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LOCAL IMPERATIVES AND IMPERIAL POLICY; THE SOURCES OF LORD CARNARVON'S SOUTH AFRICAN CONFEDERATION POLICY

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I

In February 1876 the General Manager of the Standard Bank of South Africa wrote that there was "a general spirit of enterprise abroad, which some ten years ago would hardly have been considered possible in such a country."¹ It is a commonplace that the discovery of diamonds in 1867 set in train an economic transformation in South Africa, but its political effects were no less important. In the 1870s an attempt was made to construct a 'confederation' under the British flag, which it was intended would extend to the Zambezi in the north and to the Portuguese lines on the east and west coasts. To those whose interests lay in the development of a modern capitalist economy in South Africa, Boer republics and Black polities alike were anachronistic and obstructive, and the necessity for incorporating both into a united and efficient British dominion seemed imperative. In an article published in 1974 Anthony Atmore and Shula Marks argued that these "local imperatives" rather than Carnarvon's strategic preoccupations were the crucial forces pushing in the direction of confederation.² I have sought to demonstrate elsewhere³ by an examination of the relevant evidence that Carnarvon's reasons for confederation were not strategic in nature, as Robinson and Gallagher and Goodfellow claimed,⁴ but that they were the sort of socio-economic considerations identified by Atmore and Marks. In this article I examine the question of how imperial policy came to correspond so closely to these 'local imperatives'.

This is a question which needs to be asked, since, unlike the confederation of Canada, with which Carnarvon was fond of comparing it, the attempt to erect a South African confederation in the 1870s was overwhelmingly a product of imperial initiative and impetus.⁵ The republics had no wish to come under the British flag. More significantly, Carnarvon's policy was opposed by the Molteno administration of the Cape Colony, which, as the biggest and richest South African state by far, would necessarily have been the major component of any successful confederation. Natal was probably the state in which the largest proportion of the white population favoured confederation, but even there the Lieutenant-Governor described the "preponderating feeling" towards confederation as one of "apathy and indifference".⁶ A Natal newspaper stated of Carnarvon's policy: "It has dropped down upon us from above, from the Colonial Office, and not been developed in South Africa itself as a conviction growing out of the whole condition of things."⁷ John X. Merriman, a member of Molteno's cabinet, expressed a similar view: "the fact is that the cry for Confederation is purely an extraneous one, born in the brain of Lord Carnarvon, local prejudice and local jealousy tending the other way."⁸ These are overstatements. There was support for confederation, or for the British expansion it represented, but it came from politically powerless sources: from interests in the eastern Cape (the Molteno administration was dominated by westerners) and from interests in Natal, which had not yet received responsible government. How, then, did the local forces pushing in the direction of confederation come to find expression in imperial policy, as the evidence suggests they did, despite their lack of political power? Why did Carnarvon take up the cause of these local economic interests?

In an article published in 1979 Norman Etherington argued that under the influence of Theophilus Shepstone, Natal's veteran Secretary for Native Affairs, Carnarvon became a convert to, and an instrument of, the sub-imperialist forces emanating from Natal.⁹ It is at first sight strange that the sparse white population of Natal, heavily outnumbered by blacks, should have harboured impulses to bring further tracts of African territory under British control. Paradoxically, these expansive urges arose out of this very demographic imbalance. The black population was too powerful relative to the white to be deprived with safety of direct access to the soil. There was therefore a perpetual 'labour shortage'. Coastal sugar farming depended on migrant labour from the north (as well as indentured Indian labour) while the languishing state of capitalist agriculture elsewhere led to Natal's whites becoming heavily involved in trading and prospecting in the interior. Any threat to these activities, or to the flow of labour, was liable to produce a clamour for British intervention. Shepstone was a leading figure in Natal's expansionist impulses. He first met Carnarvon in September 1874 when he spent three months in England, and he immediately made a great impression on him.¹⁰ It was through this direct personal contact, Etherington argues, as well as indirectly through such men as Frederic Elton, one of Shepstone's border agents in Natal and later a labour recruiter and British consul in Mozambique, and Sir Garnet Wolseley, Administrator of Natal for six months in 1875, that Carnarvon absorbed the distinctly Shepstonian, Natalian view of southern, central and eastern Africa, so that "the perceptions of Shepstone and the expansive interests of Natal became, for a brief period, British imperial policy."¹¹

Etherington has added to our understanding of confederation by revealing formerly hidden connections with great subtlety and richness of detail. Nevertheless, there is room for considerable doubt as to the validity of his central thesis. The fact is that Carnarvon's and Shepstone's views on the crucial question of 'native policy' were, and remained, poles apart.¹² Shepstone regarded the tribal system and 'native law' as necessary methods of control. He knew that anything calculated to proletarianise Africans would be resisted. He consequently preferred to stick to transient migrant labour from the north. He also wished to keep open a 'safety-valve' in the north whence the dispossessed might ultimately depart in peace. These were chief among the reasons for his wish to extend British control northward.¹³ The lesson Carnarvon drew from the Langalibalele affair, however, was that the tribal system and native law should be phased out and that the Africans should be 'civilised' by incorporating them as individuals within a common society, at, of course, the lowest level, the level of wage labourer. Even after Shepstone's personal explanations Carnarvon remained dubious about his proposals for a 'safety-valve',¹⁴ and he was quite explicitly opposed to Natal's remaining reliant on migrant labour from the north: "with good wages & treatment the Natal colonists ought not to need foreign labour" he wrote.¹⁵

Shepstone was careful to avoid explicit disagreement with Carnarvon. He was able to state quite truthfully that he had originally (in the 1840s) advocated measures similar to those now urged by Carnarvon but that they had been vetoed on grounds of expense; and he formally assented to the decision that the long-delayed policy of 'civilisation' should henceforth be implemented.¹⁶ But the truth is he had become converted to what circumstances had made his life's work, and he did his best to ensure that any change to the system over which he had presided for thirty years should be as slight as possible, and the pace of change so slow as to be imperceptible. Wolseley wrote privately to Carnarvon from Natal:

No matter what may be the change considered necessary here in Native affairs, or no matter how trifling may be the service or the duty I

wish to see carried out where Kaffirs are concerned, I am always met by Mr. Shepstone, my adviser upon such matters, upon whom your Lordship told me to rely, with the objection that we are too weak to run the risk of the excitement that any such attempt on my part to carry out existing laws would occasion...¹⁷

To complaints that the 'new native policy', as implemented by Shepstone, was indistinguishable from the old, the Colonial Office response was that such critics overlooked

the peculiar condition of the natives of Natal, the extraordinary influence wh. Mr Shepstone possesses over them, & the weakness of our military force there, all wh. reasons make it advisable that the introduction of reforms should be entrusted to Mr. S.¹⁸

Shepstone certainly had great influence with Carnarvon, but he used it to impede the implementation of what the latter regarded as an essential part of his South African policy. Carnarvon and Shepstone did of course have some aims in common. Both wished to bring territory to the north under the British flag, but that Carnarvon wished to do so in order to facilitate the flow of labour to Natal, which is the essence of Etherington's argument, is very difficult to reconcile with the evidence.

III

In some ways a more plausible agent of transmission of 'local imperatives' would be John Paterson, the founder of the Standard Bank, a leading Port Elizabeth merchant, and its member of the Cape Legislative Assembly. The *Cape Argus* described him as "the great apostle of confederation"¹⁹ and his views on its expected benefits were very close to Carnarvon's.²⁰ Carnarvon hoped that the campaign against Molteno conducted by his emissary, J.H. Froude, in 1875 would result in Paterson's replacing Molteno as premier.²¹ This stratagem failed, but Paterson went to England in the following year and had many discussions with Carnarvon, who took him into his confidence in the preparation of the South African Bill which was intended to provide the constitutional framework of confederation.²²

Just as Shepstone represented the expansionist impulses of Natal, so Paterson represented the expansionist impulses of the eastern Cape, and the latter should not be overlooked. By the 1870s Port Elizabeth, not Cape Town, was the commercial metropolis of the Cape. An English visitor to Port Elizabeth in 1877 commented: "The contrast of this place to Cape Town is most striking - brisk & go ahead...really refreshing after the apathetic & dull dirt of dutch Cape Town."²³ In 1850 the value of trade (imports and exports) passing through the two ports had been about equal. By the 1870s Port Elizabeth's share was double that of Cape Town's. This was partly the result of the expansion of wool-farming within the Cape, but partly the result of the greater role of Port Elizabeth's merchants in the trade with the interior.²⁴ Port Elizabeth was better placed to capture this trade than Cape Town, which was further away from the inland states and separated from them by much more arid terrain, which in pre-railway days, when grass was fuel, created severe transport problems.

Not only did Port Elizabeth dominate the trade with the diamond fields, but a syndicate of Port Elizabeth merchants (one of whom was John Paterson) owned the farm on which the Kimberley and De Beers mines were situated.²⁵ These Port Elizabeth interests, said Sir Henry Barkly, the High Commissioner, had been the "loudest in urging" the annexation of Griqualand West, and, once the step had been taken, they "set about raising rents & licenses for digging", which caused much discontent. Barkly warned them that he was "not going to employ British bayonets to make their fortunes",²⁶ but

when a diggers' insurrection broke out in the following year, he had no alternative but to send British troops up to Griqualand West to quell it.

President Burgers' disastrous war with the Pedi in 1876, which provided Carnarvon with the opportunity to annex the Transvaal, had severely disrupted trade with the colonies. In the western Cape it was possible to indulge in regret on the extinction of the South African Republic, since there, as Barkly's successor, Sir Bartle Frere, stated, "the real welfare of the Transvaal very remotely affects commercial and agricultural interests";²⁷ but in the eastern Cape, where merchants were owed a million pounds by Transvaal customers,²⁸ the annexation was "greeted jubilantly".²⁹ Intervention in the Transvaal had been urged upon Carnarvon in October 1876 by a deputation of thirty or forty "residents, merchants and others interested in the South African Colonies", among whom were several prominent easterners, including the ubiquitous Paterson, who had in fact organised and staged the entire occasion.³⁰

A man whom Goodfellow ranked as one of Carnarvon's principal advisers, along with Froude, Wolseley and Shepstone,³¹ was Donald Currie, the owner of the Castle shipping line. With the support in particular of midland and eastern Cape merchants, Currie broke the monopoly of the Union shipping line over regular sailings to South Africa in the 1870s.³² He gave Froude a free passage to South Africa to attend the abortive conference of 1875,³³ played an important role as an intermediary between Carnarvon and President Brand in settling the diamond fields dispute,³⁴ and kept the Colonial Office informed of the progress of Burgers' attempts to construct a railway to Delagoa Bay³⁵ and of German reactions to British policy in South Africa.³⁶

Sir Henry Barkly and Richard Southey, the Lieutenant-Governor of Griqualand West, cannot be said to have had any personal influence with Carnarvon since he had a decidedly low opinion of them both; but by virtue of their official positions they were sources of information and advice, and the advice they offered and the glosses they put upon the information they provided were of a decidedly expansionist kind. The list of influences might be extended to include the correspondents who urged the Colonial Office to annex Delagoa Bay, to annex the Transvaal, to annex everything to the Zambezi, even to annex the whole of Africa.³⁷ But it would be tedious and pointless to continue. There is nothing surprising in the fact that merchants and speculators and agents of capitalist interests of all kinds should wish to use British bayonets, or British *force majeure*, or British expansion by whatever means, to make their fortunes. What needs to be explained is why the Colonial Office under Carnarvon was so responsive to their wishes.

There is something curiously familiar in Etherington's account of Shepstone's extraordinary influence over Carnarvon's mind. Events later in the decade were to show that African chiefs were susceptible to Shepstone's influence only to the extent that it was in their interests to be so influenced. Surely the same is true of British Secretaries of State. When Etherington interprets Carnarvon's statement that Britain should apply a sort of Monroe Doctrine to much of Africa as "evidence of Carnarvon's complete conversion to the expansionist policies preached by the men from Natal"³⁸ one feels that there must have been something more to it than that. The persistence with which Carnarvon pressed his confederation policy, in the face of indifference and positive hostility from within South Africa, suggests that forces distinct from those emanating from South Africa itself must have been at work. Goodfellow's contention that Carnarvon was motivated solely by strategic considerations, and that ultimately his confederation policy was scarcely more than a matter of personal whim³⁹ has served to make the imperial input seem unimportant. But as I have argued elsewhere,⁴⁰ Goodfellow wrongly identified the imperial reasons for confederation. I attempt to identify them correctly in

this article, and, as we shall see, they were of such a nature as to become increasingly pressing. Carnarvon originally proposed confederation as a means of settling certain political problems in South Africa; but in order to understand why he became increasingly determined to impose confederation on South Africa it is necessary to examine Britain's position in the world in the 1870s⁴¹ and see how it influenced Carnarvon's view of empire, of Africa, and of southern Africa in particular.

IV

Whether or not Britain passed through an 'anti-imperialist' period followed by a 'new imperialism' later in the nineteenth century is a question that has generated a vast literature.⁴² From it one may draw the following conclusions. Britain's industrial supremacy and her consequent espousal of free trade were inherently inimical to empire: Britain did not need to own other countries in order to trade with them. Relatively few, however, drew the rigorously logical conclusion that the empire ought to be dissolved, especially in the case of India, whose economic value as a possession was manifest; but there was no desire for expansion, and although territory was sometimes annexed to protect trade or for strategic reasons, there was much aversion to the added responsibilities and expense that further annexations might incur. It was generally assumed that the colonies of settlement would eventually become independent, and, far from this process being resisted, self-government and its corollary, self-defence, were in some cases almost thrust upon them by the politically dominant Liberals. The empire was a source of pride to many, but many also felt that everything of value in the world-wide family of Anglo-Saxon nations that British enterprise had created would survive an amicable parting, and that what would not survive, namely Britain's responsibility for the defence of distant territory, was something she would be well rid of. It was the onset of depression and the rise of foreign competitors that brought about a change in these attitudes. This change did not happen all at once. Nevertheless, the convention that 1870 marked the turning point is not a mistaken one. The Franco-Prussian war and the withdrawal of imperial troops from New Zealand might seem very disparate events, but they both helped to produce what proved to be a decisive shift.

Gladstone's first administration was widely suspected of wishing to dismember the empire. These fears appeared to be confirmed by the Colonial Secretary Lord Granville's recall of British garrisons from the self-governing colonies at a time when they could ill afford to lose them, by the peremptory and even hostile tone of his despatches, and by his and Gladstone's evasive replies to the charge that they wished to get rid of the colonies.⁴³

The protest against this policy or supposed policy of dismemberment (and the supposition was not as mistaken as it has sometimes been represented)⁴⁴ began among the colonists themselves. A series of noisy protest meetings attended by colonists, ex-colonists, and Englishmen with colonial connections was held in London in late 1869 and 1870, and aroused much comment in the press. The attention of the public was focused on the empire to an extent unprecedented in recent years. The protest was taken up in parliament, a campaign in which Carnarvon took a prominent part. The belief or hope was stimulated that the empire was not destined for certain disintegration but that it might be given more institutional coherence and become an additional source of strength to Great Britain.⁴⁵ Carnarvon attacked the folly of attempting "to abandon these sources of possible - and if possible then of incalculable - strength, and to allow this country to subside into the position of a second Holland".⁴⁶ Much of the protest came from the Liberals,⁴⁷ but Disraeli adroitly captured the rising imperialist sentiment for the Conservative party. The imperial programme adopted by the Conservatives was not intended to be one of

wholesale annexation; rather, it was a policy of attempting to bind the self-governing colonies of settlement closer to the mother country. Consolidation, not expansion was its watchword. Self-government should have been granted, said Disraeli, "as part of a great policy of Imperial consolidation". His proposals in this connection were vague, but they included "an Imperial tariff", securities for the continued access to the unappropriated land of the colonies by emigrants from England, reciprocal defence arrangements, and "the institution of some representative council in the Metropolis".⁴⁸ Schemes for imperial federation proliferated in the 1870s.⁴⁹ Carnarvon had little faith in such blue-prints, but as a practical statesman he believed that opportunities should be taken as they arose to work towards the goal "which may yet in the fullness of time be realised, of a great English-speaking community, united together in a peaceful confederation, too powerful to be molested by any nation, and too powerful and too generous, I hope, to molest any weaker State."⁵⁰ In introducing his South African Confederation bill, he stated: "It is possible that Confederation is only one stage in the political journey of the Empire and that it may even lead in the course of time to a still closer union."⁵¹ He also pointed out that there had been a "remarkable tendency" towards "aggregation" in recent years, instancing Italy, Germany and the United States of America.⁵²

It was largely events in Europe which gave rise to the feeling that Britain was not playing the role she should as a great power, and that the maintenance and consolidation of her empire would add to her weight in international affairs. The balance of power in Europe was changing, as Prussia defeated Denmark, Austria and finally France itself, and the German Empire was formed. Britain had exercised no influence during this "German Revolution" as Disraeli called it;⁵³ peace, retrenchment, reform and what might nowadays be called appeasement were the watchwords of the Liberals. When Russia seized the opportunity of France's defeat to repudiate the clauses of the Treaty of Paris which had been imposed on her by France and Britain after the Crimean War and which guaranteed the neutrality of the Black Sea, the British Government was content with an insubstantial face-saving formula. Britain's aloof and passive stance was noted and derided on the continent, and produced in Britain itself a flood of criticism of the Government's "Pharisaical neutrality", its "pulpit good advice",⁵⁴ its peace-at-any-price principles" and "the doctrine of non-intervention, as interpreted by Manchester",⁵⁵ or in short, in the vogue word of the day, the "effacement" of England.⁵⁶ Carnarvon expressed his disquiet thus:

In continental phraseology, we are "effaced" from the roll of great powers, and it is not only known that we have no means of fighting, but it is thought that we will not fight. Nor can we complain of it as unreasonable if foreigners inquire whether those who showed such unmistakable reluctance to support Savoy and Denmark, and Luxembourg and Turkey, would be very eager to compromise themselves on behalf of Switzerland, or Holland, or Belgium.

Such a national policy, Carnarvon believed, was not only dishonourable, but dangerous.

Heavily weighted in the race of commercial competition; consuming with improvidence the resources on which much of commerce depends; loved by none, envied by many; with enormous wealth to tempt, and with little power to defend; undermined by a pauperism which is growing up by the side of and in deadly contrast to our riches; with power passing from the class which had been used to rule and to face political dangers, and which had brought the nation with honour unsullied through former struggles, into the hands of the lower classes, uneducated, untrained to the use of political rights, and swayed by demagogues, we talk as if Providence had ordained that our

Government should always borrow at 3 per cent, and trade must come to us, because we live in a foggy little island set in a boisterous sea.⁵⁷

As this statement suggests, underlying the disquiet at the diplomatic 'effacement' of Britain, was the knowledge that the era of Britain's undisputed supremacy in the economic sphere was drawing to a close. Britain's aloofness, pacifism, complacency and lack of interest in empire had all been based upon her commanding lead in industry. As this lead was eroded, so doubts and anxieties grew. Froude in 1870 attributed the prevalent indifference towards the empire to the apparently endless prosperity Britain was then enjoying, but asked "whether our confidence is justified; whether the late rate of increase in our trade is really likely to continue".⁵⁸ Carnarvon made a similar point a little later in the same year: "Heavily pressed as we are in the race of international competition", he asked, "are our fortunes so well assured that we can afford to throw away the affection, the loyalty and the warm feeling of the colonists as if they were merely so much idle lumber?"⁵⁹ One of the leading opponents of Granville's colonial policy, the Liberal M.P., R.A. Macfie, who was also a director of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, warned an audience of Liverpool businessmen in May 1872 that "a variety of circumstances might deprive England of that start in the race of manufacture on which she had so long thriven, and we should be prepared, by means of outlets in the colonies, for the day when England's pre-eminence might pass away and employment was needed for the people."⁶⁰

These anxieties, first aroused by the sharp, but short, depression of the late 1860s, were intensified by the renewal of economic depression in 1873. This depression was unusually widespread, being experienced throughout Europe and America, and unusually prolonged, the turning point not being reached in Britain until 1879. British overseas investment fell from an average of 73 million pounds per annum in the period 1870-4 to an average of 28 million pounds per annum for the period 1875-9. Exports of domestic produce grew in constant prices by only three per cent between 1870-4 and 1875-9, as compared with normal rate of growth of about fifteen per cent over five years.⁶¹ Since prices were falling, export values in current prices fell by eighteen per cent between 1872 and 1879.⁶² Profit margins shrank, interest rates fell, bankruptcies became more frequent, and unemployment grew. "An impression prevails" wrote Robert Giffen, the head of the statistical department at the Board of Trade in 1877, "that the present stagnation of trade is unprecedented in intensity and duration, and that it is likely to be permanent." He noted that there had been "a diminution of singular magnitude in our export trade. That trade has frequently fallen off in times of general depression, but never to such an extent as has lately been witnessed." He asked whether the depression was, as many believed, "the beginning of anything unusual or unprecedented?"⁶³ His answer was no; but the pessimists were right; it was the beginning of what became known as the 'Great Depression of 1873-1896'.

The reality of this phenomenon has been questioned by some economists,⁶⁴ but historians are justified in retaining the concept if only because it reflects contemporary perceptions. The phrase is not a subsequent invention, but emanates from the period itself.⁶⁵ In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the British believed they were living through a Great Depression, and in respect of overseas trade at least, it is difficult to say that they were mistaken.⁶⁶ Businessmen experienced great difficulty in selling their goods during this period, profit margins remained depressed, and there was "a serious decline in business confidence".⁶⁷ Businessmen were inclined to attribute their difficulties to growing foreign competition. Britain ceased to be the workshop of the world in this period. The United States overtook Britain as the world's major industrial power, and most European industrial economies, of which the biggest was Germany's, grew at a faster rate than Britain's. Nevertheless, foreign

businessmen also experienced difficulty in marketing their goods, and their profit margins also fell.⁶⁸ They reacted by demanding protective tariffs, to which demands their governments began acceding in the 1870s, and by making an intensified search for new markets abroad. Since the industrialised countries, with the exception of Britain, who remained committed to free trade, were increasingly excluding each others' goods, this search turned outwards, to the extra-European unindustrialised world.

This was an area in which Britain had long enjoyed a virtual commercial monopoly. In 1880 Britain's trade with sub-Saharan Africa was still three times the value of the combined trade of France, Germany, Holland, Portugal, the United States and India.⁶⁹ But this virtual monopoly came to be increasingly threatened by foreign exports from the onset of the Great Depression. Protectionism was something that could also be exported. If foreign countries brought parts of Africa under their dominion Britain might find herself excluded from these markets. The same consideration applied to foreign countries vis-a-vis each other, and vis-a-vis Britain too, for there could be no guarantee that Britain would stick to free trade in the new conditions, trade tended to follow the flag in any case,⁷⁰ and what Britain called free trade was sometimes disadvantageous in practice to foreign countries.⁷¹ European governments would probably have avoided the burden of administering and defending formal colonies had they been able to trust each other to do the same; it was their mutual suspicion and fear of exclusion from what were believed, however mistakenly, to be potentially valuable markets that led to the Scramble for Africa.⁷²

Space forbids any attempt to defend this view of the Scramble, but in addition to the authorities cited in the notes a contemporary authority may be cited. Lord Carnarvon had no doubt that the Scramble was inspired by "the hope of commercial advantage". Writing in 1887, he stated that the disposal of the territory to the north of the Transvaal and Bechuanaland was a "large and serious question which in various forms was often before me" as Colonial Secretary, but which had not then been "ripe for settlement". But now that the "territorial scramble" had begun, this territory could "no longer remain a no-man's land...and if it now were allowed to pass into foreign hands the results would be simply disastrous".

With it our Colonies would lose their right of way into the interior; with it our traders would forfeit the markets, which would soon be checked by hostile tariffs; with it England and her Colonies alike would relinquish the free navigation of the Zambesi - the great high road of Eastern Africa. It was both possible and expedient, while the question did not press, to adjourn the decision; and were it possible now to preserve the territory neutral and free to all nations it would probably be wisest to accept such a solution; but now that this part of Africa has become the subject of foreign ambition or enterprise, every one who knows anything of South African policy has long known that our safety lies in the formal extension of our protectorate up to the banks of the Zambesi.⁷³

The Scramble for Africa is conventionally dated from the 1880s, and this is when the chain-reaction began in earnest, but the combustible materials were assembled in the 1870s: "the colonial rivalry of the mid-1880s was to a considerable extent to grow out of the economic anxieties of the previous decade."⁷⁴ The 1870s were marked by mounting mutual suspicion and an uneasy jostling for position, but the European powers generally stopped short of outright annexation. It is during this latent phase of the Scramble for Africa that Carnarvon attempted to impose his confederation policy on South Africa, and the policy should be seen in this context.⁷⁵

V

The first year of Disraeli's administration was marked by British advance in West Africa, Malaya and the south Pacific. But this cannot be seen as the implementation of a new policy of imperialism. The groundwork for these advances had been prepared by the previous Liberal administration in response to local problems, the extension of British influence stopped short of formal sovereignty in West Africa and Malaya, and Carnarvon plainly disliked the necessity of annexing Fiji.⁷⁶ The Conservatives' imperial policy was not one of territorial aggrandisement, but of consolidating the existing empire of white settlement. In the unindustrialised world, inhabited only by 'natives', Britain wished, ostensibly at least, for nothing more than a 'fair field and no favour' for her trade; perhaps it might be more accurate to say that she wished to preserve the advantage she possessed through her old-established trade links and her influence with indigenous rulers, but which constituted no more than a kind of informal hegemony. But with the growing interest of other European powers in the outside world, this was coming under threat. In the Colonial Office the idea developed that existing influence might be quietly strengthened so as to constitute a 'paramountcy' which would be something less than occupation and administration but which would be sufficient to exclude any claims to sovereignty on the part of other European powers.⁷⁷ Formal annexations were undesirable not least because they might actually alert foreign powers to Britain's advance, and provoke emulation. Robert Herbert, the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office (he was also Carnarvon's cousin) minuted concerning the Pacific:

Further annexation will come at the proper time, but to tell the world (Germany, United States, France etc.) that we *now* contemplate it would be to defeat the object and prevent us from quietly acquiring paramount influence among the Islands.⁷⁸

Similarly, Carnarvon wrote to Derby, the Foreign Secretary, concerning South Africa:

Would it be possible in a quiet & non-ostentatious manner to assert English sovereignty all round that coast so as to preclude all intrusion whether from within [a reference to the republics] or without? What do you think? The quieter that the thing can be done the better.⁷⁹

Derby replied that he "thought that we did claim a sort of right over all that coast".⁸⁰ But foreign powers were increasingly disinclined to recognise Britain's "sort of right" to territory she did not occupy, or what Bismarck called Britain's "Monroe doctrine for Africa".⁸¹ Derby's faith in Britain's "sort of right" to African territory was destined to be rudely shattered. In May 1884 he told a group of Cape merchants that although Britain had not taken possession of the South West African coast, she "claimed a sort of general right to exclude foreign powers". Three months later Bismarck declared it a German protectorate.⁸²

Britain's desire to prevent others from annexing and ruling territory without annexing and ruling it herself led to some curious contortions. Carnarvon wished the Portuguese Government to be told that Britain claimed the whole of the southern African coast from Cape Frio in the west to Delagoa Bay in the east.⁸³ The Foreign Office, however, stated that it had been obliged, in connection with the slave trade, to point out to Portugal the bad results of claims over which no control was exercised, and that it could scarcely then proceed to do exactly what it had criticised Portugal for doing. W.R. Malcolm, an Assistant Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office, suggested that Britain should simply tell Portugal it would not recognise any extension of Portuguese claims in territory which "Gt. Britain desires ultimately to annex".⁸⁴ But this was hardly satisfactory.

Something more substantial was needed than a notification of future intentions. Herbert stated that the Foreign Office objections to claims without occupation should not be allowed to "lose us the territory now slipping from us. Perhaps a man of war cruising on the coast might be occupation enough?" This ludicrous suggestion (as it seems to me) was taken quite seriously by Carnarvon, who nevertheless thought it needed some filling out. The ship, he suggested, might "cruise along the coast, visiting any places where it may be convenient to land in order that the sovereignty of Great Britain over the territory in question may be supported by some evidence of interest and supervision".⁸⁵

I have not found the Foreign Office's reaction to this suggestion, but it is difficult to believe that it took a favourable view of it. The Foreign Office tended to favour the stratagem of using weak and pliant states with old-established claims to African territory as proxies or what would nowadays be called surrogates. By recognising and supporting their territorial rights, Britain could prevent more powerful European states from excluding her trade from these territories without the necessity of making formal annexations herself, while the client states themselves would be in no position to be obstructive. Sir Robert Morier, the British Minister at Lisbon, formulated the policy thus:

As matters stand, there are four great landlords in Africa: ourselves, Portugal, Egypt and Zanzibar. Egypt and Zanzibar do pretty well what we tell them to do. Portugal...can, I am convinced, be equally coaxed into the way she should go. If once she has been induced to do away with all commercial and administrative restrictions...an immense coastal territory will be open to the capital and enterprise of mankind, from which we shall be the first to derive the benefit...⁸⁶

The expectation that Portugal would prove pliant was based on her diplomatic dependence on Britain in Europe, and on the belief that her African empire was of no economic value to her but merely a matter of historical sentiment - a view which recent scholarship suggests was very mistaken.⁸⁷ Carnarvon had no faith in Portugal's adopting enlightened policies of free trade, nor that she would prove a pliant instrument. She had resisted all his blandishments to part with Delagoa Bay. His attitude to Portugal is illustrated in his minute on a communication from the Foreign Office reporting the grant of a concession for the monopoly of the navigation of the Zambezi and Shire rivers. He agreed with Elton, who reported this concession, that Portugal would probably use it as a precedent for claiming Lake Nyasa as territorial waters. Malcolm had stated that it was rumoured that the country round Lake Nyasa was "enormously rich in minerals". "Whether this be so or not", Carnarvon wrote,

I object strongly to the grant of these monopolies which either close the trade of a country wh. ought to be open to all the world & wh. thus maintain a detestable state of savagery & barbarism or which confine all commercial advantages to a few traders belonging to a country which has done less for the civilisation & welfare of mankind than any with which I am acquainted.⁸⁸

The Sultan of Zanzibar, unlike the King of Portugal, was an "Oriental Prince to whom are not accorded the usual rights prescribed by international law",⁸⁹ but even so there could be no certainty that he would prove a satisfactory catspaw. The Colonial Office had doubts about William Mackinnon's scheme to accept a concession from the Sultan to administer his mainland possessions for the promotion of legitimate commerce and the suppression of the slave trade. The British Government should have control over the proposed company, minuted Malcolm; in terms of the existing scheme there was nothing to stop the concessionaires from transferring their rights to "Frenchmen or Portuguese, who wd. make a nice use of them".⁹⁰

Carnarvon accordingly urged the Foreign Office to stipulate that the company should be subject to British Government control in all political actions, and that the concessionaires should be British subjects debarred from transferring their rights.⁹¹

King Leopold of the Belgians tried to gain British support for his International Association by representing it as being capable of functioning as a British proxy. Sir Bartle Frere returned from the inaugural conference in Brussels in 1876 full of enthusiasm for the proposed Association, and asked Carnarvon whether there would be any objection to the Prince of Wales becoming president of the British national committee.⁹² Carnarvon was extremely suspicious of Leopold's intentions:

I have little doubt that his real hope is to get a footing in S. Africa for some Belgian colony...and a colony in or near S. Africa would be full of objections. We find it hard enough to absorb the two Dutch Republics even under present circumstances: and it would be very unwise to encourage the creation of any new State near us. We are the paramount and we ought, if only as a matter of political convenience to be the sole Power in that part of the world.⁹³

Frere explained that there was no intention of founding colonies, that the Association would confine its operations to the country between the Zambezi and the southern boundary of Egypt, and that its purposes were the advancement of geographical knowledge, commerce, Christianity and civilisation, and the suppression of the slave trade. The Germans and the French might do something in the Sudan and north Africa, and the Italians in south Abyssinia, "but the bulk of the work will be undertaken and executed by British capital and enterprise". Leopold's Foreign Secretary, Frere stated, "told me that the King hoped when the work was once started, England would take & keep the direction".⁹⁴ Carnarvon replied that Frere's explanations went "some way to remove my suspicions" and he gave a guarded approval to the Prince of Wales becoming president of the British national committee. But his approval was very qualified:

You will perhaps think me uncharitable when I say that I should still watch all proceedings with a careful eye and should keep the international exploration well within the geographical limits which I understand to be proposed. I should not like any one to come too near us either in the south towards the Transvaal, which *must* be ours: or on the north too near to Egypt and the country which belongs to Egypt.

In fact when I speak of geographical limits I am not expressing my real opinion. We cannot admit rivals in the east or even the central parts of Africa: and I do not see why, looking to the experience which we have now of English life within the tropics, the Zambezi should be considered to be without the range of our colonisation. To a considerable extent, if not entirely, we must be prepared to apply a sort of Munro [sic] doctrine to much of Africa.⁹⁵

It may have been Carnarvon who asked Sir Henry Thring, the eminent authority on international law, to give an opinion on the matter.⁹⁶ Malcolm certainly discussed it with him. Thring's opinion caused Carnarvon to oppose the scheme unreservedly.⁹⁷ Thring pointed out that the objects of the Association necessarily involved acts of sovereignty, that the national committees were mere fund-raising bodies and that it was the executive committee of the Association, the majority of whose members would necessarily be foreigners, which had the power of direction.⁹⁸ Malcolm drew out the implications:

England is the dominant power in the country where the Society propose to operate. The scheme then comes to this, that England is to suffer the intrusion of a Society over whose actions she has no control & whose power for evil is immense. To Belgium, France or Germany the operations of the Society would be immaterial, they might indeed direct its operations so as to annoy this country but they could scarcely themselves be involved in trouble. Holland might very likely take a sinister interest in it to the detriment of English power.⁹⁹

Thring himself commented privately, in a letter to Carnarvon, that he was satisfied that "there is something in the background besides philanthropy and I cannot imagine a more cunningly devised scheme for faltering England in enterprize..."¹⁰⁰

Foreign proxies were clearly not a satisfactory solution to the problem of Britain's crumbling hegemony in Africa. However small, they had interests of their own, and if they were weak and amenable to British manipulation, they were equally amenable to manipulation by foreign powers with interests antagonistic to Britain's. Mere assertions of dominance or paramountcy or any "sort of right" not backed up by some form of occupation more substantial than a cruising ship were unlikely to deter foreign powers. Annexation of undeveloped African territory had no place in Britain's imperial policy, which was directed towards the consolidation of the self-governing colonies of white settlement. Yet there seemed a growing danger of foreign annexations, and the need to prevent them was likewise of growing importance. Britain's export markets were stagnating, and it seemed essential to keep open what were believed to be the potentially valuable markets of Africa. If this belief was speculative in regard to most of Africa, it was not so in the case of South Africa. In the 1870s British annual exports to South Africa rose more than four-fold, to 7,500,000 pounds.¹⁰¹ The trade cycle in South Africa in the nineteenth century usually corresponded to that in Britain. But in the 1870s they diverged: while Britain was plunged in depression, South Africa experienced an unprecedented boom.¹⁰² Two principal themes of British imperial policy in the 1870s - the fear of exclusion from Africa, and the wish to consolidate the colonies of settlement - came together in South Africa, for, unlike the rest of Africa, it consisted partly of British colonies of settlement. But much of it was occupied by backward Boer republics and African polities with conflicting claims and interests, and this lack of unity hampered development. It was the interior that seemed to hold out the promise of greatest development, and this area was controlled or claimed by African chiefs, who were accorded no rights under 'international law' and whose land might be annexed by any European power, and Boer republics whose rulers were no more inclined than the Portuguese to accept a client status in relation to Britain. On the contrary, the republics proved to be bent on combining with Portugal to free themselves from British domination. They appeared willing to place themselves under German protection, had only Bismarck been interested. Every consideration converged to produce the conclusion that what was needed was a consolidated, internally self-governing settler dominion under the British flag, which would keep Africa south of the Zambezi at least open to British trade and enterprise. Imperial policy and local imperatives alike required such a consummation.

VI

It cannot be claimed that these considerations explain the genesis of Carnarvon's confederation policy in 1874; but they do help to explain the persistence with which he pursued it. Carnarvon seems initially to have revived the idea of confederation as a means of strengthening white rule, the precariousness of which the Langalibalele affair in Natal had demonstrated, and as a means of settling the diamond fields dispute. In the

latter case one can see the germs of the idea of a confederation as a British proxy. Barkly had annexed Griqualand West at the urging of eastern Cape merchants and politicians, over the protests of the Orange Free State, but Molteno's western-dominated ministry refused to take it over, thus leaving it on Britain's hands. This was irritating enough, but Barkly and Southey, with the support of petitions from the merchants of Kimberley and Hopetown and the Port Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce, then went on to urge the annexation of "Batlapinia" to the north as well in order to prevent the Transvaal from expanding across the Keate Award line and disrupting Griqualand West's trade and labour supply routes.¹⁰³ The Colonial Office was very hostile to the idea. Herbert described Barkly's proposal as an "even less inviting annexational prospect" than the annexation of Fiji.¹⁰⁴ Carnarvon wrote to Barkly that he recognised that "the annexation of the Batlapin district...might be a solution of some awkward and pressing questions... but I cannot undertake further annexations with Fiji and the G[old] Coast on my hands..." He preferred to achieve his ends, he said, by a "conciliatory and friendly policy as regards the Dutch states" and mentioned the possibility of forming a "closer connection" with the Transvaal.¹⁰⁵ He had earlier asked "whether some form of federation might not solve many of the existing difficulties."¹⁰⁶ This line of thought led him eventually to the conclusion he expressed in a letter to Froude. If President Brand, he wrote,

comes into Confederation, there need not then be any great difficulty, as far as I can see, in making over such parts of Griqua-Land to the Orange Free States [sic] as may be desirable. If it is all a part of the English Empire, it will not signify whether one province or another has the disputed territory; so, too, as regards the Transvaal; if they will confederate they may have a great deal of the Batlapin and Baralong territory...¹⁰⁷

Here we can see quite clearly enunciated the principle that territory with which Britain did not wish to be politically burdened, but from which she did not wish her citizens to be economically excluded, might be held on her behalf by a confederation under the British flag. It was, I suggest, the refusal of the republics to be conciliated into confederation, the refusal of the Cape government to co-operate and Carnarvon's consequent alliance with the representatives of local expansionist forces, together with the complementary and reinforcing influence of the broader imperial experiences and considerations I have sketched, which led to this principle becoming generalised and extended from the narrow confines of Griqualand West and "Batlapinia" to the whole of southern Africa south of the Zambezi.

Some explanation is needed as to why the policy was persisted in despite every rebuff and disappointment, and why an initially conciliatory policy became one of force. For the Colonial Office the republics were all of a piece with the Frenchmen, Germans, Belgians, Portuguese and other potential obstacles to British enterprise in Africa. The crucial difference was that they were off-shoots of a British possession, on which they were still economically dependent, their political independence was the result of a past policy now seen to be mistaken, and their destiny was to be restored to the British Crown, of which Carnarvon was reluctant to concede they had ever become fully independent.¹⁰⁸ Carnarvon was prepared to admit that they had legitimate grievances, namely, the annexation of the diamond fields, and the retention by the coastal colonies of all the duty paid on their imports. These grievances would be rectified by confederation, within which provincial boundaries might be re-arranged as desired and all the provinces receive the benefit of customs duties collected by the central government. But the republics rejected this solution. Brand would not agree to confederation in return for a settlement of the diamond fields dispute, nor to anything more than his attendance at the 'London Conference' of 1876, which achieved nothing. Burgers would not even attend the conference. By the time it took place he had negotiated an agreement with

Portugal to build a railway to Delagoa Bay and raised a loan in the Netherlands with which to build it. In a letter to his Dutch financiers, a copy of which came into the hands of the British Government, he referred to the "heavy transport expenses" and the "enormously high duties" with which goods imported through the Cape and Natal were burdened.¹⁰⁹ Wolseley was tireless in warning Carnarvon of the disastrous consequences to Natal of a Delagoa Bay railway and in urging him to thwart it by all possible means.¹¹⁰

Doubts were expressed in Colonial Office minutes as to this railway project being successful, but they also show unmistakable signs of fear that it might be.¹¹¹ In any event the project showed the direction of republican policy - to escape from economic dependence on the coastal colonies by collaborating with foreign capitalists and governments, a policy calculated to seal off the interior and confine British enterprise, trade and capital to its existing possessions. It was the news of the conclusion of a commercial treaty between Portugal and the Orange Free State which led to the panicky reaction referred to above¹¹² concerning the "territory now slipping from us", and the desperate suggestion that a cruising ship might be used to assert British sovereignty around the southern African coast pending a more definite occupation. It was more specifically a clause in the treaty referring to ships of the Orange Free State, a land-locked state, which produced this reaction. The stipulations of the treaty were the same as those of the treaty between Portugal and the South African Republic concluded three months earlier, and the presence of the clause in both treaties was probably nothing more than the result of some draughtsman's addiction to routine; but in the anxious state of the Colonial Office it was seen as portending the acquisition by the republics of a seaboard on the east or west coasts. Walvis Bay was considered a distinct possibility.¹¹³ Lord Lytton, the British Minister in Lisbon, had written privately to Carnarvon to tell him that one of Burgers' aides had told the American Minister that the South African Republic possessed between eighty and a hundred miles of coastline around the mouth of the Limpopo - although when questioned by Lytton the aide had denied that the republic possessed an inch of coastline.¹¹⁴

The nature of Carnarvon's preoccupations is shown by his initial reaction to Burgers' war with Sekhukhune in 1876. He warned him that any attempt to extend the frontiers of the Transvaal would be regarded as a breach of the Sand River Convention, the charter of the republic's independence. "Designs and objects" he wrote, "such as the annexation of territory on or near the East or West coasts have been attributed to the Transvaal Republic." He went on to state in this official despatch that he could not believe such allegations, but there is no doubt that he did believe them. In a private letter of the same date he wrote that "under no circumstances can we permit any further undefined annexations of territory towards the sea coast. The Dutch policy is clear enough in this respect and we cannot allow it."¹¹⁵ This was written on 12 July 1876. It implied that the Boers would be victorious. At the end of the month Shepstone arrived from Natal. He was convinced that Sekhukhune was in league with the Zulu King, and that war could be disastrous for the Transvaal, and dangerous for white South Africa in general, a view which Carnarvon soon adopted.¹¹⁶ Paterson and some of his eastern Cape and British business associates were also on hand to warn Carnarvon of the damaging economic effects such a disaster would have, and to urge intervention in the Transvaal:

It is really very important indeed that the commerce and civilisation of the Colony should in that way spread northwards until at last it gradually extends over the wide field of the great continent of Africa. The progress which has been made has unfortunately been very seriously jeopardised by the outbreak of the war.¹¹⁷

Whether the Boers won or lost, their continued independence was inimical to British interests, imperial and local; and the war provided the opportunity to bring the Transvaal under British rule, "after which" Carnarvon believed, "the Orange Free State must soon follow, and the whole policy in South Africa, for which we have been labouring, be completely justified."¹¹⁸

Carnarvon resigned on an unrelated issue less than a year after the annexation of the Transvaal. With his departure, and with a sea of troubles mounting in South Africa, the imperial impulse behind the confederation policy in South Africa, which had reached its peak with the annexation of the Transvaal, tended to weaken. Frere continued to urge annexation up to the Portuguese line on the east and west coasts, but Herbert, his principal supporter at the Colonial Office, agreed with his colleagues that nothing further should be annexed "until a Federal Legislature is in a position to assume the responsibilities of government."¹¹⁹

VII

Britain wished to prevent other powers from excluding her commerce from African territory beyond her existing borders, but she did not wish to hold and govern it herself; the function of a South African confederation was to do it for her. L.M. Thompson's statement that "the annexation of the Transvaal...was intended to be a step towards withdrawal from responsibility for the internal affairs of South Africa"¹²⁰ has a decidedly paradoxical ring about it. The confederation policy, of which this annexation was a part, was essentially a policy of expanding the territory under the British flag, and under the enlightened and efficient administration presumed to go with it;¹²¹ the element of "withdrawal" was that this administration was to be undertaken not by Britain herself but by her local collaborators, the representatives of the local interests which would also benefit from such expansion.

Confederation did not come about. Many particular reason for this failure might be adduced,¹²² but perhaps the fundamental reason was the contradictory nature of the alliance by which it was attempted to achieve confederation. Both sides wished to use each other. Carnarvon wished to use South African settler experience of self-government and capacity for effective administration as a means of keeping southern Africa open to British trade and enterprise. The South African allies he was able to gain wished to use British power to further their expansive ambitions and interests. It seems clear that what confederation really meant for those who expressed support for it in Natal was British imperial expansion.¹²³ As Barkly said of the similar interests in the eastern Cape, they wished to "employ British bayonets to make their fortunes."¹²⁴ The annexation of the Transvaal aroused general enthusiasm in Natal, but confederation in the literal sense was greeted with "apathy and indifference",¹²⁵ and objections of the most extensive kind were raised to its practical provisions.¹²⁶ Those in South Africa who professed support for Carnarvon's policy were precisely those who had most to gain and least to lose by the alliance with Britain, and who were therefore of least use to her. Vociferous but powerless economic interest groups in the Natal and the eastern Cape were no substitute for the Cape Government. But in the nature of the case any Cape administration was virtually bound to decline to collaborate with Carnarvon's schemes. It was not simply that the majority of the electorate were Afrikaners, who sympathised with the republics' wish to retain their independence, nor that the western and central districts had little to gain economically from confederation: the success of Carnarvon's schemes would have meant the Cape's taking on the lion's share of the cost of policing and defending the rest of a very turbulent South Africa. One wonders what would have happened had John Paterson, "the great apostle of confederation", become premier, as Carnarvon hoped. In all probability

he would have proved as much of an anomaly as a Ghibelline pope, and have defected at the last - as did Sprigg. When J.G. Sprigg became premier he undertook to support confederation; but in June 1880 he withdrew a resolution calling for a preliminary conference, realising that even this would be defeated. The newly-elected Liberal Government thereupon recalled Sir Bartle Frere, and confederation was declared to be "in abeyance for the present".¹²⁷ It was an apt phrase. The forces, local and imperial, propelling the forward movement represented by confederation proved to be too weak in the 1870s; but they continued to gather strength, and a later period was to see a different outcome.

NOTES

Abbreviations used in the notes

B.L.	- British Library (Carnarvon Papers)
C.O.	- Colonial Office records in the Public Record Office, London
P.R.O. 30/6	- Carnarvon Papers in the Public Record Office, London
C.1814 etc.	- British Parliamentary Papers
H.L.	- House of Lords
H.C.	- House of Commons
F.O.	- Foreign Office

1. Standard Bank Archives, Johannesburg, G.M.O. 3/1/6, p.200, General Manager, Port Elizabeth, to Secretary, London, 19 February 1876.
2. A. Atmore & S. Marks, 'The Imperial Factor in South Africa in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, III (1974) pp.120-7. The quoted phrase is on p.124.
3. R.L. Cope, 'Strategic and Socio-economic Explanations for Carnarvon's South African Confederation Policy; the Historiography and the Evidence', *History in Africa*, 13 (1986, forthcoming)
4. R.E. Robinson & J. Gallagher, with A. Denny, *Africa and the Victorians; the Official Mind of Imperialism* (London, 1961) pp.59-60; C.F. Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African Confederation 1870-1881* (Cape Town, 1966) pp.70-2.
5. The contrast with Canada was pointed out at the time in both the Cape and British parliaments: P.A. Molteno, *The Life and Times of Sir John Charles Molteno*, vol. 1 (London, 1900) p.350; Great Britain, H.L. Deb., 3rd ser., CCXXXV (9 July 1877) col.980. The fact that the initiative came from the Colonial Office and not the South African colonies was much commented on in the British parliament: Great Britain, H.C. Deb. 3rd ser., CCXXXV (24 July 1877) cols 1762-4, 1768, 1769, 1785, 1786; *ibid.* (25 July 1877) cols 1799-1800.
6. B.A. Le Cordeur, 'The Relations between the Cape and Natal, 1846-1879', *Archives Year Book for South African History*, 28th year, vol. 1 (Cape Town, 1965) p.233.
7. *The Natal Witness*, 19 June 1877, quoted in W.R. Guest, 'Natal and the Confederation Issue in the 1870s' (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Natal, 1966) p.128.
8. Merriman to Goldwin Smith, 7 October 1879, in P.L. Lewsen (ed.) *Selections from the Correspondence of J.X. Merriman 1870-1890* (Cape Town, 1960) p.75.
9. N.A. Etherington, 'Labour Supply and the Genesis of South African Confederation in the 1870s', *Journal of African History*, 20 (1979) esp. pp.239, 245, 248, 252; see also the same author's 'Frederic Elton and the South African Factor in the Making of Britain's East African Empire', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, IX (1981), and 'Anglo-Zulu Relations 1856-1878' in A. Duminy & C. Ballard (ed) *The Anglo-Zulu War; New Perspectives* (Pietermaritzburg, 1981)
10. B.L. Add. Mss. 60906, Carnarvon's diary for 1874, entries for 12 & 13 September 1874.

11. Etherington, 'Labour Supply', p.239.
12. For Carnarvon's views see C.O. 179/114, minutes on Pine to Carnarvon, 16 June 1874; C.O. 179/116, minutes on Shepstone to Malcolm, 10 October 1874; C.1121, pp.92-4, Carnarvon to Pine, 3 December 1874. The standard work on the Shepstone system is D. Welsh, *The Roots of Segregation; Native Policy in Colonial Natal 1845-1910* (Cape Town, 1971). See esp. chaps 8, 9 & 11.
13. Etherington, 'Labour Supply', pp.237-8, 241-2, 243-4, 247-8.
14. C.O. 179/116, minute by Carnarvon, 18 September 1874, on Lucas to Herbert, 9 August 1874; C.O. 179/116, minute by Carnarvon, 5 December 1874, on Shepstone to Herbert, 30 November 1874.
15. C.O. 179/115, minute by Carnarvon, 12 December 1874, on Pine to Carnarvon, 22 October 1874.
16. C.O. 879/8, Natal no 80, minute by Shepstone, 14 June 1875, encl. in Wolseley to Carnarvon, 14 June 1875.
17. P.R.O. 30/6/38, no 25, Wolseley to Carnarvon, 12 June 1875.
18. C.O. 179/122, minute by Malcolm, 26 February 1876, on Chesson to Carnarvon, 25 February 1876.
19. *The Cape Argus*, 28 August 1879, quoted in C.2482, p.243.
20. P. ffolliot & E.L.H. Croft, *One Titan at a Time; the Story of John Paterson of Port Elizabeth, South Africa, and his Times* (Cape Town, 1960) p.168.
21. Goodfellow, p.86.
22. *Ibid.*, pp.119-120.
23. Littleton Papers, University of the Witwatersrand Library, A 721, no 28, Littleton to his mother, 23 August 1877. Littleton was Sir Bartle Frere's private secretary.
24. A. Mabin, 'The Rise and Decline of Port Elizabeth, 1850-1900', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 19 (1986, forthcoming).
25. R. Turrell, 'The 1875 Black Flag Revolt on the Kimberley Diamond Fields', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 7 (1981) pp.215, 229-230.
26. P.R.O. 30/6/32, no 17, Barkly to Carnarvon, 23 September 1874.
27. C.O. 48/482, Frere to Carnarvon, 5 June 1877.
28. Molteno, vol. 2, p.122. See also p.132.
29. D.M. Schreuder, *The Scramble for Southern Africa 1877-1895; the Politics of Partition Reappraised* (Cambridge, 1980) p.30.
30. Goodfellow, pp.119-120; C.O. 879/10, African no 108, 26 October 1876; the Address they presented, which bore about 75 signatures, is not included in the latter, but was printed in *The Times* of 27 October 1876, a cutting of which is in C.O. 48/481.
31. Goodfellow, p.208.

32. A. Porter, 'Britain, the Cape Colony and Natal, 1870-1914; Capital, Shipping, and the Imperial Connection', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser. XXXIV (1981) p.568.
33. Goodfellow, p.65n.
34. *Ibid.*, p.100.
35. C.O. 48/480, minute by Herbert, 11 February 1876, on F.O. to C.O., 10 February 1876.
36. C.O. 48/484, Currie to C.O., 28 June 1877, encl. articles from the *Cologne Gazette* of 17, 18, 20 & 21 June 1877 on "England's Advance in South Africa".
37. These letters are to be found in the "Offices and Individuals" files of the Colonial Office records.
38. Etherington, 'Labour Supply', p.252.
39. Goodfellow, p.70-72, 215-6.
40. See Cope, *op. cit.*
41. This is touched on by Atmore & Marks, pp.106, 120, 121-2.
42. That there was such a break was argued by R.L. Schuyler, 'The Climax of Anti-imperialism in England', *Political Science Quarterly*, XXXV (1921) and C.A. Bodelson, *Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism* (Copenhagen, 1924, reprinted London, 1960). This view was criticised and an argument for continuity put forward by R. Robinson & J. Gallagher, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., IV (1953); see also J.S. Galbraith, 'Myths of the Little England Era', *American Historical Review*, LXVII (1961) and G. Martin, 'Anti-imperialism' in the Mid-Nineteenth Century and the Nature of the British Empire, 1820-70', in R. Hyam & G. Martin (ed.) *Reappraisals in British Imperial History* (London, 1975). The argument for continuity has been most cogently criticised in turn by D.C.M. Platt in two articles, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade; Some reservations', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., XXI (1968) and 'Further Objections to an "Imperialism of Free Trade" 1830-60', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., XXVI (1973). A judicious account of the debate is P. Kennedy, 'Continuity and Discontinuity in British Imperialism 1815-1914' in C.C. Eldridge (ed.) *British Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1984). See also footnote 72.
43. C.C. Eldridge, *England's Mission; the Imperial Idea in the Age of Gladstone and Disraeli 1868-1880* (London, 1973) chap. 3.
44. Granville's writings reveal an unmistakable desire for Canadian independence: E.A. Benians, J. Butler, C.E. Carrington (ed) *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, vol. III, pp.22-4. Lord Kimberley, Granville's successor as Colonial Secretary, noted in his diary in May 1869 that nearly all the ministers were in favour of complete independence for Canada, and wrote in March 1872 that "Gladstone, Lowe and Cardwell make no secret of their opinion that we should be well rid of colonies". Kimberley himself regarded complete independence as inevitable, but was opposed to any step which might hasten it: Lord Kimberley (ed. E. Drus) 'Journal of Events during the Gladstone Ministry 1868-1874' *Camden Miscellany*, 3rd ser., XC (1958) pp.4 & 29.
45. Eldridge, *England's Mission*, chaps. 4 & 5.
46. Bodelson, p.113.

47. The Liberal Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Colonies, Edward Knatchbull-Hugessen, contributed an anonymous article to *The Edinburgh Review* deprecating a "thrifty, cold, timorous, unfriendly policy" towards the Cape, stating that South Africa possessed "enormous capabilities of development" and holding out the prospect of "the increasing trade which will follow her gradual but certain development under an united and stable form of government": 'South Africa and her Diamond Fields', *The Edinburgh Review*, 134 (1871) p.448.
48. G.E. Buckle, *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield*, vol. V (London, 1920) p.195.
49. Bodelson, pp.130-145.
50. Carnarvon, 'Imperial Administration' *The Fortnightly Review*, new ser., 24 (1878) p.760.
51. Great Britain, H.L. Deb., 3rd ser., CCXXXIII (23 April 1877) col.1658.
52. *Ibid.* col.1657.
53. P. Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism 1860-1914* (London, 1980) pp.24-7; Buckle, vol. V, pp.126-138.
54. F. Harrison, 'The Effacement of England', *The Fortnightly Review*, new ser., 9 (1871) p.165.
55. J.E. Cairnes, 'Our Defences: a National or a Standing Army', *ibid.*, p.167.
56. According to J.M. Ludlow, 'The Reconstitution of England', *The Contemporary Review*, 16 (1871) p.499, the phrase originated in the German *Moniteur* of Versailles during the occupation.
57. Carnarvon, 'Army Administration and Government Policy', *The Quarterly Review*, 131 (1871) pp.539-540. This article is in part a review of G.T. Chesney's 'The Battle of Dorking', first published in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 109 (1871). This piece, which was reprinted as a booklet, and which caused a considerable stir, was an account, ostensibly written fifty years after the event, of the German invasion and defeat of Britain shortly after the Franco-Prussian war. Chesney's point was not only the complacency of the British Government and people and the inadequacy of Britain's defences, but the artificial and precarious nature of Britain's prosperity. France, he said, recovered from its defeat: it had no colonies to lose; its broad and rich land was the source of its wealth. But Britain was a small island dependent on foreign trade and financial credit; once stripped of its colonies, with its trade turned away and its credit shaken, it was permanently ruined - "its trade gone, its factories silent, its harbours empty, a prey to pauperism and decay" (p.571). The latter part of the passage I have quoted from Carnarvon's article, from "power passing from the class..." to the end, is composed of two almost verbatim extracts from the 'Battle of Dorking'; only the tense has been changed from past to present.
58. J.A. Froude, *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, vol. II (London, 1874) pp.194-5, a reprint of an article first published in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1870.
59. Eldridge, *England's Mission*, p.63.
60. W.G. Hynes, *The Economics of Empire; Britain, Africa and the New Imperialism 1870-1895* (London, 1979) p.15.
61. W.A. Lewis, *Growth and Fluctuations 1870-1913* (London, 1978) p.37.

62. Hynes, p.22.
63. R. Giffen, 'The Liquidations of 1873-6', *The Fortnightly Review*, new ser., 22 (1877) pp.510, 515, 520.
64. Most trenchantly by S.B. Saul, *The Myth of the Great Depression* (London, 1969).
65. R.A. Church, *The Great Victorian Boom 1850-1873* (London, 1975) p.9.
66. Between 1853 and 1873 the export of British manufactures (in constant prices) had risen by 3.3% per annum. Between 1873 and 1899 the rate of growth was only 1.6%. Since imports of manufactures were growing at a much faster rate, net exports of manufactures grew by only 0.4% per annum in constant prices. Since prices were falling, the annual value of net exports of manufactures in current prices actually fell from £178,000,000 to £118,500,000 in this period. This combination of a low growth rate in the export of British manufactures and a high growth rate in the import of foreign manufactures "subjected British manufacturing to a terrible beating, for which the term 'the Great Depression of 1873 to 1896' does not seem inappropriate." - Lewis, p.118.
67. Saul, p.53.
68. Saul and Lewis give the impression that there was no Great Depression in Germany; but German historians believe that there was, and, by their accounts, so did German contemporaries: H. Rosenberg, 'Political and Social Consequences of the Great Depression of 1873-1896 in Central Europe', *Economic History Review*, 1st ser., 13 (1943); H.-U. Wehler, 'Bismarck's Imperialism 1862-1890', *Past and Present*, 48 (1970); Kennedy, *Anglo-German Antagonism*, pp.48-58.
69. J.F. Munro, *Africa and the International Economy 1800-1960* London, 1976) p.67.
70. For example, the fact that the Cape was a British possession ensured that it was British and not foreign interests that benefited from the Cape's railway construction: this has been demonstrated in detail and with remarkable clarity by A.J. Purkis, 'The Politics, Capital and Labour of Railway-building in the Cape Colony 1870-1885' (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1978) chap. 7. For contemporary affirmations of this dictum, see J. Martineau, 'New Zealand and our Colonial Empire', *The Quarterly Review*, 128 (1870) p.158, and J. Vogel, 'Greater or Lesser Britain', *The Nineteenth Century*, I (1877) pp.821-2
71. In Britain's West African possessions there was no tariff discrimination between British and foreign goods as such, but those goods in which Britain could undersell all comers paid a low tariff, while those which in practice came from France and Germany paid a high tariff: C.W. Newbury, 'Victorians, Republicans and the Partition of West Africa', *Journal of African History*, III (1962) pp. 493, 497.
72. There are of course diplomatic and strategic aspects to the Scramble for Africa, but on its fundamentally economic causes, see, in addition to numerous more specialised and regional studies, the following: W.W. Rostow, *British Economy of the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1948) pp.58-89; A.E. Musson, 'The Great Depression in Britain 1873-1896: a reappraisal', *Journal of Economic History*, 19 (1959) pp.222-8; J Stengers, 'L'imperialisme colonial de la fin du XIXe siècle: Myth ou réalité', *Journal of African History*, III (1962), an English translation of which, without footnotes, may be found in P.J.M. McEwan (ed.) *Nineteenth Century Africa* (London, 1968); R. Hyam, 'The Partition of Africa', *Historical Journal*, 7 (1964); E.J. Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire; an Economic History of Britain since 1750* (London, 1968) pp.103-7;

D.C.M. Platt, 'Economic Factors in British Policy during the New Imperialism', *Past and Present*, 39 (1968); D.S. Landes, *The Unbound Prometheus; Technological Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the Present* (Cambridge, 1969) pp.231-241; Hynes, *op. cit.*; P.J. Cain & A.G. Hopkins, 'The Political Economy of British Expansion Overseas 1750-1914', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 33 (1980). For the belief that African markets were potentially valuable, see J.S. Galbraith, *Mackinnon and East Africa 1878-1895; a Study in the 'New Imperialism'* (Cambridge, 1972) pp.3-6; P. Gifford & W.R. Louis (ed.) *France and Britain in Africa; Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule* (New Haven, 1971) pp.186-7, 219-220; R. Owen & B. Sutcliffe (ed.) *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism* (London, 1972) pp. 279-281; M.E. Chamberlain, *The Scramble for Africa* (London, 1974) pp.26-7. Some contemporary comments on Africa's potential value as a market not mentioned in the above secondary sources are: A. Wilson, 'Twenty Years of African Travel', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 121 (1877) pp. 682, 705-7; H.B.E. Frere, 'Zanzibar and its Sultan', *Macmillan's Magazine*, 32 (1875) pp.191-2; H.B.E. Frere, 'Zanzibar as a Commercial Power', *ibid.*, pp.275, 284-8.

73. Carnarvon, 'The Cape in 1887' in Lord Carnarvon (ed. R.G.W. Herbert) *Speeches on the Affairs of West Africa and South Africa* (London, 1903) pp.543-5. In 1889 Cecil Rhodes offered Carnarvon the chairmanship of the British South Africa Company: A. Hardinge, *The Life of Henry Howard Molyneux Herbert, Fourth Earl of Carnarvon, 1831-1890*, vol. III (Oxford, 1925) p. 294. For evidence that the statement quoted in the text was not the mere wisdom of hindsight and that Carnarvon held similar views in the 1870s, see below pp. 10-12
74. Kennedy, *Anglo-German Antagonism*, p.58; see also P.J. Cain, *Economic Foundations of British Overseas Expansion 1815-1914* (London, 1980) p.51.
75. The causal connections probably run both ways. The Transvaal was annexed in this period. Much of the discussion about the causes of the Scramble is concerned with what set off the chain-reaction of annexation. It is arguable that it was Carnarvon's forward policy in southern Africa; see G.N. Sanderson, 'The European Partition of Africa; Coincidence or Conjuncture?' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, III (1974) p.20.
76. W.D. McIntyre, *The Imperial Factor in the Tropics 1865-1875* (London, 1967); B.L. Add. Mss. 60906, Carnarvon's diary for 1874, entry for 15 April 1874 (on Fiji).
77. McIntyre, pp.368-371; Sanderson, pp.20-2.
78. McIntyre, p.369.
79. P.R.O. 30/6/8, Carnarvon to Derby, 27 October 1875.
80. *Ibid.*, Derby to Carnarvon, 28 October 1875.
81. Sanderson, p.29.
82. H.A. Turner, 'Bismarck's Imperialist Venture: Anti-British in Origin?' in P. Gifford & W.R. Louis, *Britain and Germany in Africa; Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule* (New Haven, 1967) p.75.
83. C.O. 179/122, minute by Carnarvon, 17 March 1876, on printed copy of memo on Portuguese possessions on the east coast of Africa.
84. C.O. 179/122, minute by Malcolm, 5 April 1876, on F.O. to C.O., 3 April 1876.

85. C.O. 48/479, minutes by Herbert & Carnarvon, 23 April 1876, on F.O. to C.O., 20 April 1876, and draft, amended by Carnarvon, C.O. to F.O., 29 April 1876.
86. R. Anstey, *Britain and the Congo in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1962) p.86.
87. G. Clarence-Smith, *The Third Portuguese Empire 1825-1975; a Study in Economic Imperialism* (Manchester, 1985) pp.81-2.
88. C.O. 179/122, minutes by Malcolm, 8 April 1876, and Carnarvon, 11 April 1876, on F.O. to C.O., 4 April 1876, encl. Elton to Derby, 5 January 1876.
89. This is how he was described by Sir John Kirk, the British consul in Zanzibar: Galbraith, *Mackinnon*, pp.102-3.
90. C.O. 179/125, minute by Malcolm, 9 July 1877, on F.O. to C.O., 23 June 1877.
91. Galbraith, *Mackinnon*, pp.60-1.
92. P.R.O. 30/6/4, no 63, Frere to Carnarvon, 4 December 1876.
93. *Ibid.*, no 64, Carnarvon to Frere, 8 December 1876.
94. *Ibid.*, no 68, Frere to Carnarvon, 10 December 1876.
95. *Ibid.*, no 67, Carnarvon to Frere, 12 December 1876.
96. Roeykens states that it is not known who consulted him: P.A. Roeykens, 'Leopold II et L'Afrique 1855-1880', *Academie royale des Sciences coloniales, Memoires (Histoire)* new ser., XIV (1958) p.348.
97. P.R.O. 30/6/4, no 69, Carnarvon to Thring, 18 December 1876.
98. Thring's memorandum, dated 13 December 1876, is printed in Roeykens, pp.348-351.
99. P.R.O. 30/6/4, no 70, memo by Malcolm, 16 December 1876 (based on conversations with Thring).
100. *Ibid.*, no 71, Thring to Carnarvon, 30 December 1876.
101. From £1,819,000 in 1869 to £7,492,662 in 1879, in current prices, a 4.12-fold increase. Since prices in Britain were falling, the increase in volume would have been greater. About four-fifths of South Africa's imports came from Britain. Figures from Le Cordeur, pp.244-6.
102. C.G.W. Schumann, *Structural Changes and Business Cycles in South Africa 1806-1936* (London, 1938) pp.124, 82.
103. C.O. 48/468, Barkly to Kimberley, 4 March 1874, encl. Southey to Barkly, 18 February 1874, and Barkly to Kimberley, 4 March 1874, encl. petitions.
104. B.L. Add. Mss. 60791, Herbert to Carnarvon, 10 April 1874.
105. P.R.O. 30/6/32, no 13, Carnarvon to Barkly, 22 August 1874.
106. *Ibid.*, no 6, Carnarvon to Barkly, 27 May 1874.
107. P.R.O. 30/6/84, p.37, Carnarvon to Froude, 2 September 1875; cf. Herbert's statement that confederation would be the means "of putting Griqualand West back into the Orange state, without surrendering the territory from under the British flag." - C.O. 48/477, minute by Herbert,

- 18 August 1875, on F.O. to C.O., 31 July 1875. These writings clearly state a principle which is adumbrated earlier; B.L. Add. Mss. 60798, no 47, Froude to Carnarvon, 23 September [1874] and no 47a, Herbert's notes on this letter, 30 October [1874]; C.O. 48/471, minute by Herbert, 14 January 1875, on Barkly to Carnarvon, 3 December 1874.
108. C.O. 48/480, minute by Carnarvon, 10 April 1876, on Brand to Derby, 16 February 1876, encl. in F.O. to C.O., 4 April 1876; C.O. 48/480, minutes by Herbert, 25 May 1876, and Carnarvon, 2 June 1876, on F.O. to C.O., 25 May 1876, and draft, C.O. to F.O., 9 June 1876.
 109. C.O. 48/480, Burgers to Insingers, 12 January 1876, encl. in F.O. to C.O., 10 February 1876.
 110. P.R.O. 30/6/38, nos 22, 25, 36, Wolseley to Carnarvon, 29 May 1875, 12 June 1875, 16 August 1875.
 111. C.O. 48/480, minutes by Malcolm & Herbert, 11 February 1876, on F.O. to C.O., 10 February 1876; C.O. 179/122, minutes by Malcolm, 21 February 1876, and Herbert, 22 March 1876, on F.O. to C.O., 18 February 1876.
 112. p. 10
 113. C.O. 48/480, minutes by Malcolm, 22 April 1876, and Herbert & Carnarvon, 23 April 1876, on F.O. to C.O., 20 April 1876; C.O. 48/478, minute by Malcolm, 5 May 1876, on Barkly to Carnarvon, 4 April 1876.
 114. B.L. Add. Mss. 60797, Lytton to Carnarvon, 11 December 1875.
 115. C.1748, pp.46-7, Carnarvon to Barkly, 12 July 1876; P.R.O. 30/6/38, no 77, Carnarvon to Bulwer, 12 July 1876.
 116. Natal Archive Depot, S.N.A. 1/7/7, p.257, minute by Shepstone on S.A. Republic - Sekhukhune affairs, 5 June 1876; P.R.O. 30/6/38, no 78, Carnarvon to Bulwer, 5 August 1876.
 117. C.O. 879/10, African no 108, p.2, Proceedings of deputation to Carnarvon, 26 October 1876. The words quoted were spoken by one A. Hamilton, and this meeting took place after Shepstone had departed for the Transvaal. But Paterson had informed Herbert in advance what each speaker would say, and this statement undoubtedly reflects his views; and he had been in England since about the beginning of August and had had several meetings with Carnarvon, although no record of what was said survives. - Goodfellow, pp.103-4, 119-120.
 118. C.J. Uys, *In the Era of Shepstone; Being a Study of British Expansion in South Africa* (Lovedale, 1933) p.174.
 119. C.O. 48/486, Frere to Hicks Beach, 5 & 17 September 1878, and minutes by Herbert, 10 October 1878.
 120. M. Wilson & L.M. Thompson (ed.) *The Oxford History of South Africa*, vol. II (Oxford, 1971) p.289.
 121. See the comments on Thompson's statement in Atmore and Marks, p.127.
 122. Etherington, 'Labour Supply', p.253.
 123. Guest, pp.5-6, 85-6.
 124. See above, p.3
 125. See above, p.1

126. Guest, pp.89-90, 117.

127. Great Britain, H.C. Deb., CCLV (17 August 1880) col.1365, Grant Duff,
Under-Secretary for the Colonies.