led to the building of over thirty European castles and fortified posts between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the British, Dutch, and Danes were the only remaining European powers. The British headquarters at Cape Coast Castle was situated among the small trading polities created by the Fante, a Twi-speaking Akan people. The British were historically embroiled in local politics, and from 1807 onward this brought them into repeated conflict with the powerful inland Akan state of Asante. The British presence here, whether under trading-company or government authority, was configured in such a way that, despite equivocation, London found itself inexorably drawn ever deeper into local political affairs. The Anglo-Asante Treaty (1831) and the so-called Bond (1844) locked Britain into a vague Protectorate over, and rights of judicial interference in, the Fante states. This was extended to the eastern Gold Coast when the Danes quit (1850). The departure of the Dutch (1872) prefigured a British expedition against Asante (1873–74), following which British colonial control over an enlarged southern Gold Coast was formalized by direct annexation.

In the 1830s Methodist missionaries were invited to Cape Coast. This initiative came from the nominally Christianized urban mulatto élite that had originally risen to prominence under the aegis of the slave trade and that had then turned to other types of commerce. Under the dynamic leadership of the Revd T. B. Freeman, himself a West Indian mulatto, the Methodists proselytized among the Fante. As in Freetown and among the Yoruba, there swiftly emerged an evangelized, trading, property-owning, Victorian middle class. First confined to the British posts at Cape Coast and Anomabo, Christianity carried by British missionaries and a growing network of indigenous catechists then made inroads into the Fante hinterland. This was not without its problems. Resistance was offered by the *akomfo* ('priests') of Fante religion, but on the Gold Coast missionaries enjoyed the direct, if sometimes reluctantly given, sanction of British law. The world of the Fante Christian bourgeoisie is portrayed at length in the pages of the

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[6] An overview is Akintola Wyse, 'The Place of Sierra Leone in African Diaspora Studies', in J. F. Ade Ajayi and J. D. Y. Peel, eds., *People and Empires in African History: Essays in Memory of Michael Crowder* (London, 1992), 107–20. Also Johnson U. Asiegbu, *Sierra Leone Creoles in British Nigeria Revisited, 1857–1920* (Oxford, 1984). A pioneering biography is John D. Hargreaves, *A Life of Sir Samuel Lewis* (London, 1958). The best overall guide to the Gold Coast is R. Jenkins, 'Gold Coast Historians and Their Pursuit of the Gold Coast Pasts, 1882–1917', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Birmingham, 1985, 2 vols.

British official Brodie Cruickshank's *Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast of Africa* (1853). The picture that emerges from Cruickshank, as from many other texts, is one that resonates with the experiences of Freetown or Lagos.

Fante Christianity was resolutely aspirational in terms of salvation, but also in the worldly spheres of status, wealth, education, and consumer modernity. The Fante conception of the Akan 'big man' (*obirempon*) laid emphasis on instrumental strategies of seeking advantage in status competition among peers. In a sense, trading wealth, Western education, the building of imposing houses, and the rest were simply added to the existing repertoire of Fante norms and values. In this environment Christianity itself, whatever the strength of personal belief invested in it, was a further token of individual attainment in its own right within this intensely competitive milieu. Broadly speaking, mission education among the Fante followed the path already described (although there was no equivalent of Fourah Bay College in the Gold Coast). Schools turned out catechists and government employees. The latter were much in demand, for British administration and commerce had more need for clerkly skills on the Gold Coast than in any other part of tropical Africa. After mid-century the Fante urban élite produced a notable intelligentsia of writers, journalists, and pamphleteers. These were bound together by Christianity, education, and modernity, but also by older patterns of proximity and intermarriage, given a new fillip by an increasingly self-conscious sense of belonging to an élite.[7]

Mid-nineteenth-century Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and the Gold Coast, with their confident élites, is a useful point to pause and take stock. The background to the developments just described was the quickening pulse of British industrial and financial power. This manifested itself in numerous ways. For present purposes we must look first to the growing capacity and desire—religious, economic, scientific—to replace the tropical Africa of the imagination, virtually a *terra incognita*, with a continent explored, explained, and domesticated to British ideals of Christian culture. However, caution is required, for it is only with hindsight that this impulse can be cast in the role of preamble to colonial overrule.

In 1841 a mission was despatched to the confluence of the Niger and Benue rivers in the interior of what is now southern Nigeria. Its purpose was to explore West Africa's greatest river, to root out slave-trading at source, to assess Christian prospects, and to establish cash-crop plantation agriculture. Grandiose plans,

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[7] G. E. Metcalfe, *Maclean of the Gold Coast: The Life and Times of George Maclean, 1801–1847* (London, 1962); Edward Reynolds, *Trade and Economic Change on the Gold Coast, 1807–1874* (London, 1974); Mary McCarthy, *Social Change and the Growth of British Power in the Gold Coast, 1807–1874* (Lanham, 1983); and the important K. Arhin, 'Rank and Class among the Asante and Fante in the Nineteenth Century', *Africa*, LIII, 1 (1983), pp. 2–22.

however, did not prevent its failure. This sounded the death-knell of the original abolitionist dream of African farmers organized and mobilized to support themselves by producing for the British market. West African exports—notably palmoil—became the province of indigenous entrepreneurs rather than Christianized communities of yeomen. But if the Niger expedition was a failure, it was one with heroic resonances.[8] Anti-slavery and Christianization were inspired to a new urgency in tandem with the growing wish to explore and to cast light on the 'dark continent'. Sometimes these imperatives were joined together, sometimes they operated independently. The objective was the interior of tropical Africa. The greatest unknown of all was East and Central Africa, and it was there that the legacy of the Niger expedition found its fullest expression.

In the eighteenth century Europeans, including the British, rarely visited East Africa. The western end of the Indian Ocean trading network was an Omani Arab domain. An Islamic Swahili coastal élite brokered commerce between Gulf seafarers and the trading networks of East and Central Africa. The Yao and later the Nyamwezi traded ivory, slaves, and gold from the interior into Portuguese Mozambique and such long-established coastal entrepôts as Kilwa and Mombasa; until the 1850s cloth, beads, and copper were the most prized imports. A complex of developments drew Britain into this world in the nineteenth century. First, slaving in this area greatly increased after British abolition. Demand from the Gulf, Cuba, and Brazil, and from intensified sugar production on the Mascarenes (Réunion and Île de France) all contributed to anti-slavery outrage in Britain. The East African slave trade became a moral crusade. Secondly, although the Royal Navy's anti-slavery presence in the Indian Ocean was limited by comparison with the Atlantic, Britain felt able to fix upon Zanzibar as the key to increased slaving. For economic reasons Sayyid Said ibn Sultan, ruler of Oman, transferred his court to Zanzibar in 1840, and when he died in 1856 the island became independent. In addition to slaving wealth Zanzibar possessed an enticingly valuable export industry in cloves. Abolitionist and commercial interests saw a British Consul appointed to Zanzibar in the 1840s. Thirdly, although Britain lacked details it seemed clear that the East African slave trade was conducted with particular brutality. Zanzibari merchants, Indian financiers, Arab-Swahili caravans, and their predatory African partners extended the destabilizing trade far inland to the Bemba and beyond to the Lozi and Lunda of Central Africa. Accounts of savage cruelty reinforced British anti-slavery with an urgent wish to carry the saving grace of Christianity into the heart of Africa.[9]

[8] Most recently, Howard Temperley, *White Dreams, Black Africa: The Antislavery Expedition to the River Niger, 1841–1842* (New Haven, 1991).

[9] E. A. Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa: Changing Patterns of International Trade to the Later Nineteenth Century* (London, 1975); Frederick Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of*

The totemic figure in the Christian fight against the East and Central African slave trade was David Livingstone. An ambiguous and complicated individual, Livingstone traversed the continent (1853–56) and then sought to reach Central Africa via the Zambezi River (1858–64). He achieved heroic stature in Britain, and did more than anyone else to expose and keep before the public the horrors of slavery. To him belongs a deal of the credit for the British decision to impose an end to the Zanzibari slave trade in 1873, but his impact on African cultures themselves was less than was claimed by later Imperial hagiographers. In addition to his Christian mission against slavery, his significance lay in his contribution to the collective British enterprise of exploring eastern Africa.[10] Here the prize—the Niger writ large—was the source of the Nile. The Royal Geographical Society presided over intense public interest in this question. The expeditions of Burton and Speke (1857–58), from East Africa to Lakes Tanganyika and Victoria, of Speke and Grant (1860–63) from East Africa via Lake Victoria, Buganda, and Bunyoro down the Nile to Cairo, and of Baker (1862–65), from Cairo via Khartoum, Lake Victoria, and Bunyoro to Lake Albert, explored vast, previously unknown areas but failed to resolve the Nile question. In 1866 the Society recruited Livingstone to settle the matter. His five-year journey, until his celebrated 'rescue' by Stanley in 1871, became an iconic representation of Victorian England's view of herself. But Livingstone died in 1873 and it was left to Henry Morton Stanley (1874–77) to conclude the quest for the source of the Nile. In the course of his journey he linked the Indian and Atlantic oceans, travelling from the interlacustrine region of eastern Africa down the Lualaba–Congo river system to its mouth on the coast of western Africa.[11]

The explorers Burton and Stanley were unusual individuals, but in their views and writings both gave pointed expression to shifting attitudes towards Africa and Africans. European ideas of African cultures were increasingly informed by new ideological currents against which Britain assessed herself and her experience of Africa. These included a burgeoning power and concomitant sense of a superior British destiny, reinforced by Imperial gains elsewhere and underpinned by the sedulous rise of pseudo-scientific racism; a growing confidence that Africa might be civilized in its own interest, not simply by missionary enterprise and free trade,

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Africa (New Haven, 1977); Thomas Q. Reefe, *The Rainbow and the Kings: A History of the Luba Empire to 1891* (Berkeley, 1981); Abdul Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar: Integration of an East African Commercial Empire into the World Economy, 1770–1873* (London, 1987); Charles H. Ambler, *Kenyan Communities in the Age of Imperialism: The Central Region in the Late Nineteenth Century* (New Haven, 1988).

[10] Consult now Adrian Hastings, *The Church in Africa, 1450–1950* (Oxford, 1994).

[11] Clements R. Markham, *The First Fifty Years' Work of the Royal Geographical Society* (London, 1881); and see above, chap. by Robert A. Stafford.

but also by exposing its peoples to all of the many ordering technologies and secular disciplines of modern bourgeois life. As corollaries, the failure to effect wholesale Christian conversion despite the expenditure of money, effort, and lives, the lack of success in fostering an export-oriented plantation economy, the continuing stain of the slave trade, despite abolition (now combined with more information—and misinformation—about the extent and nature of African domestic slavery), and the presumed barbarism of great African states and cultures (Asante, Dahomey, Buganda, the Congo) were all intimations that, perhaps, Africans were irredeemable if left to govern themselves. Such ideas were the prelude to the Imperial Age in Africa. They were first articulated and acted upon in West Africa.[12]

First, some indicative straws in the wind. The explorer Richard Burton served as Consul in the Bight of Benin (1861–64) and travelled again in West Africa in 1881. In his writings on West Africa he expressed (predictably enough) a prurient fascination with the barbaric splendour, as he saw it, of the Dahomean court. But he abhorred West African Creole culture, regarding it as no more than an inauthentic, offensive, comic mimicry of its British counterpart. As ever, Burton's opinions were highly coloured, but there is much evidence that by the 1860s many British commentators and officials shared his dismissive view of the ultimate outcome of early abolitionist hopes and policies.[13] Increasingly, this rejection assumed racial forms. Educated or westernized West Africans of whatever sort came to be widely viewed as mimic-men, legatees of a false, pre-colonial start in civilizing Africa. Racial tensions developed, even in mission circles. Thus, indigenous Africans complained of the rise of patronizing, racist attitudes within the Methodist mission to the Gold Coast, and looked back with longing to the more egalitarian ethos that had prevailed before mid-century. In 1879 the finances of the Church Missionary Society's Niger mission were entrusted to a European. Africans resigned or were dismissed in an atmosphere of racial division. When the celebrated Bishop Crowther died in 1891 he was replaced by a European.[14]

Policy mirrored these shifts. In 1868 J. A. B. Horton, the Freetown Creole army doctor long resident on the Gold Coast, published his *West African Countries and Peoples*. This distilled the widespread educated African aspiration for a part in government and offered blueprints for political participation. Horton directly

[12] Philip D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1750–1850* (Madison, 1964).

[13] Richard Burton, *Wanderings in West Africa: From Liverpool to Fernando Po*, 2 vols. (London, 1863), *Abeokuta and the Camaroons Mountains. An Exploration*, 2 vols. (London, 1863), and *A Mission to Gelele King of Dahome*, 2 vols. (London, 1864); Richard F. Burton and Verney Lovett Cameron, *To the Gold Coast for Gold*, 2 vols. (London, 1883). Cf. W. Reade, *Savage Africa* (London, 1863) and *The African Sketch-book*, 2 vols. (London, 1873).

[14] These changes can be traced in detail in Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society Archives (School of Oriental and African Studies, London) and in Church Missionary Society Archives (Birmingham University).

inspired the creation of the Fante Confederation and its (second) 1871 Constitution, providing for a King or President and representative and national Assemblies, was based on his proposals. A Great Seal was struck and a Supreme Court convened. The Fante, historically disunited, banded together in confederacy around the issues of British impositions and high-handedness. Taxes, the lack of a right of consultation or voice in policy-making, and uncertainty over Britain's commitment to defend them against Asante were key concerns. Confederation failed, in part because of internal disagreements, but also because Britain was opposed to it. Ideas of governmental modernization along Western lines spread inland beyond the sphere of British jurisdiction. As early as 1865 the Abeokuta Egba on the western fringe of Yorubaland set up a United Board of Management with a President, a High Sheriff, a Supreme Court, and a postal system. The Sierra Leonian G. W. Johnson played a leading role in this experiment, but the Egba modernizers enjoyed only limited success. The larger significance of events among the Fante and Egba is that, just as British attitudes were hardening in the manner described, westernized Africans—both under British jurisdiction and beyond it—were taking tentative first steps towards modern forms of political participation and autonomy.[15]

In 1865 a Parliamentary Select Committee recommended that Britain reduce her commitments in West Africa wherever possible. The Colonial Office favoured retrenchment on the grounds of expense and the vagueness of British jurisdiction. This last consideration, it was felt, had the potential to involve Britain in unwanted future conflicts and obligations.[16] In essence, and despite much equivocating argument, nothing was done. Eight years later in 1873–74 Britain found herself confronting an Asante invasion of Fante and then committing troops to advance 150 miles inland to burn the Asante capital of Kumasi. The politics of this first serious British military venture into the tropical African interior need not detain us here. More germane is the fact that this Anglo-Asante War was the first conflict to be fought in the aftermath of the Cardwell reforms. It was commanded by Sir Garnet Wolseley and officered by members of his 'ring'. These men rose to dominate British military thinking about Africa until the South African (Anglo-Boer) War (1899–1902), and directed military policy at the height of the colonial conquest. Famously self-promoting, the Wolseley 'ring' deluged the British public with accounts of its first success as a team. These writings concerned a sophistic-

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[15] Francis Agbodeka, *African Politics and British Policy in the Gold Coast, 1868–1900: A Study in the Forms and Force of Protest* (London, 1971); Saburi O. Biobaku, *The Egba and Their Neighbours, 1842–1872* (Oxford, 1957); A. Pallinder, 'Adegboyega Edun: Black Englishman and Yoruba Cultural Patriot', in P. F. de Moraes Farias and Karin Barber, eds., *Self-Assertion and Brokerage: Early Cultural Nationalism in West Africa* (Birmingham, 1990), pp. 11–34.

[16] *Report from the Select Committee on Africa (Western Coast), PP* (1865) 412, V.

ated culture and great state in the interior of West Africa, and because of the later importance of the authors their views formed a powerful template for subsequent readings of other polities during—and beyond—the conquest.[17]

Several broad, complementary interpretations of Asante culture prevailed in the writings of the Wolseley 'ring', and were endorsed by journalists (including Stanley) who accompanied the expedition.[18] The first view was a graphic enlargement of earlier missionary presumptions concerning an Asante—and African—predilection for 'human sacrifice'. Wesleyans such as T. B. Freeman in the 1840s condemned such practices but believed they would disappear with the advent of Christianity. The Wolseley 'ring' termed Kumasi 'the city of blood', and argued that 'human sacrifice' was a mode of government. That is, Asante needed humbling and conquest rather than empathy and conversion before it would change its ways. The second view was a crystallization of emergent British racial attitudes. As members of an inferior race the Asante required discipline rather than understanding in order to function as a culture. The current dispensation of blood-letting and 'human sacrifice' was inhumane, but any future British administration would have to adopt Draconian measures for Asante's own good. The equation of Africans 'in a savage state of nature' with wilful children underpinned this brisk recommendation. The third view was that, as all Africans were damned to an inferior place within the human family, then the 'natural' Asante, provided he was strictly ruled, was to be preferred to the abomination that was westernized Fante Creole culture. In extension of Burton's strictures the Wolseley 'ring' urged the sheer unnaturalness of any sort of hybridity. Cultures were fixed in rank, and any attempt to assimilate an African to Anglo-Saxon ideas and practices could only result in a displaced, pathetic caricature. The final view, much enlarged upon by Wolseley in later life, combined pseudo-scientific racism with fashionable canards about the influence of climate and ecology upon cultural history.[19] The Asante were manly and warlike because they lived under iron discipline in an invigorating environment. The Fante were weak and cowardly because they were creolized residents of a debilitating milieu. Forests, deserts, and highlands were good; coasts, swamps, and lowlands were bad. These were all extreme, formalized versions of opinions in general circulation on the eve of Britain's subjugation of its African

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[17] From a large choice, Henry Brackenbury, *The Ashanti War: A Narrative: Prepared from the Official Documents by Permission of Major-General Sir Garnet Wolseley*, 2 vols. (London, 1874); William Francis Butler, *Akim-Foo: The History of a Failure* (London, 1875); E. Wood, *The Ashanti Expedition of 1873–4* (London, 1874).

[18] Henry M. Stanley, *Coomassie and Magdala: The Story of Two British Campaigns in Africa* (London, 1874).

[19] General Viscount Wolseley, 'The Negro as a Soldier', *The Fortnightly Review*, New Series, CCLXIV (1888), 689–703.

Empire. Repetitions, traces, or echoes of all of them are to be found in the literature of colonial conquest concerning Benin, Yorubaland, Igboland, and Sokoto in West Africa, or Zululand and the Sudan elsewhere on the continent.[20] They testify *inter alia* to the continuing potency of an imagined Africa in an era of greatly increased factual knowledge.

The colonial conquest of East Africa was preceded by a period around and after mid-century when the informal advance of traders, missionaries, explorers, and the rest not only augmented Europe's store of information about Africa, but also exposed African cultures to an indiscriminate, eclectic barrage of new ideas, practices, and technologies. Nowhere did this development call forth a more complex response than in Buganda, most powerful of the interlacustrine kingdoms. By the early nineteenth century the *kabaka* (king) of Buganda controlled the western side of Lake Victoria. From there Buganda was linked into the long-distance trade network of eastern Africa, including the route that ran nearly 800 miles via Nyamwezi to the coast facing Zanzibar. Early in his reign the *kabaka* Mutesa (late 1850s–84) developed a strong interest in the culture, religion, and technology of the Zanzibari traders who visited his court. Advanced guns and consumer goods were his initial concern. These were conventional trade items, but Mutesa also had a consuming interest in theology. He became fascinated with the precepts of Zanzibari Islam, introduced the Koran, and rewarded youthful royal pages who learned Arabic. However, when Zanzibar failed to assist Buganda against threats from the Sudan, devout pages argued that this was because Mutesa's Zanzibari Islam was too lax. In 1876 the *kabaka* executed the most critical of his Muslim subjects. But having opened the door to foreign trade and ideas Mutesa found that he could not close it again. Protestant and Catholic missionaries were invited into Buganda to check Islam, and one another. When Mutesa died he had lost control of the situation. In 1886 his desperate successor martyred Christians in the name of the local spirit cults. But a Muslim, Protestant, and Catholic alliance deposed and then reinstated him on their own terms. Thus far these developments had been matters of court politics, barely affecting the countryside. But in the 1890s British troops arrived, Protestantism triumphed with their support, and religious fervour—exacerbated by the chaotic uncertainties of foreign conquest—spread to embrace all Buganda. As the world of the Ganda people was turned upside down many thousands embraced Christianity, looking to the Bible to explain what had happened.[21]

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[20] For one aspect, C. Madge and R. Cline-Cole, 'The West African Forest Zone in the European Geographical Imagination', *Geography*, no. CCCLIII, 81 (1996), pp. 24–31.

[21] M. S. M. Kiwanuka, *A History of Buganda* (London, 1971); M. Wright, *Buganda in the Heroic Age* (Nairobi, 1971); D. A. Low, *Religion and Society in Buganda, 1875–1900* (Kampala, n.d. [1957?]). Sir Apolo

The European 'scramble' for Africa was breathtaking in its rapidity.[22] As a result Britain and a host of African cultures and peoples suddenly found themselves confronting each other. The ostensible arrangement was one of rulers and ruled, but this simple equation in theory turned out to be subtly complex in practice. British conquest was accomplished with no clear idea of how particular areas should be governed nor any substantive knowledge of many subject cultures. The choice of responses open to Africans was bewilderingly complex, both between and—importantly—within cultures. They might 'collaborate' in an effort to secure British favour; they might 'resist' to the point of defeat or disintegration; they might submit in a process of bargaining the conditions of their subjection; they might equivocate, dissemble, change their minds, or simply await developments. Choices with longer-term implications surrounded the issue of European culture. Nowhere did Africans resolve this by polar responses of outright rejection or acceptance. Everything was shaded; thus, for example, Africans might embrace education but be sceptical about the mission Christianity of its bearers. In truth, cultural encounters between Briton and African during the late-nineteenth-century conquest, even where violence was involved, were on both sides matters of probing negotiation towards the equilibrium of a changed order rather than permanently binding choices between strategies of outright collaboration or resistance.[23]

Example rather than comprehensiveness must suffice to illustrate the theme of negotiated cultural contact during the colonial conquest. The object is to show something of the range and complexity of an encounter that was misleadingly assumed to be simple (even one-sided) before the development of modern African historiography. The examples of Asante and Sokoto in West Africa and the Ndebele in Central Africa serve to make the point.

The British invasion of Asante in 1873–74 was a punitive expedition. Asante retained its political autonomy, but was subject to increasing British pressure and influence thereafter. The British finally deposed the *asantehene* Agyeman Prempe in 1896, suppressed an uprising against them in 1900, and formally annexed Asante as a Crown Colony in 1901. Pre-colonial Asante was a culture in which the state exercised formidable controls over political office, access to wealth, and ingress or egress from the country. Weakened and laid open after 1874, Asante experienced a series of crises including a protracted dynastic conflict (1883–88). In the course of this numbers of Asante became alienated from a polity that monopolized wealth

Kaggwa, *The Kings of Buganda*, English translation (Nairobi, 1971) is an insider account from the early colonial period.

[22] See chap. by Colin Newbury.

[23] See the chaps. by John D. Hargreaves and Terence Ranger in L. H. Gann and Peter Duignan, eds., *Colonialism in Africa*, 5 vols. (Cambridge, 1969–75), I.

but no longer reciprocated with security. They voted with their feet and fled into the British Gold Coast. Once there, they were exposed to the acquisitive individualism of *laissez-faire* capitalism, the dispositionary rights of the person under English common law, and the gamut of Western cultural influences. They supported British subversion and conquest of Asante, but in a particular way that sought to combine their acquisitive individualism with access to the prestigious chiefships of historic Asante culture. After 1901 the British relied on these people to implement colonial rule and supported and favoured them. Their example, and the unchecked access of European norms and values, swiftly fused historic Asante identity with an untrammelled capitalism. The uprising of the old order in 1900 was not repeated. It was capitalism—expressed in the rapid spread of cocoa as a cash crop—that reconciled Asante to British colonial overrule. Official records from the early colonial era show the significant extent to which administrators relied for support upon Asante who were ideologically reconciled to the new order. Nor was there a realistic alternative, for British personnel were few and their knowledge of Asante was very limited. Earlier British stereotypes of savage, warlike Asante survived into the colonial period but were soon replaced by admiration for a 'progressive' people devoted to making money.[24]

Sokoto (in present-day northern Nigeria) reveals another set of variations on the theme of cultural encounter during the conquest. Created by jihad (holy war) in the first decade of the nineteenth century, the Sokoto Caliphate was the largest West African Muslim polity annexed by the British. Due to its geographical remoteness from the coast it was little known by the British prior to the conquest of 1903. Extensive and presumed to be formidable, Sokoto puzzled the British by offering little concerted resistance. The immediate British explanation relied on the late-nineteenth-century European commonplace about the corruption, decadence, and weakness of Islamic polities. The truth was much more complex. Sokoto was constructed out of potentially volatile and conflicting components— Hausa, Fulani, and smaller ethnic groups, core and periphery, town and countryside, orthodox and popular Islam (syncretically fused with non-Islamic beliefs)— and the shock of British conquest brought latent cleavages between the ruling élite and its subjects into the open.

First, the urban, orthodox Islamic élite around the Caliph consulted Muslim precedents for guidance in dealing with infidels. A choice was made to practise canonically sanctioned dissembling; that is, to submit in body but not thought. The state's autonomy (a thing of this world) was surrendered so as preserve the

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[24] Apart from works already cited, Thomas J. Lewin, *Asante Before the British: The Prempean Years, 1875–1900* (Lawrence, Kan., 1978); William Tordoff, *Ashanti Under the Prempehs, 1888–1935* (Oxford, 1965); and Jean Marie Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine: Asante Nationalism in an Emergent Ghana* (Madison, 1993).

integrity of Islam against any excess of British destructiveness provoked by military resistance. Secondly, the arrival of the British coincided with a rising tide of popular Islamic Mahdist expectation and acted to confirm the belief that the end of the material world was imminent. Accordingly, numbers of commoners began to move eastward to meet 'the expected one' (the Mahdi) and prepare for the last battle between good and evil. Throughout the nineteenth century the Sokoto élite had discouraged such radical views among its subjects. It was now alarmed by wholesale defections to the east, and particularly so as in the prevailing confusion the Caliph (willingly or not) was with his migrating subjects. British forces caught up with the Mahdists and the Caliph was killed in the fighting. Mahdist expectation survived, and in 1906 became centred on the insurrectionary village of Satiru near Sokoto. The British were caught unprepared. However, the Sokoto élite allied itself with its infidel rulers and suppressed its own rebel subjects on their behalf. This was a calculated act. The British administration had already guaranteed the survival of Islam and the precolonial emirate system. Indeed, Sokoto's conqueror Sir Frederick Lugard developed his concept of 'indirect rule' through historically sanctioned native rulers—*the* theory of British colonial rule in Africa—out of his experience governing these very emirates. The Sokoto élite for its part had opted for British support in maintaining its sway over its own historically disaffected subjects.[25]

The Ndebele were a creation of the *mfecane* or 'time of troubles', the revolutionary changes that convulsed southern Africa in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.[26] Fleeing before Shaka's Zulu, the Ndebele settled in the late 1830s as overlords among a part of the decentralized Shona people (in present-day Zimbabwe). The Ndebele kingdom preserved its own language and military arrangements, but it adopted the Shona territorial cult of *mwari* and other rituals. British missionaries arrived in 1859 but entirely failed to gain converts. In 1889 the British South Africa Company occupied Shona territory with little difficulty. Initially, the Ndebele opted for a policy of coexistence. But in 1893 a mix of British high-handedness and chafing resentment on the part of youthful Ndebele warriors provoked a limited war. Three years later, in 1896–97, a full-scale revolt occurred as the Ndebele came to realize, with the advice of their spirit cults, that pioneer British South Africa Company officials and gold-seekers were the advance guard of

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[25] D. Murray Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate* (London, 1967); R. A. Adeleye, *Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria, 1804–1906: The Sokoto Caliphate and its Enemies* (London, 1972); Robert W. Shenton, *The Development of Capitalism in Northern Nigeria* (London, 1986); Paul E. Lovejoy and Jan S. Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery: The Course of Abolition in Northern Nigeria, 1897–1936* (Cambridge, 1993); and in Vol. IV, see the chap. by John W. Cell.

[26] Carolyn Hamilton, ed., *The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History* (Johannesburg, 1995).

a wave of whites who planned to settle. Fearing massive land seizures, loss of cattle, and extinction as a culture, the Ndebele and their Shona clients conducted guerrilla warfare and besieged the nascent settlement of Bulawayo. The revolt, which the Ndebele were now convinced was a matter of national survival, was bitterly fought and bloodily suppressed. Defeat led to the dissolution of the Ndebele polity, to landlessness, to cultural disorientation, and personal anomie. The barrier to unrestricted white inroads into this part of Central Africa was removed and farmers flooded in after the gold-prospectors. The Ndebele were left to negotiate their place in the colonial order from a position of virtual power-lessness. Under the new dispensation they were reduced to labouring on white grain and tobacco farms.[27]

The cultures of Asante, Sokoto, and the Ndebele were organized around and arbitrated by complex state structures. But very many of the African peoples that succumbed to British conquest lived in acephalous, decentralized, small-scale societies. Statelessness posed special problems for the British conquerors. Often, and quite literally, there was no one with the authority to make formal submission. The imposition of colonial rule over such peoples was a slow osmotic process rather than a finite political event. Thus, in the occupation of south-east and central Nigeria the British sent military columns into Igboland and among the Tiv of the Benue river valley. Other than as a declaration of intent these were some-what futile exercises. Resolving the cultural encounter between the British and such decentralized peoples was something that took time. In the first stages of conquest British administrators were as much persuaders as conquerors. The Igbo or Tiv had to be won over to an understanding of the advantages and obligations of British rule. Tax-gathering by diktat in the absence of an indigenous chain of command would have required manpower resources that the British did not possess. Igbo or Tiv people responded to the perceived benefits and drawbacks of colonial rule on an individual and sectoral basis, a point complexly illustrated in the Igbo novelist Chinua Achebe's celebrated *Things Fall Apart*. In the cultural encounter with the Igbo the British ran the risk of subverting negotiation by radical innovation in the interests of a more structured, hierarchical, transparent administration. Thus, the eventual introduction among the Igbo of 'Native Administration' chiefs, a variant of Lugard's 'indirect rule', was a greatly resented mistake and acknowledged as such by experienced officials on the spot.[28]

Among the issues that preoccupied the British immediately following conquest none was of wider concern than that termed 'domestic slavery' by officialdom.

[27] The classic account is T. O. Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia, 1896–7*, 2nd edn. (London, 1979).
[28] Sir F. D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (London, 1922); A. E. Afigbo, *The Warrant Chiefs: Indirect Rule in South Eastern Nigeria* (London, 1972). In Vol. IV, see chap. by John Cell.

This phenomenon was held to be endemic to Africa's cultures; certainly, very diverse forms of indigenous servitude and clientage existed on the continent together with other sorts of dependency barely understood but disapproved of by the British. Nineteenth-century abolitionists and missionaries deplored 'domestic slavery' but recognized its fundamental place in societies they could do little to change. Commercial interests took the sanguine view that 'domestic slavery' was functionally necessary to African economic production. In theory the moral responsibilities of colonial rule precluded the continuation of such indulgent attitudes. In practice matters were not so simple. The British abolished 'domestic slavery' by fiat in cultures where they wished to quash opposition or punish intransigence. In 1897 a British mission to the Edo kingdom of Benin (in present-day Nigeria) was virtually annihilated.[29] A punitive expedition then occupied Benin, but the capital had been abandoned. The British declared emancipation for any slave coming back to the town, and then freed the royal slaves to teach the Edo king a lesson. But the Edo experience was unusual. In most cultures the British swiftly learned the accuracy of nineteenth-century perception. 'Domestic slavery' was the existing mechanism for mobilizing labour, and British officials needed it as much as had African rulers. Practice diverged from theory. The British continued to abhor 'domestic slavery' but permitted its continued existence under one or another fictive legalism. Sometimes this caused conflict with zealous missionaries.[30] But 'domestic slavery' survived in parts of British Africa into the 1920s until such time as labour needs could be fully met from within the developed cash economy.

Slavery of another kind produced the first crisis in Britain's nineteenth-century involvement in another, quite distinct part of Africa. South Africa was a special case and needs to be treated as such.[31] Britain occupied the Cape in 1795 and established a permanent presence at the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. Here, uniquely, Britain encountered after 1795 earlier European settlers of Dutch, German, or French Huguenot stock who first settled in 1652. These Boers (or Afrikaners) evolved their own, fiercely independent religion, language, and culture, based upon crop and livestock farming supported by indentured and African slave labour. In the century-long clash which developed between Briton and Boer, culminating in the protracted, bitterly fought war of 1899–1902 and the compromise of the Union of South Africa in 1910, the ultimate victims were the African peoples.

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[29] P. A. Igbafe, *Benin Under British Administration: The Impact of Colonial Rule on an African Kingdom, 1897–1938* (London, 1979).

[30] e.g. in Asante between British officials and Basel missionaries in Kumase.

[31] See chap. by Christopher Saunders and Iain R. Smith.

The Xhosa, borrowing from Christian missionary eschatology, killed their cattle in 1857 in an other-worldly attempt to expel Europeans once and for all. This extreme measure precipitated the destruction of Xhosa society by the British Cape government and Boer farmers. The Zulu kingdom—greatest of the states to emerge from the upheavals of the 1790s to 1830s among the Bantu societies of eastern South Africa (the *mfecane*)—finally went down to military defeat in 1879 after a victory over British forces at Isandhlwana. African 'resistance', whether cultural or military, was ultimately unable to stand against Boer and British imperialism.

Once drawn into the orbit of the white colonial societies, many Africans were confronted by new and difficult problems of adjustment. Others, however, initially adapted very successfully to the opportunities presented by change. In the early phases of mining development paid African labour was needed and offered better wages than those available on white farms. From mission stations like Lovedale in the eastern Cape numbers of Africans took away an education that held out prospects of employment in the cash economy. African farmers and transport drivers took advantage of the commercial openings offered by colonial urban expansion; their output was vital, for instance, in feeding the Rand. However, African economic independence was no more acceptable than political. From the 1890s, and ever more rapidly after 1902 and 1910, the colonial government cut back African prospects to fit the demands of white enterprise, using the mechanisms of land control, labour legislation, and taxation. Thus, in the second half of the nineteenth century and beyond the African peoples of South Africa experienced political annexation, societal breakdown, and cultural anomie. Africanized Christianity with its numerically small, emergent middle class offered one of the few means of sustaining the seeds of a new African politics which was gradually to find its voice in the twentieth century.[32]

Deposited in all British—and European—archival records of the colonial conquest are maps, ranging from the nearly blank to the elaborately detailed. Maps are perhaps the most potent of all symbolic representations of the partition of Africa. Indeed, a familiar image of the Berlin Conference of 1884–85, at which Britain and the other imperial powers delimited their future African possessions, is of intent

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[32] From a huge literature, Richard Elphick and Hermann Giliomee, eds., *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652–1840*, 2nd revised edn. (Middletown, Conn., 1989); J. B. Peires, *The House of Phalo: A History of the Xhosa People in the Days of their Independence* (Johannesburg, 1981), and *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement of 1856–7* (Johannesburg, 1989); Jeff Guy, *The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom: The Civil War in Zululand, 1879–1884* (London, 1979); Philip Bonner, *Kings, Commoners and Concessionaires: The Evolution and Dissolution of the Nineteenth Century Swazi State* (Cambridge, 1983); Peter Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us: The Pedi Polity, the Boers and the British in the Nineteenth-Century Transvaal* (London, 1984); Elizabeth A. Eldredge, *A South African Kingdom: The Pursuit of Security in Nineteenth-Century Lesotho* (Cambridge, 1993).

statesmen poring over a map of the continent.[33] The cartographic enterprise was pivotal to implementing conquest and embedding colonial rule—the siting of boundaries, ports, railways, roads, or towns and the labelling of forests, rivers, lakes, mountains, or plains were all referenced to map-making and sprang from it. Maps also symbolized the reconfiguration of cultural encounter. By 'filling in' Britain's map of Africa cartographical knowledge enabled the recasting of the continent's cultures in terms of colonial concepts of bounded spatial identities and rigid territorial attachments. Much evidence exists to suggest that the majority of pre-colonial African societies annexed by the British construed themselves in terms of cultural indicators of belonging rather than geographical delimitations of territory. The 'great states' of pre-colonial Africa themselves operated with fluid notions of core, periphery, and influence rather than fixed ideas of demarcation, frontier, and foreignness. By labelling and fixing African cultures in space to define possession and expedite overrule the British—like other imperial powers— opened a Pandora's box. In particular, issues of ethnicity and identity referenced to spatial boundaries became contentious urgencies of the colonial era. The construction, content and nature of 'Yorubaness' within Nigeria, say, or 'Kikuyu-ness' within Kenya, or 'Gandaness' within Uganda, or 'Asanteness' within the Gold Coast, became pointed, contested questions that continue to trouble Africans in the post-colonial era.[34]

Some attempt at retrospect and prospect is offered here. At the start of the nineteenth century Britain's presence in tropical Africa was narrowly confined to the—mainly West African—coast. Systematic exploration of the interior occupied the entire nineteenth century (and extended in remoter areas into the twentieth), dating, perhaps, from the 1788 foundation of the African Association by the savant Joseph Banks and others.[35] The ideological grounding of this effort shifted over time. At its outset the British cultural encounter with African societies was dominated by inquiries dedicated to accumulating knowledge, to bridging the gap between imagination and reality. That this reconciliation might be reconfigured but never achieved is apparent in all nineteenth-century British reporting of Africa. The most generalized indication of this is the way in which—around and after mid-century—the imagined Africa of pseudo-scientific racial thinking became the optic through which an ever increasing factual knowledge was viewed. Bowdich's first eyewitness account of Kumasi (1817) is characterized by scientific

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[33] See T. Bassett, 'Cartography and Empire Building in Nineteenth-Century West Africa', *Geographical Review*, LXXXIV, 3 (1994), pp. 316–35.

[34] The best treatment (on Kenya) is Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa*, 2 vols. (London, 1991).

[35] See chap. by Robert A. Stafford, and in Vol. II, chap. by Richard Drayton.

curiosity, but none the less treats Asante culture as a complex achievement in its own right and on its own terms. Robert Baden-Powell's participation in the British occupation of Kumasi (1896) resulted in an account of Asante that enlarges on the views of the Wolseley 'ring'. In this, Asante is a blood-soaked despotism condemned to its fate by racial inferiority. Only Anglo-Saxon rule can redeem it from the excesses of its birthright.[36] This is an extreme distillation of a widespread climate of opinion. Even those dedicated to a humane tutelage of Africans by colonial overlordship shared implicitly in ideas of superiority and inferiority that were grounded in assumptions about race and destiny.[37]

It needs to be restated that the British missionary enterprise in Africa arose from a complex of ideas. Principled abolitionism and anti-slavery were accompanied by paternalist ideas of social improvement to be rooted in economic production for British markets. This is not to question the Christian sincerity of British missionaries. Africa was remote and unhealthy; many missionaries died but the supply of replacements never dried up. But missionary work, like exploration, requires ideological contextualization. Missionaries were products of British society and to a degree shared in its evolving values. Thus, it is scarcely surprising that the later decades of the nineteenth century saw an increasing racial awareness being added to early Victorian paternalism. Ironically, this development was greatly sharpened by the very real, if localized, success of missionaries among peoples such as the Fante and Yoruba. A latent contradiction existed between the ongoing Christianizing of Africans and the point at which an established African Christianity might be deemed ripe for emancipation from stewardship. Missionary writings of the later nineteenth century are replete with vexed—and vexing—discussions about autonomy and independence for African congregations. Issues of race certainly played their part in British reluctance to relinquish control, in African alienation from mission churches, and in the rise of the independent African church movement in the 1880s and 1890s.[38]

By then one of the guiding suppositions of the early abolitionists had long since proved false. The foundation of Freetown led to the emergence of a property-owning middle class and not a community of industrious agriculturalists. This pattern was repeated wherever urbanized societies emerged on the Sierra Leone model or out of the conditions of trade. Like their Creole counterparts, indigenous West or East African entrepreneurs (in palm-oil, timber, ivory, gum, etc.) who achieved economic success as individuals also came to take many of their cultural

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[36] T. E. Bowdich, *Mission From Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee* (London, 1819); R. S. S. Baden-Powell, *The Downfall of Prempeh: A Diary of Life with the Native Levy in Ashanti, 1895–96* (London, 1896).

[37] For some of the resonances, Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London, 1993).

[38] Hastings, *Church in Africa*, chap. 7.

cues from bourgeois Victorianism. This westernized African society, fostered by abolitionists, missionaries, and a whole panorama of economic possibilities in commerce had a complex nineteenth-century history. Evolving racial attitudes again played an instrumental role. The 1850s and 1860s are sometimes spoken of as being an 'Indian summer' for this community. It was in these decades that it realized the British were opposed to granting it due political participation and that the source of this denial lay in shifting metropolitan attitudes towards the very idea of civilized, Anglicized Africans. In the second half of the century this community suffered a cultural ambivalence. On the one hand British civilization was an admirable thing; but on the other its representatives in Africa were increasingly rejectionist and contemptuous towards westernized Africans. Members of this community took to separating out the message from the messenger. Constitutionalism, the rule of law and a concern with asserting (and defending) juridical rights came to occupy a central place in their thinking and discourse. Britain was often said to be failing her own ideals. Obversely, the rhetoric and terms of encroaching British colonialism fed a reactive interest in the specificity of African cultures and history. Late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century writing by Africans is shot through with these often contradictory impulses.[39]

In 1800 most Africans had seen few if any Europeans. In 1900 nearly all of Africa was ruled by Europe. The sheer number and diversity of African cultures that encountered the British in the course of the nineteenth century is bewildering. Exemplary cases have been discussed throughout, for generalization about such a range of societies risks relapse to levels of analysis that obtained before the emergence of a modern African historiography. Having entered that caveat, it remains important to draw attention to a theme that applies to African cultures generally in their encounter with the British, whatever the historical specifics of place and time. That theme is the conditions of the cultural encounter seen with hindsight from the perspective of African peoples. Early-nineteenth-century British sojourners in African cultures were supplicants of one kind or another. They *asked* for audience, consideration, protection, information, trade, diplomatic relations, converts, and the rest. By corollary, African cultures maintained the capacity not only to accede to or deny such requests but also to control or expel British visitors. A vital element in the same configuration was that African cultures had considerable powers of arbitration in rejecting or accepting British ideas and artefacts. The record overall shows African cultures to have been aware of the notion of *caveat emptor*.

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[39] e.g. J. E. Casely Hayford, *Gold Coast Native Institutions, with Thoughts upon a Healthy Imperial Policy for the Gold Coast and Ashanti* (London, 1903).

These conditions shifted after mid-century, and from the 1870s on African cultures found themselves increasingly unable to resist British penetration. By this reading colonialism can be contextualized as the culmination of a century-long shift from a Britain that *asked* to one that *demanded* and at last *commanded.* The reasons for this change are to be sought in the politics of Europe, in Britain's evolving strategic view of herself, and—perhaps most directly for Africa's peoples—in the 'speeding up' of British cultural capacity; in the period from the 1860s to the 1890s a series of revolutions in bureaucratization, technology, weaponry, communications, medicine, and the rest conferred upon Britain (and Europe) a hugely augmented capacity for cultural transmission and imposition in the broadest sense. African cultures succumbed to the onslaught of a Britain (and Europe) now organized, translated, and mobilized through the ever accelerating pace of modernity. Max Weber is as trustworthy a guide, as ever Marx was presumed to be, to the British overcoming of African cultures. This is not at all to argue that African cultures lay supine and inert before Europe's insertions and subversions. In the final quarter of the nineteenth century numbers of African societies braced themselves against change, engaged with it, and even tried to bend aspects of it to their own purposes. But the conditions of the cultural encounter were running against them, and whatever negotiation they managed to achieve within the new dispensation must be seen against the background of a single, blunt fact. British and other European colonialisms incorporated African peoples into the ideological and materialist worlds of Western modernity. All African cultures are still negotiating dialogue with—and within—the implications of that fact.

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Costs and Benefits, Prosperity, and Security, 1870–1914

AVNER OFFER

Empire for what? A benefit or a cost? Agent of peace or engine of war? To ask these questions about the late-Victorian Empire necessarily involves contemplating imaginary alternatives, 'counter-factual' worlds, in which the Empire did not exist or existed in a different form; imaginary worlds in which the First World War was avoided, or perhaps had been lost. There is no end to counter-factuals, but only one past. Counter-factuals nevertheless help us to define which aspects of the past are significant, and what questions to ask. To evaluate the past, as opposed to merely describing it, history must be compared with what did not happen.

To begin with, the questions of cost and benefit will apply to Britain alone. The experience of scores of societies overseas is beyond our scope. What benefits should we value? Intangibles such as 'well-being', or 'virtue' (e.g. in the form of 'the white man's burden')? These may be rewards of Empire, but they are difficult to measure, and it is necessary to fall back on other proxies for success. Two predominate: one is prosperity, or economic performance, using the measuring-rod of money. Another is security: preserving the peace or prevailing in war. To be sure, prosperity and security do not capture the full range of rewards or address important non-economic and non-political motives for Empire.[1] But prosperity and security, while only parts of the picture, are large and important ones. This chapter therefore surveys economic thinking about the theory of Empire, and goes on to evaluate the impact of trade, emigration, investment, governance, and defence on some British balance sheets.

Theory

The economics of Empire are informed by a few simple ideas, stated by Adam Smith and further developed by subsequent writers. Smith encompassed trade,

[1] Ronald Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience* (Manchester, 1990); Avner Offer, *The First World War: An Agrarian Interpretation* (Oxford, 1989), chaps. 9, 21.

investment, settlement, governance, and conquest into one comprehensive system of analysis. His fundamental insight was that Empire opened access to new economic opportunities, thus increasing the scope for the division of labour which is the main source of productivity and growth. Pursuing these opportunities was bound to alter the structure and pace of development at home, for the better under free trade, possibly for the worse under monopoly. Furthermore, colonies cost money to govern and defend, and these costs could wipe out the gains. If colonies were necessary at all, they should be self-governed, and commercial relations should correspond as much as possible to those of a voluntary trading partner.[2]

Subsequent thinking about the costs and benefits of Empire developed these insights. David Ricardo and John Stuart Mill analysed precisely the benefits of specialization and trade, and endorsed free trade as the policy to maximize economic welfare. Both Ricardo and Mill worried that diminishing returns to investment in natural resources (primarily in agriculture) might curb the rate of growth and could bring it to a halt eventually. Reaching out for new reserves of natural resources through trade and overseas development could keep the rate of return at a higher level, and could stave off the onset of stagnation.[3]

Edward Gibbon Wakefield, writing in the 1830s and the 1840s, shifted the emphasis from trade to emigration. Colonial settlement and investment provided an escape from cyclical slump and stagnation in Britain. A glut of savings and discouraged entrepreneurs in Britain could be mobilized to colonize the virgin lands of the Empire, where settlers could gain a better living and capital much higher returns.[4]

Karl Marx, an avid reader of both Smith and Wakefield, adopted their ideas and gave them an additional twist: competition was driving down the rate of profit at home, but this decline of the rate of profit could be postponed by investing overseas, where exploitation was easier and rates of return higher. Since the world was finite, colonization could not go on forever, and once the last frontier was reached, the crisis of capitalism could not be long in coming.[5]

Round about 1900 J. A. Hobson applied a similar approach to the most salient Imperial problem of his time: the war in South Africa. His original diagnosis

[2] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. E. Cannan (New York, 1937), Book I, chap. 3. Also Book IV, chap. 7, parts ii–iii, esp. pt. iii, pp. 563–79.

[3] Ricardo's model is diffused throughout his writings; see Mark Blaug, *Ricardian Economics: A Historical Study* (New Haven, 1958), chaps. 2 and 9, sect. ii; John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy with Some of their Applications to Social Philosophy*, ed. W. J. Ashley, new edn. (London, 1909), Book IV, chaps. 1–6.

[4] e.g. Edward Gibbon Wakefield, *A View of the Art of Colonization in Letters Between a Statesman and a Colonist* [1849], Introduction by James Collier (Oxford, 1914), letters 12–16.

[5] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production*, 2 vols. (1867; Moscow, 1954), I, chap. 33.

(echoing Wakefield) was one of over-saving, in which the accumulated wealth of the rich found no worthwhile domestic investments, because of workers' lack of purchasing power. Instead, these savings sought an outlet in the Empire, especially in speculative gold-mining: aggressive mineral magnates in Africa provoked international conflict and war. This analysis reflected the circumstances of the period *c*.1893–1904 in Britain, when deflation had pushed down domestic interest rates. The most attractive overseas investment was gold in South Africa. A wave of speculative investment generated tensions which eventually culminated in the South African (Boer) War. However, Hobson also noted that Britain's overseas investment had gone largely to the settler colonies (Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada) to the United States, and to South America. He believed that most of this investment was productive, and a benefit to domestic consumers, but thought it even better for these savings to have been invested or consumed at home.[6]

Hobson set out a broad statistical framework to support his argument. By the eve of the First World War G. Paish and C. K. Hobson had provided a detailed quantitative account of Britain's assets overseas. Several scholars have developed these estimates, including (chronologically) Feis, Imlah, Hall, Simon, Feinstein, Davis and Huttenback, and Pollard.[7] Edelstein's recent investigation is used extensively below.[8] In assessing these figures, it is useful to examine their several components, namely, investment, trade, and emigration.

Investment

Adam Smith predicted that overseas investment would pay more than investment at home, and would also bias the course of domestic development, possibly to its detriment. These prognoses are still at the core of investigation and debate. Investment in Empire conforms with the temporal pattern of British overseas investment in general (see chap. 2 above). The serious outflow of British investment began in the 1800s, and tended to move in cycles, pouring into one region after another in response to local development opportunities. In Britain, the Low Countries, and Germany urban growth and industrialization created a large appetite for food and raw materials. For the settler societies, this need created an opportunity to develop and export the harvest of farms, forests, and mineral

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[6] J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* [1902], 3rd edn. (London, 1938), chaps. 2, 4, 6.

[7] Listed in the Select Bibliography, except for Simon, whose article is printed in Hall.

[8] Michael Edelstein, *Overseas Investment in the Age of High Imperialism* (New York, 1982); 'Foreign Investment and Accumulation', and 'Imperialism: Cost and Benefit', chaps. 7 and 8, in Roderick Floud and Donald McCloskey, eds., *The Economic History of Britain since 1700*, 2nd edn., 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1994), II, pp. 173–216.

deposits. Investment went mostly (about 70 per cent) into extractive infrastructure: predominantly railways, but also urban utilities (gas, electricity, public works). Much of this was lent to governments and local authorities. A smaller fraction (about 12 per cent) was sunk directly in agriculture and mining.[9] British funds also supported local financial institutions (banks, insurance, mortgage and land companies) which financed urban and rural housing, agricultural construction, and merchant inventories.

In composition, about 70–80 per cent of these assets constituted 'portfolio investment', that is, tradeable financial assets such as overseas government bonds or the securities (bonds and shares) of foreign companies. The rest was made up of 'direct investment', that is, the material and financial assets of British companies and entrepreneurs operating directly overseas.[10] About 38 per cent of British investment overseas went to the Empire, and about 62 per cent outside it, while more than two-thirds of British investment raised in financial markets was destined for overseas. Within the Empire, more than two-thirds of all investment went to the areas of recent settlement, occupied almost entirely (apart from South Africa) by British and other European migrants, and their descendants (Table 2.6 above).[11] At the end of the period the income from overseas assets contributed about 8 per cent of British national income, and these assets, valued at about £4.2 billion, made up about 37 per cent of all British capital assets (including such domestic assets as buildings and land, not traded in financial markets).[12] Given that only the wealthy normally invested in bonds and shares, and that about two-thirds of financial assets were invested overseas, it is clear that the professional, managerial, and rentier classes had a strong preference for overseas assets.

Overseas income grew faster than overseas investment. In principle, overseas investment did not have to draw on domestic resources at all: it could be financed entirely from reinvesting the returns on earlier investments, and would still have left a considerable surplus. Property income from abroad exceeded net foreign investment for the whole period after 1865 except for a few years around 1870.[13] Of

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[9] Edelstein, 'Foreign Investment', p. 179.

[10] Edelstein fixes the boundary between the two at 30% British ownership.

[11] Calculated from Lance E. Davis and Robert A. Huttenback, with the assistance of Susan Gray Davis, *Mammon and the Pursuit of Empire: The Political Economy of British Imperialism, 1860–1912* (Cambridge, 1986), Table 2.1, pp. 40–41. Minimal estimate.

[12] Edelstein, 'Foreign Investment', Table 7.1, p. 175; value of domestic and overseas capital: land was 21% and reproducible capital 41%; C. H. Feinstein, *National Income, Expenditure and Output of the United Kingdom, 1855–1965* (Cambridge, 1972), Table 46, col. 9, p. T104; Table 50, p. T110; C. H. Feinstein, 'National Statistics, 1760–1920', in C. H. Feinstein and Sidney Pollard, eds., *Studies in Capital Formation in the United Kingdom, 1750–1920* (Oxford, 1988), Table 18.5, p. 400.

[13] Edelstein, 'Foreign Investment', Table 7.1, p. 175.

course as interest flowed in and capital was repaid, investors had a choice between consumption and reinvestment, at home or abroad; since most investment came from the wealthy, who earned much more than they consumed, the choice of consumption would rarely arise. Investment could be and was withdrawn from one region and diverted to another. This gradual accumulation of assets over decades, across the globe, meant there was little overlap between the flash-points of political and military expansion, and the geographical configuration of economic imperialism, concentrated in the temperate countries, the 'informal empire', and the United States.

Effect of Investment on Trade

Adam Smith insisted on no discrimination in favour of Imperial trade and investment, and his doctrine informed Britain's nineteenth-century commitment to free trade. British trade and investment were not channelled by policy into British territories, and British defence, in the form of the Royal Navy, extended equally to traders with Imperial and non-Empire territories.

Not all property income from abroad was reinvested. Enough of it remained (together with earnings from shipping and financial services, other arms of Britain's overseas orientation) to finance a permanent trade deficit of enormous magnitude. On average, Britain imported 46 per cent more merchandise (by value) than she exported during the period from 1871 to 1914.[14] Not only could Britain import far more goods than she exported for decades on end, she did so at falling prices. Between the 1870s and 1914 the terms of trade, the price relation between British exports and imports, improved about 10 per cent in Britain's favour. These price improvements were facilitated by Britain's nvestments in railways, in steamships, in trading services, and in urban and rural development overseas. More than two-thirds of these imports took the form of natural resource products, mostly food, fodder, and industrial raw materials.[15]

Those imports caused Britain to run down its own domestic agriculture. The imports of cheap food into Britain acted to depress the value of agricultural land, to depopulate the countryside, and to diminish the influence of the landed aristocracy, the gentry, and the farmers; they barely harmed the farm labourers, who migrated increasingly to the towns. Cheap food imports thus had a progress-

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[14] Re-exports deducted from imports. Calculated from B. R. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, 1988), Table 'External trade 3', p. 453.

[15] Offer, *The First World War*, Table 6.1, p. 82; terms of trade, Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics* 'External trade 23', pp. 526–27.

ive effect (in the economic sense, of reducing inequality, and also arguably in the social and political ones), redistributing income from landowners and farmers to the rest of society. In particular, British investment overseas made food cheaper for manual workers. Food still accounted for more than half of working-class expenditure, so this was a substantial benefit.[16] Some gains in quantity were offset by losses in quality. Much of this imported food (and the bulk of working-class imported food consumption) was taken in the form of mechanically processed staples, of white flour, frozen meat, and white sugar, that neither nutritionists nor chefs would hold in high regard today. Unlike continental European countries Britain did not develop a rich indigenous food culture with distinctive cheeses, breads, and preserved meats, based on rural and small-town traditions and skills.

As the classical economists had predicted, an overseas trade orientation acted to restructure the British economy. A quantitative measure of this commitment can be derived from the scale of British overseas earnings as a proportion of GNP.[17] Over the period 1871–1913 as a whole, Britain derived an average 31.5 per cent of its income from overseas. Broken down, an average 15.9 per cent came from visible exports, 6.5 per cent from the export of services, 3.8 per cent was earned by shipping, and 5.3 per cent as property income from abroad.[18]

Visible exports relied on a set of successful industries inherited from the industrial revolution. Pride of place belonged to textile industries, cotton and wool, and their ancillary machine-building industries, which also exported widely. Both cotton and wool imported the bulk of their raw materials, while cotton exported more than three-quarters of its output, and wool almost half. Engineering, iron and steel, and shipbuilding remained strong throughout the nineteenth century. Coal, which powered Britain's own development, also found growing markets abroad.

Exported services were mostly commercial and financial. London banks financed commodity inventories and goods in transit. Insurance companies took on marine and commercial risks. Shipping and cargo brokers provided one intermediary service, while commodity exchanges provided another. Merchants moved everything from sugar and tea to wheat and zinc. The City of London formed a financial hub that brought overseas borrowers into contact with British

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[16] Kevin H. O'Rourke, 'The European Grain Invasion, 1870–1913', *Journal of Economic History* (hereafter *JEcH*), LVII (1997), pp. 775–801.

[17] GNP (gross national product) is GDP (gross domestic product) plus property income from abroad.

[18] Derived from Feinstein, *National Income*, Table 3, pp. T10–T11; Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics*, Table 'External trade 3', p. 453; Albert H. Imlah, *Economic Elements in the Pax Britannica: Studies in British Foreign Trade in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), Table 4, p. 39.

wealth. The great majority of Britain's great and middling non-landed fortunes were made in this metropolitan cluster of finance and trade. This nexus has been christened 'gentlemanly capitalism', to distinguish it from 'manufacturing capitalism'. Indeed, it has been claimed that this service industry was the real source of Britain's comparative advantage, not its industrial skills.[19] It is questionable, however, whether a financial and mercantile capitalism on this scale could have flourished for so long, and to such an extent, without a successful manufacturing industry, with its large export earnings and its large demand for imports. Perhaps the peculiar talent of 'gentlemanly capitalism' was its ability to appropriate such a large share of the returns to industrial enterprise in Britain; perhaps financial success acted to cramp industrial development. To anticipate, if 'gentlemanly capitalists' had been a little less prosperous, and business capitalists a little more so, the British economy might have developed along more enterprising and dynamic lines.

Shipbuilding and shipping, among the largest of domestic industries, were devoted to servicing this trade. British shipbuilding was the largest such industry by far, producing about 60 per cent of the world's tonnage. Britain's merchant fleet was also by far the largest in the world, with about 35 per cent of world tonnage throughout the period (and another 5–9 per cent in British possessions), way ahead of the runner-up (Germany) with 6 per cent growing to 9 per cent in 1911.[20] British trade and investment built up the demand for ships, and provided them with cargoes. The Royal Navy, another pillar of trade and Empire, gave rise to an export industry of warships, guns, and armour.

This process of industrial and mercantile specialization made British society into the most urbanized in the world. Come the First World War, more than 60 per cent of its food (by calories) was imported. Britain, as it were, had sent her grainfields overseas. The surge of overseas development financed by British wealth stimulated a large emigration from Britain to the American and Australasian frontier (Table 3.6 above). Emigration coincided, on the whole, with the cyclical pulses of overseas investment. It highlights a crucial difficulty in assessing the consequences of Empire. British migrants mostly left with some equipment of education and training, but with the bulk of their working lives still ahead of them. It is reasonable to think that migrants as a group had ambition, initiative, and drive. The loss of human capital to Britain was a gain to the immigrants concerned. By permitting, through free trade, the emergence of such a specialized global economy, Britain created large opportunities across the seas for her own

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[19] W. D. Rubinstein, *Capitalism, Culture and Decline in Britain, 1750–1990* (London, 1993), chap. 1.
[20] Derek H. Aldcroft, 'The Mercantile Marine', in Aldcroft, ed., *The Development of British Industry and Foreign Competition, 1875–1914* (London, 1968), Table 1, p. 327.

citizens. It is only the conventions of national accounting that prevent us from adding these opportunities to the benefits of Empire.

For most permanent immigrants (in the Edwardian period as many as one-third came back), conditions overseas were at least as good as at home. Real wages were much higher, and the rise in status even greater: Australia and Canada were much more equal societies than Britain, and a much smaller share of their income went to property-owners.[21] Farmers, however, often accepted very low incomes in expectation of economic independence and future gains from land appreciation. In social indicators like infant mortality and home ownership, migrants fared considerably better than the wage-worker at home. For those going to Australia and New Zealand, the climate was also better. By leaving, they took some pressure off the labour markets at home, allowing more opportunities for those who stayed behind, and improving the distribution of income. There is a category of persons, colonial administrators, policemen, soldiers, and experts in hundreds of localities world-wide, for which Empire opened up the scope for official careers which Britain alone could not afford. But in another Britain, less colonial and mercantile, their abilities might have contributed to a more dynamic economy. Emigration presented private opportunities for farmers, workers, businessmen, and professionals. In more subtle ways, the intermingling of cultures and the wide Imperial spaces opened up new horizons for imagination, aspiration, and experience, enriched the culture, and made it less insular than it would have been otherwise. Without Empire, no Conrad, no Kipling, no *King Solomon's Mines*.

Costs and Benefits of Trade

Estimates of costs and benefits depend crucially on the imaginary alternative or counter-factual chosen as a benchmark for comparison. In estimating gains from trade, Edelstein chose two plausible counter-factuals: in (a) the territories of Empire are independent or colonized by other powers. The main loss to Britain is the Empire as a free trade area, kept open (forcibly or by persuasion) to British exports. Britain now faces tariffs (of 20 per cent) comparable to those imposed by independent countries at the time. Counter-factual (b), a more radical one, assumes that in the absence of Empire, British trade with the Empire would have been lower; more precisely, a 75 per cent reduction in trade with the non-Dominion colonies (placing them on a level with British trade with, for example, China or Turkey); and a 30 per cent reduction in exports to the Dominions (comparable with, for example, Argentina). These 'facts' are highly stylized, but

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[21] Robert C. Allen, 'Real Incomes in the English-speaking World, 1879–1913', in George Grantham and Mary MacKinnon, eds., *Labour Market Evolution* (London, 1994).

convey a sense of the magnitudes involved. Using counter-factual (a) (higher tariffs), the benefits of Empire to British trade are estimated as rising from 1.6 to 3.8 per cent of GNP between 1870 and 1913. Under counter-factual (b) (less trade), they rise from 4.3 to 6.5 per cent of GNP during the same period. Edelstein implicitly regards trade as by far the largest economic benefit conferred by Empire on Britain.[22] Even counter-factual (b) appears to be small, but for such a mature and diversified economy, it is actually a substantial benefit to come from a single source, comparable in size to the more conservative estimates of benefits of the railways (7–11 per cent of GNP) or of free trade (about 6 per cent).[23] On the other hand, trade theory suggests that a protectionist Britain, as a dominant buyer of many goods, could have off-loaded the cost of a tariff on to its trading partners, perhaps sufficiently to compensate for losing the benefits of free trade.[24] Intuitions of this kind haunted the Edwardian protectionist movement.

Did the Imperial connection provide Britain with the right trading mix? On the face of it, the answer would seem to be 'yes'. Britain imported primary and semi-fabricated commodities, and exported manufactures. Closer in, the answer is less clear-cut. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, and despite some successes, Britain failed to achieve the same standing in the new emerging technologies of electricity, chemicals, and internal combustion as she had in the technologies of the first industrial revolution, for example, in textile manufacture and machinery, in iron and steel, engineering, steam engines, and shipbuilding. One study suggests that British exports were only intensive in low-skilled labour.[25] Many writers detect a failure to upgrade the human-capital base. Was that a failure bred of complacency caused by the success of the large import-export economy in sustaining 'gentlemanly capitalism'? If so, it did not disappear with Empire, and the same problems of under-training continued to dog the post-Imperial economy as well.

The Balance Sheet of Foreign Investment

Investment in Empire can be approached in a similar way. Was it to Britain's advantage to invest so much of its savings overseas, rather than at home? It is investment rather than trade which has tended to dominate discussions of the

[22] Edelstein, 'Imperialism: Cost and Benefit', Table 8.1, p. 205.

[23] C. Knick Harley, 'Foreign Trade: Comparative Advantage and Performance', in Floud and McCloskey, eds., *Economic History of Britain*, I, p. 306.

[24] Donald N. McCloskey, 'Magnanimous Albion: Free Trade and British National Income, 1841–1881', *Explorations in Economic History*, XVII (1980), pp. 303–20.

[25] N. F. R. Crafts and Mark Thomas, 'Comparative Advantage in UK Manufacturing Trade, 1910–1935', *Economic Journal*, LXXXVI (1986), pp. 629–45.

benefit of Empire. Estimating the benefits (or possibly the costs) of investment in Empire depends, once again, on the benchmark chosen for comparison.

One simple counter-factual is to assume no investment overseas. The procedure is then simply to compare the rate of return on overseas investments with comparable domestic ones. Investment in Empire paid better than comparable domestic investments, and investment overseas outside the Empire paid even more. Railway bonds in Britain apparently returned 3.8 per cent, colonial railways 4.5 per cent, and foreign railways 5.7 per cent between 1870 and 1914.[26] A sample of 566 domestic and overseas securities between 1870 and 1913 has produced a realized rate of return (i.e. including capital appreciation/depreciation) of 5.72 per cent a year for overseas investments, and 4.6 per cent for domestic ones. This difference of 1.1 percentage points was not trivial. Projected on to the magnitude of Edwardian property income from abroad, this advantage represents about 1.6 per cent of national income.[27]

So far we have assumed that Empire boosted the rate of return. From a different angle (but with the same data), Empire can be seen to depress the rates of return. Investments in Empire may have paid more than investments at home, but the rate of return outside the Empire was even higher. In another counter-factual, no overseas investment goes into the Empire, and other things are kept equal. Under these assumptions, the Empire actually depressed the potential returns from overseas investment. The counter-factuals are similar to the trade ones and assume (a) no special relationship between Britain and the colonies, or (b) a lower level of overseas investment. Consequent estimates of the benefits from investment in Empire range (depending on the counter-factual used) between −0.9 and +0.4 per cent of national income at its peak in 1913, in other words, as negligible if not actually negative.[28]

What, then, do the different rates of return signify? Why were rates of return higher in the Empire than at home, and higher still beyond the formal Empire? This was not due to greater market risks of loss and default abroad. If anything, market volatility was greater at home. If investors required a higher return on overseas investments, it was not due to adverse experience with such investments. Edelstein argues that the difference is due entirely to the higher economic productivity of overseas investment. That explains, perhaps, why the bulk of British portfolio investment was placed there. But it does not entirely explain why the efficient capital market of late-Victorian Britain was unable to transfer capital

[26] Davis and Huttenback, *Mammon and the Pursuit of Empire*, p. 81.

[27] Edelstein, 'Foreign Investment', p. 183. In contrast to Avner Offer, 'The British Empire, 1870–1914: A Waste of Money?', *Economic History Review* (hereafter *EcHR*), XLVI (1993), p. 221, based on Edelstein's much higher risk-adjusted differential.

[28] Edelstein, 'Imperialism: Cost and Benefit', Table 8.1, p. 205.

from low-return to high-return investments, and to equalize the rate of return, as economic theory would suggest. Why would anyone accept a low return when a higher one was available, at a lower risk, consistently, over decades?

The difference must lie in investors' *perception* of risk; not in the actual market risk of gain and loss, captured by measures of volatility. On the evidence of rates of return, British investors regarded their investments as being more secure at home, somewhat less so in Australia and Canada, and least secure in territories outside British jurisdiction. This does not seem to be a reflection of the *systemic* risk of political upheaval and war.[29] Britain's position near the cockpits of Europe, threatened by maritime blockade, would not seem to make it more secure than the main destinations of Imperial and overseas investment, but knowledge and ignorance may be more relevant. British investors understood domestic business conditions and institutions, knew less about Dominion and colonial ones, and least of all about foreign ones. Resolving disputes would be cheaper under British jurisdiction at home and in the Empire, the 'rules of the game' more familiar. Hence, to borrow in London, Imperial and foreign enterprises had to bid higher than comparable British ones. On the whole, however, wealthy British savers were willing to put up with additional uncertainty if it offered a higher rate of return. They may not have been so poorly informed after all. What determined the actual rates of return, then, was the distribution of risk preferences among British investors, who were willing to place more than two-thirds of their portfolio funds in overseas baskets.

Does it follow that overseas portfolio investment, with its higher rates of return, was also economically better for Britain? There are two conflicting perspectives on this crucial issue.

The first perspective, assuming diminishing returns to domestic investment, and hence a priority for overseas investment, is rooted in the classical theories already discussed. It regards the stock of investment opportunities as limited. As capital accumulates, the opportunities for high-return investments at home are gradually exhausted and the yield begins to fall. One method of keeping up the rate of return is to shift investment into underdeveloped territories overseas, where opportunities still abound. When Britain had constructed one railway system, there was little room for a second. Hence, for a capital-rich country like Britain, investment overseas was the natural progression.[30]

The other view, which assumes the possibility of increasing returns, and hence priority for investment at home, echoes Hobson's concern about 'overinvestment'

[29] Offer, 'British Empire', p. 221. If that had been the case, the home–overseas differential would narrow as dangers to Britain mounted after 1900. This does not seem to have happened.

[30] e.g. Donald N. McCloskey, 'Did Victorian Britain Fail?', *EcHR*, Second Series, XXIII (1970), pp. 446–59.

overseas. It regards the allocation of such a large proportion of Britain's savings to portfolio investment overseas as depriving the domestic economy of vital resources and as a source of lasting damage. Britain invested a much smaller proportion of her national income than the United States and Germany, and sent about one-third of this investment overseas. A moderate version argues that a somewhat higher rate of domestic investment (comparable with, for example, the United States or Germany) would have delivered a much higher level of consumption, as much as 25 per cent more, even on diminishing-returns assumptions.[31] Even a sceptic can concede that with capital-market imperfections the extra returns to domestic investment could have amounted to as much as 7 per cent of GNP.[32] A more radical critique points out that it was only in large, hands-off investments typically sold in financial markets that overseas investment had any advantage: 'The yield on the [UK] gross domestic capital stock for the years 1910–14 can be shown to be 10.6 per cent...British domestic investments as a group yielded a higher private return than did the assets which comprised the bulk of the British foreign portfolio.'[33]

If domestic returns were better, why then did savings flow overseas? The costs of floating a loan or issuing shares in London was high. To tap the financial markets, investments had to be substantial; that is the main reason why the railways and other large public works, with their large capital requirements, were the typical City investments. Smaller projects and public goods of various kinds found it more difficult to gain access to financial markets. The bulk of British savings were held by a small fraction of the population. These investors were, on the whole, passive. They were *rentiers*, who had no desire to 'get their hands dirty' with enterprise and management. Given the particular risk aversion of these investors, the Empire (and overseas in general) was a good place for them to invest. According to this view, the unequal distribution of wealth ensured a mismatch between the preferred private rate of return to savers, and the optimal rate of return for society, which could have been much higher. Financial markets failed to allocate investment funds to their best social uses.

The loss to Britain went beyond the funding itself. Investment embodies new knowledge and stimulates change, its benefits spill over beyond their specific locus; more domestic investment could have led to higher returns, by stimulating positive changes in the structure of the British economy. This perspective

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[31] N. F. R. Crafts, 'Victorian Britain Did Fail', *EcHR*, Second Series, XXII (1979), pp. 533–37.

[32] McCloskey, 'Did Victorian Britain Fail?', p. 455.

[33] William P. Kennedy, *Industrial Structure, Capital Markets, and the Origins of British Economic Decline* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 152–53.

currently enjoys some popularity, both theoretical and empirical. Investment at home would have raised the rate of growth and the level of consumption.[34] Conversely, diversion of investment to safe and undemanding projects overseas undermined the urban fabric, and deprived Britain of the technological and institutional dynamism which would have delivered greater economic growth.

From this point of view overseas investment was not an economic priority for Britain; the lower rate of return at home did not indicate exhaustion of investment opportunities. A clear-cut superiority of overseas investment was only in evidence over a narrow range of assets, those securities (mostly bonds) traded on the Stock Exchange. These financially liquid assets excluded the bulk of domestic physical capital, such as the value of land, housing stock, and business premises, as well as most public capital: roads, schools, civic facilities, hospitals. They excluded most equipment and buildings of manufacturing industry. They left out the educational facilities of Britain's schools and universities, as well as the knowledge and skills embodied in her population.

With a more equal distribution of income, domestic demand would have been higher, and would have shifted away from food and raw materials towards consumer durables, better housing, and education. This could have provided higher returns to investment at home. It has been argued that capital could not find its way into more productive investments at home due to the inflexibility of capital markets: that the City of London found it easier to lend at lower rates of return for projects that it knew and understood, than to make difficult decisions about industrial creditworthiness at home. Government support for overseas investment seriously undermined public investment at home, especially in education.[35] In the process of urbanization, Britain's cities 'became ugly, crowded and polluted', and this may have held back productive investment as well.[36] The argument that there were no more useful investments to be made at home can be dismissed. The development of the telephone system in Britain, and of urban electric public transport, lagged far behind the United States. Britain also lagged considerably in the production and application of electricity and of motor transport. Some

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[34] For a survey of endogenous growth theory, Jonathan Temple, 'New Growth Theory and New Growth Evidence', *Nuffield College Working Papers in Economics* (Oxford, Sept. 1995); more specifically, e.g. J. Bradford de Long, 'Productivity Growth and Machinery Investment: A Long-Run Look, 1870–1980', *Journal of Economic History*, LII (1992), pp. 307–24. Previous research, Sidney Pollard, 'Capital Exports, 1870–1914: Harmful or Beneficial?', *EcHR*, Second Series, XXXVIII (1985), p. 513, n. 103.

[35] Kennedy, *Industrial Structure* ; Avner Offer, 'Empire and Social Reform—British Overseas Investment and Domestic Politics, 1908–1914', *Historical Journal*, XXVI, 1 (1983), p. 138.

[36] Jeffrey Williamson, 'Coping with City Growth', in Floud and McCloskey, eds., *Economic History of Britain*, I, pp. 353–55.

estimates suggest that the rise of investment and the consequent structural shifts could have delivered dramatically higher standards of living in Britain.[37]

For a different use of the wealth that went overseas, we have to envisage a different kind of society: either a more equal society, with lower levels of accumulation and higher levels of domestic demand, consuming more and investing more in technologically advanced enterprise at home, or possibly a society still unequal, but with fewer outlets for overseas investment, which might then have taken a longer view of both its industrial opportunities and of its social and educational needs, in both respects rather like Sweden or Germany. Both of these visions bring out how closely the structure of British economy and society were bound up (as the theorists of Empire had predicted) with its overseas orientation.

Some caution is in order. It is easy to get carried away by radical counterfactuals, and well to remember that they are counter-factual. Although the world has seen large shifts and international differences in growth rates, it nevertheless seems rash to attempt to pin Britain's relative stagnation in the late-Victorian period on one variable alone, important as that variable may be. Moreover, the relation between investment and growth remains opaque. Were Britain's industrial and investment weaknesses a result of excessive overseas investment, or were they maybe its causes? It is not clear that higher investment in Britain would have had the same effect as high investment elsewhere. Investment does not occur in a vacuum, and British industrial culture was resistant to change. Did Britain have the 'social capacity' to be an industrially dynamic society? Total Factor Productivity, a measure of the efficiency of capital and labour jointly, was considerably lower in Britain than in the United States. What is clear is that the counter-factual of no overseas investments suggests a society quite radically different from the one that actually existed. In this respect, British overseas investment made a real difference to the British experience, so much that it is hard to visualize an alternative.

Governance and Security

Benefits of Empire must be set off against the cost of its governance. Adam Smith considered that it was folly to cling to Empire by force, but that the benefits of Imperial trade, even monopolistic trade, still exceeded the cost of governing and defending it. This is the other key debate about the benefits of Empire. Given the existence of benefits in trade, employment, and investment, did they exceed the

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[37] Kennedy, *Industrial Structure*, Table D4, p. 168. These particular calculations have been criticized, e.g. by C. Knick Harley, in a review in *American Historical Review*, LXLIV, 4 (1989), p. 1380.

costs of Empire? And what were those costs? The first of these was the cost of Imperial administration and defence; the second was exposure to the risks of war.

How much did trade and investment rely on the territorial presence and naval protection provided by Empire? No other large country before or since, not even the United States after 1945, has placed so much of its assets overseas. Other economic powers—France, Germany, the United States—committed far smaller shares of their resources to overseas investment. Perhaps that was prudent: France and Germany eventually lost the bulk of their overseas assets in the First World War. When the United States embarked on massive investment overseas after 1945, it had acquired its own 'free trade empire', underpinned by earth-straddling military, naval, and air forces. The overseas orientation of the British economy certainly exposed it to the risks of international conflict, and justified construction of a large navy. This national commitment to naval power aligned the interests of overseas investors with the security interests of society as a whole, and provided a further incentive for affluent British savers to accept overseas uncertainties This is a crucial link between Empire and overseas investment.

Its position as an island off the continental mass, with open access to the ocean, allowed late-Victorian Britain to dispense with a conscript army. Naval power conferred a technological advantage. Steam power provided excellent mobility at sea in comparison with marching, horse-drawn transport, and even railways. Continental powers had to give priority to their land forces. The United States was so remote from any threat that it could almost ignore defence altogether. Australia, New Zealand, and Canada also neglected their defences, secure in the knowledge that their sea routes were as valuable to Britain as to them. While potential rivals were preoccupied with military threats on land, Britain was free to maintain by far the largest navy. This asymmetry remained in place throughout most of the nineteenth century.

For all the Empire's expanse, its military cost was not excessive even by low contemporary standards. Between 1870 and 1913 Britain spent an average of about 3 per cent of her national income on defence. This was hardly crippling, compared with, for example, 5 or 6 per cent of a much larger economy after 1945. This level of expenditure was either in line with or actually lower than European Great Power norms, depending on the assumptions used.[38] France and Germany each kept more than 600,000 men under arms after 1895, Russia about 900,000 (rising fast), and all of the Great Powers (including Austria, Italy, and Turkey) had millions of men ready for wartime mobilization. Indeed, if the economic idling of conscripts

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[38] Offer, 'British Empire: A Waste of Money?', pp. 222–26; John M. Hobson, 'The Military-Extraction Gap and the Wary Titan: The Fiscal Sociology of British Defence Policy, 1870–1914', *European Economic History Review*, XXII, 3 (1993) pp. 461–507.

is taken into account, French and German defence costs were substantially higher than Britain's. British defence manpower was smaller, but not insubstantial. On the eve of the South African War, in 1898, there were 99,000 regular soldiers in regiments at home, 75,000 in India, and 41,000 in the other colonies. The navy had another 100,000 officers and men. Britain kept a total of some 315,000 men permanently under arms, and also a 'native army' in India of about 148,000.[39] Naval spending rose from one-half of defence outlays in 1895 to almost two-thirds in 1913. Britain's defence effort, like her economy, was based on skilled and specialized wage labour, her long-service officers, soldiers, seamen, stokers, and mechanics, and on large lumps of capital in the form of armoured ships.

Naval command reduced the need for land forces. It was unnecessary to maintain a large garrison at every potential trouble spot; forces could be carried by sea wherever needed. During the South African War Britain supported a large military effort 6,000 miles from home. The Indian garrison, the largest standing army in the Empire, was more than half native, and was financed entirely from local sources. Apart from South Africa, no other component of the Empire faced any serious threats on land.

By the 1890s sea-power was no longer a matter of cheap gunboats and cruisers, but of expensive battleships and their large flotillas of smaller vessels. Technological change eroded British dominance. Cheaper weapons, the mine, the torpedo, and the submarine, enabled small powers to mount a real threat, while each cohort of capital ships became obsolete in little more than a decade. Other industrializing nations all grew faster than Britain, and were thus able to compete in naval construction. No single power aspired to match the Royal Navy before the First World War, but several of them outclassed or threatened it in their home waters during the Edwardian period. Britain gave way to Japan in the Far East, to France, Italy, Austria, and Russia in the Mediterranean, to Germany and Russia in the Baltic, and to the United States in North America; she needed the bulk of her firepower simply to match the German threat in the North Sea. This sudden eclipse of British dominance undercut the viability of the free-trade Empire. Hence, during the Edwardian period, the anxious attempts to recast the arrangements for Imperial defence, such as Chamberlain's Tariff Reform campaign, the Imperial conferences, and an implicit reliance on American resources in British defence strategy.[40]

What was the relation between economic and military strength? Mercantilist writers regarded power and plenty as inseparable. In India, Britain continued to run an Empire held by military forces, and governed directly. India dominated the

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[39] *Hazel's Annual for 1899* (London, 1899).
[40] Offer, *The First World War*, pp. 253–56; see above, chap. by E. H. H. Green.

Empire in terms of numbers, with some 85 per cent of its population in 1911. It also ran a permanent payments deficit with Britain, which helped the metropolis to balance its transactions elsewhere. In 1910 India paid a net £60m to Britain, at a time when the overall British deficit on visible trade was £144m.[41] There is some controversy as to whether any part of this payments surplus should be regarded as exploitative: in economic terms, British investment did not receive exorbitant returns, and the cost of British administration may be regarded as moderate.[42] But the gratifications of governance remained British, and there is also a question whether the combination of unilateral transfers to Britain, and the British management of a silver monetary base, did not have a harmful effect on India's terms of trade.[43] There is also a question whether British goods would have been so successful in India without British rule. But India did not dominate British trade. Together with all the other dependent colonies, it only took between 15 and 21 per cent of British exports during this period. The vast bulk of British overseas economic activity was not mercantilist in nature: it had no direct reliance on military force or commercial privilege, but depended instead on the free flow of trade.

A commercial policy of free trade, and the relative openness of the Empire to foreign trade, had the advantage of reducing friction with the other powers. In the context of free trade, it was less important to dominate a territory than to keep it open. That was the meaning of the 'imperialism of free trade'. But the Raj in India and expansion in Egypt and Africa were not entirely consistent with this doctrine. Freedoms of governance and of trade were reserved for the dominant race of the Empire.

Lenin called the Great War an 'imperialist war'. Britain had the largest of Empires. Can its Empire be implicated in the collapse of peace in Europe in 1914? There is such a link, in which the pursuit of prosperity eventually acted to undermine security. By opting for free trade, Britain gave up self-sufficiency in food and raw materials, and came to depend on unmolested passage for its world-ranging merchant marine. British naval supremacy was an implicit premiss of economic specialization. The Royal Navy kept a watch in distant waters, and was relied upon to safeguard food supplies in time of war. The rapid growth of other industrial countries, however, eroded British naval supremacy, and gave rise to a serious concern about security around the turn of the century.

Simultaneously, Britain's trading Empire, more particularly its English-speaking components in Canada, Australasia, and South Africa, was emerging as a

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[41] S. B. Saul, *Studies in British Overseas Trade, 1870–1914* (Liverpool, 1960), p. 58 and chap. 8; Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics*, Table 'external trade 3', p. 453.

[42] James Foreman-Peck, 'Foreign Investment and Imperial Exploitation: Balance of Payments Reconstruction for Nineteenth-Century Britain and India', *EcHR*, XLII (1989), pp. 365–72.

[43] Ibid., pp. 371–72.

strategic asset for Britain. The main purpose of Chamberlain's tariff reform campaign was to bind these societies into a British *Kriegsverein* (i.e. military alliance) by means of a *Zollverein* (customs union). The perceived menace of the German naval build-up pushed Britain into defensive alliances with France and Russia. Between 1906 and 1908 British naval planners investigated the new geo-strategic alignment, and concluded that Germany was also reliant on maritime trade, and similarly exposed to blockade. In 1908 the Committee of Imperial Defence decided on a hybrid strategy for a possible war with Germany. A small expeditionary force would be despatched to stiffen French resistance, and this would provide a naval blockade, the decisive weapon, with the time required for its work.[44] In Germany, a similar analysis inclined the leaders towards a desperate strategy of pre-emptive attack.[45] International economic specialization, and especially the British division of labour which relied on food from overseas, thus helped to dislocate the balance of power in Europe and impelled Britain into continental alliances; the naval arms race was one of the precipitating causes of war. Some writers have suggested that the Empire might have given Britain a false sense of security; that Britain was not assertive enough; that by merely raising its spending to European levels it could have helped to deter Germany from launching the First World War.[46]

What had failed was the system of 'hegemonic stability'.[47] According to this interpretation, peace and plenty depend on the presence of a Great Power with military superiority, willing to act as arbiter and enforcer of the peace. From this standpoint, British military and naval efforts should not be viewed as merely a contribution to British defence. The Royal Navy extended protection to the Dominions and their trade, to Britain's informal empire in Asia and South America, as well as to its trading partners, especially the United States. In deterring war, it extended the benefits of peace to Britain's adversaries as well, to France and later to Germany. Indeed, this benefited these countries economically more than it benefited Britain, since the rest of the developed world was growing faster at the end of the nineteenth century than was Britain. If the international division of labour underpinned by Britain's free trade did increase growth, and if growth occurred faster in other countries, then the system of hegemonic stability was redistributing economic and military power away from Britain and making a challenge to its hegemony more likely.

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[44] Offer, *The First World War*, part 3.

[45] Ibid., chaps. 22–23.

[46] Hobson, 'The Military-Extraction Gap', pp. 493–500.

[47] Associated with Robert Gilpin, Robert O. Keohane, and Charles P. Kindelberger; a critical survey in Isabelle Grunberg, 'Exploring the "Myth" of Hegemonic Stability', *International Organization*, XLIV, 4 (1990), pp. 431–77.

When Britain decided to enter the war, she was able to draw on the resources of its Empire and its great informal trading web. Some of the best assets of British security turned out to be the bonds of the English-speaking world overseas: economic, social, political, sentimental, forming a complex but effective system of practical kinship. Australia, New Zealand, and Canada added some 30 per cent to the population of the British Isles, and almost 40 per cent to their income.[48] By extending British resources, the Empire made Britain more prone to take military action. It created resources, which stood ready for dissipation by statesmen, admirals, and generals. The military effort of the Dominions was formidable. Canada, Australia, and New Zealand mobilized 1.2 million men, almost one-fifth of the numbers enlisted in the British Isles. India mobilized almost another million. In addition, the Empire provided money, as well as vast resources of food, raw materials, and industrial capacity. In 1917 the allied margin of superiority was very small, and Britain might have had to settle on difficult terms without this Imperial support. The 'informal empire' also made a crucial economic contribution, and the United States, part of the British overseas web of trade, migration, and finance, proved decisive economically even before its formal intervention in the war guaranteed the military outcome.

Conclusion

Any balance sheet of Empire depends on the counter-factual chosen. In comparison with a world that had not been colonized by Britain, other things being equal, the benefits of Imperial trade alone contributed at most 5–6 per cent to British national income at the end of the period, and perhaps even less. Imperial investment, compared with a world without Empire, added very little, while a world with no overseas investment, and other things kept equal, is not a realistic counterfactual. In total, then, the direct contribution of Empire to Britain was not entirely negligible, but in its absence British average incomes would still have been ahead of such contemporary first-rank economies as France and Germany, Sweden and Switzerland.

If one assumes constant or increasing rather than diminishing returns on domestic investment, the Empire can be seen as a diversion from a more productive development path in which more equipment and talent had been allocated to the domestic economy. Such counter-factuals throw up dramatic improvements in British welfare, but are they to be believed? Periods when the option of overseas investment was not so readily available (during the 1890s, 1930s, and the 1950s)

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[48] At prevailing exchange rates, though only about 27% at Purchasing Power Parity, as calculated from Allen, 'Incomes in the English-speaking World', Table 6A, p. 128.

were indeed times of more dynamic domestic development and growth by British standards, though still lacklustre by the standards of other countries. This suggests that the problem was as much the productivity of domestic investment as the domestic share of overall investment. The link between investment and growth (indeed, all the determinants of growth) is poorly understood, and appears to involve social, cultural, and institutional factors as well. High investment in Britain might not have been so productive as elsewhere, due to such inhibitions and constraints: the traditions and adversarial attitudes of workers and employers, the parsimony of local government, the low level of education and training—all militate against the assumption of increasing returns to domestic investment. High estimates of growth forgone should be qualified accordingly. Other things would have had to change as well; given the strong trade orientation of the British economy, and the Imperial share in its trade (about one-third), there is a real question whether existing output levels could have been maintained without the Empire. At any rate, the radical counter-factual of increasing-return investment at home takes us a long way from reality. One has to go very far back in history, to the outcomes of the Revolutionary and French wars, to find the historical crossroads which would have made a different world possible.

The real welfare impact of Empire lies elsewhere, and it requires shifting one's gaze away from the British Isles. The attractions of Imperial and overseas investment and trade were not merely matters of clever finance, but reflected a unique economic opportunity. This was embodied in the vast potential of natural resources in thinly occupied countries in temperate climates: minerals, timber, but mostly agricultural land and its products: grain, wool, cheese, meat, hides. What opened it up was the demand of metropolitan urban societies, and their capacity to pay in cheap manufactures. Given the large cost advantages of these newly productive areas, opening them up with railways and export facilities provided straightforward economic benefits.

The establishment of overseas English-speaking societies was by far the largest permanent benefit created by Britain and her Empire. In doing so, it inflicted an appalling cost on the aboriginal peoples of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Most of the benefits did not accrue directly to Britain, but were reaped on the spot. Some of these countries, the Dominions, were politically integrated in the Empire. The United States had been so in the past, and was bound to Britain by strong ties of language, kinship, and commerce. These communities were among the richest in the world. Britain planted the seed, and nourished it with infusions of migrants, talent, and money. She also transferred a set of mature institutions, a legal system, property rights, and the management of diplomacy and defence. Take Australia, the richest society in the world between the 1860s and the 1890s, settled almost entirely by British migrants and their

descendants, financed (over and above local accumulation) from Britain, subject to British jurisdiction, and accepting British sovereignty. While these self-governing societies only received about a tenth of British exports, the Antipodes at least depended absolutely on Britain for their markets. At the end of the period, overseas 'New Britannias' added, as we have seen, almost 40 per cent to British GNP, dwarfing any other actual contribution of Empire to welfare in the British Isles alone. Their inhabitants may not have been more wealthy than Britons on the average, but manual workers (the majority) were much better off in terms of wages and status, and lived in more equal societies. The overseas, English-speaking, natural resource economy absorbed millions of migrants from Britain. In reality, at the end of the nineteenth century the Dominions were extensions of the British Isles, tied to Britain by a web of kinship, investment, and trade, and by the political institutions of Empire which still had a binding force. Had there been no Empire, these territories would not have remained undeveloped. Settlers would have come from elsewhere in Europe, North America, or even Asia. This would have been a loss to the people of Britain, and perhaps (given these countries' democratic instincts and their internal stability), a loss to global welfare. These societies became British instead, and were still substantially so in 1914.

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CHRONOLOGY

Year	Great Britain and General	South, South-East, and East Asia
1783	Peace of Versailles	
1784	Pitt's India Act	Foundation of Asiatick Society of Bengal
		Peace with Mysore
1785		Warren Hastings leaves India
1786		Cornwallis Governor-General of Bengal
		First British settlement on Malay coast at Penang for the East India Company
		1786–93 artists Thomas and William Daniell visit India
1787	London Committee for the Abolition of the slave trade formed	
	Sierra Leone established as settlement for freed slaves	
1788	African Association founded	Trial of Warren Hastings begins (1788–95)
1789	Outbreak of French Revolution	
1790		Start of the war with Tipu Sultan of Mysore
1791		
1792	House of Commons votes for gradual abolition of slave trade	Defeat of Tipu and end of Mysore War
	Baptist Missionary Society founded	
	FRENCH REVOLUTIONARY WAR	
1793	War with France	Macartney's mission to the Chinese Emperor in Peking
		Renewal of East India Company Charter

Africa and Middle East	Americas, Caribbean, Australasia, and the Pacific	Year
Peace of Versailles, Britain loses Senegal	Samuel Seabury consecrated Bishop of Connecticut	1783
		1784
		1785
		1786
First settlers reach Sierra Leone	US Constitution	1787
	Charles lnglis consecrated Bishop of Nova Scotia	
	Captain Arthur Phillip, first Governor of New South Wales, founds Port Jackson settlement (Sydney)	1788
		1789
		1790
	Canada Act establishes colonies of Upper and Lower Canada	1791
Commons votes for abolition of slave trade		1792
	Jacob Mountain consecrated Bishop of Quebec	1793

Year	Great Britain and General	South, South-East, and East Asia
1794		William Carey, Baptist missionary, arrives in Bengal
1795	Foundation of London Missionary Society	William IV of the Netherlands issues Kew Letters
		Michael Symes's first mission to the court of Ava (Burma)
1796	Glasgow and Scottish Missionary Societies founded	Hiram Cox posted as Resident to Court of Ava (Burma)
		East India Company conquer Dutch coastal area of Ceylon
1797		
1798	Irish rebellion	Wellesley Governor-General of Bengal
		Napoleon's expedition to Egypt
1799	Foundation of the Society for Missions to Africa and the East (the Church Missionary Society)	Death of Tipu and conquest of Mysore
1800	Malta occupied	
	Muzzle-loading, smooth-bore musket	
1801	Irish Act of Union	
1802	Peace of Amiens	Peace of Amiens: Britain retains coastal Ceylon, as a Crown Colony
		Michael Symes's second mission to the court of Ava (Burma)

NAPOLEONIC WARS

Year	Great Britain and General	South, South-East, and East Asia
1803	Renewed war with France First Passenger Act (others in 1823, 1825, 1835, 1842, 1852, 1855)	
1804		
1805	Destruction of French and Spanish fleets at Trafalgar	Wellesley recalled from India
1806		
1807	Act abolishing the British slave trade from 1 May	
1808	Start of Peninsular War to eject French from Spain	

Africa and Middle East	Americas, Caribbean, Australasia, and the Pacific	Year
	Jay Treaty adjusting territory and trade with USA	1794
First British occupation of the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa		1795
		1796
	LMS missionaries arrive at Tahiti	1797
		1798
First LMS mission to South Africa under Dr J. T. Van der Kemp		1799
		1800
		1801
Peace of Amiens: Cape of Good Hope returned to the Dutch	Peace of Amiens: Britain gains Trinidad	1802
	British settlement in Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania)	1803
		1804
		1805
Second British occupation of the Cape of Good Hope	Commodore Popham seizes Buenos Aires	1806
British abolition of the Atlantic slave trade		1807
The African Institution formed		
Sierra Leone becomes a British Crown colony	Braganza royal family quits Portugal for Brazil	1808

Year	Great Britain and General	South, South-East, and East Asia
1809		
1810		French island of Mauritius conquered
1811		British conquest of Java
1812		
1813		East India Company Charter Act opens India trade and eases restriction on missionaries' access to India
1814		First Bishop of Calcutta arrives in India
1815	Battle of Waterloo, Vienna Peace Settlement: Britain retains Malta, and Ionian Isles	Vienna Settlement: Britain retains Mauritius, and Ceylon, Java and other territories returned to Dutch
1816		Abortive Amherst mission to China
1817		James Mill's *History of India*
1818	Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society established	Abdication of Baji Rao II (Peshwa of Poona), and absorption of Maharashtra into Bombay Presidency
1819		Stamford Raffles acquires Singapore; Batavia returned to Dutch
1820		
1821		
1822	Death of Sir Joseph Banks	
1823	Anti-Slavery Society formed: campaign begins	First Anglo-Burmese War begins

Africa and Middle East	Americas, Caribbean, Australasia, and the Pacific	Year
		1809
	1810–21 Spanish–American Wars of Independence	1810
Expulsion of Xhosa from the Zuurveld begins	Selkirk's Red River grant	1811
		1812
	First crossing of the Blue Mountains (NSW) by Blaxland, Lawson, and W. C. Wentworth	1813
	CMS mission established at Rangihoua	1814
Vienna Settlement: Britain retains Cape Colony	Vienna Settlement: Britain retains Tobago, St Lucia, and Guiana	1815
Slachtersnek Rebellion, Cape Colony	Louis-Joseph Papineau elected speaker of the Lower Canadian Assembly	
	Governor Macquarie (NSW) establishes first native institution in Paramatta for education of Aborigines of both sexes	
	(April) Barbados slave rebellion (May) Imperial government recommends Slave Registration Act	1816
	Bank of New South Wales established	1817
	49th parallel adopted as boundary between United States and British territory from Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains	1818
		1819
British settlers arrive at Algoa Bay		1820
British government take control of Gold Coast trading forts	Merger of Hudson's Bay Company and North-West Company ends Montreal fur-trade	1821
	Brazil becomes an independent republic under Pedro I	1822
British merchants establish post at Natal	Monroe doctrine enunciated (Aug.) Demerara slave rebellion	1823

Year	Great Britain and General	South, South-East, and East Asia
1824		Anglo-Dutch Treaty: Britain cedes Bencoolen and acquires Malacca
		First Anglo-Burmese War ends
1825		
1826	Select Committee of Enquiry on the Expediency of Encouraging Emigration from the UK	Treaty of Yandabo: Burma cedes Arakan and Tenasserim to Britain
		Henry Burney concludes treaty with Siam
		Formation of the Straits Settlements
1827		
1828		William Bentinck appointed Governor-General of India
1829	E. G. Wakefield's *A Letter from Sydney*	Suttee abolished
1830	From 1830s diffusion of steam trains and river steamers underway	Drive launched against thugee
	Ripon Regulations inaugurate sales of Australian lands by auction	
	Royal Geographical Society founded	
1831		
1832		

Africa and Middle East	Americas, Caribbean, Australasia, and the Pacific	Year
First Anglo-Asante War	The *Australian*, first in a mushrooming of newspapers in convict NSW	1824
British government rejects Protectorate over Mombasa	Britain recognizes independent republics of Latin America	
	1824–25 Brief boom in British trade and investment with Latin America	
	Anglo-Brazilian commercial treaty renewed	1825
	Argentine-Brazil War begins Britain assists in the creation of Uruguay	
	First British settlements established in Western Australia	1826
Fourah Bay College, Sierra Leone, founded		1827
Control of Gold Coast forts restored to merchants	Argentine-Brazilian War ends	1828
Cape Colony Ordinance 50 removes legal discrimination against the Khoikhoi		
	Death of Shawnadithit, last Newfoundland Beothuk	1829
	Entire Australian continent declared British Swan River Colonization Association settlement established at Perth, Western Australia	
		1830
Anglo-Asante Treaty	(Dec.) Jamaica slave rebellion	1831
	Representative government introduced into Newfoundland	1832

Year	Great Britain and General	South, South-East, and East Asia
1833	Emancipation Act, abolishes slavery as from 1 Aug. 1834	Charter Act abolishes East India Company monopoly of the China trade
	First steamer crosses the Atlantic	Death of Rammohun Roy, father of the Bengal renaissance
1834	Seven agents appointed at British ports to ensure protection of migrants	
1835	Foundation of the Geological Survey of the United Kingdom	T. B. Macaulay's Minute on Education in India
		Chesney's Euphrates expedition (1835–37)
1836	Report of Select Committee on the Disposal of Land in British Colonies 1836–37 Famine in Scottish Highlands coincides with extension of government bounty emigration	
1837	T. F. Elliot appointed Agent-General for Emigration	
	Report of the Select Committee on Aborigines	
	Aborigines' Protection Society formed	
1838		Sir David Wilkie's painting *Sir David Baird discovering the body of Tipu Sultan*
1839	British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society formed	East India Company seizes Aden Anglo-Chinese Opium War begins
		First Afghan War begins
1840	Colonial Land and Emigration Commission appointed	

Africa and Middle East	Americas, Caribbean, Australasia, and the Pacific	Year
	James Busby takes up appointment as British Resident, New Zealand	1833
	Britain seizes the Falkland Islands	
Emancipation of slaves in British colonies	British colonial slavery abolished; period of Apprenticeship begins	1834
Cape Colony Eastern Frontier War Afrikaners' Great Trek begins	92 Resolutions passed by Lower Canadian Assembly	
	7th Report on Grievances adopted by Upper Canadian Assembly	
Annexation of Queen Adelaide Province, Cape Colony	Port Phillip Association settlement at Melbourne (Victoria)	1835
	New Zealand chiefs sign the Declaration of Independence	
	Arrival of Methodist missionaries in Fiji	
Retrocession of Queen Adelaide Province	South Australian Association settlement at Adelaide (South Australia)	1836
Cape of Good Hope Punishment Act		
	Formation of the New Zealand Association	1837
	1837–38 Rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada	
	(Aug.) Beginning of full freedom for slaves	1838
	Lord Durham's Report on the Affairs of British North America	1839
Anglo-Zanzibar anti-slave trade treaty	(Jan.) First New Zealand Company settlers arrive at Port Nicholson	1840
	(6 Feb.) First signing of the Treaty of Waitangi	
	(May) Hobson proclaims sovereignty over all New Zealand	

Year	Great Britain and General	South, South-East, and East Asia
1841	Select Committee on Emigration from Scotland	James Brooke becomes Rajah of Sarawak
	Colonial Bishoprics Fund set up The Niger Expedition	*De facto* beginning of the British administration of Hong Kong
1842		Treaty of Nanking ends the Opium War
		First Afghan War ends
1843	British Settlements Act	Annexation of Sind
	Foreign Jurisdiction Act	Slavery abolished in British India
1844	Founding of the Ethnological Society of London by Thomas Hodgkin	
1845	Retirement of Sir John Barrow, Second Secretary of the Admiralty	First Sikh War
		First 'Land Regulations' inaugurate the International Settlement at Shanghai
1846	Earl Grey's colonial defence review	Sultan of Brunei cedes island of Labuan to Britain
	Repeal of the Corn Laws Sugar Duties Act 1846–47 French invasion scare	
1847		
1848		Marquess of Dalhousie appointed Governor-General of India
		Second Sikh War
1849	Repeal of the Navigation Acts	Annexation of Punjab

Africa and Middle East	Americas, Caribbean, Australasia, and the Pacific	Year
British Consul stationed at Zanzibar	Inauguration of the united province of Canada: equal representation in Assembly for Upper and Lower Canada	1841
	Ashburton-Webster Treaty fixes boundary of N. Brunswick and Maine	
1841–42 The Niger Expedition	French annexation of Marquesas	
	Murray memorandum on policy to Latin America	
	Constitution Act granted representative government to New South Wales	1842
	French annexation of Tahiti	
British annexation of Natal		1843
Resumption of Imperial control over West African settlements	Electoral defeat of Reformers in Canada by Sir Charles Metcalfe and W. H. Draper	1844
The 'Bond', establishes British protection over southern Gold Coast		
	1845–47 Franklin Expedition in search of North-west Passage	1845
	Anglo-French blockade of Buenos Aires (1845–48) begins	
War of the Axe, Cape Colony, begins	Sugar Duties Act	1846
	Settlement of the Oregon boundary dispute with United States	
Annexation of land between Fish and Kei Rivers, Cape Colony	First local responsible ministry formed in Nova Scotia	1847
War of the Axe ends	Order-in-Council grants Australian squatters security of tenure	
Annexation of the Orange River Sovereignty	La Fontaine–Baldwin 'Great Ministry' formed in Canada	1848
	Canadian self-government confirmed when British Parliament declines to intervene in Lower Canadian Rebellion Losses Bill after riots in Montreal	1849

Year	Great Britain and General	South, South-East, and East Asia
1850	Shipping companies obtain mail subsidies and introduce time-reducing long-distance steamers	Railway construction begins in India
	British Association reorganized to recognize geography as an independent science	
	Robert Knox, *The Races of Man*	
1851	Emigration Advances Act	First Indian telegraph line laid
	Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace	
	Sir Roderick Murchison elected to second term as RGS President, and assumed effective control	
1852	French invasion scare	Udaipur lapses to East India Company
	Highland and Island Emigration Society sends almost 5,000 migrants to Australia (1852–58)	Second Anglo-Burmese War leads to annexation of Lower Burma
1853	Nationalities of migrants distinguished for the first time	Parliament renews East India Company Charter
		Competitive entry to Company service introduced
		First Indian railway line opened
1854	Outbreak of Crimean War	Nagpur lapses to East India Company
		Sir Charles Wood's Education Despatch
		Great Ganges Canal opened
		Beginning of British involvement with the Chinese customs administration
1855	Sir Roderick Murchison appointed Director-General of the Geological Survey	*Ryotwari* system in Madras revised
		John Bowring concludes treaty with King Mongkut (1851–68) of Siam
1856	End of Crimean War	Oudh annexed

Africa and Middle East	Americas, Caribbean, Australasia, and the Pacific	Year
	Vancouver Island colony established	1849
Heinrich Barth's Sahara and Sudan expedition	Gold discovered in Bathurst district, NSW	1850
	Australian Colonies Government Act	
	Transportation to Australia ends (except Tasmania 1852, and W. Australia 1868)	
	Sydney University founded	
	Britain steps up pressure on the Brazilian slave trade	
Bombardment of Lagos		1851
Sand River Convention recognizes the Transvaal republic	Britain permits Australian colonial legislatures to draft new constitutions	1852
	New Zealand constitution enacted by British Parliament	
	Fall of Rosas, Argentine dictator	
British Consul appointed at Lagos	French annex New Caledonia	1853
David Livingstone traverses the African continent		
Representative government constitution for Cape Colony		
Bloemfontein Convention recognizes the Orange Free State	Reciprocity Treaty establishes partial free trade between USA and Britain	1854
	Abolition of seigneurial tenure in Lower Canada	
	Secularization of the Canadian Clergy Reserves	
	1st meeting of NZ General Assembly, Auckland	
		1855
	1856–57 Canadian legislation disestablishes the Anglican Church	1856

Year	Great Britain and General	South, South-East, and East Asia
1856		Hindu Widows Remarriage Act passed
		1856–60, the 'Arrow War' between China and an Anglo-French coalition
1857		First Indian Universities founded
		Outbreak of the Indian Mutiny/ Rebellion
1858	David Livingstone's missionary appeal in Cambridge to the universities	Government of India Act abolishes the East India Company
		Straits Settlements transferred from East India Company to the new India Office
1859	Universities' Mission to Central Africa formed	First Bengal Rent Act
	French invasion scare	
	Canadian information office opens in Liverpool	
	Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*	
1860	Machine-made single-shot breech-loading rifles proliferate	Treaty of Peking marks end of the 'Arrow War'
	Rotary presses and newsprint increase newspaper circulation	Acquisition of Kowloon (Jiulong) opposite Hong Kong Island
		1860–61 Hankou and Tientsin opened as 'treaty ports', including British concessionary areas
1861	Select (Mills) Committee on Colonial Military Expenditure	Indian Councils Act
1862		Amalgamation of Lower Burma, Arakan, and Tenasserim
		Arthur Phayre's commercial treaty with King Mindon Min of Burma
		British naval intervention against China's Taiping rebels
1863	The Anthropological Society of London founded	(Sir) Robert Hart becomes head of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs
1864		

Africa and Middle East	Americas, Caribbean, Australasia, and the Pacific	Year
		1856
Xhosa cattle-killing on eastern Cape Colony frontier	1857–58 A. C. Gregory North Australian Exploring Expedition	1857
1857–59 Richard Burton and John Speke expedition to discover sources of Nile	1857–60 Palliser Expedition across western British North America	
1857–64 W. B. Baikie Niger expedition		
1858–64 David Livingstone's appeal to the universities, followed by his Zambezi expedition	Alexander T. Galt joins Cartier-Macdonald ministry pledged to work for inter-colonial union	1858
	Potatau Te Wherowhero installed as Maori king	
	Canadian tariff raised to levels considered as protectionist by British manufacturers	1859
	Canada's Grand Trunk Railway completed	
1860–63 John Speke and James Grant locate source of Nile in Lake Victoria	Imperial troops occupy Waitara	1860
	1860–62 Sturt Expeditions transversing Australia south to north	
	US Civil War (1860–65)	
British annexation of Lagos	1861–62 Allied intervention in Mexico	1861
Anglo-French agreement over Zanzibar		1862
1862–65 Samuel Baker's expedition to discover Nile's Abyssinian tributaries and Lake Albert		
	Imperial troops invade Waikato	1863
	1863–66 French intervention in Mexico	
The Yoruba 'recaptive' and Anglican, Samuel Adjai Crowther, consecrated Bishop of the Niger	Outline plans for union of British North America adopted at Charlottestown and Quebec Conferences	1864

Year	Great Britain and General	South, South-East, and East Asia
1865	Colonial Naval Defence Act	
	Colonial Laws Validity Act	
	Parliamentary Select Committee on Britain's West African Settlements	
	China Inland Mission established by J. Hudson Taylor	
1866		
1867	First Lambeth Conference	Straits Settlements transferred to Colonial Office supervision
1868	The Colonial Society founded in London, becoming the Royal Colonial Society (1869) and finally the Royal Colonial Institute (1870)	
	Charles Dilke's *Greater Britain*	
	W. E. Gladstone Prime Minister	
1869	Maria Rye and Annie Macpherson inaugurate mass juvenile migration schemes	
1870	Introduction of compound steam engines reduces fuel consumption and operating costs of iron-hulled steamers	India has 5,000 miles of railway track
	Undersea cable laying proliferates, connecting with overland telegraphs and creating a world-wide network	

Africa and Middle East	Americas, Caribbean, Australasia, and the Pacific	Year
Parliamentary Select Committee on the West African Settlements	Morant Bay rebellion in Jamaica 1865–70 War of Triple Alliance (Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay against Paraguay)	1865
1866–71 David Livingstone's expedition in search of the source of the Nile ends with his 'discovery' by H. M. Stanley	Abrogation of Reciprocity Treaty with British N. America by USA	1866
	Nova Scotia and New Brunswick agree to negotiate a British North America Union under British auspices	
	Vancouver Island annexed to British Columbia	
	Fenian raids on Canada and N. Brunswick	
Discovery of diamonds in Griqualand West	Passage of British North America Act	1867
	Creation of Maori seats in the New Zealand General Assembly	
Britain's Abyssinian Expedition Annexation of Basutoland	Foundation of Canada First, nationalist and imperial-minded ginger group	1868
	Queensland's Act to Regulate and Control the Introduction and Treatment of Polynesian Labourers	
Suez Canal opened	Red River crisis delays transfer of Hudson's Bay Company's territories to Canada	1869
	Confederation decisively rejected in Newfoundland general election	
	Manitoba created as Canada's fifth province	1870
	Withdrawal of last Imperial troops from New Zealand	
	Introduction of New Zealand's immigration and public works policies	

Year	Great Britain and General	South, South-East, and East Asia
1870	British troops withdrawn from New Zealand, Australia, and Canada John Ruskin's inaugural lecture as Slade Professor of Art at Oxford, with strong Imperial content	
1871	Death of Sir Roderick Murchison Charles Darwin's *The Descent of Man* Ethnographical and Anthropological Societies combine as Anthropological Institute	
1872	Board of Trade assumes responsibility for collecting migration statistics and administering Passenger Acts	
1873	Death of David Livingstone	
1874	Benjamin Disraeli Prime Minister	Treaty of Pangkor: Andrew Clarke concludes agreements with Malay States of Perak, Selangor, and Sunjei Ujong which accept British Residents
1875	1875–80 Shipping tonnage through Suez Canal increases sharply to 3.5 million tons p.a.	Murder of James Birch, first Resident of Perak
1876		Royal Titles Act: Queen Victoria becomes Empress of India
1877	The word 'jingoism' coined from songs by G. W. Hunt during the Russo-Turkish War	Lord Lytton's Delhi durbar

Africa and Middle East	Americas, Caribbean, Australasia, and the Pacific	Year
		1870
(Oct.) Annexation of Griqualand West to Cape Colony	British Columbia joins Confederation with promise of transcontinental railway	1871
	Sir John Macdonald member of Imperial delegation to negotiate Treaty of Washington with USA	
	Murder of Bishop John Patteson in Melanesia	
Cape Colony granted responsible government	British government concedes financial guarantee for Canada's Pacific railway	1872
	Victoria Education Act, first to introduce free, compulsory, secular education	
	Pacific Islanders' Protection Act	
Death of David Livingstone at Chitambo's (Zambia)	Creation of Canada's North West Mounted Police	1873
Anglo-Zanzibar Treaty ending the slave trade	Missionary activity begins in New Guinea	
Anglo-Asante War begins		
1874–77 H. M. Stanley concludes search for source of Nile	British annexation of Fiji	1874
End of Anglo-Asante War		
(Nov.) Britain purchases 44% of Suez Canal shares	Creation of Supreme Court of Canada	1875
Egypt bankrupt: Anglo-French 'Dual Control' of finances established	(April) Confederation riots in Barbados	1876
	Completion of Canada's Inter-colonial Railway	
	South Australia pioneers legal recognition of trade unions	
British annexation of the Transvaal	Western Pacific High Commission set up	1877
Sir Bartle Frere appointed High Commissioner for South Africa		

Year	Great Britain and General	South, South-East, and East Asia
1878	British occupation of Cyprus	India's Vernacular Press Act
		Second Afghan War (1878–80)
1879	First publication of *Boys' Own Paper*	
	Carnarvon Commission on the Defence of British Possessions and Commerce abroad (1879–82)	
1880	Repeating rifles, machine-guns, and mobile artillery spread widely	Lord Ripon Viceroy of India
	Europe linked to East and West Africa by telegraph cables	
1881	Death of Benjamin Disraeli, Lord Beaconsfield	British North Borneo Company granted Royal Charter
1882		
1883	J. R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England*	The Ilbert Bill
	Formation of National Association for Promoting State-Directed Emigration and Colonization	
	Boys' Brigade formed	
1884	Foundation of the Imperial Federation League, and the Manchester Geographical Society established	

Africa and Middle East	Americas, Caribbean, Australasia, and the Pacific	Year
Annexation of Port St John's and British Protectorate over Walvis Bay, South Africa		1878
Khedive Ismail deposed and replaced by son Tawfiq	Adoption of 'National Policy' of tariff protection in Canada	1879
Anglo-French 'Dual Control' of Egyptian finances confirmed	War of the Pacific begins in which Chile defeats Peru	
(Jan.–Sept.) Anglo-Zulu War, British defeat at Isandhlwana and final victory at Ulundi		
Anglo-Pedi War		
First South African (Anglo-Boer) War, with British defeat at Majuba Hill	Appointment of first Canadian High Commissioner in London	1880
	Native-born Australians outnumber migrants	
	Protectorate over Cook Islands	
The Urabi Revolution, Egypt	End of War of the Pacific	1881
Pretoria Convention restores independence to Transvaal subject to British 'suzerainty'		
British bombardment of Alexandria and occupation of Egypt after victory at Tel el-Kebir		1882
Evelyn Baring arrives in Egypt as Agent and Consul General	Privy Council decision in *Hodge* v. *The Queen* strengthens Canadian provinces against Dominion government	1883
Civil war in Asante begins		
Evacuation of Egyptian forces from Sudan	Increased bounties on European beet sugar brings collapse of sugar prices and sugar economies	1884
London Convention relaxes conditions on Transvaal independence	German actions prompt declaration of Protectorate of British New Guinea	
Anglo-Portuguese treaty to control Congo mouth		
German protectorate over South-West Africa		
Berlin West Africa Conference		

Year	Great Britain and General	South, South-East, and East Asia
1885	Final Act of the Berlin West Africa Conference	Formation of the Indian National Congress
	Colonial Defence Committee established	The 'Penjdeh incident'
	Royal Scottish Geographical Society founded	Third Anglo-Burmese War
1886	Liberal Party splits over Home Rule for Ireland	Annexation of Burma
	Emigrants' Information Office opens	
	Lord Salisbury Prime Minister	
	Keltie Report on the state of geographical education in Britain published	
	Colonial and Indian Exhibition in South Kensington, London	
1887	June: First Colonial Conference held in London	Agreements with Pahang (Malaya) leading to appointment of British Resident
1888	Imperial Exhibition, Glasgow	Sarawak, North Borneo, and Brunei become British Protectorates
1889	Naval Defence Act Hartington Commission on army administration (1889–90)	
	Brussels Conference on the Slave Trade Select Committee on Emigration (1881–91)	
1890	Steel-hulled ships with triple expansion engines into regular commercial use; purpose-built refrigrated versions	
	Medicines alleviate tropical diseases Chemical and metallurgical advances permit profitable mining of low grade ores	
1891		The Pahang rising (Malaya)

Africa and Middle East	Americas, Caribbean, Australasia, and the Pacific	Year
Death of General Gordon and fall of Khartoum to Mahdists	North-West Rebellion in Canada Canadian Pacific Railway completes trans-Canadian link	1885
British Protectorates over Niger Coast and Bechuanaland		
Transvaal gold rush and foundation of Johannesburg		1886
African Christians 'martyred' in Buganda		
Royal Niger Company granted charter		
Anglo-German agreement on spheres of influence in East Africa		
Annexation of Zululand	Anglo-French Condominium over the New Hebrides Australian Naval Agreement	1887
Imperial British East Africa Company granted charter	Abolition of slavery in Brazil	1888
End of Asante civil war		
British Protectorate over Shire districts of Nyasaland	Anglo-German-USA supervision of Samoa	1889
British South Africa Company granted charter	Fall of the Brazilian monarchy	
	Berlin Conference guarantees independence of Samoa and preserves rights of Britain, USA, and Germany	
Anglo-German Heligoland Treaty (for Zanzibar, Uganda, and Witu)	Manitoba rescinds official recognition of French language and abolishes public funding of Church schools	1890
Anglo-French Declaration on West Africa	Baring crisis, Argentina	
Cecil Rhodes Prime Minister of Cape colony	1890–93 severe Australian economic depression and industrial unrest	
Death of Bishop Crowther	Death of Sir John A. Macdonald	1891
Anglo-Portuguese Treaty delineates spheres of influence in South-East Africa	Liberal government takes power in New Zealand under John Ballance Chilean civil war	

Year	Great Britain and General	South, South-East, and East Asia
1892		Indian Councils Act amended
1893	Break-up of the Imperial Federation League	
1894		
1895	Joseph Chamberlain becomes Secretary of State for the Colonies Navy League founded Beginning of sequence of Imperial Exhibitions mounted by Imre Kiralfy	Treaty of Shimonoseki inaugurates new phase of imperialism in China
1896		Anglo-French declaration on Siam Formation of the Federated Malay States (Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan, and Pahang)
1897	Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Second Colonial Conference held in London	Anglo-Thai secret convention Large-scale railway building begins in China
1898	Death of W. E. Gladstone	99-year lease of the New Territories as an extension of Hong Kong Lease of Wei-hai-wei Lord Curzon Viceroy of India
1899	(Oct.) Outbreak of Second South African War	

Africa and Middle East	Americas, Caribbean, Australasia, and the Pacific	Year
Abbas II succeeds his father, Tawfiq, as Khedive of Egypt	First sitting of the Maori Parliament	1892
	British Protectorate over Gilbert and Ellice Islands	
Portal sent to report on Uganda after chartered company failed		
British South Africa Company War with Ndebele	Enactment of women's suffrage in New Zealand	1893
	British Protectorate of Solomon Islands	
British secret Congo Treaty with King Leopold II	South Australian women first to get the vote	1894
Cape Colony annexation of Pondoland completes takeover of Transkei territories		
(29 Dec.) Jameson 'Raid' on the Transvaal	US intervention in Anglo-Venezuelan border dispute	1895
East African Protectorate established		
Ndebele–Shona revolt against British South Africa Company rule begins	Election of Wilfred Laurier, first French-Canadian Prime Minister	1896
1896–98 Reconquest of the Sudan, with railways and armed gunboats prominent in the campaign	Henry Lawson's famous bush sketches, *While the Billy Boils*, published	
Sir Alfred Milner appointed High Commissioner for South Africa	Royal Commission investigates economic crisis in West Indies	1897
Ndebele–Shona revolt ends	Canada announces tariff preferences for British goods at the Colonial Conference	
	Beginning of Klondike gold rush	
Sierra Leone Hut Tax War	Introduction of Old Age Pensions in New Zealand	1898
Anglo-French Agreement on West Africa		
Battle of Omdurman	Spanish-American War	
The Fashoda Crisis		
Anglo-German Agreement on future of Portuguese colonies		
Anglo-Egyptian Condominium over Sudan	Britain relinquishes Samoa Islands to Germany and the United States	1899
Anglo-French Agreement over Sudan	German–British convention establishes rights in Sámoa, Tonga, Niue, and the Solomon Islands	
Bloemfontein Conference		
Outbreak of Second South African War		

Year	Great Britain and General	South, South-East, and East Asia
1900	(Oct.) Conservative victory in general ('Khaki') election	Punjab Land Alienation Act
	Relief of Mafeking occasions great excitement	1900–01 British participation in the Western suppression of the Boxer Rebellion
		1900–04 India's 25,000 miles of railways carry 188 million passengers
1901	(Jan.) Death of Queen Victoria	
1902	Committee of Imperial Defence established	Curzon's Delhi durbar Anglo-Japanese Alliance
	South African War ends Third Colonial Conference held in London	1902–11 Moderate Chinese nationalism manifested in the 'Rights Recovery Movement'
1903	Tariff Reform campaign begins	British military-diplomatic mission to Lhasa (Tibet)
1904	Anglo-French Entente Congo Reform Association formed Controversy begins over importation of Chinese labour to South Africa	
1905	Richard Jebb's *Studies in Colonial Nationalism*	Partition of Bengal First large-scale Chinese boycott of western (American) trade
1906	Liberal victory in general election	Formation of the All-India Muslim League
		British Resident posted to Brunei British recognize Chinese suzerainty in Tibet
1907	4th Colonial Conference held in London: favours promotion of Empire settlement over foreign emigration	The Anglo-Russian Convention eases the defence of India Afghanistan a British Protectorate

Africa and Middle East	Americas, Caribbean, Australasia, and the Pacific	Year
British Protectorate over Northern Nigeria, succeeds Royal Niger Company	Annexation of Cook Islands by New Zealand	1900
British annexation of Asante	Political federation of the six colonies into the Commonwealth of Australia	1901
Treaty of Vereeniging concludes South African War	International sugar convention ends bounties on European beet	1902
Aswan Dam built	Pacific Cable laid, providing 'all-red' route around the globe	
	Canada, Australia, and New Zealand announce tariff preferences on British goods	
	1902–03 Anglo-German coercion of Venezuela	
British conquest of Sokoto, Northern Nigeria	Canadian case rejected in the Alaska boundary award	1903
	New South Wales Royal Commission to investigate declining birth rate	
	Batlle becomes President of Uruguay	
Anglo-French Entente settles Egyptian and Moroccan issues		1904
South African Native Affairs Commission Report	Creation of the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan	1905
First Moroccan crisis		
Sir Eldon Gorst succeeds Cromer as Consul-General in Egypt	Australia takes over British New Guinea, renamed Papua	1906
Satiru uprising in Northern Nigeria		
1906–07 Transvaal and Orange River Colony granted responsible government	Brazilian coffee support programme starts	
Selborne Memorandum advocates Union of South Africa	Commonwealth of Australia introduces federal tariffs and passes Pacific Islanders Act retrospectively repatriating islanders by 1906	1907

Year	Great Britain and General	South, South-East, and East Asia
1907	Founding of Boy Scout movement	Indian National Congress splits at Surat
		1907–09 Morley–Minto reforms of India's government
1908	Pan-Anglican Congress held	B. G. Tilak convicted of sedition
1909	Imperial Defence Conference Merger of Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' Protection Societies	Treaty of Bangkok: Siam cedes to Britain rights over Malay States of Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan, and Trengganu
1910	(Jan. and Dec.) Conservatives defeated in two general elections World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh Death of King Edward VII	
1911	First Imperial Conference held in London	Delhi Coronation durbar Revocation of the partition of Bengal Revolution in China and the establishment of a Republic
1912		'Custodian Bank System' strengthens foreign grip on Chinese state revenues
1913	Conservative leader announces that his party will not introduce Imperial Tariff Preference without a specific electoral mandate	'Reorganization Loan' to Chinese Republic by British-led banking consortium India's Tata Iron and Steel Company produces steel rails

FIRST WORLD WAR

1914	(Aug.) Outbreak of war	(Aug.) Outbreak of war Johore state (Malaya) accepts British General Adviser

Africa and Middle East	Americas, Caribbean, Australasia, and the Pacific	Year
	Australia's Arbitration Court hands down Harvester Judgement determining minimum wage for unskilled men	1907
		1908
Passage of South Africa Act, providing for Union	Department of External Affairs established in Canada	1909
Northern Nigeria Land and Native Rights Proclamation	Naval Service Act passed by Canadian Parliament	1910
Union of South Africa	Mexican Revolution begins	
Death of Sir Eldon Gorst, and Lord Kitchener named Consul-General in Egypt	Defeat of Laurier's government Canada's new Conservative government rejects reciprocity agreement with United States	1911
	Reform Government takes power in New Zealand under William Massey	1912
		1913
Egypt declared a British Protectorate and Khedive Abbas II deposed	Australia takes German New Guinea	1914
	New Zealand takes German (Western) Samoa	
	Opening of the Panama Canal	

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