

DENNIS IAN MULLEN

CONCEPTS OF LITTLE ENGLAND: 1880-1900

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Dennis Ian Mullen

Title: Concepts of Little England: A Study of Negative Reactions in the Growth of Empire, with Special Reference to the Period Between 1880-1900.

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This thesis describes the ad hoc reactions of anti-Imperialists towards the responsibilities incurred by the administration of the British Empire. In its treatment of this subject the thesis employs a chronological and regional approach although special emphasis is given to India and Africa. It describes the presumptions of the Manchester School and particular reference is made to the political teachings of Richard Cobden which the anti-Imperialists freely interpolated as a justification for their criticisms of imperial policies. However, also discussed is the attitude of these Radicals towards Imperial defence and Home Rule. By way of conclusion a comparison is made with the early attitudes of the British Independent Labour Party to imperial questions.

CONCEPTS OF LITTLE ENGLAND: A STUDY OF NEGATIVE
REACTIONS TO THE GROWTH OF EMPIRE, WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1880-1900

by

DENNIS IAN MULLEN

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PREFACE

I would like to acknowledge particular works which have been of great assistance to me. Professor A.P. Thornton's, The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies has described the attitudes and views of a great number of people who were disenchanted with Imperialism. Professor Thornton in his Preface, pointed out that his sources for such a study were so numerous that it would be impracticable to contain them within a single bibliography. In attempting to approach the matter differently, I have approached the subject of anti-Imperialism from a regional and chronological viewpoint. The emphasis has been confined to the reactions of a small number of Radicals--within Parliament--who consistently objected to what they believed to be the unnecessary enlargement of Empire.

The principal source has been Hansard. In addition, contemporary periodicals, biographies and memoirs have been freely consulted. But recently two significant works for this thesis have appeared. Professor D.A. Hamer's, John Morley, Liberal Intellectual in Politics--while not concerned with anti-Imperialism per se--has provided me with new insight into Morley's personality and political philosophy. Also Professor Bernard Porter's Critics of Empire has suggested a fitting Epilogue to

this study by his clear reference to the "capitalist conspiracy" theory which was first articulated in the House of Commons by the Little Englanders. In addition, The Historiography of British Empire Commonwealth (Edited by Professor Robin W. Winks), has suggested valuable secondary sources.

Finally, my thanks to Dr. Vogel--not only for his patience--but for his ability always to ask the kind of questions which have encouraged me to proceed in this venture.

CHAPTER I

HISTORIOGRAPHY OF ANTI-IMPERIALISM

This thesis was originally undertaken in order to define the political philosophy of that peculiar late nineteenth century phenomenon of "anti-Imperialism" or "Little Englandism" through which a few radical Liberals achieved a reputation for lack of patriotism. However even a cursory reading of primary materials has made the writer aware that no single "system" could accommodate the assumptions of every anti-Imperialist, because--while these are significant, such assumptions were as diverse as those that were held by the Imperialists. This difficulty may be better understood when it is recalled that prior to 1868, the term "empire" denoted the "natural" influence of Great Britain, or, more specifically it denoted the United Kingdom itself.¹ Disraeli, seven years before his Crystal Palace speech which heralded his "romantic" conception of Empire, foresaw--on the occasion of the debate on the matter of the future defence of Canada--a global union of English speaking people.²

¹John Stuart Mill, Fraser's Magazine (April, 1959). Quoted in Richard Koebner, Empire (Cambridge, 1961), p. 68.

²H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 177 (1865), p. 1570, Disraeli.

Only when the term "empire" had assumed an expansionist connotation was the word "imperialism" coined--which explains why it first came to be used in connection with the devious foreign policy of Napoleon III. Evidently, at this time not even Palmerstonian tactics were provocative enough to excite the general hostility of the radical conscience. Dilke may have been the first English writer to employ the term "imperialism" which he associated with paternal despotism.³ But Dilke did not believe that much dependence could be placed upon the unity of "Greater Britain" in time of war. Writing one year after Canadian Confederation he could not foresee any time when "Australia would feel herself deeply interested in a guarantee of Luxembourg, nor Canada in the affairs of Servia."⁴ The Maori War (1869-1870) also helped boost the notion of expanding empire, although "imperialism" in spite of the formation of the Imperial Federation League would not be associated with a distinct political creed until the occasion of the Liberal Unionist split of 1886. Yet, in spite of its dominant tone and the aggressive emotions that it aroused, "imperialism" attracted an amorphous and largely undisciplined following and failed to find any wholly representative voice.

³C.W. Dilke, Greater Britain (London, 1868), Vol. 2, p. 367, 380. Dilke, Charles Wentworth (1843-1911). M.P. (1868-1886), (1892-1910); wrote Greater Britain (1868) and Problems of Greater Britain (1892); Under Secretary for foreign affairs (1880-82); President of local government board under Gladstone (1882-85); instrumental in passing Redistribution Act 1885; supported acts legalizing powers of trades unions and shortening hours of labour, and welcomed representation of labour interests in the House of Commons. (Liberal).

⁴Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 147.

It has been decided therefore in the course of this thesis to avoid discussion of "anti-Imperialism" in any purely abstract or theoretical sense, and instead to focus attention--according to a regional scheme--on ad hoc reactions of specific anti-Imperialists to some of the problems generated by territorial commitments and to relate these to contemporary political ideas. This study therefore is not to be construed as a monographic scrutiny of isolated aspects of imperial policy, but rather as a composite sketch of radical dissent which expressed itself in the form of a largely unpremeditated reaction to the implications of imperial expansion as a whole.

This enquiry has concerned itself mainly with colonial discussions generated between 1880 and 1900 especially because of the fact that in both of the above mentioned years, general elections were fought entirely on imperial matters. This delimitation precludes a detailed examination of dissident attitudes towards the Boer War which is appropriate, because the existing "Little Englander" sentiment became submerged by a much larger "pro-Boer" agitation which soon attracted a majority of the members of the Liberal Party. This enquiry does not include consideration of the significance of "dominion status" within the empire, but is concerned with problems created by the administering of areas supporting non-English indigenous populations. It discusses the essential premises of "Cobdenism" and concludes by

comparing the "Little Englanders" themselves with the more creative and generous-minded imperial critics who wrote during the first decade of the twentieth century.

The term "anti-Imperialist" will be generally employed in preference to the collocation "Little Englander" because the etymology of this expression suggests that "Little Englander" can be given neither an entirely consistent nor an entirely objective meaning during the period in question. It is therefore surprising to learn that, in spite of the disappearance of "formal" empire, the collocation "Little Englander" is still in current usage, denoting "one who desires to restrict the dimensions and responsibilities of the empire."⁵ Twenty years after the conclusion of the Second World War the term was still being used to describe one of the options open to Britain in contemporary foreign policy.⁶

However, the anti-Imperialists themselves strongly deprecated the use of such an expression and would not accept it either as a valid nomenclature or as a description of themselves. John Morley⁷--who

⁵Oxford English Dictionary (12 Vols), 1933.

⁶John Mander, Great Britain or Little England? (London, 1963).

⁷Morley, John. Viscount Morley of Blackburn (1883-1923). Editor of Fortnightly Review (1867-82) and Pall Mall Gazette (1880-83); M.P. (1883-95, 1896-1908); supporter and biographer of Gladstone; Chief Secretary for Ireland (1886-92); Secretary of State for India (1905-10). (Radical-Liberal).

epitomized anti-Imperialism in its intellectualized and abstract aspects--denied any historical validity to the expression. He suspected that it had been only concocted by Jingoists and he asserted that he knew only "old England (which) knew what she was about."⁸ Gilbert Murray⁹ who, during the Boer War was identified in the popular mind with the "Little Englanders" considered any person to be a jingo who sought a "bloated expansion" and he pointedly differentiated between the "true", i.e. moderate, Imperialist and the "Little Englander".

A "Little Englander" government does not recognize Indians as fellow subjects. It debar Indians from their own Civil Service. It makes wars for its English interests and over-taxes India to pay for them. It neglects India in time of famine.¹⁰

Surprisingly enough Joseph Chamberlain¹¹--who by 1882 had moved away from the anti-imperialist position with which he had been associated during the earlier part of his public career--soberly described the "Little Englander" at a time of great imperial excitement as "one who

⁸H.H. Asquith, Fifty Years of British Parliament (Boston, 1926), Vol. 1, p. 304.

⁹Murray, Gilbert (1866-1957). Classical scholar; Professor of Greek, Glasgow and Oxford Universities, promoter of League of Nations Union (from 1918), Chairman (1923-28).

¹⁰Gilbert Murray, Positivist Review, VIII (1900), p. 197.

¹¹Chamberlain, Joseph (1836-1914). Entered Parliament as Radical Liberal (1876); entered Cabinet, (Board of Trade) (1880-85); opposed Home Rule (1886); Leader of Liberal Unionists and Colonial Secretary 1895-1902. (Radical-Liberal-Unionist).

regards the expansion of the empire as encouraging obligations which were not proportional to its advantages."¹²

As early as 1884--i.e. several months before Home Rule became a divisive issue in English Liberal politics the Pall Mall Gazette had given the term "Little Englander" a derogatory connotation. This literary development can be attributed to W.T. Stead¹³ who had succeeded John Morley as Editor the previous year upon Morley's election to the British House of Commons. Prior to the appearance of this "New Journalism" it is doubtful that such a term as "Little Englander" would have been used to impugn any individual's patriotism.¹⁴ Although the style of Stead's "new journalism" tended to be emotional, it would be wrong to dismiss his work as totally irresponsible because Stead's writing was politically incisive. Opinions about him greatly varied. Matthew Arnold praised Stead's contribution as "full of ability, novelty, sensation, sympathy and generous sentiments."¹⁵ Perhaps Stead's blatant mixture of popular Imperialism and pugnacious English insularity can

¹²H.H. Asquith, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 304.

¹³Stead, William Thomas (1849-1912). Editor of Pall Mall Gazette (1883); founder of Review of Reviews (1890); "forced" Gladstone to send Gordon to Khartoum (1884); devoted to advocacy of international peace and of friendship with Russia.

¹⁴Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 304.

¹⁵Frederic Whyte, The Life of W.T. Stead (London, 1925), Vol. 1, p. 237.

perhaps be partly explained by his total ignorance of any language other than English.¹⁶

Stead was an unusual Nonconformist who had become attracted to theosophy, but although Stead never belonged to the political establishment the Pall Mall Gazette was widely read in parliamentary circles and may have been instrumental in developing a new popular "national" sentiment. But, while Stead must surely have been influenced by "social darwinism", he did not eulogize the efficacy of force in either domestic or foreign matters. In fact, like the other anti-Imperialists, Stead claimed to have been strongly influenced by Cobden. However, in view of the fact that he frequently disparaged other professed Cobdenites, it is hard to prove in what respect he was attracted to Cobdenism, except that like Cobden, Stead made continued efforts to minimize friction with Russia. Prior to the Midlothian Campaign, he had already persuaded Gladstone to write his pamphlet on the Bulgarian "horrors" and he publicly encouraged the formation of the Eastern Question Association.¹⁷

¹⁶George Bernard Shaw wrote of Stead: "Stead meant well--the case of Eliza Armstrong and the Maiden Tribute was a put-up job--all his indignations did him credit; he was so stupendously ignorant that he never played the game. He had no general knowledge of art and history, philosophy or science with which to co-ordinate his journalist dreams." Refer Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 304.

¹⁷A.J.P. Taylor, The Troublemakers (London, 1957).

It is doubtful whether Cobden would have endorsed the principle of moral intervention implicit in this campaign.

Stead boldly articulated a "new liberalism" which emphasized a strong colonial policy; while at the same time he repudiated "excessive meddling" in "foreign" i.e. European affairs.¹⁸ This is illustrative of the fact that many Radicals--as opposed to the Gladstonians--were isolationists as far as European matters were concerned, if only because an isolationist position left them free to discharge the British mission abroad in what had hitherto been non-European areas. In point of fact, even by 1884 Stead had sensed that there was a growing interdependence of foreign and colonial activities but he failed to realize the implications that this interdependence would contain for what was still a "free trade" system.

Although Stead never disowned Gladstone as leader of the Liberal Party--and he could hardly have conceived of that Party without him--his editorials frequently endorsed the new economic and social "collectivism" which was becoming so suspect to Gladstone. Always subject to eclectic

¹⁸Pall Mall Gazette, November 4, 1884. Stead's leader was entitled "Liberals--National and anti-National". "In vain will the professors of laissez-faire and disintegration tune their scrannel pipes in the hearing of the English democracy . . . The people are as deaf to their piping as they are to the maddening blast of the Jingo trumpet . . . (hitherto many Liberals) had no faith in England over the sea."

political influences Stead sought to "appropriate all that was reasonable in the faith of the Tories in England without losing faith in freedom and progress."¹⁹

But from 1884 on, issue after issue of the Pall Mall Gazette not only pleaded for a "wider federalism" but also emphasized the alleged political advantages to be obtained by converting peripheral areas into dependencies. Those critics who did not take kindly to his suggestions were disparaged as "Little Englanders", who were undermining the national confidence as much as "Jingoes" were "distorting" it. Thus Stead applauded Australia's annexation of New Guinea because "it effectively took the matter out of the hands of a querulous Mother Parliament and paralyzed the machinations of the Little Englander."²⁰ In fact, Stead seriously argued that if colonial affairs in general could not be handled more affirmatively or imaginatively by the Colonial Office, they should be taken over by the Home Office.

Although Stead championed a "Big England" attitude--to a degree that must have appeared absurd to many of his contemporaries--Stead failed to elaborate upon colonial theory or systematize it in any definitive sense. Like the majority of nonconformists, who identified

¹⁹Ibid., November 4, 1884.

²⁰Ibid., November 20, 1884.

themselves with public questions, Stead was a moral rather than a political thinker. At times he appeared to favour a "federal union" of all the British colonies, but he also frequently implied that a future empire might assume the more centralized form of a "legislative union". What is particularly significant is that Stead succeeded in generating a clamorous excitement in imperial matters even prior to the death of General Gordon. That he succeeded in doing this is remarkable, because until Lord Salisbury's First Administration, (1885) colonial affairs were seldom discussed at length or with enthusiasm unless they involved military adventure. However, by Stead's admission, Little Englanders were not in a position to exert a measurable influence upon government policy.²¹

Stead received no official encouragement from Lord Salisbury who probably despised the literary techniques of the Pall Mall Gazette as much as he did the altruistic pretensions of the "Nonconformist Conscience". Paradoxically, it was often the anti-Imperialist who most admired Lord Salisbury because of that statesman's unwillingness to romanticize imperial policies, although neither Stead nor his anti-

²¹Ibid., November 4, 1884: "There are no doubt one or two individualities who are as anti-national and anti-colonial as the worst enemies of our party could desire, but they are isolated . . . and not one of them would sacrifice a possible seat in the Cabinet to his preference for a Little England."

imperialist opponents would ever grasp the subtle strategic considerations that compelled Salisbury to secure successively Egypt, the Sudan and Uganda.²² Yet by the time of the Second Boer War (1899-1902)--when Stead's disillusionment with both Chamberlain and Rhodes²³ was total--Stead's attitude towards imperial affairs, as handled by the Colonial Office, had moved close to the position adopted by his anti-Imperialist opponents. At the turn of the nineteenth century, the semantics of Imperialism had moderated appreciably, Stead identifying himself with anti-Imperialists and in the process being labelled "pro-Boer" by his new Imperialist attackers. Stead then openly joined with such prominent Little Englanders as Henry Labouchere²⁴ and Sir Wilfred

²²Gascoyne-Cecil, Robert Arthur Talbot, Third Marquis of Salisbury (1830-1902). Secretary for India (1866-67, 1874-78), for foreign affairs 1878; Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary (1885-92, 1895-1902). (Conservative).

²³Rhodes, Cecil John (1853-1902). Sent to Natal for health reasons; acquired fortune in Kimberley diamonds; entered Cape Assembly 1881; annexed Bechuanaland (1884); obtained by cession of ruler area named Rhodesia to the north, made sole manager of Company incorporated with rights of sovereignty over territory; Prime Minister Cape Colony (1890-96), but forced to resign after Jameson Raid; re-entered Cape Parliament 1898; besieged at Kimberley (Oct. 1899-Feb. 1900). Donated £10,000 to Liberal Home Rule Fund 1880.

²⁴Labouchere, Henry du Pré (1831-1912). In diplomatic service (1854-64); founder of Truth (1877) remarkable for exposures of corruption. M.P., (1865-66, 1867-68, 1880-1905); advocate of Home Rule; instrumental in exposing Irish journalist Piggott; embarrassed Rhodes' Party by enquiry into Jameson Raid. (Radical-Liberal).

Lawson²⁵ to become a member of the Stop-The-War-Committee and even made the suggestion that John Morley should assume the leadership of the Liberal Party.²⁶

Stead had been the first to speak derogatorily of the "Little Englander" but the fact that he himself embraced the anti-Imperialist wing of the Liberal Party sixteen years later shows how the use of such terms as "anti-imperialism", "colonial reform", or "Little Englandism" might tend to confuse rather than clarify any history of imperialist thinking. While it is unavoidable that such terms be employed in this thesis, it is evident that they can possess little historical significance unless they are specifically employed within a narrow context.²⁷ Thus it would be presumptuous and ambiguous to speak blandly of a Little-England period between 1840 and 1870 but the fact that over a long period historians have done this, has helped perpetuate the notion that the early Victorians were anti-expansionist. Such a simplification tends to overlook both the heterogeneous composition of the Manchester School and the principle of economic self-interest which later guided and motivated those who were ostensibly hostile to the formal enlargement of empire.

²⁵Lawson, Sir Wilfred (1829-1906). M.P., (1859-1905); temperance advocate; supported disestablishment, abolition of House of Lords, disarmament. (Radical-Liberal).

²⁶ Frederic Whyte, The Life of W.T. Stead, Vol. 2, (p. 200).

²⁷Robin W. Winks, The Historiography of the British Empire Commonwealth, p. 55.

Leading statesmen were frequently depicted as being either "for" or "against" empire. However, it has been recently argued that such a presumption inadvertently perpetuated a shallow dogmatism in the understanding of imperial controversy. The origin of this apparent controversy can be traced back at least as far as the mid-point of the nineteenth century. Prior to his work at Cornell University, Goldwin Smith, Oxford Regius Professor of History,²⁸ and an unrepentant anti-Imperialist further extended the line first originated by Adam Smith and then plotted by Richard Cobden.²⁹ Indeed it was Cobden who later insisted that Goldwin Smith's Letters on The Empire be published as a guide for future government policy. But what is paradoxical--and largely overlooked--is that about the time Disraeli made his celebrated remark to the effect that in British North America even after Confederation

²⁸Smith, Goldwin (1823-1910). Oxford Regius Professor of History (1858-66); settled in Canada and predicted its voluntary union with the United States; denounced by Disraeli as a social parasite in Lothair (1870). (Liberal).

²⁹Cobden, Richard (1804-1865). Opposed defence of Turkey against Russia (1835), a leader of the Anti-Corn-Law-League (1838-45); organized peace conferences (1848-51); shared unpopularity with John Bright for public opposition to the Crimean War; negotiated commercial treaty with France (1860); declined offer of cabinet office, popularly believed to have led "Manchester School". (Radical-Liberal).

the "wretched colonies were a millstone around our neck,"³⁰ Goldwin Smith had been thinking of such colonies not so much in terms of being liabilities as of being "daughter communities" who either had, or shortly would, come of age.³¹ That is why Goldwin Smith predicted the need for colonies to pay for their own defence; a prediction which the Colonial Reform Society itself thought premature.

Goldwin Smith's concept of an Anglo-Saxon "Confederation" was broadly similar to Dilke's, although he did not perhaps emphasize its federal or organic connection as much as Dilke had done. But Goldwin Smith wrote not as an administrator, but as an academic who only partly endorsed Cobden's notion that the "state" was a merging section of humanity, although he deplored the alleged grandeur of "splendid isolation" and contended that it was inconsistent with Cobdenite "cosmopolitanist pretensions". As an historian, Goldwin Smith's historiography rested heavily upon the alleged symbolic value of free trade; and the identification of free trade with any particular notion of "national" power is admittedly a somewhat precarious undertaking.

³⁰Monypenny and Buckle, Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Vol. 1, p. 1201. (This remark was contained in private correspondence with Lord Malmesbury with reference to the 1858 Newfoundland dispute).

³¹Goldwin Smith, Commonwealth or Empire (London, 1902, p.

J.A. Froude³² and J.R. Seeley³³ helped to formulate an historiography which served as an "apologia" for imperialism in the generation preceding the First World War.³⁴ In its extreme form, this interpretation of history itself constituted an expression of jingoism and it was well epitomized by J.A. Cramb who seriously attributed external reaction to British policy by foreign powers to "pthomos" or universal envy. It was only inevitable that the events of the South African War should chasten such writers and cause such excessive statements to be revised.³⁵

The "myth" of the alleged incompatibility between anti-Imperialists and pro-Imperialist policies was further structured by distinguished imperialist historians writing at the time of the First World War. Meticulous and exhaustive work by such scholars as A.P. Newton³⁶

³²J.A. Froude, History of England, (12 Vols., 1956-1870).

³³J.R. Seeley, The Expansion of England, (1883)

³⁴Donald Creighton believed that Froude founded a "school" expressly to replace the "moribund" Manchester School. (Refer D. Creighton, "The Victorians and the Empire," Canadian Historical Review, XIX, p.141). G.P. Gooch believed that Seeley would have been called a "Little Englander" had he written the above work in 1900. Refer G.P. Gooch Heart of the Empire (1902), p. 338.

³⁵J.A. Cramb, The Origins and Destiny of Imperial Britain (1900).

³⁶A.P. Newton, A Hundred Years of The British Empire, (1940).

and H.E. Egerton³⁷ convincingly established conceptualizations of "Little England" and "Big England" as political realities contained within consecutive time periods. R.L. Schuyler crystallized the view that imperial statesmen were committed either to the enlargement or the piece-meal dissolution of the Empire, by suggesting that imperial attitudes were dependent upon whether or not they had been developed before 1870.³⁸ Donald Creighton claimed that anti-Imperialists and Imperialists shared only one thing in common, namely "the undeviating consistency with which they invariably acted upon the strictest moral principles." The first half of Victoria's reign, he alleged "saw all but a few sentimental ties cut, the second became a slave to the habit to acquire colonies." Cobden and Bright he believed had elevated free-trade dogma to the highest point of moral unction since James I's assertion of "the divine right of Kings."³⁹ But this work represents an historiography that perhaps overly concerned itself with the outward political relations between Great Britain and her dependencies.

Admittedly this was a tradition that might be traced to Gibbon Wakefield,⁴⁰ and to those colonial reformers who had traditionally

³⁷H.E. Egerton, A Short History of British Colonial Policy, (1932).

³⁸R.L. Schuyler, "The Climax of Anti-Imperialism in England," Political Science Quarterly (New York), XXXVI (December, 1921), pp.537-560.

³⁹D. Creighton, op. cit., p. 144.

⁴⁰Wakefield, Gibbon (1796-1862). Organized association for colonizing South Australia; Manager of New Zealand Land Company (1839-49).

ridiculed various allegedly "myopic" figures of the Colonial Office such as James Stephen. The "Little England"--"Big England" dichotomy was implicit even in writings produced immediately prior to the Second World War when it was currently accepted that there was a "tacit assumption among moderate and reasonable men that colonial separation was inevitable and desirable."⁴¹

It is not surprising that a new historiography in respect to this dichotomy was anticipated by Paul Knaplund in his study of Gladstone's colonial and imperial policy.⁴² Obviously Gladstone was neither an "Imperialist" nor an "anti-Imperialist" in Schuyler's sense.

Since the Second World War a revised historiography has largely succeeded in further erasing the previous dichotomy of extremes by suggesting that "formal" and "informal" techniques of imperialism were really the opposite sides of the same coin. Such a revision--most notably articulated by J. Gallagher and R. Robinson--emphasizes that although strategies may have varied between one continent and another, basic economic and political presumptions were consistent. Thus, with respect to the broad view of the Empire, it has been more recently stressed that the mercantilist techniques imposed upon India and the

⁴¹Cambridge History of the British Empire (Cambridge, 1940), Vol. 2. See H.J. Habbakkuk, "Free Trade and Commercial Expansion, 1853-1870".

⁴²Paul Knaplund, Gladstone and Britain's Imperial Policy (London, 1927).

free trading methods employed in South Africa or South America coincided and were administered simultaneously. The revision has sought to clarify the financial motivation behind Britain's overt moves in political jurisdiction and show that the Little Englander involvement between 1840 and 1870 was not necessarily a reaction to expansionism per se, but actually represented a striking period of expansionism by itself. For example, these writers cited that during the so-called "indifferent" period of the eighteen-forties, Britain had annexed Hong Kong in the Far East, the Punjab and Sind in India, and New Zealand in the South Pacific, as well as the Gold Coast and Natal in Africa. They further stressed that in the eighteen-fifties, formal or informal control was extended to Berar, Oudh, Lower Burma and Kowloon in the East, and to Lagos, Sierre Leone Basutoland, Griqualand and the Transvaal in Africa.⁴³

The above thesis argues that instead of being doctrinally attracted to or repelled by imperialism, British agents were seeking an essential continuity by which they saw formal or informal techniques as complementary rather than contradictory. It recognizes that the various phases or techniques of British expansion or imperialism cannot be

⁴³J. Gallagher and R. Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," The Economic History Review, 2nd Ser., VI (August, 1953), pp. 1-15.

considered consecutively or chronologically because the same amount of political control was not required everywhere at the same time. Even the post-1870 "imperialistic" period with its complex economic overtones represented no fundamental alteration of the principle of free trade. While late Victorians still preferred informal empire as a means of expansion, the challenge of competitive "empire" admittedly increased the number of occurrences where the policy of informal empire was plainly insufficient. But to maximize the potential success of "informal" matters, guarantees of free trade and access would be obtained as a reward for recognizing foreign territorial claims. This--it is submitted--was the intention behind the Anglo-Portuguese treaty of 1884, the ill-fated Congo arrangement of 1885 and the Anglo-German agreement over East Africa in 1886.

In minimizing the distinction between "formal" and "informal" techniques of imperial consolidation, the above authors have precluded the "Marxist" concept of economic determinism as a satisfactory explanation of British involvement in Africa. Their interpretation has conceded that trade, philanthropy and even colonization might have thrived in an "informal" environment but that political strategy and prestige necessitated a more overt "formal" approach to peripheral questions of empire in the eighteen-eighties. Thus it was primarily for strategic reasons that Britain found herself involved in Egypt, because

she found herself compelled to utilize Egypt as a bastion against Russia in lieu of Constantinople. The fact that a "nationalist" uprising took place simultaneously in Egypt was coincidental and irrelevant to British pretensions. Thus those Little Englanders who protested against initial British involvement in Egypt allegedly lacked insight or imagination. The above authors exhaustively qualified their seemingly irreverent interpretation that the extension of formal political control was used only as a last resort. In their thesis, Egypt is made to explain the "why" and the "how" of partition.⁴⁴

While Africa and the Victorians constitutes a tour de force in imperial historiography, its thesis has been challenged as an oversimplification. If "formal" as opposed to "informal" technique denoted only a change in method rather than ideology why--it has been asked--was it that between 1840 and 1870 free trade had been depicted as a "moral law" and a "scientific certitude"? The public outcry caused by Disraeli's imperious decision to purchase the Suez Canal shares was of enormous significance, because this suggested that "formal" moves would have seemed incongruous in the "free-trade" heyday. Why had so many mid-Victorians made a dogma out of the apparent identification of individual and international interests? Gallagher and Robinson have

⁴⁴J. Gallagher and R. Robinson, Africa and the Victorians (1961).

been challenged by an historiography which depicts "formal" and "informal" techniques as intrinsically different phenomena. This revision interprets the ultimate Liberal victory of 1906 as less a victory of socialism or of Liberal reform than as a vindication of free-trade.⁴⁵

The myth of a distinct self-contained Little-Englander period persists. This myth was at one time nourished by the assumption that the Colonial Reformers were themselves imperialistic. But the Colonial Reformers appear to have invigorated an understaffed Colonial Office which lacked the resources to pursue an aggressive policy of colonization. Wakefield attempted to artificially diminish pressure on capital by encouraging the emigration of both professional people and artisans to distant colonies. These future colonists were to be supported by public expenditures made by the government and were not to be maintained merely by the fluctuating convenience of trade investitures. But such a programme was necessarily condemned--at a later time--by those who had adopted the Cobdenite cant.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Oliver Macdonagh, "The Anti-Imperialism of Free Trade," The Economic History Review, 2nd Ser., XIV (April, 1962), pp. 489-501.

⁴⁶Bernard Semmel, "The Philosophic Radicals and Colonialism," Journal of Economic History, XXI (December, 1961), pp. 513-525.

In evaluating the historiography of anti-Imperialism it is tempting to attempt a synthesis of views. Even if the middle quarters of the nineteenth century are to be depicted--relatively speaking--as a Little-Englander era, the age of the maligned individual Little Englander must be confined to the last quarter. But there were too many exceptions to admit the view that in the middle of the nineteenth century England was officially anti-Imperialistic. And even in the last quarter of the nineteenth century the appellation of "Little Englander" could be deliberately applied only to one's political opponents and not to one's friends. That there was dissent in respect to Imperial ventures is beyond dispute, but dissent tended to confuse diplomatic strategy with imperial doctrine, but the growing condemnation of Imperial conduct by invocation of Cobdenite cant certainly gave the appearance of a doctrinaire abstraction of anti-Imperialism. But such criticism all too often represented a nostalgic mid-nineteenth century view of Empire, and even those nostalgic free traders who rendered it would have warmly endorsed Huskisson's earlier warning that, "England cannot afford to be little. She must be what she is or nothing."⁴⁷

Perhaps it was the popular masses who created the myth of the "Little Englander". Recent studies have suggested that imperialism was

⁴⁷John S. Galbraith, "Myths of the Little England Era," American Historical Review, LXIII (October, 1961), pp. 34-48.

a sociological rather than a political or economic phenomenon.⁴⁸

This "Little Englandism" was distinctly a popular term of reproach, coined during a period of overt expansionism but which significantly coloured the writing of imperial historians, and like the spectre of Imperialism without which it could never have been given birth, "it can properly be understood only in terms of the same social hysteria that has since given birth to other and more disastrous forms of aggressive nationalism."⁴⁹

⁴⁸J.A. Schumpeter, Imperialism and Social Classes (Oxford, 1951).

⁴⁹D.K. Fieldhouse, "Imperialism: An Historiographical Revision," Economic History Review, 2nd Ser., XIV (December, 1961), pp. 187-209.

CHAPTER II

LIBERALISM AND THE LAISSEZ-FAIRE STATE

The purpose of this chapter will be to discuss the development of "liberal" attitudes and to suggest what light they might shed on "imperialist" or "anti-imperialist presumptions". "Laissez faire" is ever associated with nineteenth century Liberalism but despite the widespread acceptance of this tradition, the period of the mid-nineteenth century with which it has been particularly identified, has been recently interpreted as an era of affirmative, rather than negative bureaucratic collectivism.¹ Repeal of the Navigation Acts, which had been effected before the mid-point of the century coincided with a restructuring of the welfare state; which was itself a lineal descendant of the Elizabethan "Statute of Apprentices". The role of the state in every day life in both the economic and political sense was gaining in importance but, simultaneously was becoming less suspect to the public at large.

If one is to identify distinct trends in the criticism and administration of colonial policy, it is at least fair to assume that such trends would be repercussive of social and economic changes in

¹D. Roberts, Victorian Origins of the Welfare State (Yale, 1960).

Britain itself. Thus, while early Victorian society may never have attained the "freedom" of the "laissez faire state" in the literal sense, it is helpful to assume tentatively that society at least reflected the "notions" of such a state.² When, subsequently, the "heroic" age of laissez faire capitalist practice had been superceded by one of limited liability the state could then be regarded as a large-scale example of a joint stock company. This would imply that the preceding atomized cosmopolitanist background--against which Adam Smith's colonial theories had been developed--was re-shaped so as to emphasize metropolitan or even national characteristics. The earlier laissez faire period had seen colonial practices registered, largely in the form of informal communication, with missionaries, traders, settlers and natives.³ But when colonial designs became more and more subordinated to strategic conditions created by foreign rivalry, the simpler operations gave way to more complex diplomatic overtures. By the eighteen-nineties, colonial and foreign policies had largely merged to form part of a metropolitan-oriented "imperial" policy.

This is not to suggest that it is profitable to abstract political doctrines and assume that such be the motivating agency behind political

²S.H. Beer, British Politics in the Collectivist Age, p. 37.

³V.T. Harlow, The Historian and British Colonial History (Oxford, 1957), p. 1-10.

conduct. Gladstone⁴ once paraphrased Edmund Burke⁵ by suggesting that "in politics the space afforded to abstract reasoning is extremely limited."⁶ Emotions do seemingly play a more important role in political action than conscious considerations of abstract philosophy; for which reason Sir Lewis Namier has suggested that theorizing in political history is for the most part an artificial and unnatural activity.⁷

But this does not dispel the temptation to assume that there may be some causal relationship between attitudes and events. At least, succumbing to this temptation would alleviate the consequences of that opposite error which Herbert Butterfield has described as "taking mind out of history."⁸ But because it is believed that the detection of attitudes behind political conduct can provide a meaningful task, this

⁴Gladstone, William Ewart (1809-98). Except for less than a year and a half, M.P. from 1832 to 1895. Colonial Secretary, 1845-46; Prime Minister (1868-74, 1880-85, 1886, 1892-94). (Liberal).

⁵Burke, Edmund (1729-97). M.P. 1765, obtained high position among Whigs by his criticism of George III's arbitrary policies; advocated liberal treatment of colonies; championed free trade with Ireland; urged impeachment of Warren Hastings; appeared as champion of the old order in Reflections on the French Revolution (1790) but remained an eloquent apologist for the constitutional principle.

⁶H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 273 (1882), Gladstone.

⁷Sir Lewis Namier, Personalities and Powers (London, 1955), pp. 4-5. Quoted in Eric Stokes, The Political Ideas of English Imperialism (London, 1960), p. 6.

⁸Herbert Butterfield, History of Human Relations (London, 1951).

thesis, while tracing reactions to particular imperial problems, will attempt to summarize some of the attitudes or presumptions behind expressions of anti-imperialism. By way of introduction, reference will be made to some of the more speculative aspects of political philosophy.

Philosophical speculation has led some writers to identify leading imperialists with the "idealist" or "neo-Hegelian" view, which upheld freedom to be inseparable from political obligation and which depicted social institutions as representing the concrete embodiment of moral ideas. While it is true that Lord Rosebery⁹ often employed Rudyard Kipling's kind of imagery, which sanctified "duty", and that Haldane¹⁰ and Milner¹¹ might have conceivably been influenced by German Idealism, there is no evidence to show that such distinctive ideas as

⁹Primrose, Archibald Philip, 5th Earl of Rosebery (1847-1929). First Chairman of the London County Council (1888). Foreign Secretary (1886); 1892-94; Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary (1894-95). During the following ten years became increasingly distrusted by Liberal rank and file, becoming in 1902 President of the Liberal League, which denounced the allegedly "pro-Boer" tendencies of the Party. (Whig).

¹⁰Haldane, Richard Burdon. Viscount Haldane (1856-1928). M.P. (1885-1911); War Secretary (1905-12), and according to Field Marshal Haig "the greatest England ever had." He studied German philosophy at Gottingen. (Liberal).

¹¹Milner, Alfred. Viscount Milner (1865-1925). Appointed High Commissioner in South Africa (1897-1905), Governor of Cape of Good Hope (1897-1901); precipitated Boer War by demanding enfranchisement of Johannesburgers (1899). His rigid and bureaucratic methods were allegedly influenced by his early German upbringing. ("Socialistic" Liberal).

were held by these Imperialists were necessarily drawn from "idealist" sources. Other leading Imperialists such as Lord Curzon,¹² Sir Edward Grey¹³ and Herbert Asquith¹⁴ did pass through Balliol College when the influence of its Master, Benjamin Jowett¹⁵ was paramount, but there would be little basis to any suggestion in that members of any British Cabinet would consciously play the role of "Hegelians" or "anti-Hegelians". Even Milner who urged Britain to exert political pressure upon South Africa so as to secure her in Britain's image had more of the utilitarian streak of the Fabians in him than the Hegelian view.

It was John Morley, the most articulate of all the "anti-Imperialists" who explicitly repudiated idealism when he deplored the

¹²Curzon, George Nathaniel. 1st Marquis Curzon (1859-1925). Under-Secretary of State for India (1891-92); for foreign affairs (1895-98); Viceroy of India (1899-1905). As the model of the benevolent despot, Curzon's actions in India seemed designed to make the Raj eternal. (Conservative).

¹³Grey, Sir Edward. Viscount Grey of Fallodon (1862-1933). Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1892-95); Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1905-16). In spite of his association with the ententes, he tried to revive the Concert of Europe, and in spite of his being a leader of the Liberal Imperialists he encouraged the transformation from colonial to dominion status for overseas dependencies.

¹⁴Asquith, Herbert Henry, 1st Earl of Oxford and Asquith (1852-1928). M.P. (1886-1918, 1920-24); Home Secretary (1892-95); Chancellor of the Exchequer (1905-1908); Prime Minister (1908-1916). Supported the "Imperialists" in the Boer War although it was under his ministry that South Africa became a dominion (1910).

¹⁵Jowett, Benjamin (1817-93). Vice-Chancellor of Oxford (1882-86); Master of Balliol (1870-93).

belief that "the real is the only rational form in the test of right and wrong, that the State has nothing to do with the restraint of morals, that the ruler is emancipated."¹⁶ But it is nevertheless true that such imperialists as Milner did adopt a pro-consular stoic ethic which exacted a filial loyalty, and which bore heavy overtones of nationalism indicative of the fact that within the Imperial movement "cosmopolitanism" per se was regarded as suspect and even subversive. The English approach to the British Empire has been interpreted as being neither logical nor intellectual. The British Empire was a "growth". By contrast, the Germans--who thought of the British Empire as an emporium of country houses--devised on a prior justification of their Empire so that it became an artifact.¹⁷ Anti-Imperialists on the other hand, professed a disinterested concern for humanity per se which being devoid of notions of the "white man's burden" tended to postulate the complacent acceptance of an insular self-sufficiency. This complacent attitude was reinforced by the "canonization" of the economic theories of Richard Cobden and John Stuart Mill¹⁸ which the anti-Imperialists freely interpolated.

¹⁶John Morley, Life of Gladstone (London, 1903), Vol.3, p. 551.

¹⁷A.P. Thornton, The Habit of Authority (Toronto, 1966), p. 47.

¹⁸Mill, John Stuart (1806-1873). Employed by the East India Company, (1827-58). By refining and humanizing the utilitarianism of Bentham, Mill repudiated laissez faire and marked a transitional point of British Liberalism. His writings on colonialism reflected his sympathy for human suffering. M.P. (for Westminster), (1865-68). (Liberal).

The above mentioned Imperialists were to enjoy close association with the Fabians, whose roots were Benthamite and anything but Hegelian. In fact, it would be true to say that both Imperialism and anti-Imperialism had intellectual roots embedded in the era of mercantilism. Eighteenth century physiocrats who had preceded Adam Smith¹⁹ were notably "anti-Imperialist", although the emphasis of their Little Englandism... was agricultural, and thus distinct from the commercially orientated school of "Philosophic Radicals". Physiocrats criticized existing colonial monopolies "as a sterile compost of the obsession of merchants and industrialists."²⁰ This they did, not so much because they valued cosmopolitan attitudes, but because they wanted England to aspire to an insular self sufficiency.

By contrast, Adam Smith--who regarded the corpus of physiocratic doctrine as being as artificial as the mercantile system--was exclusively concerned with considerations of commerce basing his views upon his reading of external events which had preceded the American

¹⁹Smith, Adam (1723-90). Laid foundation of the modern science of political economy, by his theory of the division of labour, money, prices, wages and distribution. His system which upheld the natural liberty of trade and commerce was as authoritative in politics as economics.

²⁰A.V. Judges, "The Idea of a Mercantile State," Transactions of the R.H.S., 4th Ser., XXI (1939), pp. 41-69.

Revolution. Convinced that colonies were devouring capital instead of creating it, he argued that such colonies were not only unprofitable but even detrimental to the national interest. In effect he equated individual self-interest to national welfare an identification which later proved most convenient for the "Manchester School". Significantly, Adam Smith's premises were respected by most people involved in colonial administration, even after the repeal of the Navigation Acts. But the endorsement of Adam Smith by the "Manchester School" does not imply that Adam Smith was totally unmoved by the need for national security, in fact he had originally given only qualified approval to the repeal of the Navigation Acts, which, even in the event of their redundancy should be removed "only by slow gradation, and with a good deal of reserve and circumspection."²¹

The laissez-faire approach to capital investment needed modification when it became apparent that Britain was in fact producing a surplus of both capital and population. But the immediate followers of Adam Smith denied the very existence of surplus capital. According to the prevailing "wage fund theory" as expounded by Ricardo,²² capital

²¹Adam Smith, Wealth of Nations, bk. IV, ch.vii, pp. 429-435.

²²Ricardo, David (1772-1823). M.P. (1819-23). Published Principles of Political Economy and Taxation (1817), which presented his theory of the "quantity" of money, destined to dominate British economic thought until the 1850's.

by its very nature had to be fully utilized, and wages pegged naturally because the demand for such labour was in itself dependent upon the further accumulation of capital.²³ In this theory the extent of the market was irrelevant; it was the quantity of capital which decided the volume of trade. Jeremy Bentham²⁴ for example, agreed that a new trade market could conceivably realize a greater profit in the same category, but even this argument, in his view, would have invalidated the worth of colonial monopolies because he charged that invariably they encouraged industries which were either physically or geographically ill-suited. Later however, Bentham did depart from pure laissez-faire reasoning when he recognized a national responsibility for the protection of colonies, but which would only be exercised in the event of an existing colony being unable to defend itself against predatory nations.²⁵ Thus implicit in early Utilitarian teaching is a dichotomy--not an equation--between national responsibility and national self-interest.

The early Utilitarians never clearly defined the authority of the state in their deductive system of social criticism; in fact

²³Klaus E. Knorr, British Colonial Theories 1570-1850 (Toronto, 1944), p. 297.

²⁴Bentham, Jeremy (1748-1832). A jurist and philosopher, he developed a liberal notion of economics. His ethical doctrine upheld that the morality of actions is determined by utility.

²⁵J. Bentham, A Manual of Political Economy (1798). Quoted in Bernard Porter, Critics of Empire (London, 1968), p. 9.

"Hegelian" views could not easily be imported by England in the early nineteenth century. In spite of their practical interest in social reform, their theoretical work extended the empiricist tradition of Locke and Hume, and it would be wrong to suggest that their empiricism had much measurable effect upon contemporary liberalism. But while their notions of a "mechanistic psychology" and "calculus of happiness" ignored any platonic valuation of the "ideal right" and favoured a relativistic concept of society which extolled the individual they helped create an intellectual climate which might later be more receptive to collectivism or socialism. Superficially such a tradition was "anti-Imperialist"; but its rationality anticipated a more constructive approach to "empire" to be adopted by later Utilitarians.

One part of Adam Smith's and Jeremy Bentham's premises that seemed anti-Imperialistic had already been crystallized in "Say's Law".²⁶ Since this "law" posited that supply and demand were mutually created, it denied the existence of excess capital or production. It was Gibbon

²⁶Say, Jean-Baptiste (1767-1832). Published Traite d'Economie Politique (1803). His theory--repudiated by Malthus, Wakefield and J.S. Mill--maintained "that supply and demand being mutually creative, the occurrence of general over-production or a general glut of commodities seemed impossible. Only a temporary disequilibrium of supply and demand of particular goods could develop and such a short-run dislocation would rectify itself automatically. If this theory was true, then accumulation of capital could never be in excess of possibilities of its employment." Quoted K.E. Knorr, op. cit., p. 299.

Wakefield who rejected such a premise and in so doing, refuted the assumption that colonies were expendable and created the impression that his opponents were anti-imperialistic. While he worked out a project for systematic colonization which obviated the need for mercantilist protection in the belief that Britain had already cultivated its existing Dependencies to the limits of existing technology, Wakefield outlined a combination of controlled colonization and free trading, so as to preclude the settlement of inferior land.

Nothing could deserve the name of a colony of Great Britain which did not represent all the interests, civil and religious of the Mother Country which was not in fact a replica of England, complete in every part according to its proportions.²⁷

Wakefield demanded "national expenditures" rather than ad hoc "investitures in trade".

By means of the Colonial Reform Association, Wakefield and his associates drew public attention to the problems of colonial administration. Though this was subsequent to the repeal of the Navigation Acts, this work promoted a sentimental attachment to the idea of empire. Such reforms were welcomed by the Cobdenites because self-government implied political devolution and the reduction of administrative costs. Some anxiety was felt that the Association might expedite dissolution of

²⁷H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 58 (1841)p. 577, Wakefield.

colonial connections, and its founding was endorsed by Lord Grey²⁸ and Lord John Russell²⁹ only on the understanding that it would not do this.

As Wakefield's ideas were significant for Utilitarian and Liberal theory his arguments were broadly adopted by John Stuart Mill, in fact in retrospect Mill's views were much closer to Wakefield's ideas than to Cobden's; for Mill believed that laissez-faire economics had been over-concerned with the means of distribution and had taken insufficient account of the potential of the employment field. In arguing that production was determined not just by capital and labour, Mill stressed that the employment factor was two-fold in that it involved not only the expendable land of the country and its colonies, but also the "unseen" capacity of foreign markets to take manufactured commodities. Because the demand of foreign markets in his view was limited, he argued that Britain was economically obliged to augment her own resources.

The exportation of labourers and capital from old and new countries, from a place where their productive power is less to a place where it is greater, (means that) colonization in the present state of the world is the best affair of business.³⁰

²⁸Grey, Henry George. 3rd Earl Grey (1802-94). Colonial Secretary (1846-52). First minister to endorse responsible government and first to introduce free trade between Great Britain and Ireland. Opposed Home Rule (1886).

²⁹Russell, Lord John. Earl Russell (1792-1878). Committed to the repeal of the Corn Laws (1846), succeeded Peel as Prime Minister (1846-52).

³⁰J.S. Mill, Principles of Political Economy, p. 970. Quoted in K.E. Knorr, op. cit., p. 305.

Mill's "professorial" approach to politics suggested that he was the last of the "classical" political thinkers to apply himself to practical questions of administration. Yet this approach did not mean that he was objectively detached; he was to denounce with great emotion the brutality used in suppressing the Jamaican Rebellion in 1865, and the travesty of justice which had acquitted Governor Eyre. Invariably Mill felt inhibited when he considered national interests--Disraeli poured scorn on Mill as the "finishing Governess"--but in experiencing this difficulty came to epitomize that classical liberal view of the state whereby the state was denied any special sanctity and was held as responsible for its actions as any individual.

But Mill never developed a convincing justification of the state as a positive agency for social improvement, which is indicative of the fact that he never formally repudiated Benthamism, he merely widened and defined its basis to a degree. His contributions to liberal thinking were made at a time when he could still label the conservatives as the "stupid party", and thus later readers have found his writings tainted with complacency.³¹ But his zeal for administrative reform emphasized that brand of liberalism which championed intellectual democracy but which still regarded it as suspect--at least in its most popular form.

³¹J.S. Mill, Autobiography (New York, 1948), p. 289.

In the popular mind, the legacy of the "anti-Corn Law League" was the continued existence of the "Manchester School". Surprisingly the designation of this "School" was not effected--and then by its opponents--until 1848 by which time the "anti-Corn Law League" had been dissolved. This largely explains why the Manchester School was considered to be "Protectionist" until the end of the eighteen-thirties. In 1848, Disraeli--who maintained that he was a "genuine" free trader--argued that the Peelites had only sold out on the principle of repeal because it was promised that Britain would negotiate reciprocal trade agreements with other nations. These agreements had not materialized and it was clear that the country had been hoodwinked by "the school of Manchester" which operated on the principle of buying cheap and selling dear.³² Thus the Manchester School was constituted a distinct collectivity by its principal adversary at a time when Manchester traders had little in common save a proffered respect for Cobden and Bright. John Morley would later write:-

While it is only simpletons who disparage the real utility of the Manchester principles . . . it is not well to claim for them a higher place than belongs to a number of empirical maxims . . . there are whole departments of social institutions about which the Manchester School quite naturally and rightly never professed to have anything to say.³³

³²H.P.D., 3rd. Ser., Vol. 97 (1848), p. 417, Disraeli.

³³John Morley, "Home and Foreign Affairs," The Fortnightly Review, XXXVII (April 1882), p. 504.

It is sometimes assumed that because members of the Manchester School had had no official correspondence with the Colonial Reformers in respect to Britain's "Second Empire", there was necessarily a lack of concern in this area. This is misleading, because there is evidence that the Philosophical Radicals and the Colonial Reformers worked assiduously together in the original anti-Corn Law League. It is difficult to identify a common denominator in Manchester theory but a synthesis of their views might indicate that the Manchester School tended to subordinate "national power" to economic wealth, whereas the emerging parliamentary Liberals might sacrifice some economic wealth to sustain national prestige. Perhaps the Manchester School had been too closely identified with the attitudes of Richard Cobden. Because in the popular mind, Cobden had eulogized pacifist and laissez-faire principles it was then assumed that the Manchester School was a collectivity wholly sympathetic to those ideals, and the fact that in 1846 Manchester traders had demanded the forcing of the Elbe which the Danes had blockaded was easily overlooked. Cobden's premise that the efficacy of free trade would encourage traders to force their governments to renounce war was derived from Ricardo, although it appears to have been the only idea of Ricardo--who by now had been largely discredited--that Cobden appears to have used.³⁴

³⁴William D. Grampp, The Manchester School of Economics (London, 1960), p. 9.

A further fallacy concerning the Manchester School has been the assumption that it had attacked the "Factory Acts" and was vehemently opposed to their further extension. Evidently Cobden's individual attitude towards these Acts was bewildering and ambiguous. He had criticized Lord Shaftesbury "for using his heart rather than his head" and this created the impression that Cobden had adopted a rigidly doctrinaire position of laissez faire. By association, therefore, the Manchester School was confused with this attitude, but this assumption is as illogical and dangerously misleading as the belief that the Manchester School was necessarily pacifist because of Cobden's repugnance for Lord Palmerston's gunboat diplomacy. There is evidence that Cobden did in fact support Lord Ashley's 1842 Factory Act but he did not commit himself to the extension of this Act towards other manufacturing establishments.³⁵ But supposing Cobden did at times regard laissez faire as a positive moral force, this did not mean that he postulated it as the only criterion to be used in deciding upon a particular measure of economic policy. There were occasions when Cobden supported economic legislation to give the government tighter control of fiscal policies. In 1844, for example, Cobden had endorsed the Banking Act, which gave the Bank of England quasi-monopolistic powers.³⁶

³⁵Ibid., p. 91.

³⁶Lloyd W. Mints, A History of Banking Theory in Great Britain and the United States (Chicago, 1945), p. 111. Quoted in William D. Grampp, op. cit., p. 105.

Cobden might well have agreed with John Stuart Mill--who had accepted free trade only with cautious advocacy--that a government should act only where individuals are not effective and should refrain from acting where individuals are. But when the government did act it should never sacrifice the principle of moral freedom to the achievement of effective means. Thus, if Cobden perceived that the free flow of trade might produce a bellicose effect he would rescind such freedom, and when the Russian government sought to borrow money on the London market he resisted such a move.³⁷

What is perhaps frequently overlooked is that Cobden was personally admired by statesmen who were not associated with the Manchester School, or with any "anti-Imperialist" movement. On the occasion of Cobden's death in 1865, Disraeli rightly predicted that Cobden's reputation would grow with time.³⁸ If Cobden's premises concerning Empire were similar to Goldwin Smith's, at least he never earned Disraeli's estimation of Goldwin as a prig and a pedant who peddled sedition.

Cobden was understandably applauded in his own lifetime by all "parties" but posthumously he came to be venerated especially by

³⁷Richard Cobden, Speeches on Questions of Public Policy, Eds. J. Bright and J.E. Thorold. (2 Vols. London, 1870) II, p. 418.

³⁸H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 178 (1865), p.676, Disraeli.

anti-imperialist radicals of the "left"--not only on account of his attitude towards international affairs--but because of his repudiation of primogeniture and such social devices as perpetuated hierarchy. Even Gladstonians applauded his censure of diplomatic technique and would later draw upon Cobden's invectives when railing against the principle of Realpolitik. But Gladstonians could not pretend that Cobden supported the "Concert of Europe" in any literal sense, because Cobden had always been repelled by the prospect of a resurrection of the Congress System which he felt too "confining".³⁹

In retrospect the Manchester School was seen as a collectivity which had attempted to de-emphasize the distinction which officialdom had drawn between colonial and foreign policy by allegedly attacking the aristocratic "prerogatives" of the Foreign Office, together with the "horse guards mentality" of its Secretariat. According to this tradition--which anti-Imperialists publicized--the Manchester School denounced the European "balance of power" as a "phantasm" whose belligerent diplomacy was prejudicial to wealth and commerce. The reality was different however, the Manchester School had proved unreceptive to the "Peace Societies" which were launched continuously during the nineteenth century. By

³⁹Donald Read, Cobden and Bright (London, 1967), p. 113.

misinterpreting Cobden's view of the state as being but a merging section of humanity, anti-Imperialists had favoured the depiction of the Manchester School as an international-minded group. Cobden interpreted the mercantile community as a restless force and he freely admitted that the dull prosaic tenor of a genuinely non-belligerent community might enervate the individual unless industry could by itself find a new channel for man's combative nature. This posed a serious problem for Cobden who never professed the same empathy for the working class that Bright did. His disingenuous approach never permitted him to endorse the principle of working class or middle class international solidarity.

In another respect the traditional parsimony of the Manchester School was echoed in Cobden's views concerning the accounting of colonial expenditure. However, both the "Imperialist" and "anti-Imperialist" attitudes could be traced from a common demand for economy in public spending. Hume⁴⁰--last of the truly militant Radicals--was as obsessed with imperial economy as was Cobden, and he advocated an imperialist federation on the grounds that dependencies directly represented at Westminster would be better able to defray their administrative costs. Perhaps Cobden felt that such a federation would actually decrease

⁴⁰Hume, Joseph (1777-1855). Last of the Radical "Leaders". Encouraged repeal of laws prohibiting emigration.

colonial economy rather than improve it and he objected to Hume's argument on the grounds that dependencies might contaminate the Imperial Government itself. In fact after the original system of Imperial preferences had been abandoned, the relative expense of governing the Empire had diminished rapidly and the argument that Britain could not pay for what remained rang rather hollow. Nevertheless Cobden's attitude is illustrative of his way of expressing a moral idea by means of a material solution. But it should be emphasized that Cobden adopted a fundamentally moral approach to international questions and this approach took precedence over the rigid doctrine of non-intervention. In any case Cobden did not speak for the Manchester School as a whole, because in spite of Disraeli's original witticism, the term was a misnomer because at the best it could only denote a class of traders, rather than a mentality.

The Post-Cobdenite Fragmentation of Liberalism

It may be now appropriate to consider the Imperial question itself in relation to the Liberal Party as a whole. Liberalism has been described as a "starting point" rather than an "end", and it is therefore presumptuous to associate it with any particular concept of empire. This problem of defining liberalism was compounded for late Victorians, many of whom came increasingly to agree with John Morley that after 1874, "their age was characteristically and cardinally an

epoch of transition in the very foundations of belief and conduct."⁴¹

The genesis of liberalism had occurred long before its attainment to respectability as a political party although as recently as the early nineteenth century liberalism had been synonymous with anarchy. In the eighteenth century writings of John Locke and the Empiricists, the functions of the state had been interpreted as minimal.

Yet by the middle of the nineteenth century it was inevitable that political theory should become adjusted in accordance with a changing concept of society which under the influence of the organic implications of "Social-Darwinism" was beginning to emphasize "collectivist" needs. This was in contradistinction to the emphatic dignity of the individual which "liberalism" had traditionally wished to preserve as a self-reliant societal unit.

By contrast, Conservatives--who had admittedly "leapt in the dark" on the occasion of the Second Reform Bill in 1867--did not feel as obliged to theorize as had the Liberals. Conservatives felt no parallel obligation to try to systematize or comprehend the totality of political truth. To Conservatives, "Empire" posed an historical problem, but it did not pose the ethical predicament that it created for Liberals.

⁴¹John Morley, The Fortnightly Review, XXI (April, 1874), p. 437.

Conservatives were generally satisfied with Disraeli's succinct observation that imperialism represented "the sublime instinct of an ancient people."

The Utilitarians were undoubtedly influential in the development of "imperialist" theory within liberal thinking. They had in turn developed implicit political ideas of the English Empiricists who had been peculiarly concerned with social criticism. Nevertheless, the notions of "natural rights" which was an integral part of the Lockean enlightenment had never extensively permeated the body of English political thinking. In fact, Liberals of the post-Second Reform Act period depended more upon Burke--whom they considered authoritative upon Imperial matters--than upon Locke. But Burke's political temperament had been essentially passionate, and it was not always appropriate to resolve, or even approach imperial questions by means of Burkeian terminology if such questions--being of an abstract character--could have been more satisfactorily posed in the more rational idiom of Jefferson or Rousseau. Thus through a common respect for Burke, Liberals and Conservatives have never been in any fundamental quarrel about the need to maintain the character of the British Constitution, even if they might have disagreed over its premises. Both parties have been notably free from continental determinism and have drawn their prime inspiration from the growth and exposition of the English "Common

Law". On the eve of the Imperialist controversy however, Liberalism perhaps began to have misgivings at the dominance of an hereditary elite in political life over commercial interests. Its interpreters began to place a greater emphasis upon public opinion as a necessary endorsement of political action. Liberals began to see free trade as something more than an economically sound policy. They were not yet beset by suspicions that in a world of changing industrial patterns, rigid retention of free trade might be a harbinger of uncertainty. Instead they projected it as a panacea for resolving existing rivalries. This assumption lay at the heart of Cobdenism although even within his lifetime Cobden had placed no such axiomatic confidence in free trade.

When Liberals attempted to define among themselves, the premises upon which Imperialism might be based, they found it impossible to attain a simple consensus. Was Imperialism simply a legitimate nationalism "writ large" on a broader territorial canvas or was it a national excrescence? Most Liberals would agree that as a United Kingdom, Britain was not a "nation state". Britain had no "irredentist" national tradition and the coincidence of the state and nation in England could represent only a temporary aberration.⁴² Those Liberals who imagined that "peace,

⁴²A. Cobban, Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians, p. 329.

retrenchment and reform" represented a positive policy were understandably repelled by the thought that Imperialism would emphasize the state at the expense of the individual. Some radical Liberals, e.g. Charles Dilke, did attempt to abstract Imperialism and define it in terms of a new raciology, although this necessitated constant revision. To a few Liberals, Disraeli's romantic concept of imperium et libertas became an inspiration although to Gladstone and the rank and file of his Party it represented a contradiction in terms.

It was inevitable that, as the experience of popular democracy unfolded, Liberals be compelled to focus their attention increasingly upon the techniques of government and less upon abstract speculation. Until 1870, some Liberals--such as John Morley--were uncertain whether even a multi-party system was necessary. Morley described the traditional party system as deadening and dispersing "the political energies, the patriotic sympathies, the civil impulses, of the nation at large."⁴³ Attitudes to such questions as Church Disestablishment seemed more important and divisive than party label. In little more than a decade imperial questions had become predominant issues and reactions to these questions created at least four "groups" within the Liberal Party. The "Whig" circle still enjoyed privileges by

⁴³John Morley, "Old Parties and New Policy," The Fortnightly Review, XXI (September, 1868), p. 325.

"rule of thumb" on imperial matters although their authority was to be increasingly challenged by such Radicals as Dilke and Chamberlain.⁴⁴ Some of these Whigs adopted a "forward" approach to Empire and remained less perturbed by ramifications of imperial expansion. Lord Hartington⁴⁵ led this group and he received moral support from both grandees and humanitarians.

The bulk of the Liberal Party however might well be described as "Moderates" who on domestic and colonial matters found the pragmatism of Gladstone congenial. For the most part they were made up of representatives of the provincial middle class but they also included such Whigs as Ripon⁴⁶ and Granville.⁴⁷ A third group comprised energetic radicals who valued the work of the Colonial Reformers but whose views frequently reflected--even if subconsciously--the notions of "external"

⁴⁴John Vincent, The Formation of the Liberal Party 1857-1868 (London, 1966), pp. 246-250.

⁴⁵Cavendish, Spencer Compton, Lord Hartington. 8th Duke of Devonshire. (1833-1908). Leader of the Liberals in House of Commons (1875-86); Secretary of State for India (1880-85); founded Liberal Unionists (1886); joined Salisbury Coalition as President of Council (1895-1902). (Liberal Unionist).

⁴⁶Robinson, Frederic John. 1st Marquis of Ripon (1827-1909). Viceroy of India (1880-84), when he encouraged limited self-government; Colonial Secretary (1892-95); Liberal Leader House of Lords (1905-08). (Liberal).

⁴⁷Granville, George. 2nd Earl Granville (1815-91). Inept Foreign Secretary under Gladstone (1870-74, 1880-85). (Liberal).

and "internal" Social Darwinism (infra chapter 3). The more articulate of these, e.g. Dilke and Chamberlain, were given minor ministerial posts in Gladstone's Second Administration. This group, which--prior to 1886--might be called "anti-imperialistic" was articulate but heterogeneous in composition. And fourthly, these were the recalcitrant anti-Imperialists or "Little Englanders" who spoke in the idiom of Cobden and Bright as if "Manchesterism" carried the authority of dogma. Some of these anti-Imperialists e.g. John Morley and Wilfred Lawson,⁴⁸ emphasized moral responsibility in imperial affairs to a degree that embarrassed Gladstone, while others of this group, such as Henry Labouchere, because of an irresponsible iconoclasm which they displayed towards almost all aspects of the political establishment, were well informed but proved singularly unhelpful.

Gladstone had been instrumental in creating the modern Liberal Party by effecting a political union of Peelites, Whigs and Radicals. But it had been largely the favour of the Cobdenite Radicals that had carried him to the leadership of that party in preference to other Whigs. Intellectually and emotionally, he was a complex figure who never compartmentalized political parties completely, at times he would applaud a policy because it was both "liberal" and "conservative". But at times

⁴⁸Lawson, Sir Wilfred (1829-1906). English radical and temperance advocate. Supported disestablishment, abolition of the House of Lords, disarmament. (Liberal).

Gladstone's exposition of policy seemed so devious that Beatrice Webb would later define Imperialism as "Gladstone's sentimental Christianity combined with the blackguardism of a Rhodes or a Jameson."⁴⁹ Gladstone's contradictions constituted a maze of complexity: "He was a Dissenter who was always explaining away his dissent, though still more his agreement; a Radical who preferred the company of aristocrats."⁵⁰ Although he was capable of extraordinary concentration on the minutiae of finance it was because of his extraordinarily intellectualized sentiments that Gladstone tended to focus on one great problem at a time. Thus Gladstone might employ terminology specifically related to the problem of Irish Home Rule when dealing with a wholly external imperial question.

Gladstone sustained within the Liberal Party the awareness of a sense of European identity, which he verbalized as the "Concert of Europe". Without Gladstone this "Concert" would have been seldom mentioned but as Salisbury observed, because his implicit faith in the "morality" of the Concert made him almost an apostle of universal interference all too often Gladstone only succeeded in uniting the Concert

⁴⁹Beatrice and Sydney Webb, Our Partnership (London, 1948), p.190.

⁵⁰A.J.P. Taylor, The Troublemakers (London, 1957), p. 60.

against Britain.⁵¹ Gladstone's implicit faith in the "public law" of Europe perhaps divided him from the Manchester School; but, unlike Cobden, he could never decide whether sanity and diplomacy rested with the people or with the aristocracy, "all too often it had to deal with whether he was fighting an election."⁵²

Moral scruples tended to fortify Gladstone's political principles but not his political decisions. Thus in Egypt, Gladstone submitted to the interests of the bondholders, but when he later sought to extricate himself from this quicksand he tried to deal directly with the Porte rather than in Concert with the great European powers. His Midlothian Campaign (1879-80) contained suggestions which implied a need for Britain's unilateral intervention, and if implemented would have constituted a "pseudo John Bullism" in Bulgarian affairs.⁵³ In the popular liberal mind Gladstone's addresses when read in retrospect were interpreted as implying non-intervention. Stead felt Gladstone had been misrepresented in this regard and quoted Gladstone as affirming that "what is called the Manchester School has never ruled the foreign policy of this country, never during a Conservative Government, and never

⁵¹Ibid., p.70. G.Cecil, Life of Salisbury, Vol. 3, p. 136.

⁵²Ibid., Chapter III.

⁵³R.T. Shannon, Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation 1876 (London, 1963), p. 273.

especially during a Liberal Government."⁵⁴ While the eclectic dissertations which characterized the Midlothian Campaign have been regarded as the expression of his political apotheosis, they seem quite incoherent and are generally written off as the aberrant features of a great intellect.⁵⁵ Gladstone's radical promises were reminiscent of Cobden in that they appealed to economy and to the equal rights of all nations, but his appeal to the Concert of Europe was not of Cobden's tradition.

Gladstone construed judicial control of imperial affairs not as a field for Benthamite experimentation, but as a responsibility which should conform to the uncoded principles of the common law. This may have been because he believed that nascent British communities would eventually be the dominant communities in time to come. Gladstone's belief in free trade was Burkeian rather than Mancunian. Frequently Gladstone feigned ignorance of Cobdenite radicalism, as if the comparative simplicity of Cobdenism was beyond his comprehension. Castigating mercantilism Gladstone noted that, "through a wise and salutary neglect, a generous nature has been suffered to take her own way to perfection."

⁵⁴Pall Mall Gazette, January 2, 1885.

⁵⁵A.J.P. Taylor, op. cit., p. 85.

Sometimes Gladstone's doctrinaire regard for the sanctity of trade made him unsympathetic to a change in the imperial chain of command even if this meant only minor constitutional adjustments in changed circumstances. Hence his reluctance to accede to the Australasian demand that would have necessitated rescinding the 1850 Australia Government Act.⁵⁶ But, although Gladstone believed that in the long run colonists could work things out best for themselves, he heartily endorsed much of the work of the Colonial Reformers. Although he did not always abide by them, Gladstone defined two limitations to colonization: avoidance of nominal or fictitious claims and consideration of native interests.

Gladstone did not repudiate either "informal" or "formal" advance and therefore it is difficult to either synopsise or delineate his career within the historiography that depicted attitudes as either "for" or "against" Empire. Even the function of the Chartered Companies he interpreted as harmonious with traditional "informal" techniques. This explains his compliance with the first of these Chartered Companies--the British Borneo Company--in 1882. When accused of being an accessory to formal annexation, Gladstone replied that "rejection of the Charter meant gratuitous observance of doctrinaire principles." This suggests that there was distinct adversity in the House of Commons to the

⁵⁶H.P.D., 2nd Ser., Vol. 108 (1850), p. 595, Gladstone.

acceptance of new territorial liabilities of any kind. When Gladstone was accused of "sailing too close to the wind", Gladstone denied the suggestion by assuring the House that "the legal certification of trading activity would always overpour the boundaries of empire."⁵⁷

It was in 1835 that Gladstone, as Colonial Under Secretary, had first acknowledged Wakefield's "signal ability". But at this time, his tendency towards political paternalism prevented him from distinguishing "responsible government" from full independence.⁵⁸ Gladstone's ideas were perhaps influenced by his image of a "Magna Graecia" insofar as Colonies would always be linked by sentiment. Only gradually would Gladstone jettison his visions for the planting of an aristocracy and an Established Church in the Colonies:

We cannot stamp the image of England on the colonies like a coat of arms on wax. For all true, genuine, wholesome and permanent resemblance, we must depend upon a law written not on stone but on the fleshly tablets of a heart. It must be wrought wholly through a free will and the affections of the colonial community.⁵⁹

The Anti-Imperialism of John Morley

Of all the Liberals who extracted and systematized the "anti-Imperialist" aspects of Gladstone's work, clearly his biographer John

⁵⁷H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 367 (1882), p. 1188, W.E. Gladstone.

⁵⁸H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 39 (1837), p. 1454, W.E. Gladstone.

⁵⁹H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 106 (1849), p. 992, W.E. Gladstone.

Morley stands out as the most articulate. Morley and Gladstone's personalities were complementary; both developed an obsession for Home Rule inasmuch as they alleged Home Rule to provide a synthesis of all subordinate reform movements. Both appealed to the "Nonconformist Conscience" although Morley might be described as a "Nonconformist without Christianity." In his early writings, Morley appeared to draw inspiration from the "great men" theory of history and this perhaps might explain why he has been accused of adopting a sycophantic attitude towards Gladstone. What possibly caused Morley to become Gladstone's closest confidante was his similar approach to politics, i.e., his obsession with resolving only "one question at a time." For Morley, Gladstone had the "spirit of system," he was the one leader who could extract order and unity from fragmented policies.

Morley's quest for an all embracing "system" made him necessarily indecisive as a statesman. "I am a cautious Whig by temperament, a sound Liberal by training, a thorough Radical by observation and experience."⁶⁰ But in his writings, Morley scrutinized the presumptions of late Victorian Liberalism. He synthesized the classical "atomized" fragment of earlier individual writers and linked them to the "collectivist" premises upon which the notion of an organic society rested. But although Morley conceded that the individual member

⁶⁰The Times, September 17, 1885.

of society was an evolved product of nature, Morley rejected the notion of "natural rights", which he believed to be essentially alien to English Liberalism. Because nature gave land to the strongest tribe he denied that "natural rights" could be employed as a priori truth upon which political theory could be structured.⁶¹ This academic distinction obliged Morley to repudiate Rousseau whom he criticized for devising a single system which could be arbitrarily imposed upon all society. Each national community had its own unique and complex tangle of social development.

Morley came to place such importance upon the individual whom he alleged to be philosophically "free", that he has--in some of his work, e.g. On Compromise--been accused of sponsoring an "elitism". At first, Morley's emphasis upon the natural advantages of an "elite" made him very early in his life advocate an active foreign and imperial policy. In fact Morley came close to neo-Hegelianism: the "elite" would help to activate the "national will".⁶² Thus at an impressionable stage of his life, Morley never identified himself with the middle class in the way which Cobden and Bright had done. He believed that this "neglect" later permitted him to identify more closely with the working class even though he could not endorse its academic demands when he

⁶¹J. Morley to J. Chamberlain, January 6, 1885. Quoted in D.A. Hamer, John Morley, Intellectual in Politics, p. 153.

⁶²John Morley, The Fortnightly Review, VIII(September, 1867), p. 363.

felt that it was anti-imperialistic.

For a long while Morley attempted to systematize alternatives for political action. He searched for "representative" general questions which, although they did not constitute an entire "system" of political thought, would at least depict fragments of an entire situation. By focusing on these fragments he at least acquired the "habit" of a system without acquiring the system itself. For such representative questions to serve his need, it was necessary that they related to the notion of liberty as a whole as well as have appeal for the greatest possible number of Radicals.

Through the National Educational League, Morley had been drawn to active politics many years before his entry into Parliament. His association with this League had been the cause of his initial acquaintance with Chamberlain. When Morley subsequently became convinced that the work of that League had been nullified by the Education Act's celebrated Twenty-fifth Clause--which gave Anglicans control of public education--he turned to Disestablishment as a possible alternative "question" to unite Radicals. Morley began to interpret Liberalism as essentially hostile to denominationalism and he even proposed Goldwin Smith as the leader of such a Disestablishment Movement.⁶³

⁶³J. Morley to F. Harrison, September 26, 1873. Quoted in D.A. Hamer, op. cit., p. 107.

As a speculative publicist, Morley soon appreciated Chamberlain's ability as a party manager and he endeavoured to project himself as an "Adam Smith" onto Chamberlain's "Pitt" or as a "Burke" onto Chamberlain's "Rockingham".⁶⁴ By 1882, it was becoming only too obvious by virtue of this very analogy, that Morley had transferred his primary attention from Disestablishment to anti-Imperialism. Anti-Imperialism was not concerned with any single, all-embracing, "great question", although the focal point of his anti-Imperialist obsession was to be Home Rule. Morley's subsequent preoccupation with Ireland and Empire inevitably destroyed his partnership with Chamberlain. As a public administrator, Chamberlain invariably thought not in terms of systematic theory but of political programs by which various social grievances might be grouped together.

But Morley continued to think only in terms of a single great "question" and his political estrangement from Chamberlain was complete when Morley saw in anti-Imperialism a "positive" idea through which English public opinion might be educated. Morley began to view anti-Imperialism as a crusade which might weld Liberalism to the interests of the working class; not only did it give Liberalism a clear cut sense of "right" and "wrong", it also projected an historical continuity.

⁶⁴J. Morley to J. Chamberlain, December 9, 1875. Quoted in Ibid., p. 115.

He thought that an ambivalent attitude to Imperialism constituted in itself an obstacle to progress:

So long as Imperialism is placed first and foremost in such a position as to attract to itself the interest, the force, the intellect of statesmen of the public welfare, reform in any large or serious sense, or reform of the arrangements and institutions of the country, becomes impossible.⁶⁵

It was befitting that external issues rather than negative domestic issues, were to "integrate" Gladstonian Liberals. Whereas both Gladstone and Morley were suspicious of the encroachment of the state upon public questions and were aware of the narrowing limits of what voluntary effort could do in the face of government control, the Irish Question posited no such difficulty. The Irish Question, which required firm government action could be structured and abstracted as something essentially "just" and "progressive". Paradoxically, the Home Rule crisis even strengthened Morley's own position within the Party, if only because according to his own estimate, Morley had not compromised himself. In 1890 Schnadhorst, the Liberal Caucus manager who had defected four years earlier from Chamberlain, had even predicted that this advantage would enable Morley to perhaps become leader of the Liberal Party,⁶⁶ although this

⁶⁵The Times, January 20, 1889.

⁶⁶John Morley, Recollections, Vol. 1, p. 237.

advantage was to become a handicap when the Second Home Rule Bill failed in 1892. Thereafter Morley consistently referred to the coercive measures that had been used in the Irish as a reminder to the English working class of what a Tory government was capable of doing.

Morley had vainly hoped that by the time the Home Rule issue was removed from the political scene, the Liberal Party would have structured remaining problems into very coherent patterns with priorities already having been decided upon. Yet his approach to these other problems, e.g., specific labour questions, suggests that he was really quite unfamiliar with them. He spoke of "the vast grim world of manual labour" and of the possibility of whether legislation could effectively deal with any of these problems. Because he had never believed that a government could control tides and currents, he could not see how arguments involving wages or hours of work were "party" questions at all. The only possible answer was a partial dismantling of the existing centralized bureaucracy on the assumption that locally elected bodies understood local necessities.⁶⁷

In spite of his condescending attitude Morley was genuinely admired by leaders of the "New Liberals", e.g., Haldane, Asquith and even Grey. But Morley seemed unwilling to reject individualism and to

⁶⁷The Times, November 20, 1889.

structure a fundamentally new political philosophy on the basis of collectivism. Indeed since the death of Bradlaugh,⁶⁸ Morley was reputed to be the most conspicuous exponent of individualism in the country. With the ultimate failure of Home Rule, in 1892 Morley returned to an unadulterated "Cobdenism" which had always seemed a vehicle of social progress to him and which at this late period seemed still to offer a viable "system". Home Rule was finally lost as a unifying issue when, in 1898, the Irish Nationalists accepted local government reform from the Liberal Unionists. By then, Morley was obliged to interpret the Liberal Party as only a "coalition of interests". It was to be its new "anti-Imperialist" leader--Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman⁶⁹--who in the end would persuade Morley to agree that many shades of opinion had to be tolerated within the Party. This was a significant admission to extract from Morley who had long thought that the greatest danger that could overtake the Liberal Party was not to be in electoral defeat, but rather in its having "shallow and inconsistent convictions."⁷⁰

⁶⁸Bradlaugh, Charles (1833-91). English secularist and social and political reformer. Advocating such "advanced" views as birth control, he was elected Radical M.P. for Northampton, but was excluded from the House until 1886. (Radical).

⁶⁹Campbell-Bannerman, Sir Henry (1836-1908). M.P. (1868-1908); Secretary for War (1886), (1892-95); Prime Minister (1905-08); led "pro-Boer" faction when he publicly denounced Milner's "methods of barbarism". Advocated arbitration of international disputes and limitation of armaments. Granted responsible government to Boers after conclusion of the South African War. (Liberal).

⁷⁰The Times, January 31, 1895.

Morley dramatized the dilemma of all "Little Englanders" who placed total emphasis upon the "freedom" aspect of "classical" liberalism. Change could not be imposed: it could only anticipate due organic evolution. It has been remarked that in spite of his intellectuality, Morley never went beyond John Stuart Mill, whose writings he had already mastered before he reached middle age, although all the great events of his life were to happen after he had reached that point.⁷¹

Other Prominent Anti-Imperialists

Apart from John Morley, the most obvious link between the "Moderates" within the Liberal Party and the anti-Imperialists was Sir William Harcourt. In Gladstone's last Administration (1892-94), Harcourt and John Morley were--with Gladstone--thought to be the "last of the Manchester men".⁷² Early in his life, Harcourt had broken with his Anglican Tory background to become an Erastian Whig and perhaps "Erastianism" was one of the few concepts--apart from that of international law--which Harcourt accepted with conviction. It explained his predilection for Disestablishment in Ireland and a certain sympathy for Disestablishment in England itself; a reform which would prove attractive

⁷¹Holmes-Laski Letters 1916-1935, I, 1953, p. 751. Quoted in D.A. Hamer, op. cit., p. 379.

⁷²A.G. Gardiner, Life of William Vernon Harcourt, vol. 2, p. 78.

to almost all "Little Englanders".

Harcourt construed Europe as having developed since the early part of the nineteenth century on the basis of nationality and he therefore used "nationalism", rather than "internationalism", as a basis for his anti-Imperialism. But Harcourt regarded the essence of Imperialism as militarism. A strong aversion for Napoleon III caused him--unlike some of the English intellectuals--to sympathize with Germany in the Franco-Prussian War. He freely boasted that it had been the "Ideologues" who had ruined France, and that it was clearly the "Philistines" who had made England.⁷³ Harcourt's repugnance for war caused him to extol the memory of Sir Robert Walpole, whom he believed not to have been corrupt but merely willing "to pay fools to do what wise men told them." Harcourt took comfort from Chamberlain's observation that "Little England" was not a term of reproach, but that it only meant a particular view of policy.

Although disinterested in abstract political theory--Harcourt looked upon John Stuart Mill as the most unsound of all authorities on finance and economics--he had definite views on the reform of the British Constitution which he shared with anti-Imperialists. In fact, he was an avid student of the growth of English political institutions, and

⁷³Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 142.

while he believed that the House of Lords was incapable of reforming itself, he held that the Executive should act with Parliament as a coadjutor. This was illustrative of the fact that all anti-Imperialists held that the Commons should focus debate on the merit of Imperial expansion and on any Cabinet decisions having to do with military or administrative reform.

Harcourt freely admitted that he was a thoroughly eighteenth-century man in disposition and sentiment who abhorred "Pall Mallism" and sensationalism of all kinds. A cynical yet compassionate man, Harcourt would probably have succeeded Gladstone as Liberal Leader had it not been for the sudden popularity of Lord Rosebery. He was perhaps more aware of the moral inconsistencies of Gladstonianism than any of the other Liberals, and his admission that Wolseley's action at Tel-el-Kebir was a question of "butcher and bolt" was indicative of the compromised position of the "moderate" wing of the Liberal Party. (infra chapter 6). But his inability to sympathize genuinely with the position of the Irish Nationalists disenchanted those anti-Imperialists who took Home Rule seriously. In November 1886, Harcourt told Morley that "nine people out of ten think Ireland a bore and would gladly turn to something else."⁷⁴ Seldom vindictive--and often compromising as he was with respect to the imperialist wing of the Liberal Party, and especially

⁷⁴W.V. Harcourt to J. Morley, November 20, 1886. Quoted in D.A. Hamer, op. cit., p. 229.

to Joseph Chamberlain on the occasion of the enquiry into the Jameson Raid--Harcourt himself assured the premature end of a public career that never quite attained greatness.

Of all the anti-Imperialists, Sir Wilfrid Lawson was the most consistent "Cobdenite" although the narrow tenacity with which he pursued Cobdenism suggested his unwillingness to see an idea grow.⁷⁵ Cobden he regarded as the greatest Englishman of the nineteenth century and he was so grieved by his death that he noted "every succeeding year which goes over our heads is a fresh testimony of the soundness of his free-trade gospel."⁷⁶ Lawson once intimated that his reading of Adam Smith had provided him with the only education he had ever received.

Lawson accepted freely his label as a "Little Englander" which he believed aptly summarized his forty-years career in the House of Commons. It is possible that Lawson introduced more Resolutions in Imperial debates than any other member. Invariably he spoke during a Second Reading of a Bill because he believed that that was the occasion when he could best discuss underlying principle of the issue involved. In 1880 Lawson moved an Address for Bartle Frere's recall--whom Harcourt would call a "prancing pro-consul"--only two days after the new government

⁷⁵G.W.E. Russell, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, A Memoir, (London, 1910), p. 116.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 67.

had met and he was one of perhaps three or four radicals who protested against a policy that he alleged to be "unwise , impolitic, ignoble and unjust."

Eighteen years later Lawson was to tell the House of Commons that it had degenerated into an "Army and Navy Stores", whose main functions were to vote whatever supplies might be asked for, and to ratify and register the results of mysterious campaigns.⁷⁷ But the vociferous popular support for the South African War gave Lawson's radical conscience a shock from which it did not recover. In 1901, he wrote of his entry into the Commons forty-four years earlier: "I was a Little Englander then and I am a Little Englander now, not believing that it is really essential to our national harmony, glory, all prosperity, to plunder and destroy other nations with whom we think fit to quarrel."⁷⁸

In retrospect, Lawson revealed many of the failings of the "Little Englander" arguments. In spite of a sense of humour he lacked pliancy; his mind was so tenaciously literal that he always saw the contrasts of this life as greater than they really were. He was scarcely able to observe the child grow into a man without suggesting it was

⁷⁷A.P. Thornton, The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies (London, 1959), p. 98.

⁷⁸G.W.E. Russell, op. cit., p. (240).

inconsistent. "This explains his approach to the British Empire for growing as it did, and why he wanted to see it reduced so that it might be governed on the abstract principles of Radicalism."⁷⁹

But of all the anti-Imperialists who objected to the theory of "collectivism" as a necessary social and economic reform, Leonard Courtney was perhaps the most intransigent. He was an implacable individualist, who by temperament was nearer to Bentham and Cobden than to Bright. Courtney believed that not only was political economy a science, but it also afforded invaluable guidance in the conduct of private affairs. Morley evidently admired his view, and believed that on economic matters Courtney was more practical than John Stuart Mill. It was Courtney who, in his youth, had written the Times' obituary of Richard Cobden. Working under the scrutiny of Delaney, then its Editor, Courtney had noted that "Cobden had defects in his early training; that his notion of the state was little more than that of a machine to secure the punctual observance of commercial relations."⁸⁰

It was Courtney's financial acumen which initially attracted him to Gladstone, who had invited him to the Treasury Bench as an Under-Secretary as early as 1880. Courtney accepted this invitation but only

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 116.

⁸⁰G.P.Gooch, Life of Leonard Courtney (London, 1920), p. 80.

on condition that he absent himself from any vote on the Transvaal.⁸¹ Prior to this, Courtney had supported Dilke's motion to censure Bartle Frere; on which occasion he advanced the thesis that all the ills in South Africa could be attributed to the 1877 annexation of the Transvaal.

Courtney--along with Bright--was virtually the only noted anti-Imperialist to defect formally from the Liberal Party. However, Courtney's departure had been pre-determined by his preference for a system of minority or proportional representation that had been disregarded in Dilke's Redistribution Act of 1884. In point of fact, Courtney had approved of Gladstone's policy in Ireland between 1880 and 1885 both in respect to remedial and repressive measures, and he was to give John Morley full support for his remedial measures when Morley was Irish Secretary between 1892 and 1895. Later, on becoming Chairman of the South African Conciliation Committee, Courtney severed all relations with the Unionist Party.

It was Courtney's anti-Imperialist preoccupation with South Africa that clearly identified him with the "Little Englanders" and it was in this context that Courtney was to describe Milner as a "lost

⁸¹L. Courtney to W.G. Gladstone, December 25, 1880. Quoted in Ibid., p. 160.

mind." Courtney argued that instead of preventing anarchy, Britain was creating it.⁸² But in his indictment of British policy, Courtney was amongst the first to detect the element of financial speculation in British Imperialism which he came to label as "Emporialism".⁸³

If there is a common denominator or intellectual thread that links the arguments and presumptions of Radical anti-Imperialists it is a vague antipathy for socialism and Anglicanism and an uncritical reverence--Courtney excepted--for Cobdenism. Perhaps the factor most common to all was an almost unquestioned belief in the "natural" rights of representative institutions. All these amorphous traits were well epitomized in the irreverent career of Henri Labouchere. (*supra*, p.13). Like Lawson, Labouchere made some contributions to almost every debate on imperial matters although his "anti-Imperialism" was perhaps less doctrinaire than Lawson's.

Salisbury once intimated that he used Labouchere's remarks to fend off Bismarck's invitations to join the Triple Alliance.⁸⁴ Early in his public career Labouchere derided Disraeli's "Imperialism" as "swagger abroad and inaction at home." He considered colonies as

⁸²Ibid., p. 176.

⁸³A.P. Thornton, op. cit., p. 35.

⁸⁴A.J.P. Taylor, op. cit., p.15.

injuriously expensive. As early as 1868, Labouchere's Motion--that the Estimates for the Diplomatic and Consular Services should be separately itemized on the Supply Estimates as a whole--was carried by a margin of four votes and gave Members thereafter an opportunity to question the Foreign Office on what it had been doing.⁸⁵ By a similar margin eighteen years later, Labouchere barely failed to pass what would have been an even more significant Motion--"that it was neither just nor expedient to contract engagements involving great national responsibilities, or to add territories to the Empire without Parliamentary knowledge and consent." Predictably, Gladstone argued against this plea on the grounds that it made the Legislative superior to the Executive branch of Government.⁸⁶

Labouchere's political ideas in respect to the domestic scene sheds light on other premises he held. Like other "Little Englanders", Labouchere was as "anti-Tory" as he was "anti-Socialist"; in fact he suspected that both Toryism and Socialism represented an illiberal paternalism. Competition was a principle of social existence, and to denounce it by decrying the natural inequality of man was in Labouchere's view as harmful as to perpetuate distinctions by the artificial

⁸⁵A.P. Thornton, op. cit., p. 85.

⁸⁶H.P.D., 3rd. Ser., Vol. 303 (1886), p. 1408, Labouchere. Division List (March 19). 102 Ayes to 112 Noes.

inequality of rank. A government should not assume any moral obligation to sustain the weak, although--and here he modified the Spencerian notion of Social Darwinism--it might legitimately intervene to prevent such abuse of opportunity as might result from the natural business relations of employers and employees. In debate with Hyndman, Labouchere declared: "there are Individualists and there are Collectivists. Modern Radicalism, I would point out to you, recognizes this perfectly. . . . Modern Radicalism is in favour of both Collectivism and Individualism."⁸⁷

Labouchere even argued that he found nothing basically wrong in the political philosophy of Lord Rosebery--the arch-Imperialist of the Liberals--and on being questioned on this very subject described Rosebery as having "borrowed from Socialism its large, general conception of municipal life, and from Individualism to take its spirit of self-respect and self-reliance in all practical affairs."⁸⁸ This is illustrative of the difficulty of relating nineteenth century anti-Imperialism to any exclusive, or even distinctive attitude towards social reform. While anti-Imperialists certainly believed in a measure of social reform--which they allegedly retarded Imperialism--it might be reasonable to assume that no nineteenth century anti-Imperialist

⁸⁷A. Thorold, The Life of Henry Labouchere (London, 1913), p. (419).

⁸⁸Ibid., p. (420).

rejected the "classical" liberal veneration of the "individual".

In his celebrated debate with Hyndman, Labouchere revealed that he still accepted the long-defunct wage fund theory of Ricardo and that he believed that the cheaper capital could be obtained, the more there remained for the wage fund. Thus as a principal spokesman for anti-imperialism in the 1890's, Labouchere was but echoing prejudices about the economics of colonialism that had been voiced by Bentham and his contemporaries in the eighteen-twenties. At the same time however, Labouchere greatly admired the increased productivity associated with American manufacturing practices, and it might be fair to suggest that every Little Englander--prior to President McKinley's term--admired the affluence of the United States, which had seemingly assured the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon world without necessitating departure from an isolationist view of European affairs. It was his favourable impression of the United States, which he formed on the occasion of an early visit there, that obliged Labouchere to take radicalism seriously. Late in life, Labouchere was disappointed that he had not been appointed Ambassador to the United States during Gladstone's last Ministry, the proposal for this having been thwarted only by the Queen herself.

Labouchere's obsession with social--as opposed to economic--egalitarianism confirmed the high regard he entertained for the United States as the future hope of the western world. This view reinforced

his implicit racialism which was typically Victorian. "Why is the Anglo-Saxon race the master race in the world . . . Why has the Anglo-Saxon race maintained its liberties? It is because of that individualism, that self-reliance which exists in the country."⁸⁹ Yet this racialism was a potential source of division in the Liberal Party, and it was disowned by the more "Gladstonian" of the Liberal anti-Imperialists. Gladstonians had always asserted that the Midlothian Campaign deprecated the "pseudo-scientific jargon of manifest destiny" and the "inevitable development of imperialist determinism." They interpreted the racialist overtones of contemporary imperial debate as a sign of internal decadence. The word "Anglo-Saxon", while passing muster for the British-born inhabitants of English countries, was being used to describe the entire English speaking world, and the collocation therefore "escaped ridicule by evading definition." "Let us reserve the old name English to designate the vital and racy qualities of our nations and let Anglo-Saxon be the glorious epithet of their deformity and their tumefaction forever."⁹⁰ Thus the anti-Imperialists such as Morley and Labouchere, stood as condemned as the Imperialists in the eyes of Gladstonians, but the anti-Imperialists and the Gladstonians would have agreed that the "new enthusiasm sacrifice(d) much that is pre-eminently English for something

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 434.

⁹⁰Hammond, Hirst, Murray, Liberalism and the Empire (London, 1900), p.185.

which is not English at all."⁹¹

Labouchere spiced his comments with expressions of pugnacious English insularity, but perhaps it was his manner, with its banter and persiflage rather than his matter, which explained his social success, and the viable circulation of his own publication Truth which was renowned for its alleged irresponsibility, frivolity, unconventionality and powerful social attack. Nevertheless, the tone of Labouchere's attack was never the same after the Unionist defection of 1886, which cost him the friendship of Chamberlain which he had greatly valued. But to the end of his life he gave the appearance of a cynical spectator instead of that of a militant reformer. There was perhaps something Voltairian in his impiété which contained the instinctive cynicism that so disarmed or exasperated the moral fervour of the Gladstonians. While the leger-de-main which made his intrigues seem rather "un-English", his indifference to the "moral" issues as justification of adventurous action was characteristic of the Little Englanders.

It was Labouchere who defined "radicalism" as "fervent liberalism". The varieties of factions which constituted the Liberal Party in the closing years of the nineteenth century suggest that even the traditional metaphoric descriptions of a political party as its own universe--self

⁹¹Ibid., p.190.

contained and united by fundamental principles--seemed singularly inapplicable to its intellectually-autonomous units, which operated in patterns that were often unpredictable. Imperialism seems to have been pre-eminently the product of radical enthusiasm, yet those who protested against Imperialism the most vehemently claimed themselves to be the custodians of radicalism. Anti-Imperialists never lost the optimism of radicalism--which indeed was the basis of all liberalism--but they understandably lost some of radicalism's fervour. They opposed an expansive "empire" because it undermined the absolute value of the "individual" as the social unit. Yet they could not avoid the implication of Social-Darwinism that state action formed a part of that organic "process" by which society was moving towards a pre-determined end. But under the aegis of Imperialism the "state" and the "individual" seemed to be at cross purposes, and to the Radical Little Englander this was "unnatural" and seemed only to confirm that Imperialism per se was anti-historical.

CHAPTER III

CULTURAL RELATIVISM AND THE IMPERIAL IDEA

It is the purpose of this chapter to consider how ideas implicit in the contemporary study of sociology and even of anthropology may have affected the political thinking of those Liberals who were most critical of Imperial commitments. The study of sociology had been imported into England by the positivist disciples of Auguste Comte,¹ and the implications of Positivism for anti-Imperialism will be discussed later in this chapter.

Sociology in its biological aspect was essentially a deductive study first popularized by Herbert Spencer² who rationalized human relationships according to his a priori concept of the organic nature of society. Although his rationale was not inductive by method, Spencer was possibly the first Englishman since Francis Bacon to attempt

¹Comte, Auguste (1798-1857). French philosopher and disciple of St. Simon. Founder of positivism.

²Spencer, Herbert (1820-1903). Student of the doctrine of evolution as applied to sociology. One of the few modern thinkers to attempt systematization of all cosmic phenomena through deductive process. His organizing principle was that all organic development is a change from a state of indefinite homogeneity to a state of definite heterogeneity.

a synthesis of all knowledge, an unrewarding task in the nineteenth century. But for many years, Spencer's evolutionary ideas became almost axiomatic, although his social teaching never gained a wide admittance.

Spencer's principal work³ appeared several years prior to the first publication of The Origin of Species, but it was in the earlier study that the doctrine of social darwinism was formulated, which in its internal form upheld the classical liberal "atomized" view of the social community.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the nascent study of anthropology and of sociology had vindicated the hypothesis of monogenesis which had theoretically conceded to the non-European a full humanity and capacity for progress. But although this theory constituted an intellectual justification for Christian proselytising, such an hypothesis was not genuinely conducive to cultural empathy. Evolutionary anthropology which was really the preserve of the biologist posited a single scale of civilization whose summit was the achievement of Western Europe, and in spite of their professed empiricism, when such biologists elucidated the position of other races in the evolutionary scale, they invariably assigned the non-European a retarded place. This was because their "schema" were erected upon a unilinear scale. Cultural

³Herbert Spencer, Social Statics (New York, 1851).

differences were ascribed to the achievements of different stages of essentially the same process and diversities were interpreted as anachronous conflict.⁴ Early anthropologists being primarily concerned with explaining the origins of western culture were little more than curio hunters who were not deeply concerned with primitive indigenous cultures. The Origin of Species was subsequently interpolated--without the encouragement of its author--to justify a European-centred rationale of anthropology, so that when Europeans described Africans as "barbarous" they deliberately did so in a tautologous sense. Evidently such ethnocentric attitudes affected even the thinking of evangelicals and help to explain the prejudices of missionaries who might have praised an individual "savage" only to suggest that he was untypical of his race. In consequence much of missionary journalizing took the form of pure romanticizing, and anti-Imperialist Liberals frequently took issue with such expressions of sentimentality. Even at the turn of the century, Labouchere suggested that the natives only wanted "a bottle of brandy to get drunk and a gun to shoot his neighbour."⁵

The social-darwinist presumptions of chartered-company traders threatened native survival in many areas. In the New Hebrides, for example,

⁴J.W. Burrow, Evolution and Society, p. 116. Quoted in Bernard Porter, Critics of Empire, p. 30.

⁵H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 98 (1901), p. 1519, Labouchere. August 6th., 1901.

the apparent incapacity of natives to adapt to changing social patterns and their expendability in the creation of local viable markets had virtually led to their extinction. In 1868, Dilke, for example, had regarded the plight of the Australasian native as inevitable, and he reinforced the point by declaring the Anglo-Saxon to be the only extirpative race on earth.⁶ Of course, Dilke's support of Roger Casement and E.D. Morel in the Congo controversy many years later exemplifies the change of heart amongst non-evangelicals in the space of a generation, but from the 1830's through to the 1890's, it was only the Anti-Slavery Society and the Aborigines Protection Society who seemed to exercise any humanitarian concern for human rights. These societies presumed that all cultural development must follow a unilinear rather than a parallel course:

It was the mission of the Anglo-Saxon race to penetrate into every part of the world, and to help in the great work of civilization. Wherever its representatives went the national conscience should go also. Native races were like children; they must be protected against the superior brain power of the races which had reached maturity.⁷

The fact that negroes were viewed as "children" implied that they were expected to adapt to a "parental" European culture.

Missionaries thus interpreted native behaviour according to their own

⁶C.W. Dilke, Greater Britain, Vol. 1, p. 88.

⁷The Aborigines' Friend (Journal of the A.P.S.), July 1896. Quoted in Bernard Porter, op. cit., p. 51.

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 pseudo-adult terms of reference. The frequent occurrence of words like "friend", "theft" and "murder" in their descriptions of trading areas, points to the fact that missionaries believed that if only traders would scrupulously observe the processes of English Common Law all would be well. Even at the end of the century, it was beyond the imagination of anyone at Exeter Hall to try and relate the problems of economic development with the problems of acculturation, a serious omission in the era of the great scramble for Africa. The political implications of a more externalized form of social darwinism were no more encouraging for indigenous cultures because such implications were within the study of anthropology which was itself conducted on an ethnocentric basis. The two leading exponents of "external" social darwinism--Benjamin Kidd⁸ and Karl Pearson⁹--explicitly argued that "inferior" peoples should be exploited if necessary to maintain England's world position, although this represented a reaction against the earlier "internal" social darwinism of Herbert Spencer.

Early in his life, Spencer adopted an ultra laissez faire position towards British dependencies. The political construction which Spencer placed upon a biological premise caused him to encourage

⁸Kidd, Benjamin (1858-1916). English sociologist.

⁹Pearson, Karl (1857-1936). Professor of mathematics and mechanics who applied statistics to biological problems, especially evolution and heredity.

international pacifism. Thus Spencer enjoyed the political friendship of both Positivists and radical Liberals and with them co-sponsored the short-lived "Anti-Aggression League" of 1882. Spencer was also an active member of the Jamaican Committee with Mill, Darwin and Huxley and it is significant that social darwinists protested strongly against atrocities committed against "natives" at a time when the Anglican establishment was condoning such activity. But apart from the vogue in which Frederic Harrison and John Morley were also involved, Spencer never joined any other public movement. His passion for industrialism, anti-militarism and disestablishment inevitably brought him in close touch with radical Liberals. But Spencer was no "liberal" in the ordinary sense of the word. He was so suspicious of the encroachment of the state that he even regarded the popular attention given to the process of representative government with suspicion. He protested that "the divine rights of Kings" had been replaced by an even more tyrannical "divine right of Parliament".¹⁰ There was simply no room for the state in Spencer's political concept. Government was but the agency by which man made temporary adjustments to society. Now that society had reached a late industrial stage, all sections of it in his view, should have a common interest in a pacific approach to external problems. Thus, in Spencer's view, it was not the state which

¹⁰Herbert Spencer, The Man Versus the State (London, 1884).

gave cohesion to society but rather common pecuniary interests. It was to be the family and not the state which offered the merit or basis for ethical action. In fact Spencer rejected a too-strict adherence to the idea of natural selection because he believed that man could not individually control his environment although he did doubt whether the individual was in fact a free agent.¹¹ Because in his deductive "system" Spencer abandoned a literal view of the unilinear ascent of man in favour of a parallel ascent, he showed some respect for cultural relativism.

However, in its externalized form, social darwinism was re-interpreted to offer a more patriotic and less pessimistic view of the national future. Benjamin Kidd--who represented a new generation of sociologists--blamed the "Spencerian School" for the growing clan warfare and the disappearance of national lines of demarcation.¹² Kidd would not deny that Spencer's excessive emphasis upon individualism endorsed the fundamental economic premises of mid-nineteenth century society, but Kidd believed that the time had come to reverse the class polarization of economic warfare. External social darwinism postulated a corporate rather than an individualistic state and this led Kidd to

¹¹Herbert Spencer, First Principles (New York, 1920), pp.63-65, 32.

¹²Benjamin Kidd, Social Evolution, pp. 2-3, 11. Quoted in Bernard Semmel, Imperialism and Social Reform.

justify social imperialism as necessary for the welfare of the working class. Kidd predicted an intensification of national rivalries but he noted that in this struggle Anglo-Saxons had already displayed their prowess by virtue of their "humanitarian" dealings with "inferior" peoples.¹³ Kidd even embarked upon the precarious task of explaining the colonial history of Africa in the light of what he considered to be ethnic differences. He approached the delicate problem of white capital and colonial labour by arguing that the relative energy of all northern peoples as far as tropical development was concerned was "part of the cosmic order of things."

Because overproduction and over population at home would drive them to seek new outlooks for their activities and turn their attention to the great national field of enterprise which remains in the development of the tropics.¹⁴

In his view, this activity was legitimate because it was "inexpedient" to allow a great extent of territory in the richest regions of the globe--comprised largely of tropical areas--to remain undeveloped, with its resources running to waste under the management of races of low social efficiency. Experience had clearly taught Europeans that they could not colonize tropical areas and exploit their resources by their own physical labour. While this fact was indisputable, Kidd denied

¹³Ibid., pp. 165, 227, 233-234.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 316.

that "native" peoples could be trusted to develop these resources by themselves or to govern themselves with any degree of efficiency. Nor was it either possible or permissible to drive them into forced labour, to regard the tropics merely as an estate to be worked for external advantage. Kidd believed that the tropics in such circumstances could only be governed as a "trust" for civilization, and with a full sense of the responsibility which such a "trust" involved.

External social darwinism--which increasingly appealed to radical Liberals, e.g. Joseph Chamberlain--therefore justified the strengthening of the state and its work of Imperialism as a natural and necessary task of an organic society, which sought the development of an as yet unrealized potential within tropical areas.

This non-Spencerian adaptation of social darwinism was advanced also by Karl Pearson who pleaded for a socialist--i.e. collectivist--harnessing of state industrial potential while disclaiming any need for social revolution.¹⁵ Pearson disdained Spencer's liberal individualist premises on the grounds that man was essentially a "gregarious animal" whose safety depended upon his social instinct, and on the grounds that a nation was an "organized and homogeneous whole" which contained a "mixture of superior and inferior people."¹⁶ But when Pearson opted for

¹⁵Bernard Semmel, op. cit., p. 38.

¹⁶Karl Pearson, National Life, p. 26. Quoted in Bernard Semmel, op. cit.

a belligerent national policy abroad in tropical colonies, Kidd's preference for a more subdued and traditional view became apparent. Thus even external social darwinism became divided over the question of imperial expansion.

Social darwinism made a unique contribution to the imperial controversy. Almost all late Victorians became affected by the findings of biology to the extent that either consciously or sub-consciously they thought in terms of an organic community although this did not in itself determine whether Victorians believed in a collectivist society in the corporate political sense. Acceptance of this latter concept perhaps had more to do with each individual's attitude towards Imperialism per se. Not even the liberal doctrine of free trade necessarily mitigated this view because in the popular mind, free trade was based upon the presumption of Anglo-Saxon superiority in all mercantile matters.

Contemporaneous with the contribution of social darwinism to imperial controversy was the establishment of the Positivist movement which cultivated a humanistic interpretation of sociology according to Comte's premise of "the three stages". This cult regarded cultural relativism in a much more sympathetic light. The followers of this movement were attracted to the writings of Auguste Comte who had been at one time financially supported by John Stuart Mill. The history of

this movement as far as England is concerned is largely taken up by the story of Richard Congreve,¹⁷ and Frederic Harrison¹⁸ who had met at Wadham College, Oxford and who subsequently formed the Positivist Union in 1867, establishing their headquarters four years later at Newton Hall. Henceforth, they became perhaps the most consistent and outspoken of all the Home Rulers and anti-Imperialists, focussing attention upon England's position in Europe and upon the broader question of cultural relativism. Their criticisms of Victorian society were retrospective, and because they had a certain reverence for tradition, their outlook obtained some stability.¹⁹

John Stuart Mill had at one time regarded positivism as a future basis for a "scientific psychology", and Harrison²⁰ who remained in close contact with Mill for over a decade always regarded Mill more as imperfect disciple than as an opponent, and presumed that differences between them were differences of degree. Comte had tended to stress social organization and Mill individual development. John Morley had also been influenced by Comte when formulating his own philosophy of history and when composing his study of Edmund Burke,²¹ freely

¹⁷Congreve, Richard (1818-1899). Positivist and essayist. Upon his meeting Comte in Paris he adopted Positivism and devoted his life to its propagation in England.

¹⁸Harrison, Frederik (1831-1923). The most prolific and articulate of the Positivists. Founded the Positivist Review (1893).

¹⁹Warren Sylvester Smith, The London Heretics: 1870-1914, p.85.

²⁰J.S. Mill, Autobiography, pp. 163-166.

²¹John Morley, Recollections, Vol. 1, pp. 68-72, 86.

acknowledged his debt. Nevertheless, Morley--like Mill--was repelled by the cult-like arrogance of the Positivist "Religion of Humanity", and he took strong exception to Comte's minute plans for social reconstruction.²² When the Positivists brought out their international policy in 1866, it was perhaps the first composite volume in which a number of writers had laid down an ideal policy. According to their axiom of "the three stages", the Positivists maintained that Europe had undergone three preliminary politico-cultural experiences: the intellectual cultivation of Greece, the social incorporation of Western Europe by Rome and the Catholic feudal order of Western Europe.²³ In 1866, the positivists stressed that they wished to restore the Christian unity of Western Europe which the Reformation had jeopardized by means of a "secular" form of Catholicism. Since the Reformation, Europe--from which Congreve would exclude the Slavs and the Turks--had fragmented into heterogeneous aggregates. It was England's duty to rediscover her place within this European framework and regenerate common identities so that Europe could once more serve as agent and minister of the whole western community. To play a meaningful role, England should end the colonial dissipation of her political energies and should abandon the role of non-intervention in Europe and be therefore in a position to

²²John Morley, The Fortnightly Review, VIII (1867), pp.229-231.

²³Richard Congreve, The West (London, 1866), p. 140.

prevent the unification of Germany, which if permitted, would involve the incorporation of non-Germanic people into the rejuvenated western union. Positivist commentaries upon contemporary European politics were in fact frequently dictated by francophile considerations, although they shared in the widespread criticism of Napoleon III's imperialism:

We English Positivists have always and energetically blamed the encroachment of our own nation in all parts of Africa, Egypt included. One of our reasons for doing so has been the value we attach to a cordial understanding with France. . . . But it is equally deplorable that France should be carried away by the same unwholesome unscrupulous thirst for African Empire.²⁴

Congreve had anticipated the humanistic as opposed to the biological application of cultural relativism to the doctrine of imperial renunciation. He argued that in early times, civilizations, although co-existent were isolated, but, with the close of this period of isolation, history, in a more narrow and technical sense began. Subsequently Africa and the East no longer guided the doctrines of western man and even Europe became fragmented. The Christian "Imperialism" of the Crusades was a grim reminder of the error of thinking that internal ills could be cured by common exterior aims. Existing cultures must therefore be respected whether Moslem or polytheistic. Congreve was convinced that all European commercial "freebooters" should be forcibly restrained in

²⁴E.S. Beesly, "France and England," Positivist Review, II, (1894), p. 120.

the East, which implied that Congreve objected to both "formal" and "informal" empire. Commerce when left to itself therefore represented only a "negative" force:

The inefficacy of this commercial tie may well be exposed by seeing to what it leads in regard to other nations not professedly included in it. The common interest of those whom it connects finds its expression in the most oppressive action towards those without. It is but a collective selfishness, and naturally works to selfish ends.²⁵

Positivists complained that according to the non-interventionist process of the pax-britannica, Britain's efforts were concentrated upon self-interest. Britain's moral duty had obligated her to come to the aid of Denmark in 1863, and to come to the aid of France in 1870. By her willful inaction, Britain had assisted Prussian hegemony.

England had smothered herself in cosmopolitan dependencies and was burdened by a monstrous, abnormal, polyglot and incoherent empire. From being the dominant nation in the state system of Europe, (England) was translated into a nondescript world power. The empire was parvenu, and England had reduced her stature by her association with it.²⁶

Positivists denounced imperial expansion with far more vehemence than Manchester traders but although their aim would always be to "subordinate politics to morals" their ideals should not be confused with the Gladstonian concept of Liberalism. Although Positivists

²⁵Richard Congreve, op. cit., p. 150.

²⁶Frederic Harrison, National and Social Problems, p. XX.

²⁷Richard Congreve, India (1857), p. 7.

questioned the validity of "empire" on pseudo-religious and historical grounds, Harrison sought to qualify their position by explaining that positivism sought to transform religion from a supernatural to a "scientific" basis, to substitute a relative anthropocentric for an absolute, cosmic analysis.²⁸ Cultural relativism was to be the key to making all intelligent political judgements. Economic considerations could not be divorced from political or moral needs but because the formative period of positivism had coincided with the implementation of free trade, the Positivists' insistence upon the dismemberment of the British Empire, whilst significant, perhaps appeared less conspicuous than might otherwise have been the case. Nevertheless, Congreve assumed that political severance of Canada and Australia from Great Britain would be but a matter of time.

It will remain for the future to see whether distance alone will be the necessary condition of separation, the older divisions of Great Britain were but an anticipation. In one form or another they will reappear.²⁹

Positivists commented upon almost every aspect of Imperial activity in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Their anti-Imperialism however rested not upon Britain's insularity but upon the assumption that Britain was an integral part of Europe. In retrospect

²⁸Frederic Harrison, "Aims and Ideals," in The Creed of a Layman, p. 255. Quoted in Bernard Porter, Critics of Empire, p. 158.

²⁹Richard Congreve, The West, p. 145.

they have been proved uncannily correct. "It (was) as though they had gone on to the wrong wave length and because audible only when time turned the knob."³⁰

³⁰A.J.P. Taylor, The Troublemakers, p. 67.

CHAPTER IV

ANTI-IMPERIALISM AND THE ISSUE OF HOME RULE

It was Lord Salisbury who observed that disaffection in Ireland had "awakened the sleeping genius of imperialism." In addressing the National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations he declared that "to maintain the integrity of the Empire must be our first policy with respect to Ireland."¹ He thought the Irish were too politically immature to be entrusted with even local self-government. Self-government within the Empire in his mind was a privilege not a right, and this honour ought not to be bestowed upon Ireland without regard to the condition of the United Kingdom.

These observations are significant for this study because in the mid-nineteenth century the identification of the United Kingdom with "empire" made retention of Ireland an Imperial problem, and academic discussion of whether or not Ireland was a "nation" could not alter this salient fact. In the popular mind, Imperialism came to be entwined with the policy of coercion in Ireland and it is logical to seek some parallel correlation between anti-Imperialism and the policy of Home Rule. On

¹L.P. Curtis, Coercion and Conciliation in Ireland, pp. 59, 431.

numerous occasions Gladstone asserted that in the Home Rule conflict could be observed the germ of all imperial controversies. Even as early as 1874, when the term "Home Rule" was first entering the public consciousness, Richard Congreve noted that Conservatives tended to regard Ireland as an integral part of England, whereas the Liberals were prepared to draw a limited distinction between the two areas. Congreve succinctly observed that the remedies which the Liberals had applied by that year were "too little and too late." In an important respect Congreve did anticipate a point later made by those Liberal Little Englanders who accepted Home Rule, namely that Ireland's plight was national rather than economic by nature. "No matter how much capital, material prosperity cannot satisfy the Irish. The Irish cannot be bribed to forego the higher objects of existence of a state."²

The Positivists were perhaps the only group outside of Ireland to identify almost unanimously with the principle of Home Rule. In 1886, Harrison said that the immense majority of the Positivists favoured a separate national government for Ireland. His own preference was for an Irish government in which the executive should be separated from the legislature as in France or the United States. By pleading against reproduction of the House of Commons in Dublin, Harrison was denying any

²R. Congreve, Essays, Political, Social Religious, p. 180.

genuine organic connection between England and Ireland.³ This underlined Congreve's point that Ireland was as distinct from England as Holland or Belgium. Its demand was but part of the disaggregation of Europe which could be traced back to the sixteenth century. He called therefore for the reconstituting of Ireland as a self-existent state.

The Positivists adopted a separatist attitude towards Ireland in a more extreme sense than any Parliamentary Liberal entertained. But no study of nineteenth century Liberalism in England can ignore the significance of the Unionist defection. If the period extending from 1886 to 1914 is to be viewed as a turning point in English political thought, the Irish Question was a decisive factor in the orientation of the Liberal Party. Home Rule was a catalyst separating men according to their beliefs. Although approximately only one seventh of the Party defected it deprived the Liberal Party of the opportunity to rule at the time when "Socialist" heresies--later crystallized by the Newcastle Resolutions--became a national economic issue. By forcing it to become an Opposition Party for a twenty-year period (1886-1906) with the exception of three years (1892-1895), the Irish Question drew attention to the negativism implicit in Liberal Party theory. Not only did it pose the dilemma of whether the Liberal Party should enforce an "illiberal"

³Pall Mall Gazette, February 8, 1886.

policy of coercion but it also forced it into a period of serious introspection. Had it not been for the "Celtic Fringe", the Liberal Party would never have obtained a majority of seats after its electoral defeat of 1874. But from 1868 onwards, Liberal governments--in attempting to pacify Ireland--applied simultaneously both coercive and remedial measures, although it was remedial legislation, even more than coercion that necessitated the bold assertion of governmental authority which seemed diametrically opposed to the laissez faire tenets of classical Liberalism. But even as the plans of the Liberal Party for political and economic reform in Ireland were being put into effect, caucus managers became aware of the grave implications these reforms might have on the future of the Party, (i.e. the segment that had left the Liberal Party over the Irish Question). Conservatives and Liberal Unionists were not immediately to coalesce but between them would capture the support of the City of London. Of long term significance was the development for the first time of a creed of articulate political theory outside the Liberal Party.

Had the Liberal Party unanimously interpreted Irish disaffection as a demand for national self-determination in the contemporary Gladstonian sense--i.e. as "a nation rightly struggling to be free"--its reaction would perhaps have been less convulsive. But Ireland had seemingly existed as a "nation" only in mythological times. Its literary epic tradition had nourished tribal rather than national loyalties, and

Salisbury maintained that Ireland possessed a less viable "nationalism" than either Scotland or Wales. In the eighteenth century if Irish nationalism had openly expressed itself as a conspicuous indigenous factor, objection to the Act of Union (1801) would have been voiced by the catholic peasantry, whereas, in point of fact, opposition on that occasion was voiced chiefly by the estranged Ulster squirearchy, who stood to lose their monopoly of patronage and political jobbery. During the following two generations a mass exodus of the Irish populace from Ireland all but eliminated extant Gaelic culture.⁵ In England, O'Connell's demand for repeal fell on deaf ears;⁶ even the nascent Liberal Party could not endorse the nationalist overtones of "repeal" in retrospect because it was the Liberals who--if only for economic reasons--would most have welcomed the overshadowing of the Irish "thirst" for freedom by enthusiasm for a commonwealth and free trade, conditioned by the benefits of the Pax Britannica. Even Mazzini had declared himself skeptical of Irish nationalism, its "liberalism" was suspect because of the clerical support given to it in its embryonic stage. Ironically, the tactics of the Irish Land League were to be proscribed by Pope Leo XIII, who condemned agitation and

⁵Conor Cruise O'Brien, Parnell and His Party 1880-90, p. 6.

⁶O'Connell, Daniel (1775-1847). Founded the Catholic Association (1823); influenced public opinion to support catholic emancipation; revived earlier demand for the repeal of the union of Great Britain and Ireland; opposed administration of the Poor Law and the movement against paying of rent.

and effectively endorsed Salisbury and Balfour's coercion by means of a "Rescript".

The reactions of Liberals to agitation in the eighteen-seventies were complex. Some Imperialists--e.g. Cecil Rhodes--endorsed the principle of Home Rule out of political opportunism, on the assumption that its realization might serve as a focal point of a new Imperial concept of federation. But other Imperialists or Forwardists--e.g. Lord Hartington--thought it dangerous that Imperial power should be separated from the Judiciary in Ireland even though it might be recognized that "her people represent an ancient and a famous race with a past and a history, with feelings, traditions and instincts all their own."⁷

Predictably, anti-Imperialists were divided on the issue. Those among them who interpreted Ireland's problem as essentially organic and national rather than as an isolated manifestation of class warfare, supported Home Rule, although seldom enthusiastically. John Morley, who found that "he was chained to the oar" as far as Home Rule was concerned, observed that,

the function of the State, the duties of property, the rights of labour, the question of whether the many are born for the few, the question of a centralized imperial power, the question of the pre-eminence of morals in politics--all these things lie in Irish politics.⁸

⁷H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 230 (1881), p. 756, Hartington
H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 9 (1886), p. 1238, Hartington.

⁸John Morley, "Old Parties and New Policy," Fortnightly Review, X (September, 1868), p. 327.

In Morley's view, the problem of Irish disaffection was primarily national in identity although it had economic ramifications. Those anti-Imperialists who challenged the good faith of the Irish Nationalists considered their agitation to be outside the mainstream of the Radical tradition. Goldwin Smith regarded the scheme of Home Rule as "pernicious" but the terminology that he employed suggested that his reaction reflected his inherent antipathy for Roman Catholic society. Having predicted the secession of Canada and Australia, Goldwin Smith crossed homewards across the Atlantic in 1886 expressly to plead the Unionist cause. It was a gesture that surprised many Radicals. But Goldwin Smith's attitude was significant. In 1867 he had lamented the execution of three Fenians, and had remarked that Ireland had now come into line with other discontented nationalities of Europe. But by 1882 he had changed in outlook and he denied that Ireland had been deprived of representative national institutions. In Morley's view--which by 1882 was sympathetic towards Home Rule--Goldwin Smith sounded like Froude when dealing with the Irish question.⁹

Gladstone had used the term "Home Rule" as early as 1882, i.e. one year after the passage of his Irish Land Act, but he admitted that the term could be applied in a hundred different senses "some acceptable

⁹Pall Mall Gazette, July 4, 1882.

and others mischievous."¹⁰ But at this time there were scarcely five English Members who were willing to sponsor a separate legislature for Ireland.¹¹ But those who were willing to do this at this time were obliged to tolerate the "Plan of Campaign", which they likened to Trade Union activity, although Trade Union activity was suspect at this time to almost all anti-Imperialists.

In spite of the disruptive activities of the Nationalists, the Irish Question ceased to represent the dominant public question after 1882, largely on account of the appearance of extraneous Imperial problems. Even without this apathy, the anti-Home Rulers could remind the English electorate that Irish nationalism interested only one-twelfth of the total population. Admittedly, the tone of Irish disaffection had changed since 1870, when Isaac Butt¹² had first coined the expression "Home Rule" as a less polemical slogan than O'Connell's "repeal". But, although in each Session of Parliament Butt tabled a resolution demanding Home Rule, it should not be construed that even Butt was an anti-Imperialist. In fact, on Imperial matters, Butt might be regarded as a "Forwardist". Thus in 1877 Butt actually rebuked Nationalists for obstructing swift passage of the

¹⁰H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 266 (1882), W.E. Gladstone.

¹¹H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 310 (1886), p. 1163, Storey.

¹²Butt, Isaac (1813-1879). Protestant Irish leader and lawyer; as leader of coalition between Irish Protestants and other nationalists, inaugurated home-rule movement; (c. 1870).

1877 South Africa Bill annexing the Transvaal.¹³ Butt described in some detail his attitude towards Imperial problems as a whole, and the lively interest which he took in these matters present quite a contrast to the far more parochial concerns of his successor Parnell.¹⁴ In the first years, Butt envisaged Home Rule according to the provisions of the ill-fated Second Home Rule Bill (1892) insofar as he proposed retention of a full Irish representation at Westminster for Imperial matters, while making provision for an Irish House of Commons, which would legislate on all internal matters and be responsible--not to the British Crown--but to an Upper House of Irish peers. This reflected Butt's insistence that, with respect to external matters, Ireland's future was secure only if the responsibility for her defence and fiscal policies lay with Great Britain herself. In this sense both Dilke and Chamberlain--and indeed the great majority of Radicals--were "Home Rulers". However, Butt did insist that the proposed Irish Legislature have more autonomy than Gratton's Parliament, and one reason why he stipulated this was that he felt that he felt that the Irish had hitherto been excepted from the benefits of

¹³Conor Cruise O'Brien, op. cit., p. 23.

¹⁴Parnell, Charles Stewart (1846-1891). Irish Nationalist leader, M.P. (1875); initiated calculated policy of obstruction-standing invariably on opposition side to obtain concessions; united Fenians and Land League (organized 1879); imprisoned (1881) on charge of obstructing operating of new Land Act; frustrated by assassination of Cavendish (1882); engineered Gladstone's defeat in 1885; but obtained Gladstone's commitment to Home Rule in 1886; politically ruined by O'Shea divorce suit (1890).

the English Common Law. Thus, in seeking a larger measure of autonomy, Butt was desiring to accelerate Ireland's legal assimilation of the Common Law.¹⁵

The predicament in which English Liberals were placed by the Irish agitation had been anticipated by John Stuart Mill, even though the foundation of the Home Rule Association had only just preceded the year of his death. In his treatise on Ireland, Mill outlined some significant constitutional proposals. He cited the Ausgleich as a possible example of a future association between England and Ireland, and although the actual disparity between the populations of England and Ireland weakened his analogy, even Salisbury was intrigued at one time by the suggestion.¹⁶ Surprisingly, Mill rejected the idea that Ireland might be constituted as a province within a system similar to the Canadian federal arrangement as unbecoming for Ireland's dignity by virtue of the fact that Canada had absolutely no veto over foreign affairs. Mill sensed at an early date that without a comprehensive solution for the problems of Irish representation, Ireland would--if subject to indefinite coercion--drift into Republicanism. As an independent Republic, or even as a disaffected agrarian faction, Ireland might seek membership within a coalition hostile to England. While this would necessarily endanger England's

¹⁵It would not be an understatement to suggest that the "United Ireland" Movement was largely engineered by Protestants. See S.G. Hobson, Irish Home Rule (1912), p. 119.

¹⁶Michael Hurst, Joseph Chamberlain and Liberal Reunion, p. 383.

safety, it would also hasten a final schism within Ireland herself. That Mill thought such an alignment possible illustrates that Mill gave credence to the notion that Ireland possessed a distinct nationhood, at least in the sense that Wales or Scotland did. But most of Mill's suggestions had to do with economic reform--he was well aware of the fact that property in the Irish mind had become associated with the cultivator rather than the proprietor--and his recommendations were broadly implemented by Gladstone in the 1881 Land Act.¹⁷

In 1879, Butt's Home Rule Association was replaced by the much more militant Irish Land League, whose Executive was Fenian-inspired. This development coincided with Britain's first large scale importation of American grain, which, in the absence of suitable protection, hastened the ruin of Irish agriculture. The Land Act did not remedy this situation--it aggravated it. Only a few tenants could afford the one-quarter payments demanded by this legislation, and these were Ulster tenants who were estranged from the rest of the population by the advantageous position in which they were now placed. Parnell actually interpreted this development as a challenge to his leadership.¹⁸ Parnell, however, had already found himself saddled with an organization that was growing visibly more

¹⁷John Stuart Mill, England and Ireland, p. 13.

¹⁸Eric Strauss, Irish Nationalism and British Democracy, p. 114.

extremist. In 1878 the Home Rule Conference in Ireland had resolved to form a disciplined body that had no community of interest with England.¹⁹

It was in 1881--and a few weeks prior to the Land Act--that a Coercion Bill was passed that for the first time drew substantial support from English Radicals. Even John Bright supported this legislation, although he hoped that the Government would interpret coercion "liberally". Those who voted against this Bill were virtually all Irish Nationalists, who attended the debate.²⁰ Chamberlain also voted for this measure of coercion, although he strongly criticized the conduct of the Irish Secretary Forster as "too coercive", and intimated later in the year that, provided the Union stood in the British Isles--as Union had in the United States--"within those limits there was nothing Parliament could not ask for and hope to attain."²¹

Bright's endorsement of coercion for the first time was perhaps even more significant because he had been personally absorbed by Irish affairs for almost fifty years. Like Cobden, Bright would have welcomed an early abolition of primogeniture and he lamented the fact that no middle class had appeared in Ireland to exert a decisive influence on

¹⁹Peter Fraser, John Chamberlain Radicalism and Empire, p. 32.

²⁰Division List No. 95, 303 Ayes to 46 Noes, February 2, 1881.

²¹J.L. Garvin, Life of Joseph Chamberlain, Vol. 1, p. 345.

national affairs. Since the abolition of the Corn Laws, polarization of interests between landlord and tenant had increased, and both Cobden and Bright hoped that the Government would accelerate the development of a yeoman class--there could be no question of a substantial bourgeoisie--in Ireland. The kind of measures that they had in mind were to facilitate a "sturdy union" and were to be applied within a voluntaryist framework. In the context of a growing disaffection they necessarily appeared disingenuous and ineffectual, although their proposals might have been more effective if operated coercively. But coercion, in either its punitive or remedial sense, had traditionally been repugnant to Cobden and Bright. His experience of the American Civil War had deepened Bright's admiration for the centralist features of the American constitution, and the word "union" had for him taken on an almost mystical significance. Perhaps, Bright--tempted to seek an analogy where none existed--envisaged for Ireland a nation of Jeffersonian proprietors.²²

As early as 1835 Bright had anticipated the disestablishment of the Irish Church. But while Bright applauded the wisdom of Gladstone's legislation to this effect in 1869, he did not insist on an equitable compensatory arrangement for the Catholic Church itself, which--as a Quaker--he was quite incapable of comprehending. Like Cobden, Bright "would leave to an unbiased reason the adjustment of speculative opinions,

²²Herman Ausubel, John Bright, Victorian Reformer, p. 162.

confident of the ultimate triumph of truth.²³ Neither Cobden nor Bright had any profound appreciation of indigenous traditions in Ireland, they seem to have blissfully assumed that ultimately the Irish peasantry would embrace English Nonconformity.

The breach between Gladstone and Bright in 1886 over Home Rule--far more serious than Bright's objection to the Alexandria bombardment of 1882--was final, although Gladstone did attempt to find some solace in the supposition that had Cobden lived he may well have endorsed the principles of the First Home Rule Bill. This is speculative, but without Bright's unimaginative and rigid Quaker pity Cobden might have been more amenable to Home Rule than Bright. It is true that in 1848 Cobden did anticipate political devolution for Ireland in his recognition of the need "for some kind of arrangement for indulging the craving of race and nationality." But Cobden simultaneously believed that if Ireland was to be improved it would "not (be) by forms of legislation or the locality of Parliaments but by a change and improvement of the population."²⁴

No attempt was made to rectify anomalies in Ireland until 1869. In the climate of Anglican indifference, Bright seemed more sympathetic to Irish grievances and he even spoke generously of Fenianism as "the

²³Donald Read, Cobden and Bright, p. 195.

²⁴Ibid., p. 199.

child of injustice."²⁵ But once Gladstone had shown good faith towards Ireland, Bright supposed that Irish Nationalists would necessarily reject militancy. When he realized that the Irish Land League was unparliamentary and unconstitutional, he began to look upon the Home Rule agitation as pernicious. Had the Irish Land League conducted itself like the Anti-Corn Law League, Bright may have tolerated it, but in any case he would not have comprehended the significance of economic grievances which had propelled the Land League into adopting a course of militant confrontation. When Labouchere became an apologist for the Irish Land League--saying that it spoke for the majority in Ireland--Bright became enraged. His anger was directed at Labouchere's suggestion that the Irish Land League was constitutionally similar to the anti-Corn Law League. Ironically, it was reminiscent of the time when Peel had called Cobden an assassin, only it was Bright who was playing the role of Peel.²⁶

Following disestablishment--which had been welcomed unanimously by the Liberal Party--Bright assumed that Ireland would be content to remain part of a "greater nation". Home Rule, he believed, would be an intolerable mischief, and he rejected any compromise federal solutions for devolution--e.g. Chamberlain's "Home-Rule-All-Round-Scheme". The

²⁵J.L. Hammond, Gladstone and the Irish Nation, p. 24.

²⁶H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 257 (1881), p. 1510, J. Bright.

suggestion that separate Parliaments be created for England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland to handle non-Imperial matters he alleged to be outrageous, even if it was "to ally the discontent of a portion of the people of Ireland." Bright's most practical solution to the problem of Irish Government came in 1886, when he proposed a Grand Committee of Irish Members at Westminster, to which all Irish Legislation would be referred, and which would sit on what would normally be the occasion of the Second Reading.

Another prominent anti-Imperialist who rejected Home Rule was Leonard Courtney. Like Bright, Courtney had already broken with Gladstone on an issue unconnected with Irish reform, but unlike Bright, Courtney's objections were unemotive and were based primarily upon statistical factors. As a leading proponent of proportional representation--and a fierce foe of the party-caucus system--Courtney argued that to perpetuate the existing system of representation would only result in the further polarization of sitting Members into either Irish Nationalists or ultra-Conservatives. Courtney noted that in 1885 scarcely half of the Irish electorate had voted, and only about two-thirds of these votes had been cast for nationalist candidates. Courtney would not countenance any suggestion that Ireland represented a particular national identity in any meaningful sense, and as early as 1874--as Times leader writer--he had uncompromisingly attacked Butt's annual motion.²⁷ But what

²⁷G.P. Gooch, Life of Leonard Courtney, p. 238.

Courtney feared most of all was the potential of dictatorial power that the Home Rule Bill would place in the hands of Parnell; as an anti-Imperialist he condemned Home Rule because in his view--just as much as Chamberlain's Birmingham Caucus--it jeopardized the relative freedom of representative institutions. Yet Courtney continued to support every piece of remedial legislation for Ireland. In the year of the Unionist defection, Courtney intimated to Gladstone that he would accept a measure of devolution which would include establishment of free county government, the inauguration of provincial conferences and the admission of Irish Grand Committees at Westminster. Courtney did not speak in the House of Commons on Irish matters until 1893.

Parnell's decision to ignore statutory evaluation of land and to withhold rent made a deep impression upon Chamberlain and other Radicals who had at one time been partial to a measure of devolution in Irish affairs. In fact even the anti-Imperialists who favoured Home Rule were apprehensive of the apparent introduction of new elements of class warfare. There was a rumour among Radicals that such doctrine was actually being exported from England to Ireland under the influence of Hyndman, Henry George and Alfred Russel Wallace and Morley applauded Chamberlain's decision to denounce such "socialist agitation".²⁸

²⁸Pall Mall Gazette, January 24, 1883.

However, before examining the tenets of anti-Imperialists who were committed in toto to the proposition of Home Rule, some consideration must be made of Gladstone's own attitude to the Irish Question. Gladstone demonstrated no overt interest in Ireland as a "natural" cause prior to his First Ministry, although in 1868 the election of twenty Irish Liberals obliged Gladstone to invite them "to share in the making of Irish policy". All the reforms which Gladstone effected prior to 1881 seemed necessary, if only to preserve Ireland's internal stability. But in that year he spoke of the Irish Nation as "marching through rapine to the disintegration of the Empire."²⁹ By now he would accept the possible need for the creation of local councils to supercede the function of the Dublin Government Boards, although Gladstone warned that nothing should be given Ireland which could not also be extended to Scotland.³⁰

As "Father" of the Home Rule Bill, Gladstone did nothing to dispel the suggestion that it was largely the creation of one man. In opening the debate, Gladstone drew broad Imperial analogies. He compared the provisions of Home Rule with generous arrangements that had already been accorded to Canada, but the real point of his analogy was not the Confederation of the Provinces but the concession of Responsible Government which had been made not by a single statute but by an

²⁹The Times, October 8, 1881.

³⁰H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 266 (1882), p. 866, W.E. Gladstone.

imaginative, pragmatic approach to the solution of a problem which was as "national" as it was economic and political. Just as this provision had increased attachment to the Crown, so, he argued, his Home Rule Bill--which precluded direct Imperial representation of the Irish at Westminster--would strengthen Imperial ties. Gladstone went to great pains to erase the notion that Home Rule was separatist by intention. He felt that such a misunderstanding was tantamount to saying that the original Reform Bill was "monarchy-destroying".³¹ But Gladstone's insistence that his Bill was essentially "federal" in its solution seemed strange, when all along the federal idea had been pursued by Chamberlain himself. In its ambiguity the First Home Rule Bill carried the seeds of its defeat.

After Gladstone, the most convinced apologist for the Bill was John Morley who had been in the House of Commons for only three years when it came up for reading. On the occasion of the 1881 Irish Land Act Morley had attacked the wisdom of coercion in any form in Ireland.³² He interpreted the strength of the Irish Land League as a force which was dynamically "conservative". It was justified because it facilitated organic change insofar as it performed the historical necessity of strengthening the Irish peasants' self reliance. Morley did not believe that the land question per se could be settled by the Imperial Government,

³¹H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 306 (1886), p. 1215, W.E. Gladstone.

³²Pall Mall Gazette, September 15, 1881.

although he conceded that no plan for Home Rule could succeed that ignored the land problem. In point of fact, Morley's appeal to Home Rule as a possible solution for disaffection preceded formation of the Irish Land League, although he appears to have conceived of it in a federal form:

Is it possible that by conceding some sort of Home Rule we might be developing in the Irish a new sense of responsibility? Might they not feel on their honour to send good men, behaving themselves with dignity and sense, if they had a sort of parliament of their own like a State Legislature.³³

In this period of his life, Morley was seeking a public platform to uphold Liberalism per se, whose reputation was subsequently tarnished by coercion. It was the subversion of the Liberal intellect that Morley feared far more than the illegality of the means of self-expression which the Irish had felt obliged to adopt. He was prepared for the need for Liberals to make concessions to Ireland, even if this meant that Liberals themselves might be excluded from office. Morley thus viewed Home Rule as a goal of principle which represented the apotheosis of anti-Imperialism and of Liberalism, although he would have termed the provisions as "enlightened" Imperialism. To other anti-Imperialists, Home Rule would mean a compromise dictated by force, a surrender of principle that actually implied abandoning of Liberal ideals.

³³J. Morley to J. Chamberlain, October 10, 1877. Quoted in D.A. Hamer, John Morley, p. 163.

Evidently Morley recognized--unlike Bright or Goldwin Smith--that the problems of Ireland were only partly social and economic. Just because Liberals had been upholders of free trade and instigators of "gas and sewage" reform, they were not necessarily qualified as public administrators because their minds remained aloof to the "national" feelings of the Irish. Thus in 1882, Morley used the Pall Mall Gazette to unseat Forster as Irish Secretary whose resignation embarrassed Chamberlain somewhat because at that time Chamberlain still wanted to use that journal to advance his own ideas for radical reform.

Morley's insistence that Home Rule was a sine qua non of any future administration caused the pragmatic Sir William Harcourt to predict that the Liberals would forfeit much popular support if they persisted "in flogging a dead horse". Harcourt had, at any rate, never been strongly attracted to Home Rule but felt he had been blackmailed into endorsing it because of the effective hold that American dynamiters had over the Irish Judiciary. Six months after defeat of the Bill, Harcourt told Morley that the great majority of English Liberals were bored by the protestations of the Irish.³⁴

Morley came to interpret the result of the November 1885 election as a mandate for Home Rule even though the contest had not really been

³⁴W.V. Harcourt to J. Morley, November 20, 1886. Quoted in D.A. Hamer, op. cit., p. 229.

fought on that issue. For him it was the only possible way out of the impasse because any other solution would not show respect for the due organic process. He reasoned that the means were as important as the ends, and that they must have faith in free institutions acting under the free play of existing forces. This, in his view, was as practical as it was altruistic, because if Irish tenants required a large British credit to become owners only an Irish Parliament could fulfill such an obligation, because otherwise any money would be wasted, if the source of political frustration was not removed.

Because the popular will in Ireland was not drawn solely from any one economic segment, it was according to Morley a bona fide "Liberal" demand. Yet the result of the December 1885 election was in fact ambiguous, many of the urban boroughs had been regained by the Conservatives and those ridings which had gone to the Liberals had been won largely on account of Chamberlain's "Three-Acres-and-a-Cow" Programme. The balance was held exactly by the eighty-six Nationalists without whose co-operation nothing could be undertaken. This latter reality happened to reinforce Morley's a priori conviction that the Liberals should not undertake any other business until Ireland had been given her own government at Dublin.

In the new Salisbury Administration (1886-92), the issue as far as Liberals were concerned was whether or not coercion should remain

government policy. It was therefore in the electoral interests of all Liberals to dramatize the injustices which were being perpetuated in Ireland. Chamberlain felt that the Liberals had for too long used Ireland as a scapegoat for general inaction. In view of other pressing domestic problems in England, Morley's conduct certainly appears obscurantist and it may have reflected his inner conviction that laissez faire liberalism--which he was emotionally and intellectually attached--had really run its course. It was as if he had deliberately sought to be imprisoned by a single great question. Yet he was reluctant to discuss even this great question in detail because it was tantamount to dismantling society and as Morley observed: "society, we may be quite sure, will not let itself be taken to pieces."³⁵

When Labouchere attempted to bring the Radicals together again by means of the Round Table Conference of January 1887, Morley proved himself obdurate as far as making any real concessions to Chamberlain were concerned. Labouchere's approach to the politics of Home Rule while devious was at least pragmatic. "The masses care very little about Ireland," Labouchere once observed, "justice to Ireland does not arouse their enthusiasm, unless it be wrapped up in what they regard as justice to themselves."³⁶

³⁵The Times, November 20, 1889.

³⁶H. Labouchere to H. Gladstone, July 9, 1886. Quoted in D.A. Hamer, op. cit., p. 236.

In 1880, not even Labouchere could have been described as a "Home Ruler". The following year when Wilfrid Lawson spoke in favour of Home Rule, Lawson doubted if there were three English Members who would have supported him.³⁷ But it was in 1880 when Labouchere first publicly addressed himself to the problem:

I really have not understood what Home Rule means. I should be extremely sorry to have the Union between Great Britain and Ireland done away with. I think it is absolutely necessary for the well being of both countries but I am myself in favour of as much local government, not only in Ireland but in all parts of England as soon as possible.³⁸

Just why Labouchere sided with Gladstone over Home Rule is not entirely clear. Had he not done so his subsequent role as an independent critic of imperialist policies might have been appreciably different. On radical questions Labouchere had thought on lines similar to Chamberlain. He was an admirer of municipal reform and he constantly chided Chamberlain that it was necessary to find "an urban cow" to give the town worker a sense of pride equivalent to that which the rural smallholder might feel as the result of recent legislation.³⁹ But like Morley, Labouchere had taken a tolerant view of the Irish Land League on the premise that it was fighting for genuine grievances and was not merely

³⁷G.W.E. Russell, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, A Memoir, p. 306.

³⁸A. Thorold, The Life of Henry Labouchere, p. 152.

³⁹H. Labouchere to J. Chamberlain, December 23, 1885. Quoted in A. Thorold, op. cit., p. 264.

fomenting class warfare. In the debate on the 1881 Land Act, he had pleaded that the League dispensed a "rude" kind of justice "for which he was accused of favouring the disintegration of the Empire."⁴⁰ Labouchere maintained that coercion did not serve to preserve legality, rather it represented the unnatural enforcement of exceptional law. He had looked upon the Irish Question as a possible basis for creating a radical government, and this largely explains his tortuous correspondence which he undertook so as to recreate a possible *modus vivendi* between Chamberlain and the Gladstonians. As a born intriguer, Labouchere was well qualified for the task and he was a logical choice for Herbert Gladstone to make as mediator between his own father and the Irish leaders in the critical weeks during the preparation of the Home Rule Bill. Many of these details Labouchere passed on to Chamberlain, who proved to be even less tractable than before after his discovery of Gladstone's precise plans.

Labouchere thus became influential in the formation of the Round Table Conference which met three times at the very end of 1886 and the beginning of 1887. Commentators grudgingly admitted that Labouchere articulated the Gladstonian point of view during these proceedings. One year earlier--at the precise moment that Gladstone chose to fly the "Hawarden Kite"--Labouchere had publicly submitted his own preference.

⁴⁰H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 257 (1881), p. 1510, Labouchere.

As an Englishman who "had exhausted his time discussing Irish affairs" he argued that the reform of the land system would have to be arranged by the Irish themselves. This he believed could be accommodated within a constitution broadly similar to the American which would necessarily leave defence and foreign relations to the Imperial Government.⁴¹ This position was very similar to that adopted by Chamberlain who recommended a definition of England's authority sufficient to secure that "Ireland should not be a point d'appui for a Foreign Country."⁴²

The ambiguous scheme which Gladstone prepared precluded a clear-cut federal representation for the Irish. Gladstone went out of his way to denigrate a scheme for Ireland similar to the federal solution devised for Canada on the surprising grounds that "Canadians are our friends and Irishmen are our enemies."⁴³ Painstaking though Gladstone was when elaborating on the minutiae of detail there is little evidence from the Irish controversy that Gladstone's mind grew in a way to suggest that he deeply understood the real mechanics of government. He seemed overly anxious that the Bill itself should explicitly extol liberty as a positive end in itself. The great majority of Gladstonians would have accepted

⁴¹The Times, December 28, 1885.

⁴²J. Chamberlain to H. Labouchere, December 26, 1885. Quoted in A. Thorold, op. cit., p. 272.

⁴³The Times, December 19, 1885.

some close parallel with the Canadian model, and as late as 1885, Chamberlain appears to have been ready to accept such a solution. It was by a renewal of common interest in a Canadian type solution that an agenda was at last drawn up for the Round Table Conference of the following year. To bring success to these meetings, Labouchere threw himself whole-heartedly into the necessary intrigue. But it was to no avail, like all Home Rulers, Labouchere was obliged to accept the good faith of Parnell and the Irish Nationalists.

There was perhaps only one other Home Ruler as acerbic as Labouchere. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt was perhaps the only Englishman of note to be accepted as a member of the Land League.⁴⁴ This was a signal honour because not only was Blunt an anti-Imperialist, he was a landlord to boot, to some degree an authority on the Irish agrarian system. What was more extraordinary was that Blunt had stood in 1885 as a Tory Home Ruler for the London riding of Camberwell but in 1888 stood for Deptford as a Gladstonian Home Ruler losing to the Conservative opponent by only 275 votes. Unlike the other English Home Rulers, Blunt admired the Catholic religious tradition of the Irish, which, he believed, formed part of the

⁴⁴Blunt, Wilfrid Scawen (1840-1922). English poet and traveller. After travels in the Near East and India, became an ardent anti-imperialist and critic of white exploitation of "native" races, and active supporter of Mohammedan aspirations and of nationalism in Egypt, Ireland and India.

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⁴⁴Blunt, Wilfrid Scawen (1840-1922). English poet and traveller. After travels in the Near East and India, became an ardent anti-imperialist and critic of white exploitation of "native" races, and active supporter of Mohammedan aspirations and of nationalism in Egypt, Ireland and India.

kind of religious tradition essential to any well-ordered community.⁴⁵

The Rescript which Leo XIII placed upon the Land League considerably embarrassed Blunt because he had had shortly before an audience with the Pope himself although they apparently had not discussed Irish matters. The ground was thus cut from under his feet. In addition--having associated with the Liberal Party on account of the Home Rule crisis--Blunt obtained notoriety for his having tested the efficacy of the Crimes Bill when he deliberately attempted to address an illegal meeting at Woodford, County Galway. Nevertheless, there was a certain consistency in Blunt's anti-Imperialism. In Egypt he had already been impressed by the rejuvenation of the Moslem religion, which, he believed, had furnished a strong moral backing for Arabi, the insurgent leader. In the Sudan, although he had backed Gordon, he had shown confidence in the Mahdi and in India he had become enthusiastic for the political inspiration of the mystic Salar Jung. Blunt attempted to define the anti-imperialist basis of his political philosophy by arguing that any party or race which usurped land other than the limited space for which it was best suited violated the harmony of natural law. In his view, the English were foreign to the whole cultural tradition of Ireland, and this was why he believed the English were unable to appreciate the essential piety of the Nationalist cause.⁴⁶

⁴⁵W.S. Blunt, The Land War in Ireland, p. 2.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 447.

The Home Rule movement represented an amorphous force which united disparate and heterogeneous voices. Perhaps it would be of some assistance in evaluating its rationale if some summary were offered of the Imperialist view of Ireland. This was distinct from the Liberal Unionist attitude which had originally sought to accommodate Irish grievances by granting a measure of devolution consistent with the retention of Imperial supremacy at Westminster. The Liberal Unionist position was not perhaps as chauvinist as the Tory-Imperialist position although it required a high note of national excitement to retain its effective control of the radical centre. It thus came to endorse coercion and to become increasingly identified with the Imperialist position itself. But Salisbury and Balfour,⁴⁷ who epitomized the coercive attitude in England saw the Home Rule issue as a class war wherein talk of "nationhood" was but a cover to dispossess landowners. The Irish were a heterogeneous "scum" whose racial integrity was a myth. To explain this aggressive and insensitive prejudice one may presume that, in indicting Parnell and all that he stood for, the Imperialists were seeking to condemn him in the eyes of not an English audience alone but of an imperial jury.⁴⁸

⁴⁷Balfour, Arthur James. 1st Earl of Balfour (1848-1930). M.P. (1874-85, 1886-1905, 1906-11); member of "Fourth Party"; Chief Secretary for Ireland (1887-91); Prime Minister (1902-05); a nephew of Lord Salisbury. A strong proponent of coercion in Ireland. (Conservative).

⁴⁸L.P. Curtis, op. cit., p. 299.

Home Rule represented a subversive attack on the premises upon which the Empire rested and its advocates audaciously challenged this system close to its epicentre. The Home Rulers were demanding an act of national self-effacement on the part of Britain which she could not afford to perform.

Anti-Imperialists were necessarily divided in their reaction to an imperial conduct that all of them would have found distasteful in any other British Dependency. All of them recognized a semblance of nationalism in Ireland--Goldwin Smith admitted that the Irish had great reverence for objects of national attachment⁴⁹--but many of them, e.g. Bright--thought that economic disequilibrium was being resorted to for the callous overthrow of existing representative institutions, which, by virtue of recent reform were essentially "democratic".

Home Rule was thus interpreted in many ways. Goldwin Smith fought against it as an anti-Imperialist whereas the Canadian Parliament itself--conscious perhaps of the authoritarian, quasi-confederationist construction which MacDonald had put upon the Canadian Constitution--endorsed Home Rule by clear Resolutions passed by both Houses.⁵⁰ The Gladstonians endorsed Home Rule because they tended to be over-pre-occupied with the concept of liberty in all its applications. Thus they focused their attention--in spite of the Land Bill--on the alleged political

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 428.

⁵⁰H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 272 (1882), p. 272, Sexton.

or national disabilities of the Irish at the expense of economic grievances that might have been better resolved by means of an imperial devolution without overtones of separatism. The coercionists, who followed Salisbury, saw Ireland as a quagmire of sullen dissidents, the Unionists, who followed Chamberlain, were willing to concede that Ireland was a Province,⁵¹ and the Home Rulers--who were perhaps Little Englanders in an unusually literal sense--belatedly recognized Ireland as a "Nation". There is the implication in the examples of Labouchere and Morley that Little Englanders used Home Rule as a red herring to defer Socialism. In recognizing that Socialism and Imperialism represented opposite poles of an economic and political dilemma, Little Englanders saw in Home Rule a point that was midway between these poles, or perhaps better still, a point that was wholly outside the axis. They therefore had everything to gain by amputating a potentially explosive economic issue from the body politic of England, and this they could best do by suggesting that historically, Ireland constituted a living organism related to, yet separate from, England herself.

⁵¹Michael Hurst, op. cit., p. 145.

CHAPTER V

INDIA: CONFLICT BETWEEN ANTI-IMPERIALISM AND UTILITARIANISM

John Stuart Mill had observed that those who had known India invariably had a genuine sympathy for the problems of the indigenous population of Ireland.¹

Several historical factors suggest that India might be a logical point from which to begin a regional survey of anti-imperialism. Part of the Indian sub-continent had been originally colonized before the last of Britain's "First" empire; and it could not therefore be considered a "parvenu" acquisition which vulgarized the imperial connection. It was destined to occupy a central position in British Imperial policy and would thus motivate Britain's diplomatic relations with other great powers. But there is an additional reason: because it served as a laboratory for administrators, the government of India gave expression and lent definitions to formal, informal, and authoritarian as well as laissez-faire concepts of Imperial rule.

Broadly speaking, those concepts had to take into account three distinctive areas of "responsibility". Economic development was an

¹ J.S. Mill, England and Ireland, p. 22.

activity which particularly interested the Manchester School but it was evident that the school's free trade pretensions were inimical to the feelings of Indians themselves. The century of conquest which had preceded the Indian Mutiny (C.1750-1857) witnessed the changing of contemporary features of mercantilism and their partial replacement by an export of financial "capital" which found its utilization not only in plantations but in the early development of railroad communication. Britain was thus obliged to export technical skills, an operation which hastened the occasion when British industrial monopolies were to be encroached upon by Asian capital itself.

A second activity which does not concern this enquiry so much was the attempt at religious conversion. This was perhaps the least successful activity because India--while devoid of a unified political structure--already possessed a complex viable religious tradition. A third area was concerned with theoretical and practical aspects of political administration and attracted utilitarian theorists. But while, like the previous activity, its rationale seemed almost evangelical, its work proved much more significant.

Admittedly, parliamentary debates on matters pertaining to India were seldom well attended during the latter part of the nineteenth century. But those who spoke in these debates shared in a tradition of academic discussion which could be traced back to the time when Burke

and Fox first denounced the fraudulent and bloody means by which political power in India had been acquired. On one such occasion Burke had cautioned that power should be exercised ultimately for the benefit of those who were its subjects.²

The most disenchanted parliamentary critic of the British presence in India in the mid-nineteenth century was Richard Cobden, who, although having conceded that Britain had a legitimate trading role to play in the sub-continent, came subsequently to argue that the future retention of India could only be effected by rigid maintenance of the dictatorial "old" colonial system. Deeply suspicious of the East India Company, Cobden believed that its monopoly was "unnatural"; and that the Company itself was nothing but "a screen between the British nation and the full sight of its awful responsibilities." But meticulous though he was about public expenditure, Cobden felt disinclined to attempt the reform of India's political fabric.³ He sensed that India, with its need for a large standing army, could only hinder a cosmopolitan free trade economy.⁴ But Cobden was adhering to a classical "free trader" ideal with respect to India in which Manchester traders could never

²Cobbett's Parliamentary History, Vol. 23, East India Bill, (December 1, 1783).

³Richard Cobden, The Speeches of Richard Cobden, Cobden to Bright, October 18, 1850. Quoted in D. Read Cobden and Bright, p. 207.

⁴Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 551.

share. In fact nine years after Cobden's death, i.e. in 1874, by virtue of the fact that the Indian government demanded fiscal autonomy, the "free trade" principle was to erupt into open antagonism between Manchester and the Indian administrators. However Cobden had always revealed more than a bland cosmopolitanism on the subject; in his pessimism, and even fatalism, Cobden predicted the need to respect what would be later termed "cultural relativism": "Hindoostan must be ruled by those who live on that side of the globe. Its people will prefer to be ruled badly--according to our customs by its own colour, kith and kin."⁵ Cobden spoke of the climate of India as forbidding the English race to become indigenous to its soil. The attempt to ignore this was "the most presumptuous act in history."⁶

By contrast, Bright's more evangelical nature made him less pessimistic about India's future than Cobden, and Bright was therefore willing at least to suggest transitional arrangements which might facilitate a total withdrawal from India in the undetermined future. Even before the Mutiny, when self government was not seriously entertained in official circles, Bright had suggested that India be divided up into at least five "presidencies", that more non-European officials

⁵John Morley, Life of Richard Cobden (London, 1905), p. 208.

⁶R. Cobden to R. Willans, December 5, 1857. Quoted Francis Wrigley Hirst, In the Golden Days (London, 1947), p. 66.

be employed, and that greater toleration be shown for both religious and political liberty. As an anti-Imperialist, Bright was nevertheless moved by the plight of the Indian people, and he could only regret what he considered to be the apathy of the British Parliament.⁷

As early as 1853, Bright had spoken in the House of Commons concerning the impending expiry of the East India Company Charter, at which time he anticipated the trend of decentralization which would be implemented in the following decade. But in his use of what would later be the "core" of the anti-imperialist argument, i.e. the need for decentralization, Bright was not content to denounce the injustice of Company rule in abstract political terms. While he was only allowed to comment on the annual statements that the House of Commons was obliged to pass, he used one such occasion to draw attention to the decay of agriculture and industry and to the retarded state of both roads and waterways.⁸ On purely constitutional grounds Bright held forthright views; he denounced the "despotic" function of the newly created office of Viceroy and he regretted that the Whig precautionary techniques of "checks and balances"--by which the old Court of Directors with the board of control had been superseded in the dual function of Indian

⁷I.M. Cumpston, "Some Early Indian Nationalists and Their Allies in the English Parliament," The English Historical Review, LXXVI, (1961), pp. 279-297.

⁸H.P.D., 3rd ser., Vol. 150 (1858), p. 1774, Bright.

Council and India Office--had failed to eradicate this "tyranny". But the Indian Mutiny produced a clamour and backlash which unnerved Bright: "like Burke before him, Bright did not know how to draw up the indictment of a nation."⁹

However, when it came to Indian affairs, not even Bright could speak for the Manchester School as a whole. While it is true that the Manchester Chamber of Commerce had previously disapproved of the formal annexation of the Punjab and Lower Burma and had disavowed intentions of formal Empire, early Indian nationalists reacted to the protestations of Manchester traders with cynicism. The building of roads, railways and canals which such traders encouraged, was interpreted by the nationalists as but a disguised form of military occupation, which retarded the process of political decentralization. Their suspicions were reinforced by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce's explicit preference for the parliamentary designation of Indian expenditures without prior consultation with native representatives.

This "authoritarian" position adopted by those associated with the Manchester School may be sharply contrasted with the extreme anti-Imperialism of Herbert Spencer, who deplored both the military aid and state-conferred privileges which had been given to the East India Company,

⁹John W. Derry, The Radical Tradition (New York, 1967), p. 221.

although not even he advocated a complete cessation of the Company's economic activity.¹⁰

But a more detailed and comprehensive repudiation of British intentions in India was penned by Positivist commentators outside of the House of Commons. Their denunciation was primarily concerned with the second area of imperial "responsibility" outlined above i.e. with religious missions: Richard Congreve who flatly rejected the insular claim that the Church of England had been rightfully appointed spiritual trustee in India, came to denounce the proseletysing of Christians as irrelevant and even injurious to the moral fibre of the Indian people. Following the Indian Mutiny, Congreve expressed the view that Britain would do better to abdicate totally her imperial pretentions in India by permitting the appointment of an International Committee, along the lines of one then examining the Danubian Principalities to determine the political identity of India and the nature of its political relationship to Europe as a whole. However, Congreve's economic thinking was naive, and he assumed that the Manchester School would agree with him that if Britain was a great entrepot, it was not because of India but, rather, in spite of Britain's connection with India. Without considering the social or economic disparity of the two areas, Congreve presumed that if the United States had been unable to make good use of her economic

¹⁰Herbert Spencer, Social Statics abdg. (New York, 1892), p. 195.

independence so would India.¹¹ But Congreve believed that the essential justification of Britain's withdrawal lay on moral, or pseudo-historical, rather than economic grounds. He equated the veneration which Indians expressed for the Hindu religion with the respect that Christianity had once enjoyed in Western Europe under Innocent III: the Hindu religion expressed the "absolute" of both spiritual and political power. Congreve charged that by infecting India with western liberalism, Britain was hastening the decomposition of the entire moral framework of India; because its political order seemed to be in decay to the casual occidental observer, he could see no justification for Britain's upsetting the course of nature.

This anti-Imperialist argument was a total contradiction of the whole concept of utilitarian reform in India. The codification of law and implementation of utilitarian principles was designed to centralize the administration and to increase India's intellectual dependence upon Britain. Twenty-five years before the Indian Mutiny, Macaulay had described the only suitable government for India as being "an enlightened and paternal despotism".¹² The Utilitarians were following

¹¹Richard Congreve, Essays: Political, Social and Religious,

¹²H.P.D., 3rd ser., Vol. (1833), p. 533 Macaulay. Macaulay, Thomas Babington. 1st Baron Macaulay. (1800-1859). M.P. (1830-34, 1839-47, 1852-56); Member, Supreme Council of India (1834-38); Secretary of War (1839-41).

an Anglo-ethnocentric tradition, a tradition which permitted them to interpret their task as one of transferring India to a higher state of civilization. This Anglo-ethnocentrism remained in the utilitarian tradition, although John Stuart Mill did attempt to seek a synthesis by tempering this presumption with a greater respect for indigenous values.

The twenty-five years which preceded the Indian Mutiny have been described as "the first age of reform in India", an experiment characterized by a blend of evangelicalism and utilitarianism. Although he did not live to witness the Mutiny, this period was aptly summarized by Wilberforce.¹³

Let us endeavour to strike our roots into the soil by the gradual introduction and establishment of our own principles and opinions¹ of our laws; institutions and manners; above all in the source of every other improvement, of our religion and consequently of our morals.¹⁴

Serious doubt has been expressed whether the term "Little Englander" has the same significance when applied to criticism of Indian government as it does when applied to that of Africa. Dilke once described himself as a "jingo" with respect to Asian affairs but a Little

¹³Wilberforce, William. (1759-1833). Led agitation in House of Commons against the slave trade (1787); leader of the Clapham Sect; supported extension of missionary teaching in India.

¹⁴Eric Stokes, The English Utilitarians and India (Oxford, 1959) p. 35.

Englander when African Dependencies were considered. This distinction is well illustrated by George Campbell, who personally annexed part of the area of Oudh, yet who lived to express a consistent objection to any British presence in either Egypt or East Africa by endorsing Little Englander motions of censure.¹⁵ With the exception of Oudh and Gwalior, Campbell believed that by 1853 the "natural limits" of annexation had been reached and he did not revise his evaluation after the Mutiny. But even before the Mutiny, George Campbell had suggested that Macaulay's comprehensive reform of the judicature was premature even if well intended. Indigenous native aptitude admittedly made any immediate native consultative assembly improbable--there was as yet no "Indian Congress" to demand this--but Campbell believed that the Whig and Utilitarian principle of "checks and balances"--was both cumbersome and heavy handed. The intention to Anglicize all facets of Indian life, which had been implicit in the adoption of much of this machinery, he believed not only to be unnecessary but undesirable. As an experienced frontier administrator, Campbell suggested that Hindustanee instead of English be adopted as the lingua franca.¹⁶ Relatively speaking, Campbell was

¹⁵Campbell, Sir George. (1824-92). Held civil appointments in the North Western Provinces, (1847-51); published Modern India (1852); appeared before Parliamentary Committee on India (1851-54); published The Irish Land (1869); published Tenure of Land in India (1870); for the Cobden Club; Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal (1871-74); Liberal M.P. for Kirkaldy (1875-92).

¹⁶George Campbell, India As It May Be, p. 408.

therefore rather anti-imperialistic, if his suggestions and attitudes are to be compared with those sponsored by the utilitarians and forcibly implemented by Lord Lytton.

Nevertheless, in the decade which followed the Indian Mutiny, the anti-Imperialist argument, which favoured a policy of decentralization found a measure of implementation. The Indian Councils Act (1861), which provided legislative councils for the governors of Bombay and Madras, enabled the Viceroy to nominate Indian members for these bodies. However there was to be no Indian participation in the executive council, and the legislative councils had no power of decision or right of interpellation. It would be incorrect to conclude that Sir Charles Wood--the author of this reform--necessarily recognized in these Councils nuclei of popular or representative governments.¹⁷

Even these reforms failed to erase a serious self-contradiction in utilitarian presumptions. The executive branch of the Indian Civil Service was becoming exclusively aristocratic in its composition and there was little prospect of a wide Indian participation in this new legislative and judicial machinery. While utilitarians cooperated with Whig paternalism to the extent that they would protect the indigenous character of the peasants, utilitarians aimed to subvert or undermine

¹⁷R.J. Moore, Liberalism and Indian Politics (London, 1966), pp. 9-10.

the more sophisticated and nascent "nationalism" in order to protect investment capital. Such contradictions are suggested in the acrimonious correspondence conducted between Lord Northbrook, a Whig, and Lord Salisbury, who endorsed the intentions of the utilitarians.¹⁸ The Manchester Liberals wanted an Indian Secretary of State who would promote Britain's interests above those of India by so manipulating the tariff as to deny India the possible benefits of protection. In Lord Salisbury, the Manchester traders found a suitable champion; but although they were nominal free traders, the Whig administration in the India of Lord Northbrooke, defended protective duties on cotton goods, cotton twist and yarn entering India in order to stabilize India's economy. For this reason, Salisbury established the precedent by which the Secretary of State imposed his own will over both Viceroy and Council, and it is hardly surprising, therefore, that Indian nationalists were tempted to identify the Manchester School with neo-mercantilism. Thereafter, resentment was expressed in India with more articulation and it was punctuated by a later estimate that by the end of the nineteenth century there had been a massive "drain" of Indian wealth to the extent of 6000 million, resulting partly from unfavourable balances of trade and partly from

¹⁸Baring, Thomas George. 1st Earl of Northbrook. (1826-1904). Viceroy of India (1876-80); Ambassador at Paris (1887-91); (Conservative).

dishonoured remittances.¹⁹ Some nationalists came to look back nostalgically to the pre-investment period, when India had received bullion in payment for her cotton goods.

It was during Salisbury's term as Secretary for India that the whole territorial question took on added significance. Gladstone and Lord Hartington took a severely critical view of the expansionist policies pursued by Lord Lytton who had become Salisbury's protégé. This may be illustrated by reference to the Northwest Frontier where the Whigs had traditionally sought to preserve friendly relations ever since the "First Afghan War" (1838-1842). In the final months of his Vice-Royalty, (1876), Northbrook had been reluctant to accede to Salisbury's request to persuade the Amir of Afghanistan to accept British aid at Herat and Kandahar.

The anti-Imperialists bitterly attacked Lytton's foreign policy and Leonard Courtenay produced a detailed and analytical critique of the entire expansionist imperial strategy.²⁰ Evidently Gladstone incorporated Courtenay's criticism of this forward policy in his current Midlothian

¹⁹Lajpat Rai, England's Debt To India (1917). Quoted in T.F. Tsiang, Labour and Empire (New York, 1923), p. 31.

²⁰Bulwer-Lytton, Edward Robert. 1st Earl of Lytton. (1831-91). Viceroy of India (1876-80); Ambassador at Paris (1887-91); (Conservative).

campaign when he spoke derisively of Disraeli's imperium et libertas.²¹ Although he was a Whig with respect to colonial affairs, Gladstone never really defined his position with respect to India. His observation that India did not add to, but detracted from, England's military strength was made while he was Leader of the Opposition, at which time he could not have afforded to cast off the traditional insularity of Manchester. He pleaded that the real substance of Britain's material greatness lay within the British Isles, and that Britain would one day have to "loose herself from this capital demand upon the national honour."²² Why then did Gladstone lament that Britain had "not been able to give to India the blessings and benefits of free institutions?"²³ This vacillating attitude by Gladstone was criticized by many contemporary commentators. To Imperialists it seemed that Gladstone was implying that India was but an unfortunate accident of Britain's national greatness.²⁴

Lord Lytton, who succeeded Northbrooke, removed protection from Indian industries in deference to Manchester at precisely the moment that India had to find new revenues to pay for ventures that military action

²¹G.P. Gooch, Life of Leonard Courtenay (London, 1920), p.

²²W.G. Gladstone, "Aggression on Egypt," Nineteenth Century Review, II (1877), p. 153.

²³H.P.D., 3rd ser., Vol. 227 (1876), p. 1744, Gladstone.

²⁴E. Dicey, Nineteenth Century Review, II (1877), p. 292.

at Herat and Kandahar had forced upon them. Gladstone denounced the imperial "despotism" by which Lytton had curtailed the liberty of the Indian press without consulting his Council, and consequently he called for a full parliamentary inquiry into the Indian Constitution.²⁵ As a Whig, Gladstone doubtless felt obliged to disown the Manchester view of the tariff and he confided that the way in which cotton duties had been remitted in this time of India's stress had been "something repugnant".²⁶ But Gladstone could give no clear indication of what the future economic and constitutional policy would be with respect to India if he returned to power. By making repeated pleas for "peace, retrenchment and reform" Gladstone was being effectively ambiguous, although it must be noted that upon his accession as Prime Minister in 1880 and following the termination of the second Afghan War (1878-79), a prompt withdrawal was made from Kandahar.

Yet it is significant that this withdrawal--although it was censured by the Tories--was not regarded by all members of Gladstone's government as necessarily anti-imperialistic and was in fact defended on tactical grounds by Lord Hartington.²⁷ Dilke defended Gladstone's

²⁵H.P.D., 3rd ser., Vol. 242, (1878), p. 51, Gladstone.

²⁶H.P.D., 3rd ser., Vol. 246 (1879), p. 1741, Gladstone.

²⁷H.P.D., 3rd ser., Vol. 259 (1880), p. 199, Harcourt.

action even more positively by accusing Salisbury and Lytton of destroying all cohesion in Afghanistan.²⁸ But Dilke would not identify himself with any doctrinaire concept of withdrawal in India and the support that he lent Gladstone might be contrasted to Fawcett's comparison of the "folly" of the Herat advance to the ill-fated annexation of the Transvaal in 1877 by the same government.²⁹

The danger to the Northwest Frontier emanated from Russia, which, ever since the Crimean War, had been advancing towards central Asia. Entering Turkestan within two years after 1864, Russia had occupied Butthan but the more ominous aspect of this was her utilization of this expansion from the Caspian Sea so as to build a railway through to Merv, which, although it lay two hundred miles to the north of Herat, was only half the distance from the frontier that the British line was at Quetta. Afghanistan therefore served as a buffer state between two opposing advances, and the opportunities which this territory offered gave rise to two distinctive approaches to the problem of imperial defence in this area. The Bombay "Forward School", composed of Salisbury himself and Lytton, Roberts and Lansdowne, advocated resistance to Russian penetration

²⁸H.P.D., 3rd ser., Vol. 259 (1880), p. 1852, Dilke.

²⁹H.P.D., 3rd ser., Vol. 259 (1881), p. 1955 Fawcett. Fawcett, Henry (1833-84); Economist; M.P. (1865-84); contributed actively to passage of Reform Act (1867); on account of assiduous representation of India's interests earned unofficial title as "M.P. for India".

by the erection of permanent forward positions in Afghanistan and Persia.³⁰ This went beyond Salisbury's earlier idea of setting up listening posts, which had initially led to the launching of a two pronged attack to partition Afghanistan in 1878.

By contrast the more liberal "Punjab School", endorsed by Gladstone, Ripon, Northbrook, Hartington and Wolseley maintained that India should be defended on the Indus.³¹ This was not a negative view, it emphasized the need for direct negotiations with Russia on the strict understanding that if she advanced beyond a certain point, Russia could expect an unlimited war with Britain.

³⁰Roberts, Frederik Sleigh, 1st Earl Roberts of Kandahar, Pretoria and Waterford. (1832-1914). Won V.C. in Sepoy Mutiny (1857-58); in Second Afghan War, forced Afghan position at Peiwar Kotal, took Kabul, and re-entered Afghan capital (1879); performed memorable march from Kabul to relief of Kandahar, achieving pacification of Afghanistan (1880). Commander-in-Chief India (1885-93); Commander-in-Chief Ireland (1895-99). Held supreme command in South Africa (from 1899); after annexing Transvaal handed over command to Lord Kitchener.

Petty-Fitzmaurice, Henry Charles Keith, 5th Marquis of Lansdowne, (1845-1927), Governor-General of Canada (1883-88); Viceroy of India (1888-93); Secretary for War (1895-1900); Foreign Secretary (1900-1905). (Whig-Unionist).

³¹Wolseley, Garnet Joseph (1883-1913). 1st Viscount Wolseley, served in Sepoy Mutiny (1857-58); held high command in southeast Africa (1879-80); suppressed rebellion in Egypt with victory at Tel-el-Kebir (1882); commander Nile expedition (1884) to relieve Khartoum; Commander-in-Chief British Army (1895-99).

Ethnic similarities prevented a straightforward demarcation of intervening territory according to tribe, but in 1880 Gladstone and Ripon returned Kandahar to Afghanistan, assuming that henceforth Britain could negotiate with Russia in good faith. The fortuitous appearance of an apparently reliable puppet ruler, Abdur Rahman, who was given both Kandahar and Kabul, suggested that the situation might now become stable. However, during the period of the "Forward School's" hegemony the Russians had courted the Amir to improve Russia's bargaining position in the Balkans. In 1885 Russia inflicted a crushing military defeat on Afghanistan at Pendjeh and, aware that he had vested the defence of India in a Russian guarantee, Gladstone characterized the Russian action as bearing "the appearance of an unprovoked aggression."³² The immediate recall of the reserves by Gladstone did not elicit the same kind of vehement criticism of government policy as had done the attempted relief of the Sudan. What protest there was came from those radicals who in Africa would have been classified as "Little Englanders". Labouchere demanded arbitration, and he was perhaps tacitly supported by the bulk of the "moderate" wing of the Liberal Party. This proposal elated John Morley, who realized that a permanent physical occupation of Afghanistan would have implied that Britain was a "continental" power insofar that

³²H.P.D., 3rd ser., Vol. 297 (1885), p. 600, ff., W.G. Gladstone.

British and Russian spheres of interest would be coterminus.³³

Labouchere deliberately moved an amendment to reduce the Military Estimate by £4 million on the grounds that the proposed occupation of Herat would alienate the native population although simultaneously he defended the allocation of £2½ million for an enlarged ironclad program.³⁴

The Viceroy, Lord Ripon, had previously succeeded in reducing the number of troops employed beyond the frontier from 65,000 to 25,000 men, but it was not for this reason that he was considered the most "Gladstonian" of Indian Viceroys. Rather it was on account of his pursuit of the ideal of local self-government.³⁵ While this was a "Whig" move and should therefore not be confused with the utilitarian principle of "efficiency" for its own sake, it singularized an almost doctrinaire affirmation of the more traditional liberal principles with which anti-Imperialists were identified. Ripon's attempt to effect some degree of political devolution proved premature, and it was only ten years later that local government bodies would be constituted as electorates for returning representative Indians to the provincial legislature.

³³H.P.D., 3rd ser., Vol. 298 (1885). Refer C.D.Lowe, The Reluctant Imperialists, p.77.

³⁴H.P.D., 3rd ser., Vol. 298 (1885), p. 1542, Labouchere.

³⁵R.C. Moore, op. cit., ch. 3.

Unfortunately, Ripon's support of the "Ilbert Bill", which proposed that in certain cases English settlers be tried by Indian Justices of the Peace, proved to be a grave tactical error. Wilfrid Blunt, who sympathized with the Indian nationalist movement and who was an early advocate of reform in respect to the Indian constitution, admitted that white planters would be put to considerable embarrassment in the event of any maltreatment of their servants.³⁶ This Bill made little impression upon the British Parliament but it significantly marked the end of the "Gladstonian" period of experimentation with internal problems. Ripon's failure coincided with the emergence of Indian "nationalism" as a more independent and articulate force. Any subsequent identification with this movement on the part of anti-Imperialists would be demonstrably more conspicuous.

In view of the important legislative decisions which could not be long delayed, surprisingly little interest was to be shown by Radicals in general towards Indian problems. Lord Dufferin, who succeeded Ripon as Viceroy, appears not to have proscribed the activities of the Indian National Congress; in the hope of avoiding a "Home Rule" type of situation, Dufferin sounded the Congress for ideas and made small concessions,

³⁶Wilfred Scawen Blunt, India Under Ripon, A Personal Diary (1909).

hoping that by so doing he could avoid ~~making~~ larger ones.³⁷ But Dufferin revealed how far removed the Whig position was from the anti-imperialist insofar as he emphasized its traditional principle of "representation of interests", as opposed to the more democratic "representation of numbers". Salisbury's legacy was that existing constitutional safeguards had been endangered from two directions, from London, where Salisbury's personal domination of the Indian Council had made it more acquiescent than the old "Board of Directors" had ever been, and in India itself, where Ripon's policy of decentralization had seriously undermined the prestige of the Viceroy's executive council in the eyes of educated Indians. Dufferin was therefore obliged to halt the process of decentralization, even though he introduced token increases to the number of elected representations on the Provincial Councils.

With respect to external threats, Dufferin succeeded in employing Afghanistan as a buffer state which would be able to hold its own by local resources if the Russians reached too far forward. Nevertheless,

³⁷Hamilton-Temple-Blackwood, Frederik Temple. (1826-1902). 1st Earl of Dufferin. Governor-General of Canada (1872-78); Commissioner in Egypt (1882-83); Viceroy of India (1884-88); during which time he pacified Amir of Afghanistan, delimited northwest frontier; annexed Upper Burma, (1186). (Whig-Unionist).

quite apart from the capital's Northwest Frontier, numerous border incidents were to mar the peace between 1881 and 1886. In that final year Salisbury incorporated Upper Burma into India, and the Proclamation which authorized this had been first initialled in London as an international device to ensure that existing Treaties between Burma and Foreign Powers be extinguished. Although it represented a major departure from the principle dictated by the Queen's Statement in her Proclamation of 1858--i.e. that she desired no extension of the Indian Empire--Gladstone himself accepted this annexation without protest. Evidently Dufferin had already been disillusioned by the experiment of "Indirect Rule" in Egypt and by its repetition with respect to the Northwest Frontier, which in both areas had led to grave insolvency; Dufferin was therefore unwilling to risk repetition of such an experiment in the southeast.

Significantly, for over a year the Manchester Chamber of Commerce had lobbied for the annexation of Burma, and there is evidence that these traders would now favour "formal" expansion if their interests were jeopardized. It almost coincided with a formal motion (defeated 22 to 21) that Britain should renounce free-trade as a general instrument of commerce. The free-trade principle was most openly challenged where the "ideal" had been most popularly associated.³⁸

³⁸W.D. Grampp, The Manchester School of Economics
p. 130.

Even in opposition, Gladstone was anxious to disown any suggestion that Burma was annexed out of deference to mercantile pressure and he spoke grandiloquently of "guaranteeing the safety and security of our own frontier and of our own people."³⁹ Gladstone could no longer conveniently entertain a sentimental respect for indigenous institutions which might have been otherwise preserved by orthodox Crown Colony status. Nor would Gladstone extend the argument of national self-determination from Ireland to Asia.

In 1880 the retirement from Kandahar had irritated Lord Randolph Churchill--who was himself a severe critic of involvement in Egyptian affairs--to the extent that he expressed resentment at the issues in Asia becoming blurred because of preoccupation with Irish affairs, and he sought a corrolary in the demand for a strong internal government.⁴⁰ It is difficult to accuse Gladstone of blurring these issues if it is recalled that almost in the same week that Gladstone intimated that he would attempt a measure of Home Rule (the flying of the Hawarden Kite),

³⁹H.P.D., 3rd. ser., Vol. 295 (1885), p. 1245, Gladstone.

⁴⁰H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 298 (1885), p. 1524. Lord R.Churchill. Churchill, Lord Randolph Henry Spencer-(1849-95). Leader of the "Fourth Party" which opposed occupation of Egypt, promoted "Tory Democracy"; advocated conciliatory policy for Ireland; Secretary of State for India (1885-86); resigned as Chancellor of the Exchequer December 1886 as gesture of resistance to fiscal demands of the Army and Navy; bitterly attacked Second Home Rule Bill (1892).

he endorsed Salisbury's action in Burma. Nevertheless the simultaneous generation of national protest in Ireland and India raises the question of whether there might have been collusion between Irish and Indian nationalists. There is little evidence to suggest that Indian nationalists might wish to needlessly jeopardize relations with their Whig allies. An early leader of the Congress Naoroji, went out of his way to identify the future liberal unionists--Hartington and Bright--as particular friends of India.⁴¹ As he had earlier done with Ireland, Bright continued to express a compassionate view of Indian affairs and in 1883 had suggested that an Indian Commission be appointed to study India's grievances. Parnell, on the other hand, disowned any suggestion that an Indian nationalist movement would support an Irish Platform if the Irish themselves should elect Indian representatives to the House of Commons. Even if Irish Home Rule were granted, Indian nationalists would, by the very nature of the solution, lose such potential political allies. Dufferin when leaving India in 1888, was careful to caution Indian Nationalists about indiscriminately applying lessons learned from the history of constitutional countries; he warned that the circumstances of India were special.⁴²

⁴¹Naoroji, Dadabhai (1825-1917). First Indian member of the British House of Commons; President, Indian National Congress (1886, 1893, 1906); Liberal M.P. (1892-95).

⁴²I.M. Cumpston, op. cit., p. 291.

The incorporation of Burma in 1886 was followed by a relatively quiet period which remained undisturbed until the tempestuous arrival of Lord Curzon in 1898. The only way in which Parliament's reaction to the problems presented by the Indian National Congress--which, until the partition of Bengal in 1903, was concerned almost exclusively with economic matters--can be discovered is to follow the questions which were asked, upon completion of the Annual Statement by the Secretary of State for India, to the House of Commons. Nevertheless the anti-Imperialists did address themselves to the task of suggesting piecemeal reform of constitutional restraint imposed by the Indian bureaucracy. Much of the groundwork for this was performed by Bradlaugh who, in 1899, had visited the Indian National Congress, on which occasion he had promised to work for a bill in the House of Commons which would increase the number of non-official members in the Indian Legislative Council by extending the principle of election, as opposed to that of appointment. That he was denied any opportunity to present this is significant.⁴³ A subsequent reform--the India Council Act (1861) Amendment Bill was finally drafted in the House of Lords, although for three years it was withheld from presentation in the House of Commons. Under the new proposed government legislation, the councils--whose members were to be doubled, although still nominated--were to be permitted to discuss

⁴³H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 341 (1890)p. 173, Bradlaugh.

budgets moved by the India Council but they were still not permitted to vote on individual clauses. Any rules which might give them power of interpellation could only be phrased by the Viceroy and his assistants.

The denial of the electoral principle in this proposed legislation would in any case have angered the Radicals. Only with difficulty did Gladstone persuade Schwann to drop his amendment deploing the absence of the principle of representative government in the proposed legislation, on the understanding that this bill anticipated subsequent adoption of the electoral principle.⁴⁴ But the voices of many members who, with respect to imperial controversies in Africa, might be classed as "anti-Imperialists" remained amute. In fact, on this occasion in 1892, when there took place in the Commons the most important constitutional debate on India to be held in over thirty years, only a minority of members were in attendance. By contrast, the re-imposition in 1894 of a five-percent protective tariff on India's imports attracted a large House and so angered Manchester members that the government's spokesman was compelled to remind the House that he served as "the Secretary of State for India and not the Secretary for Lancashire."⁴⁵

⁴⁴H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 3 (1892), p. 68, Schwann.

⁴⁵H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 22 (1894), p. 214, Fowler.
Fowler, Henry Hartley (1830-1911). 1st Viscount Wolverhampton. President of Board of Trade (1892); Secretary for India (1894); supported Boer War and opposed tariff reform. (Liberal Unionist).

Fowler was obliged to quote Henry Fawcett as saying "that only pedants would apply abstract principles of free trade to India." Here was a blatant example of "free trade" being employed as an arbitrary device, in which context it amounted to a form of mercantilism. It was a situation which was often repeated and which Goldwin Smith had remarked upon twelve years earlier:

The manufacturers of Yorkshire and Lancashire look upon India and China as a field of enterprise which can only be kept open to them by force; and indeed, . . . free traders are in fact nothing of the kind, but merely advocates of a particular tariff.⁴⁶

It was for this reason that anti-Imperialists continued to oppose the government's policy of authorizing loans to India for railroads and irrigation projects without first appointing a Select Committee to see if such arrangements would genuinely facilitate relief of economic distress.

Generally speaking, efforts by anti-Imperialists to effect even minor changes to India's bureaucracy were unsuccessful. Token adjustments were made--by means of Commons debates--to provisions for competitive entrance to the Indian Civil Service, but invariably officialdom in India would reject such reforms as impracticable. For this reason, anti-Imperialists denied that the Indian Civil Service could be construed

⁴⁶Goldwin Smith, "Peel and Cobden," Nineteenth Century Review, XII, (1882), pp. 869-889.

as "Indian" in any meaningful sense. But these discussions took the form of only minor skirmishes, and until 1906--when the Indian Congress formally demanded self-government within the Empire, the focus of radical attention would be fixed almost solely upon economic matters.

Issues such as the saddling of the Indian Exchequer with part of the Dongola Campaign's military costs revealed that anti-Imperialists were sensitive to the issue of debiting India with the military costs of the Empire at large. However the Dongola Campaign Costs episode was but a repetition of the situation created when Gladstone debited one seventh of the military costs of the First Egyptian Campaign to India's account. The action had greatly angered anti-Imperialists who recalled that on the occasion of the India Act Debate (1858), Gladstone had studiously demanded parliamentary approval for the transfer of any Indian troops beyond the Indian frontier.

The radicals who challenged the principles of charging India in these circumstances were atypical of those members who represented Manchester's interests. Stanhope, for example, had denied India's obligation to pay part of the costs of the Sudan venture on the same occasion that he had censured Gladstone for his withdrawal from Kandahar.⁴⁷ Thus even some disciples of the Bombay "Forwardist School"

⁴⁷H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 282 (1883), p. 790, Stanhope.

were opposed to the high-handed action of the imperial government with respect to India's fiscal rights. As an anti-Imperialist, Lawson had originally sought to eliminate the possibility of charging India in such circumstances by means of an amendment which was based upon the premise of "no taxation without representation."⁴⁸ Morley argued that on such occasions as these the correct function of the House of Commons should be to act as an arbiter or judicial tribunal to deliberate which was right or wrong, the Secretary of State in London, or the Viceroy's government in India, either of which the House of Commons claimed to have the right to advise.

Because the Indian Congress had preserved its patience in such protracted circumstances, Lord Curzon was imprudent enough to conclude upon his arrival that the Congress was on its way out.

Some brief mention should be made of the significance of Curzon's work which was to immediately precede that of Morley's partner, Lord Minto.⁴⁹ Curzon was impatient to propel India into the modern world and because he was sympathetic to poverty, he proposed a greatly enlarged expenditure of available funds on irrigation and education. As a

⁴⁸H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 282 (1883), p. 790, Lawson. Division List No. 237, July 27, 1883. (55 Ayes to 210 Noes).

⁴⁹Elliot-Murray-Kynynmond, Gilbert John, 4th Earl of Minto (1845-1914). Governor-General of Canada (1898-1904); Viceroy of India (1905-10); (Whig-Unionist).

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"missionary imperialist", who had perhaps been influenced by Benjamin Jowett when he had studied at Balliol, his efforts--as a Conservative--might be interpreted as one of the last great "utilitarian" attempts to direct India. His high-handedness antagonized the anti-Imperialists, who resented his presumption that Indians were incapable temperamentally and administratively of holding senior positions in the Indian Civil Service. His disastrous partitioning of Bengal which he imperiously effected in 1905, was a logical sequel to such autocratic decisions as his summoning of an education conference at Simla, to which no Indian was invited, and as his appointing in 1904 of a Universities Commission, which neglected to include a single Hindu member.

Ironically Morley's appointment as Secretary to India in 1906--"the most anti-imperialistic of all late nineteenth century statesmen who were obliged to phrase state papers"--was made at precisely the same time that the Indian Congress felt obliged to jettison its "constitutional" approach to the question of reform by adopting a new policy of violent confrontation with the Indian Government.⁵⁰ Morley brought to his task an immense sympathy for Indian problems, but also a practical "whig" desire to collaborate effectively with Lord Minto, the new Viceroy. Even as an anti-Imperialist, Morley saw Indian policy in terms of

⁵⁰R.C. Moore, op. cit., ch. 6.

continuity, although this was to be precisely the time when the Liberal Government was about to renounce "continuity" in African affairs. Because he believed that elsewhere Imperialism had distorted an overall historical continuity, he found in anti-imperialism a positive political philosophy which safeguarded organic change. It is hardly surprising therefore that in spite of his anti-imperialist record, Morley's appointment to India was construed as being essentially a "conservative" move. But in India, the "intellectual liberalism" that Curzon had epitomized was part of a peculiar continuity which could be traced back to the Utilitarians.

Because he was an acknowledged student of Burke, many educated Indians applauded Morley's appointment, but Morley's initial political mistake was that he took middle-class sentiments as representative of Indian grievances at large, whereas Lord Minto regarded the spokesman in Congress as only one factor in a complex situation. Morley insisted that Minto take the official initiative in originating projected reforms which explains why Morley--in London--delayed implementing his own reform of the Indian Council(which required that Councillors have had recent experience of living in India) pending notification of Minto's own reforms with respect to his own Executive Council in India.⁵¹

⁵¹H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 179 (1906)pp. 1673-1688, Morley.

It was later agreed to by Minto that the Viceroy's Legislative Council was to be increased from twenty-four to sixty-two members of which twelve instead of four were to be elected. This was nothing but a small token to representative government, and even in modified form it passed only with great difficulty through the House of Lords. Morley was acutely conscious that this would not be well received by the Indian Congress, and he anticipated that he might well be remembered especially for his coercive measures:

It will all be insupportable (he once wrote to Minto) if you who are a sound Whig, and I, who am an "autoritaire Radical" go down to our graves as imitators of Eldon, Sidmouth, and Six Acts and all the other men and policies which we were both of us brought up to abhor.⁵²

Morley knew that he had not introduced any real note of responsibility into Indian government even at the provincial level. In spite of Morley's deference to Minto, effective collaboration between the two statesmen was difficult because Minto saw no cause to question the legacy of autocracy, whereas by nature Morley was opposed to bureaucracy even in its paternalist form. He had formerly repudiated the parliamentary system in any form as unfeasible for India. Evidently Morley had led the moderate reform movement into a constitutional cul-de-sac. This he fully acknowledged--"I (do not) think it desirable or possible or even conceivable to adopt English political institutions to . . . India. Assuredly not in your day or in mine. But the spirit

⁵²J. Morley to Minto, July 24, 1908. Recollections II, p. 270.

of English institutions is a different thing."⁵³

Yet Morley had been self-effacing and self-deprecating in order to show Minto in the best possible light. He had the misfortune to have his public conduct as Secretary to India judged in terms of his past, particularly with reference to his work as Irish Secretary. One of the reasons why he had personally accepted the India Office was to persuade the public that a "Little Englander" would be responsible-minded and should be judged leniently.⁵⁴ He had longed to be judged with the practical men of the world, and Sir Edward Grey believed that Morley in his last public years did much to ward off criticism from sentimental anti-Imperialist Liberals. Too much had been expected of Morley because he had always judged the "Jingo" as the "devil incarnate".⁵⁵ In 1910, after leaving the Indian office, Morley admitted that had he remained there another five years, "his liberalism would probably have gone." It was not that he had developed any sudden liking for Empire but that he had become involved with forces which were wholly unenglish.

Morley's "Little Englandism" prevented him from ever identifying with the "intellectual Liberals" who, in the late nineteenth century,

⁵³J. Morley to Minto June 6, 1906. Recollections, Vol. 2, p. 63.

⁵⁴D.A. Hamer, John Morley Liberal Intellectual in Politics (Oxford, 1968), p. 350.

⁵⁵E. Grey to J. Bryce, January 6, 1908. Ibid., p. 346.

reasoned according to the utilitarian tradition that the only way to prepare Indians for self-government was to anglicize them. Like the Positivists, with whom he had at one time associated, he never (even in office), lost sight of the significance of fundamental differences separating the relativity of societies. Any presumption of an absolute standard was abhorrent to him. Morley had criticized even the utilitarianism of James Mill for this very reason.

He, (Mill) views Hindo religion, manners and institutions from an absolute instead of a relative and historical standpoint. He speaks of the Hindoos, the superstition and their degradation with the bitterness of the most ferocious evangelical missionary.⁵⁶

Still it was one of James Mills' dicta that "fitness was to be the criterion of eligibility" that had made Morley sympathetic to the idea of the admittance of natives to representative offices.⁵⁷ Unfortunately the fact that he did not advance natives to executive positions antagonized other radicals. Within the spectrum of liberal ideas there was quite clearly a smaller platform for the extreme "Little Englander" than in African affairs.

⁵⁶Francis Wrigley Hirst, Early Life and Letters of John Morley, Vol. 2, p. 127.

⁵⁷W. Staebler, The Liberal Mind of John Morley (Princeton, 1943), p. 110.

India and the Anti-Imperialist Dilemma: A Summary

It is evident that the term "Little Englander" would never have been coined merely by association with Indian affairs. The term implied polemical abuse, and India had generated too much apathy even amongst radicals.

By his association with the Middle East, Wilfrid Blunt had achieved a reputation as perhaps the "most virulent of all anti-Imperialists". At the end of the century Wilfrid Blunt undoubtedly knew India better than any other "Little Englander", and he knew the Moslem religion intimately. Not surprisingly Blunt attacked Morley's repressive measures and wrote in 1910 that it had become "the Irish history over again with Morley playing the part of Buckshot Forster at the India office."⁵⁸ Blunt had been the only European present at the first meeting of the First National Conference at Calcutta in December 1883. In his own program he had included three important points: election to the Legislative Council, establishment of Indian Provincial Parliament and representation in the British House of Commons. Thus, although he had a most genuine respect for indigenous customs--particularly Moslem--Blunt himself was actually advocating a temporary

⁵⁸Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, My Diaries 1888-1914 (New York, 1921), Vol. 2, p. 203 et seq.

strengthening of imperial connections.⁵⁹ This illustrates the whole paradox of the anti-Imperialists' position in India. By the late nineteenth century abdication of imperial responsibilities in India was becoming almost inconceivable. Perhaps anti-Imperialists were baffled by the fact that a strong "nationalist" sentiment did not appear sooner in India. But "nationalism" as a force to mould political feelings, had only been recently introduced to Europe. Anti-Imperialists were among the first to acknowledge its appearance in India although they did not seem to recognize that this brand of nationalism was not indigenously Indian, but rather was based on the narrow, post-enlightenment aspect that had developed specifically in Europe. Morley's predicament and performance as Secretary to India suggests that the anti-Imperialists had no conspicuous contribution to make towards a rationalization of the British presence in India. Morley quite clearly used the opportunity to "atone" for his reputation as an "irresponsible Little Englander". Even the expansionist policies associated with Lytton and Curzon could not be retrospectively construed by anti-Imperialists as "aberrant" features of imperialism.

The term "imperial" had a stronger connotation of nobility when applied to India than to other areas and had largely been created by Utilitarian bureaucracy and not merely as a label for "sordid gain".

⁵⁹I.M. Cumpston, op. cit., pp. 279-297.

Yet the anti-Imperialists did manifest a distaste for the authoritarian attitude of the "Utilitarians" in India. This distaste took the form of anti-militarism. They felt no embarrassment at criticizing the government for saddling or debiting India with costs incurred in extra-continental campaigns on one hand, and then criticizing the high proportion of British troops in the Indian army, even while acknowledging that Indian defence was primarily an imperial responsibility on the other. They had no wish to undermine the immense task begun by Macaulay in legal reform, but they could not share the stoic faith which had inspired this work. Perhaps the basic tenet of their credo was the "divine right of representative and indigenous institutions", and they could not develop a belief as the Utilitarians did in "universal law". They could not condone absolutism per se, which the utilitarians had extolled on moral grounds. Yet they were forced to welcome and encourage the training of indigenous, administrative personnel which the utilitarian experiment required.

Nor did the anti-Imperialists endorse the Manchester School's self-interested attitude towards the economy of India. Yet they had to admit that the Manchester lobby was not really so oppressive: was there any other imperial power which would have kept open Indian ports all the year round? Although nineteenth century trade ostensibly promoted free investment rather than monopoly trade, it had been responsible for

technical development in underdeveloped areas--not for altruistic reasons--but because they represented a source of raw materials. Anti-Imperialists did not wish to hamper indigenous development in India and criticized attempts made by British mercantile interests to prevent India from protecting her own industries. They appeared to criticize less the more disinterested attempts made by the Utilitarians to develop a concept of welfare in India through absolutist machinery. Anti-imperialists wished to "free" trade by letting Indians protect their own trade if they wished. But the appearance of the Indian Congress--which introduced the concept of "nationalism" in India much later than elsewhere--tended to confuse the situation by identifying India's problems with those of European national rights. By contrast, India's predicament was essentially more administrative or bureaucratic than "political" in the national sense. They overlooked the fact that without a European presence, the Indians could not have developed any idea of the "political" state. Thus those Indians who were to champion independence were--almost without exception--if not anglicized at least western educated, and accepted occidental premises, a fact which has been emphasized in India's indigenous historiography.⁶⁰

The Utilitarians had introduced bureaucracy with such evangelistic fervour that it was at times reminiscent of that more orthodox missionary

⁶⁰S.K.M. Panikkar, An Eastern View of British Imperialism. Quoted in British Imperialism (European Problem Studies) (Toronto, 1967), p. 108.

activity which anti-Imperialists knew to have resulted in abject failure. To anti-Imperialists therefore, there was a strain of bigotry in utilitarian presumptions. The most authoritarian of Utilitarians, Filzjames Stephen, had been described earlier by Morley as "a good fellow but of the Johnsonian way of thinking."⁶¹ Yet it was the same John Morley who would, as Secretary of State to India say of the "Raj" that "(he had) one of the most glorious tasks ever confided to any powerful state in the history of civil mankind."⁶² Perhaps there was something in the temper of the Utilitarians which still appealed even to the anti-Imperialists, that religious altruism was only a filial form of self-interest. Like utilitarians, anti-Imperialists believed in the rationality of native religions insofar as they reflected cultural needs of each ethnic unit but they were not as certain that they engendered fatalism, emotional escapism, or political irresponsibility as were the Utilitarians. The Utilitarians had pushed bureaucratic reform with an almost religious ardour, by which "law" had become a universal necessity. Their despotic "stoic" concept of universality provided a bridge between the Constitution and the Empire.

The two antithetical ideas of utilitarianism and anti-imperialism were both essentially "liberal", since both drew some

⁶¹Francis Wrigley Hirst, op. cit., p. 284.

⁶² R.C. Moore, op. cit.

sustenance from the relative empiricism of the nineteenth century. But utilitarian ardour which came to be regarded as the "gospel of the English" was suspect of anti-imperialists. To them, it suggested an injurious, excessive zeal. Nevertheless it has been well argued that the transposition of evangelicalism to secular objects, provides one key to unlocking the secret of emotionalism in later Imperialism.⁶³

On questions of liberal political theory, anti-Imperialists were perhaps less divided from the Utilitarian Imperialists. John Stuart Mill--like Burke--had the distinction of being quoted by both authoritarian and laissez-faire Liberals. But the authoritarians quoted Mill because he predicted the need for a single governmental mechanism to prepare the "natives" for ultimate liberty, and the anti-Imperialists quoted him, not only because he emphasized subjects rights and need for representative institutions, but because he emphasized that the state had no special sanctity. Anti-Imperialists rejoiced more in Mill's affirmation that liberty was a positive ideal. The Utilitarians saw no prospect of delegating authority, because they denied that "natives" could only be partly or slightly dissatisfied with their rulers. That is why Morley acknowledged that "Moderates" were always in a disadvantage in respect to nationalist movements.⁶⁴

⁶³Eric Stokes, op. cit., p. 308.

⁶⁴J. Morley to Minto, October 11, 1906. Recollections, Vol. 2, p. 186.

But anti-Imperialists would perhaps have been less surprised at the subsequent moderation of the Indian movement.

On political doctrine, then, anti-Imperialists held some views compatible with the authoritarian Liberals. Both implied respect for Locke's classical liberal doctrine, which assumed a division of power. But anti-Imperialists wished to concede at least a measure of executive, legislative and judicial freedom, which authoritarians would have extended only to more developed countries. However, the fact that the authoritarians themselves wished to concede a measure of executive freedom while retaining almost complete control of legal and judicial functions showed that they wished to "separate" these powers. But authoritarians appeal to "effective" control suggested that they--unlike the anti-imperialists--were Hobbesian rather than Lockian. And if anti-imperialists wished to concede more, it was essentially only a matter of degree.⁶⁵ Goldwin Smith had predicted this very problem as far back as 1858, when he warned that the responsibilities which the Crown inherited by the Indian Act were fraught with danger:

Many people who were by no means admirers of the East India Company, deprecated its abolition and the political identification of India with England which necessarily ensued. The Company being under the control of the British Government, the responsibility under the old system was the same, but the danger of political contagion was not so great . . .

⁶⁵Goldwin Smith, "The Policy of Aggrandisement," The Fort-Nightly Review, XXVIII (September, 1877), pp. 303-324.

Yet it is because Imperialism in India--when divorced from the romanticism which distorted it--was essentially a "liberal" idea that perhaps the anti-Imperialists after the period of Bright and Cobden never convincingly denounced the validity of the imperial idea in India. Quite clearly the term "Little Englander" is almost irrelevant when used in reference to Indian affairs. Anti-Imperialists condemned the assumption that British institutions were universally valid. But in doing this they were perhaps unconsciously adapting ideas implicit in the French and American Revolutions: ideas which were at the centre of liberal thinking. The state could not legitimately enlarge itself by tyrannical means. Similarly many of the early Indian Nationalists were adapting the occidental ideas of Rousseau, had to water them down to meet the Indian conditions. Similarly, anti-Imperialists in India were perhaps employing Jeffersonian answers to what was undeniably a problem of Empire, which had to do with a sub-continent vastly changed from the one that had characterized Britain's "First Empire". But because anti-Imperialists could never bring themselves, in the late nineteenth century to unreservedly condemn the connection with India, not even they were able to endorse in complete good faith, Gandhi's remark that "good government is no substitute for free government."

CHAPTER VI

ANTI-IMPERIALISTS AND EGYPT: AN IMPERIAL QUAGMIRE

The connotation of late nineteenth century "imperialism" was such that the term came almost to refer exclusively to what was happening in Africa. Had there been no interest in Africa it is improbable that the collocation of "Little Englander" would ever have been employed. The key figure in Egypt--Sir Evelyn Baring¹--who was to bear the brunt of anti-Imperialist criticism, had adopted a moderate position in India from which he had been able to suggest a limited autonomy for local and town boards. But this should not be interpreted as an acknowledgment on his part of a priori rights of indigenous populations. In fact he came to attribute the concept of local self-government to the earlier Whigs of the eighteen-sixties. Baring believed that the separation of the function of the official body from local and town boards should be effected gradually but totally. Consistent with this view, he was willing even to accept the Ilbert Bill as the rectification of an

¹Baring, Sir Evelyn. 1st Earl of Cromer (1841-1917). Appointed British agent and consul general with pleni-potentiary diplomatic rank to advise Egyptian Government (1883); by means of loan for irrigation forestalled bankruptcy; completed land survey; successfully installed Abbas as Khedive; resigned (1907).

anomaly, because if this Bill was withdrawn under the pressure of reckless statements--as was proved the case--it would suggest that Anglo-Indian opinion was more anti-native than it really was. Baring believed above all in the efficacy of indirect rule and he was anxious that the Indian administration be adapted accordingly.²

Baring was not directly involved in the decision that lay behind the British action at Alexandria in 1882, and such action was not recognized at the time as being imperialistic. Unlike in India--or even in South Africa--there had been no gradual expansion, and no formal annexation or confederation of territories, nor had there been anything to create a legend of a British "mission" in this area. Only by degrees did it become apparent that Egypt was being administered in much the same manner as an Indian princely state. While the Berlin Congress confirmed Britain's protectorate over Cyprus, Egypt interested neither Disraeli, nor Salisbury, least of all Gladstone. Disraeli would have nothing to do with Bismarck's suggestion of Britain taking Egypt as a quid pro quo for Balkan concessions to Russia. Bismarck may have personally encouraged the accession of Tewfik in 1879,³ but it is inconceivable that Gladstone

²Evelyn Baring, "Foundations of the Government of India," Nineteenth Century (October, 1883).

³Tewfik, Pasha, Mohammed (1852-92). Khedive of Egypt (1879-92). Yielded to joint British and French control of finances of Egypt (1880); forced to recognize virtual British protectorate (1883); lost Sudan to the Mahdi (1885).

should have come to power with any intention of forestalling Germany in this area. As it was, Anglo-French rivalry had become acute ever since Britain's purchase of the Khedive's shares in 1875 and this was accentuated by the unnaturally large loan that France had made to the Khedive. However, Anglo-French rivalry was tempered by a common suspicion of Russia.

In consequence, it was only the pacifist-minded Radicals who took issue with the decision to bombard Alexandria in July 1882. Other anti-Imperialists were unprepared for the kind of debates that would develop over the future of Egypt. In 1882 Gladstone found no organized opposition to the government's unilateral action which was necessitated by France's intransigence. While Britain had obtained an informal influence at Cairo in 1875 Anglo-French Dual Control was in fact vested in the Caisse de la Dette Publique. This organization ostensibly looked after the international rights of the bond-holders, but indicated that France, of all the non-Islamic powers, had the greatest control over Egyptian affairs. But, in the next two years France came to relinquish that leadership.

Britain and France were to have been equally represented in Egyptian financial supervision, but Britain's representative, Rivers Wilson was in effect appointed Egypt's Finance Minister in 1878. It was this appointment which later aroused suspicions on the part of the

Radicals. In 1879 he was dismissed by Ismail, but in return the Khedive himself was turned off his throne in favour of his son Tewfik. Could Britain maintain that Egypt was still a nominal free-trading area after she had conspired to remove the Khedive Ismail even when Rivers Wilson as Comptroller had officially only held the status of a private citizen?⁴

During the three years between the occasion of the Khedive's expulsion and the above debate, crucial developments took place. Only one man--Wilfrid Blunt--claimed to have had first hand knowledge of Egyptian interests at this time and Blunt was shortly to exercise a decisive influence on anti-Imperialist Radicals. In 1880 he had gone to Egypt in order to study the Egyptian-Moslem Reform Movement with the expectation that Egyptian cultural life was about to be revitalized by the establishment of an Arabian Caliphate. While he remained in Egypt between November 1880 and February 1882, Blunt learned of Arabi's alleged attempts to solidify Egyptian feeling by effecting an alliance of the Fellaheen and Circassian elements.⁵ In order to familiarize himself with this national undercurrent, Blunt had fraternized with the Egyptian teachers or "Wahhilis", but when he attempted to pass on his summary of

⁴H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 272 (1882), p. 1766.

⁵Ahmed Arabi (1841-1911). Egyptian revolutionist; born in Lower Egypt. Served 12 years as conscript soldier; secretary for war (1882); dismissed through intervention of British, sentenced to death but commuted to life imprisonment; sent to Ceylon; pardoned and returned to Egypt (1901).

nationalist complaints he was treated with indifference by Sir Edward Malet⁶. When Blunt returned to London he found the British Prime Minister obdurate. Gladstone was understandably preoccupied with the Phoenix Park murders but he was in any case quite out of sympathy with the Pan-Islamic movement. But Blunt felt that he had on hand evidence that Arabi enjoyed a genuine "nationalist" following. He also learned that Tewfik had rapidly acquired unpopularity, less on account of his subservience to the Anglo-French Dual Control than of his being regarded as an Emissary of the Sultan.

Blunt, however was regarded at home as an eccentric if not incendiary. The Foreign Office had previously dismissed his plan for an Egyptian parliament, and on January 6, 1882 had authorized the Khedive--through a joint Anglo-French note--to quell any nationalist rising. It should be remembered that up until this time Gladstone had not doubted Anglo-French solidarity. A new liquidation law in July 1880 had arbitrarily assigned 63 per cent of the entire Egyptian revenue as payment of the outstanding debt. On the surface, this law may have appeared to be a free trade justification of Dual Control. But France was less transigent than Britain, and just before her Premier went out of office, Gambetta declared the recently-constituted Chamber of Notables

⁶Malet, Sir Edward Baldwin. (1837-1908). Agent and consul general in Egypt (1879-83); ambassador to Berlin (1884-95); member of Hague Tribunal (1899).

to be a sham assembly, and the new "nationalist" Ministry of March 5, 1882--which had included Arabi as Minister of War--was given no recognition. On May 12, Gambetta's successor, DeFreycinet, agreed to the despatch of a joint Anglo-French fleet to Alexandria, and called also for a conference of the Great Powers. The presence of this combined fleet doubtless played its part in the massacre that allegedly took place in the following month, but the bombardment of Alexandria was undertaken only by British ships.

The Porte refused responsibility for the new situation and on June 25 suggested that Britain become responsible for Egypt's administration, subject only to the Sultan's nominal suzerainty. This in effect would have been an arrangement similar to the Cyprus convention. But Gladstone and Granville turned down this suggestion without even referring it to the Cabinet, (it could be recalled that Gladstone had scathingly denounced the Cyprus Convention when it had been signed by the previous government). Granville then attempted to convene an Ambassadorial meeting in Constantinople. This was considered to be compatible with the principle of the concert that Gladstone had appealed to in his Midlothian Address.

Thus when the Commons debated the implications of the bombardment, Radical opposition had been largely placated. In February 1882, John Morley, Frederick Harrison and Herbert Spencer had formed an ad hoc Anti-

Aggression League, although this does not appear to have had official party connections, and was, of course extra-Parliamentary in its composition--(John Morley did not enter the Commons until the following year). But the most dramatic anti-Imperialist gesture was made by John Bright. His resignation suggested that Bright still regarded "non-intervention" as both the beginning and the end of national policy. Gladstone, on this occasion, was naturally anxious to prove that his Midlothian Address could necessitate armed intervention in given circumstances. While both Party Leaders saw the need for military action, Gladstone evidently wanted the Dual Control whereas Salisbury wanted to strengthen the hand of the Porte.

The traditional free trade principle of the Radicals would have demanded international, free access to the Suez Canal. But it was open to question whether the rights of the bond-holders were a disconnectable consideration. A plea for arbitration was made on the occasion of the Supply Debate, but this suggestion was rejected by Chamberlain. While his approbation of the government's action was unenthusiastic, he nevertheless spoke of a policy of "smash and withdraw".⁷ His defence of the Government's action was broadly similar to that of Dilke who also sat on the Front Bench as Granville's Under-Secretary.

⁷H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 272 (1882), p. 1792, Chamberlain.

Perhaps the first critic to earn retrospectively the appellation of "Little Englander" was Sir Wilfrid Lawson. His argument in the opening debate touched upon Egypt's right to self-determination, but more significantly to the sordid implications of the financial burden imposed by the Dual Control. Significantly Lawson pointed out that taxation on the Fellaheen had been ten times per capita the amount extracted from the Indian peasant, and that half of this revenue was used to pay the salaries of Europeans living in Egypt.⁸ The anti-Imperialist argument was therefore directed particularly against the presence of the Dual Control. However, the more moderate Radicals, such as Dilke and Chamberlain, were prepared to support Britain's moral and military tutelage if it meant that a new international guarantee could be speedily negotiated.

The Porte's initiative in dissociating herself from Britain's action prompted the anti-Imperialists to suggest that Egypt could therefore administer her own budget. However in Gladstone's view such a concession would have jeopardized the delicate state of Turkish sovereignty. Lawson therefore pressed the Government to find out why the Sultan was being effectively excluded from participatory action if Britain's intervention had ostensibly been in the Porte's interest. Lawson asked whether the government would offer de facto recognition of the Egyptian administration's right to vote its own fiscal solution, provided that it laid down arms.

⁸H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 272 (1882), p. 1701, Lawson.

But while criticism came almost entirely from a handful of Liberal Radicals, it is significant that Gorst⁹ was virtually the only Conservative to criticize the Government's action.¹⁰

In October, the government obtained decisive endorsement of its actions both at Alexandria and at Tel-el-Kebir. Gladstone depicted both expeditions as the concrete embodiment of the principles of his Midlothian speeches. This he accomplished by equating the interests of the bond holders with the sanctity of international law, and by placing Arabi in the same light as a Turkish Governor. Undoubtedly, there were considerable mercantile groups within the Liberal Party with a strong interest in the Suez Canal, but even this does not satisfactorily explain Gladstone's advice to the Queen that only "infinitesimal exception" had been taken to both the naval and military operations. But while from debates it would appear that only a minority of even the Whigs would have supported indefinite occupation, Gladstone was deceiving himself in anticipating a speedy withdrawal from Egypt. Nevertheless, matters inside the Liberal Party were made easier for him than might otherwise have been the case. Evidently Bright did not wish to split the Liberal Party over

⁹ Gorst, Sir John Eldon (1835-1916). M.P. (1866-ff.). Member of the Fourth Party and close friend of Lord R. Churchill; solicitor general (1885); undersecretary for India (1886). (Conservative).

¹⁰ H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 294 (1885), p. 1666, Gorst.

the question. Irish nationalists were opposed to military action, but their effect upon the divisions was slight.¹¹ Leading Radicals were evidently optimistic that the matter would still be internationally resolved in spite of the signal failure of the ambassadorial conference at Constantinople.

Only Lawson had clearly interpreted the Egyptian involvement as a willful financial encumbrance. He did not receive any initial moral support even from Labouchere whose first reaction to British intervention was to express regret that Salisbury had not unilaterally seized Egypt. In fact he told Dilke that he saw nothing wrong with the British bombardment provided some quid pro quo was offered. When Irish members voiced disquiet, Labouchere hastened to assure his Irish contacts that Arabi's "patriotism" was of no consequence and that had the Government not taken this very necessary action "India would not be worth one years purchase."¹²

It would appear therefore that the military action in Egypt was not, generally-speaking, interpreted as an "imperialist" action on the part of the Government. Even John Morley was indifferent to anti-Imperialist arguments.¹³ There has been some comment on the fact that

¹¹H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 274 (1882), p. 2111. Division List No. 345: 354 Ayes to 17 Noes in respect of Alexandria. Division List No. 346: 230 Ayes to 25 Noes in respect of Tel-el-Kebir.

¹²S.L. Gwynn, The Life of C.W. Dilke, Vol. 1, p. 430.
H. Labouchere to C.W. Dilke, July 18, 1882.

¹³Pall Mall Gazette, July 29, 1882.

Morley glossed over the initial incidents of the Egyptian impreglio. Evidently Morley did ridicule Blunt's account of Arabi's intentions although Morley had pleaded against the Navy's opening fire at Alexandria. It was only in the fall of 1882 that Morley came to develop his argument that non-interference is the only possible mode of conduct which respects the "organic" or "natural" development of a people.¹⁴ It would appear that it was Frederick Harrison who persuaded Morley to come out against intervention in the late summer of 1882. The rift between Morley and Blunt may not have been healed yet, although Blunt came to speak of Harrison as the "soundest and most courageous man on foreign politics in the Liberal Party."¹⁵

Morley's initial endorsement of the Government's action might appear strange in view of the earlier comment that it was not England's business "to go about throwing confusion into countries that are going through the course of evolution in the regular way."¹⁶ By the end of 1883, however, Morley was beginning to view Egypt in the same light as South Africa. "Let us," he argued, "spread civilization at home, let us think of our own Hovas, Bechuanas, Fellaheen."¹⁷ Yet, although he seems

¹⁴Ibid., October 4, 1882.

¹⁵Edith Finch, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt 1840-1922, p. 156.

¹⁶J. Morley to J. Chamberlain, January 28, 1876. Quoted in D.A. Hamer, John Morley Liberal Intellectual, p. 132.

¹⁷The Times, December 13, 1883.

always to have been against Egyptian occupation he had no wish to undermine Gladstone's position in the summer of 1882. Thus Morley's recognition of the Egyptian occupation as an "imperial" venture was belated and it came after the battle of Tel-el-Kebir.

Leonard Courtney was acutely aware that criticism of the Government's conduct had been feeble at the time of the Alexandria bombardment although he did mention that all the London newspapers read by artisans were against the bombardment.¹⁸ Having previously supported a policy of military coercion to enable Balkan nationalities to obtain their independence, Courtney evidently thought that the same argument could be applied to other component parts of the Ottoman empire. But while Courtney justified the bombardment because he did not think that Arabi was truly representative of Egyptian nationalism, Courtney nonetheless hoped that the cost of the war would be met by the bond holders and not the Fellaheen.

As with Morley, the battle of Tel-el-Kebir appears to have been a turning point for Labouchere. He rapidly came round to the view that unless total evacuation was effected, the Government's policy would have to be interpreted as one of annexation. Labouchere argued that by committing herself to a possible permanent administration in Egypt,

¹⁸Leonard Courtney to Miss Potter, July 20, 1882. Quoted in G.P. Gooch, Life of Leonard Courtney, p. 174.

Britain was ignoring the concept of the sanctity of representative government. The fact that Egypt had never enjoyed fully representative government did not deter Labouchere. From now on he considered Egypt in the same light as any semi-independent state which had formerly been part of the Ottoman Empire. Labouchere therefore sold his shares in the Suez Canal Company, which according to Blunt, "fell off the scales from Pilgrim's back."¹⁹ Having done this, Labouchere now criticized the whole financial structure of Egypt. He argued that the original Dual Control should have acted as a receiver and that Egypt should have gone into liquidation paying only a fraction of the original sum to its creditors. As it was, Egypt was being permanently divested from the control of its own expenditures.²⁰ Labouchere therefore proposed that Egypt be turned into an "Eastern Belgium", with an international guarantee that Britain have access to the Suez Canal. He also bitterly denounced Arabi's banishment to Ceylon because there was, in his view, no existing law which permitted Britain to detain an Egyptian in deference of an Egyptian Khedive.²¹

After 1882, Gladstone's preoccupation appears to have centered in the area immediately to the west of the Canal. The Cabinet were agreed

¹⁹Algernon Thorold, Life of Henry Labouchere, p. 180.

²⁰Truth, October 12, 1882.

²¹Ibid., December 7, 1882.

that while British suzerainty should be maintained, the Dual Control must be abolished. Evidently Gladstone was even prepared to send Dufferin to Egypt to encourage the Fellaheen to develop some form of representative government.²² But the Whigs plainly wanted to strengthen Britain's financial control, whereas anti-Imperialists thought that Britain's ultimate strategic advantage could only be obtained by expending the greatest liberality on the Egyptians and it was this view which appears to have been supported by public opinion.²³

In February 1883, Labouchere, in seconding Lawson's amendment to the reply to the speech from the throne, pointed out that insufficient reason had been given for the employment of British forces in reconstituting the government of Egypt. He went into considerable detail to suggest that without fiscal autonomy, the Egyptians would never be able to deal with their own national debt. Labouchere thereafter was to build his main attack upon Britain's financial management of the debt. By contrast Morley's criticism of Government policy was subdued. In one of his last editorials, Morley pleaded for no increase in British personnel. He reasoned that the presence of the Consul-General was enough, and he rejected outright the appointment of a

²²R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians, p. 123.

²³Ibid., p. 131.

Receiver General for the bond holders.²⁴ Perhaps Labouchere and Morley were expressing in stronger language what most moderate Radicals were thinking at this time. Dilke and Chamberlain both wanted to reconstitute and reconvene the Chamber of Notables provided that Britain could exert adequate influence over administration of the canal.²⁵

It was thereafter with considerable relief that the government announced in 1883 that the occupying force had now been reduced to but three thousand men. But in November of that year, the annihilation of Hicks Pasha's expeditionary force posed a new threat to lower Egypt and caused the Government not only to reverse its policy of evacuation but to seriously consider the inter-dependence of the Egyptian and Sudanese question.²⁶ On June 7, Gladstone adopted a policy of withdrawal of support from the Sudan, which caused Cherif Pasha to resign as Prime Minister of Egypt. The British Cabinet's prior mistake had been in not overruling Tewfik's personal decision in 1883 to despatch Hicks to the Sudan. But now that the Sudan had become part of the Suez problem, new problems presented themselves. A large "humanitarian" or "anti-slavery"

²⁴Pall Mall Gazette, February 26, 1883.

²⁵Diary of C.W. Dilke, October 21, 1882. See S.L. Gwynn, op.cit., Vol. 1, p. 546.

²⁶Hicks, William (1830-83). British Officer in Egyptian Army, ambushed and killed November 4, 1883.

group welcomed the suggestion that Gordon be sent to the Sudan.²⁷

Following the Hicks disaster, it seemed that the whole of the Nile Valley south of Wadi Halfa would have to be abandoned. However, the War Office demanded that the Red Sea Ports--especially Suakin--be saved. The Red Sea controversy had introduced the slave-trade argument and public opinion became aroused in favour of further intervention. And yet throughout 1884, the influence of the bond holders and the Humanitarians on Government action appears to have been slight.²⁸

For a while the Gladstonian moderate Wing prevailed. The bond holders were to be paid, but not exclusively with English money. The Cabinet accepted a compromise French proposal of an international loan system guaranteed by all the Great Powers. In effect this prolonged the life of the Caisse De La Dette because these arrangements seemed the most likely means by which the British government might extricate itself from the imbroglio. Undoubtedly, the "forward" wing of the Liberal Party would have preferred to substitute unilateral British

²⁷This appointment provided a way of getting Gordon out of the quagmire that Granville and Hartington had got into over Leopold's employment of Gordon in the Congo, (see Lowe, The Reluctant Imperialists, p. 56). Also of relevance is the claim that W.T. Stead put forward Gordon's name as a result of an interview he had with him on January 9, 1884, (see Whyte, The Life of W.T. Stead, Vol. 1, p. 104).

²⁸R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, op. cit., p. 148.

financial control for international control, and on August 2, Lord Northbrook. was sent to advise Egypt to break a previous international agreement and divert the surplus from debt revenues to make up its administrative deficit. But Britain failed to receive backing from the international commission which had sat in London in June of that year to write a unilateral guarantee for Egypt. France would not permit this, even though Egypt's financial imbalance had reached such absurd proportions that at the end of 1883, she had a deficit of 1 million from a total budget of 8 million (in addition to having been already called upon to pay a 4 million indemnity for the damage done to Alaxendria). Gladstone would surely have welcomed some suspension of the law of liquidation, but it was a question of sacrificing either the bond holders or the British taxpayers and, in the absence of a general European agreement, only the latter course was open to the Government.

In 1884 Dilke had wanted to hand Egypt over to a joint control and administration supervised by the Great Powers but he had to acknowledge that Britain did not have a free hand in Egyptian affairs. But two years earlier, Dilke had been in broad agreement with Labouchere insofar that Britain should ward off other Powers and hand Egypt over to the Egyptians, but preserving influence over the Canal itself. Even Chamberlain had wanted to give the Chamber of Notables the powers

previously vested in the Dual Control.

By 1884 Anglo-German relations were complicating the situation. Bismarck's opening dispute with Britain had originated in Angra Pequena and this had led to friction in the Cameroons and in Togoland. Evidently Bismarck wished to give Gladstone as little room to manoeuvre in as possible.²⁹ France's previous lack of co-operation in Egypt might also be explained in the light of Bismarck's policy. On the occasion of the failure of the Berlin Conference at the end of 1884, Bismarck had wrongly calculated that Britain wanted to annex new territory, but when Egypt no longer appeared as a useful tool, France (in February 1885) agreed to accept British financial proposals which she had previously rejected. The more moderate proposals outlined above guaranteeing Egypt's solvency were thus used as the basis of the London Agreement signed in March 1885.

Gladstone had consistently tried to please the "Moderates" as well as the bond holders and the "Humanitarians".³⁰ Gladstone's justification for the ill-fated expedition by Gordon³¹ included not only

²⁹C.J. Lowe, op. cit., p. 63.

³⁰H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 294 (1885), p. 849, W.E. Gladstone.

³¹Gordon, Charles George (1833-85). Took part in capture of Peking; employed by Ishmail to open up African equatorial provinces (1874-76); resigned when thwarted over attempt to suppress slave trade; sent to rescue Egyptian garrison in Sudan preparatory to its abandonment (1884).

a plea for the establishment of an orderly government at Khartoum but an additional pledge to suppress the slave trade. This was in addition to shouldering the burden of defending Egypt and securing the evacuation of the Sudan. The Gordon disaster measurably influenced the Moderates, who initially wanted to hold the Mahdi at Berber or even Khartoum. But an amendment put forward by John Morley argued against any new Nile expeditions and it secured over one hundred votes.³² The Conservatives were aware that the Forward Imperialists within the Liberal Party could scarcely command forty-two votes. But although they capitalized on the confusion of the Government, not even the Conservatives urged the creation of a Protectorate; indeed not until they went into opposition in 1892 would the Conservatives press for the re-conquest of the lower Nile.

In 1885, the anti-Imperialists emerged as a more distinct subgroup within the radical-wing and this development caused a serious conflict between Morley and Chamberlain. Harrison, Courtney and Lawson, as well as other Newcastle supporters waged a vigorous public campaign against public involvement in the Sudan which infuriated Chamberlain. Morley confided that he would quit political life rather than support further punitive action against the Mahdi.³³ Frederick Harrison thought

³²H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 294 (1885), p. 849, Morley.

³³J. Morley to J. Chamberlain, February 14, 1885. Quoted in Hamer, op. cit., p. 143.

that Courtney and Morley might at the most get from thirty to forty English members to support them independently of Lawson and Labouchere. But Lawson applauded Courtney and Morley for waging a lone battle and compared their unpopular stand with his own struggle in 1882. Morley, who was acutely conscious of his academic reputation within the Party, moved an amendment regretting the despatch of the punitive expedition in the first place and observing that "none of these things would have happened if a so-called clique of doctrinaire philosophers had had any weight with the government."³⁴ Courtney seconded Morley and avoided repetitive argument concerning whether the Suez Canal should have been internationalized. He spoke of Gordon's conduct as constituting a personal, rather than a national disaster because the Mahdi's power was confined to such a small area of the Sudan that he could not afford to cross the desert to Egypt where he would only incur the hostility of a native population. Courtney was particularly effective in twitting the Moderates of the party by taking Harcourt to task. Perhaps Harcourt can be thought of as a Little Englander in respect to events in Africa after 1894, but as a front-bencher on such an occasion as this he was obliged to second Gladstone. He admitted that the Government's policy appeared to be only "to butcher and bolt" but he adopted an essentially anti-Imperialist position by deprecating the Tory Front Bench suggestion

³⁴H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 294 (1885), p. 1071, Morley.

that Egypt should now be viewed in the same light as India. It underlined the Liberal hope for a quick withdrawal. Harcourt argued that Egypt for political purposes was a great deal more in Europe than in Africa. He wondered if Bengal could be administered for a single day in such circumstances.³⁵

Eighteen months earlier, in December 1883, Labouchere and Chamberlain had entered into detailed correspondence on the Sudanese question and had found themselves in broad agreement. But Chamberlain admitted that at the time foreign affairs were only of secondary interest to him. But Labouchere who subsequently considered himself quite well-informed on Gordon's movements and was evidently in close communication with Herbert Gladstone, was of the opinion that it was Sir Evelyn Baring who had detailed Gordon to go to Khartoum. Until then it was believed that Gordon had intended to go only as far as Suakin to relieve the garrison.³⁶ Labouchere had asked in the House whether Gordon's intentions were pacific and had obtained from Gladstone an affirmative nebulous reply.

In February 1885, Labouchere attempted to come to agreement with one of the Mahdi's representatives whom he had heard of through Arabi's former chief of police at Cairo.³⁷ In the following month, Labouchere

³⁵H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 294 (1885), p. 1440, Harcourt.

³⁶W.S. Blunt, Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt (New York, 1922).

³⁷H. Labouchere to W.S. Blunt, February 20, 1885. Quoted in A. Thorold, op. cit., p. 196.

summarized the proposals he had formulated. They were based on the supposition that the Mahdi was the rightful temporal ruler of the Sudan, that the Sudan's independence would be guaranteed in return for a guarantee from the Mahdi that foreigners might be allowed to trade there. In addition the Mahdi would make provision for consular offices; and he would have to effectively prohibit the export of slaves (although this last point was expressed faintly).³⁸ It does appear that Labouchere had discussed these points with Herbert Gladstone, but W.E. Gladstone was evidently tiring of Labouchere's performance and on one occasion rebuked him for making an "inopportune and superficial speech".³⁹ Labouchere's performance may not have been particularly original but it re-emphasized the position of the great majority of Radicals in the House, i.e. that the Khedive should not continue to receive British support as an Egyptian ruler and that the payment of the debt interest should not precede the expenses of the Anglo-Egyptian Administration. But while Labouchere did much to harm his own reputation during this period, since his banter and persiflage did not match the serious tone of Parliament, his frequent correspondence with Herbert Gladstone nevertheless gave his intrigue some significance.

³⁸H. Labouchere to W.S. Blunt, March 4, 1885. Quoted in ibid., p. 197.

³⁹H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 296 (1885), p. (400), W.E. Gladstone.

In 1883, the Imperial Federation League had been founded and almost immediately this body urged the Government to create a Protectorate over the Sudan. This suggestion was endorsed by Whigs such as Hartington, who viewed the formation of a stable government in the Sudan as a necessary minimum task before any withdrawal could be contemplated.⁴⁰ However, Chamberlain still opposed any suggestion of a Protectorate over the Sudan and he had maintained his hope that Britain would leave both Egypt and the Sudan as soon as Gordon and Wolseley could get away.⁴¹ But at this juncture, Chamberlain was far more pre-occupied with domestic matters and particularly his Unauthorized Programme. Thus the split in the Liberal Party did not follow the more serious "revolt" of the following year, when the Liberal Unionist Party was formed.

Anti-Imperialism could not yet be considered a positive factor in Radical thinking, but had it not been for the Irish predicament, by 1885 it may well have been. John Morley was now considered the most serious-minded of the anti-Imperialists, but even he was prepared to give a vote for conscience only when the Government's existence was not in danger.⁴² As a Party, the Liberals were still pledged to respect the

⁴⁰Bernard Holland, Life of Eighth Duke of Devonshire, Vol. 2, p. 2.

⁴¹The Times, January 30, 1885.

⁴²Ibid., April 2, 1885.

ideals of nationalism, but quite clearly they had not come to a unified understanding of a definition of nationalism, its limitations or of the means by which it was to be maintained.

Only Gladstone's immense prestige could sustain the party's overall unity and credibility. The sudden crisis of Pendjeh (*supra* Chapter 5) caused Gladstone to look at the Sudan in a quite different perspective and the pressure on the Northwest Frontier of India enabled him to disentangle himself from the Mahdi's "threat". The remaining questions concerning the administration of the Sudan, the retention of the Port of Suakin, construction of a railway and pursuit of Osman Digna he would now treat on an ad hoc basis. Only a few Whigs such as Rosebery and Hartington saw the need to leave off keeping up the facade of respecting the Concert and to focus attention instead on German moves. But with the introduction of anti-slavery arguments, Labouchere was probably correct when he pointed out that not one member of the Liberal Party could formulate a motion upon which the Party could agree.⁴³ But by April 1885 the popular thirst for revenge against the Mahdi had subsided.

Balkan Ramifications

The new Conservative administration of Lord Salisbury was better equipped to formulate a coherent policy. It had no qualms about

⁴³H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 294 (1885), p. 1677, Labouchere.

co-operating with Turkey and in August of 1885, Sir Henry Drummond Wolff was sent to Egypt as pleni-potentiary where he would remain until January 1877.⁴⁴

A slight digression at this point is necessary to recall that the destruction of Gordon, the coup of Prince Alexander in Bulgaria, and the Russian threat to Pendjeh all occurred during the early part of 1885. The Bulgarian coup d'etat had destroyed Britain's policy at the Congress of Berlin by once more creating the bogey of a "Big Bulgaria". However, on this occasion, the spectre of a "Big Bulgaria" represented a thwarting of Russian expansion and the Egyptian question became relatively less important. Salisbury intended to withdraw from Egypt in return for a Turkish guarantee of Britain's access to the Dardanelle Straits. But Turkey did not want to antagonize Russia, and she made any accommodation impossible by her determination to reconquer Dongola. Drummond Wolff got no further than the signing of a joint convention on October 24, 1885 providing for a joint examination of the methods to be adopted. But the fact that the Sultan was unnerved by the Bulgarian Crisis did at least mean that he could not quarrel with Britain for continuing to keep in possession of Egypt.

⁴⁴Wolff, Sir Henry Drummond Charles (1830-1908). Member of "Fourth Party" (1880), a founder of Primrose League.

Radicals generally opposed the Drummond-Wolff mission because they suspected that Salisbury did not seriously intend to leave Egypt. Humanitarians such as Forster believed that Britain was compromising herself in even taking up the matter with the Sultan. Yet Radical anti-Imperialists were initially pleased with Drummond Wolff's appointment; Labouchere noted that Drummond-Wolff had frequently censured the Khedive (the Sultan's Viceroy) and his previous independent reputation within the Conservative Party qualified him as the one most likely to expedite evacuation.⁴⁵

Other Radical anti-Imperialists were disenchanted with the Mission. Lawson saw no prospect of withdrawal by means of consultation with either the Khedive or the Sultan.⁴⁶ In fact radical "Little Englanders" could not collectively make up their minds as to whether consultation with Turkey was or was not necessary. Protracted delay in Constantinople only irritated the Radicals who denied that Britain had a moral role to play and they were perhaps disturbed by a realization that they were becoming more and more isolated from an English public opinion that had become acclimatized to Britain remaining in Egypt.

Only one Radical, Sir George Campbell, who had consistently voted for speedy evacuation from Egypt, felt that Sir Drummond Wolff's

⁴⁵H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 300 (1885), p. 1200, Labouchere.

⁴⁶H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 300 (1885), p. 1207, Lawson.

mission was really worth the cost.⁴⁷ But the debate to charge the cost of the Mission split the Liberal Party down the middle. Bradlaugh--seconded by Labouchere--motioned to censure the government for not making use of Turkish troops in Egypt, and this division produced surprising support for Bradlaugh's amendment.⁴⁸ It might be assumed that all Radical anti-Imperialists felt that Drummond Wolff's Mission was a waste of time and expenditure. Sir George Campbell also apparently changed his mind when he subsequently indicated that future withdrawal from Egypt could be effected only by consultation with the European powers.⁴⁹

If a consensus of radical anti-Imperialists could have been obtained, it might have indicated a general wish to reopen negotiations with France. Throughout 1887 both France and Russia applied increasing pressure upon the Porte. Radical anti-Imperialists trimmed their sails; Labouchere now pleaded for a re-strengthening of the concert of Europe and he denounced the original intention of Drummond Wolff's role because no inkling of Britain's terms had been given either to France or to Russia. In his view, no solution could be obtained by unilateral action. If the matter involved a sphere of influence it should be turned over

⁴⁷H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 302 (1885), p. 1558, Campbell.

⁴⁸Division List Ibid.

⁴⁹H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 310 (1887), p. 322, Campbell.

to the consideration of the Concert of Europe.⁵⁰

But beneath the flippancy of Labouchere's speeches lay a considerable grasp of detail. Relations with the European powers had become very complicated due to the situation in Bulgaria. The concern for Bulgaria created a triangular contest between Britain, Austria and Russia, which caused Salisbury in 1887 to sign the Mediterranean Agreement with Austria and Italy so as to guarantee the status quo of the Balkans. Both Salisbury and Bismarck were prepared to support Prince Alexander of Battenburg because a "nationalist" Bulgaria provided as useful a buffer to Russia as had the previously conceived Eastern Rumelia. Salisbury also believed that Serbian aspirations might, at the same time, be encouraged but at the expense of Bulgaria and not Macedonia. In 1886, Salisbury was to protest against Russia's kidnapping of Prince Alexander but he was powerless to act. Austria would not help Britain; Germany was preoccupied with the Boulanger "scare" and conceded Bulgaria as Russia's sphere of interest. Yet Labouchere denounced Salisbury as the great "perturbator of the peace", on the grounds that Salisbury had plotted with the recently deceased Stafford Northcote⁵¹ to place secret funds with the friends of the deposed Alexander on the expectation of his being re-enthroned. Labouchere even claimed that blue books had been

⁵⁰H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 319 (1887), p. 84, Labouchere.

⁵¹Northcote, Sir Stafford Henry. 1st Earl of Iddesleigh (1818-87), M.P. (1855-85); leader of the opposition (1880-85); foreign secretary (1886). (Conservative).

cut off the previous December in order to conceal transactions.⁵²

Labouchere's denunciation was supported by such a "Moderate" as Sir William Harcourt.

Shortly afterwards, the matter resolved itself by the accession of a Prince (Saxe-Coburg) in Bulgaria and--unknown to Labouchere--by the incorporation of both Italy and Austria into the "Mediterranean Agreement" a move designed to prevent what Salisbury regarded as the ultimate danger, an alignment of either France or Russia with the Triple Alliance. Labouchere protested vigorously against Salisbury's Russophobic action because this showed Salisbury to be working against the pan-Slavist group in defiance of the concert. Labouchere subsequently reacted bitterly when he learned of the Mediterranean Agreement. But this arrangement was a master stroke insofar that it diverted Russia's attentions away from both the Balkans and Afghanistan to the Far East thus measurably improving conditions on the Northwest Frontier.

The crux of the matter was that by now the majority of anti-Imperialists saw no reason why Russia should be kept out of Constantinople. In fact many Imperialists such as Lord Randolph Churchill believed that such a move posited no danger to Britain. Anti-Imperialists appealed to the Concert of Europe because in the Liberal tradition there appeared no substitute although most anti-Imperialists--like Labouchere--inwardly knew that the concert lacked the coherence to give real substance to the

⁵²H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 310 (1887), p. 94, Labouchere.

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⁵²H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 310 (1887), p. 94, Labouchere.

Treaty of Berlin. Thus in the Bulgarian Crisis, Labouchere had objected to Salisbury's deliberate resistance to the Pan-Slavic Movement ostensibly out of respect for the concert. In point of fact, Pan-Slavism was shortly to be discredited although this did not mean, however, that Labouchere welcomed any exacerbation of Russo-Turkish relations.

Anti-Imperialists consistently showed indifference to imperialist nationalism on moral grounds. They had no confidence in Britain's self-assumed role of "international policeman". This is well illustrated in their reaction to the Armenian question. Since the Cyprus Convention of 1878, the Porte had tried not to needlessly antagonize Armenians, a minority of whom were still living on the Ottoman side of the Russo-Turkish border. The Liberal Party had strong connections with the Anglo-Armenian Association, but a unilateral protest to the Porte on the question--which would have been welcomed by the Nonconformists--might have seriously disturbed Moslems living on the inside of the Indian border. At one session, Gladstone spoke of "positive obligations" to put down atrocities, but the Midlothian magic had gone, for Gladstone found himself at that time addressing less than a quorum of forty members.⁵³ When the matter was raised in Supply, Labouchere, Lawson and Harcourt all showed indifference to the matter; the concerted action

⁵³H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 336 (1889), p. 1320, W.E. Gladstone.

demanded in accordance with the Congress of Berlin was unworkable.

Labouchere scorned the Nonconformist sensibilities of the Party when he cited the quid pro quo by which Britain guaranteed Asia Minor to the Turks on condition that they governed it well, as nonsense. Labouchere said he wished success to any attempt by people less barbarous than the Turks to help the Christians, but Britain should not imagine that Eastern peoples could conduct themselves in the way that English people did.⁵⁴

In March 1890, the Russo-Turkish Entente authorized movement of Moslems from the Caucasus to the Ottoman Empire, where they might have clashed with Christian minorities. Labouchere would have been willing for Russia to have unilaterally occupied Armenia to mitigate the situation by her own efforts. Labouchere argued that as long as the Ottoman government was dominant in Armenia, the Kurds would display cruelty. He suggested therefore that it would be better for Britain to repudiate the Cyprus Convention and the Turkish Agreement so that Russia and Turkey could fight it out alone. Such an attitude could be entertained by others besides Labouchere who no longer considered Russian exclusion from the Straits to be imperative.⁵⁵

The Liberals and the Return to the Sudan

The "Jingo" fever aroused by Gordon's death quickly subsided and

⁵⁴H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 339 (1889), p. 1568, Labouchere.

⁵⁵H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 348 (1890), p. 185, Labouchere.

by April 1885 the Cabinet felt able to retire altogether from the Sudan. It seemed as if the arguments of the anti-Imperialists had prevailed over those of the Moderates. Gladstone declared that he would not remain in the Sudan, "Pendjeh or no Pendjeh".⁵⁶ Nor were there to be any authorizations to move back into the Sudan during either Salisbury's First or Second Administrations, but there was to be considerable activity on or near the coast of the Red Sea where Salisbury subsequently proclaimed a naval blockade. Suakin was retained by the Conservatives, and food produce was destroyed in an effort to subdue Osman Digna, but this only increased the number of troops fleeing to Suakin itself.⁵⁷ In 1888, Campbell and Labouchere raised the question of whether British troops were to be used at Suakin.⁵⁸ No straightforward reply was forthcoming. A few days later in a supply debate, Morley blamed both parties for the impasse that had been reached; he foresaw in the coming year a repetition of the "aimless operations" of 1884-1885. He denied the suggestion that Suakin had any value as a base from which slave trading activities could be eliminated. Labouchere pointed out that the real center of slavery was at Jeddah.⁵⁹ Lawson felt it was the most interesting

⁵⁶S.L. Gwynn, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 117.

⁵⁷Osman Digna (1836-1926). Follower of the Mahdi; defeated Baker Pasha (1884); played decisive role in capture of Khartoum; defeated by Grenfell at Suakin (1888); captured near Tokar (1900).

⁵⁸H.P.D., 3rd. Ser., Vol. 331 (1888), p. 163.

⁵⁹H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 331 (1888), p. 770, Labouchere.

debate of the session, and he used the occasion to criticize what he thought was the government's intention to erect a self-governing Empire and then he moved for withdrawal before another "hideous blunder" was contemplated. This Debate revealed a sharp contrast between the "Moderates" and the anti-Imperialists. It also indicated that voting on the question of the Suakin operation was approximately along party lines.⁶⁰

The new target of censure for the anti-Imperialists was in the person of Kitchener.⁶¹ Morley charged that Kitchener was committing the same mistake that the Italians had at Massowah by willfully alienating the coastal tribes who valued their independence. Because in the minds of these tribesmen Kitchener "represented" Egypt, he was, in effect, driving them onto the side of the insurgent Dervishes.⁶²

It is noteworthy that Gladstone by now had rejected the notion that there was some prospect for putting down slavery in the area.⁶³

⁶⁰Division List No. 324, 101 Ayes to 136 Noes.

⁶¹Kitchener, Horatio Herbert (1850-1916). 1st Earl of Kitchener. Governor general of East Sudan (1886); Sirdar of Egyptian army (1892); annihilated Khalifa's army at Omdurman (1898); governor general of Sudan (1899); chief of staff South Africa (1899); commander in chief India (1902-09).

⁶²H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 332 (1888), p. 462, Morley.

⁶³H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 332 (1888), p. 485, W.E. Gladstone.

But Kitchener's military policy was successful, and Egyptian sovereignty was later proclaimed over the East Sudan. Yet it was the slavery argument which clearly divided the "Nonconformists" from the anti-Imperialists. Labouchere asked why it was that the Nonconformist conscience was silent at the news of continued hostilities in East Sudan.⁶⁴ Sir George Campbell pointed out that Britain had helped Egypt to retain territory sixty-seven miles beyond Suakin merely to keep their base.⁶⁵

These habitual complaints from a few Radical critics perhaps sound commonplace. The great majority of the "Moderates" in the Liberal Party remained quiet, although they often supported radical amendments to relevant Service Estimates. On the eve of the return of the Liberals to power in 1892, Morley offered his summary of the previous government's policy with respect to Egypt. This speech underlined the great difference that now existed between Morley and Chamberlain over the projected retention of Egypt. Morley cited Drummond-Wolff's mission as a pledge of Salisbury's good faith to get out of Egypt within three years of May 1887, had France permitted Turkey to sign the projected agreement. He also cited Chamberlain's speech of 1884 to the effect that those who believed Britain had a role as custodians of Egypt's

⁶⁴H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 351 (1891), p. 1131, Labouchere.

⁶⁵H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 351 (1891), p. 1136, Campbell.

welfare were advocating an extent of Empire, even though Chamberlain had changed his position with respect to Britain's presence in Egypt so greatly that he now spoke of the retention of Egypt on the grounds that Egypt had the best cotton growing area.⁶⁶

Yet after the withdrawal of British troops in 1885 to South Egypt, the only incident which the anti-Imperialists could consistently seize on as proof that the government did not really want to leave Egypt was the retention of Suakin. During the following six years we find that anti-Imperialists generally supported the expectations of the abortive Drummond-Wolff mission insofar as it might have facilitated evacuation. When France refused to permit Turkey to ratify the potential agreement, anti-Imperialists urged appeal to the concert and when that appeared increasingly improbable they suggested negotiation with France. The Moderates and the anti-Imperialists had both opposed the retention of Sudan on principle but for different reasons: the Moderates; because it made fulfillment of their mission to restore Egyptian finances more difficult and the anti-Imperialists, because it made the relinquishing of Britain's hold on Egypt more distant. The Liberal Imperialists under Rosebery, were far less vocal, yet as events were to show they were nearer the center of power.

⁶⁶H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 351 (1891), p. 1136, Chamberlain.

There is little evidence that the anti-Imperialists could appreciate Salisbury's empirical approach to the problem of Egypt as a whole. Throughout the previous six years Salisbury was clearly determined to hold on to both Constantinople and Cairo. The Mediterranean Agreement had been designed to protect Constantinople in the event either of a Franco-Prussian war or of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. If Salisbury himself had little faith that the Drummond-Wolff talks would have succeeded, at least his authorization of them showed that he might have conceded some ground with respect to Egypt in order to bolster his understanding with Turkey, but no more. When in 1899 it became evident that France would have permitted the Drummond-Wolff's Anglo-Turkish Convention--which it had forbidden Turkey to sign two years earlier--it was clear that Britain now felt so dependent upon Sir Evelyn Baring for advice that she could not afford to leave Egypt on any terms, if only because the Khedive would not have lasted six months. It is this realization that prompted Salisbury to keep any other European powers out of the Nile Valley. According to Salisbury's calculation of Britain's national interests, it was necessary to apply methods used in India to Egypt both internally and externally. By contrast, anti-Imperialists, fully aware that the presence of the Khedive and the rights of the bond holders were upheld by the British Government, often confused the Government's ultimate intentions. They overlooked the fact that the route to India had previously been safeguarded

to maintain parity of influence with France and to keep a loose check on the Porte. However they failed to recognize the indication of France's impotence in Gambetta's fall, and this failure made any plans of bilateral solution to the Egyptian Question highly unlikely. The anti-Imperialists would have to acknowledge that in the event that it were to become difficult to prop up despots, it would be necessary to turn such "despotized" subjects into allied people.

CHAPTER VII

UGANDA: FOCAL POINT OF ANTI-IMPERIALIST ANGER

By 1887 European diplomacy, as conducted by Bismarck and Salisbury, was extremely complex. But brief reference should be made to it, if only to suggest a possible context for the acrimonious correspondence conducted on the Uganda Question within the Liberal Party itself.

When in 1887, the Triple Alliance was renewed, Britain's relations with the Central Powers could be described as "cordial". Britain's Mediterranean Agreement, signed in that year with Italy, had been as much encouraged by Bismarck as by Salisbury. Although this Agreement did not make Britain a member of the Triple Alliance, it did guarantee stability for the status quo in the East Mediterranean. And Salisbury would be the one most able to see that the Triple Alliance and the Re-Insurance Treaty were not likely to be turned against France, since all three "Treaties" were designed to preserve equilibrium.

Thus when, in 1888, Bismarck approached Salisbury with the aim of bringing Britain into the Triple Alliance, Salisbury declined the offer. In the current situation it would unnecessarily tie his hand, and the imminence of the Naval Defence Act (*infra* chapter 9) in any case

assumed the future independence of British policy. Salisbury wished to place Britain in a position of the least possible dependence upon Bismarck's diplomatic co-operation since there was a danger that Germany would prove less tractable in the future. Yet, in spite of its defensive intent, anti-Imperialists challenged the wisdom of the Mediterranean Agreement. Labouchere was the first to raise the matter in the Commons when he challenged the government to produce its recent correspondence with Italy.¹

However, the Agreement did not antagonize the Moderates within the Liberal Party. Gladstone publicly dissociated himself from Labouchere's motion on the grounds that publication would "fetter Britain's discretion in future contingencies."² Labouchere viewed Europe as composed of two armed camps, and urged that Britain should disengage herself from Europe in the same way that the United States had always done.³ But anti-Imperialists hit upon a more serious point in the observation that any move which antagonized France would prolong Britain's stay in Egypt.⁴ This should not imply that anti-Imperialists

¹H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 322 (1888), p. 152, Labouchere.

²H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 327 (1888), p. 1187, W.E. Gladstone.

³H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 339 (1888), p. 1542, Labouchere.

⁴H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 355 (1891), p. 771, Campbell.

always criticized or doubted Salisbury's ability to handle the European situation, but it did underline their preference for a Francophile policy to a Germanophile one. By nature Salisbury's successor at the Foreign Office, Rosebery, was Francophile although the overall effect of his three years at the Foreign Office (1892-95), as far as African affairs were concerned, was to cause a deterioration in Anglo-French relations.

In the face of this, the Franco-Russian Alliance suggested as early as 1890 was clearly a grave breach in the Bismarckian system. Having "cut the wire" with Russia, it was but natural that in 1890 Germany should make a substantial agreement with Britain (the Anglo-German Agreement of 1890). This agreement which provided a political basis for a future Uganda and Kenya deserves mention. It was a product of diplomatic expediency, it may be related to Sir Evelyn Baring's observation that if Britain were to remain in Egypt for many years, then Britain must secure control of the source of the Nile. Anti-Imperialists mistakenly supposed that the agreement implied Salisbury's faith in the viability of the Chartered East Africa Company. In point of fact, it was more immediately occasioned by the Somali massacre of German colonials in November 6, 1889, and by movement of British East African colonists into Uganda, which by Peters' work had really belonged

to Germany according to the earlier 1886 Anglo-German Convention.⁵

The new agreement of 1890 increased the polarity between anti-Imperialists and Nonconformists, the latter pressing for added political responsibilities to be given all Chartered Companies in order to safeguard the treatment of "natives". Attacking this proposal, anti-Imperialists charged that it was the Chartered Companies themselves who were employing slaves.⁶

The Anglo-German Treaty itself obliged the Sultan to give up an area west of Lake Victoria and Nyanza, which forestalled Rhodes' dream of a Cape-to-Cairo railroad, a result which anti-Imperialists found reassuring.⁷ A quid pro quo was effected by which Germany yielded Zanzibar to Britain in exchange for Heligoland. However the Germans were willing to leave Britain with the Stevenson Road between Nyasaland and Lake Tanganyika.

Understandably, Salisbury did not encourage a comprehensive debate upon the Anglo-German agreement. From the opposition benches

⁵Peters, Carl (1856-1918). Founder of German Colonization Society (1884); founder of German East African Company (1885); imperial high commissioner to district of Kilimanjaro (1891); formed company in London for exploitation of Rhodesia and Portuguese East Africa (1898).

⁶H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 343 (1890), p. 1438, Labouchere.

⁷H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 347 (1890), p. 773, Labouchere.

Harcourt objected to the fact that the whole of the agreement was being presented to the Commons in the form of an Address.⁸ Imperial affairs were thus beclouded and sidetracked by constitutional questions. But one of the Articles--dealing with the future of Heligoland--was dealt with in the form of a Bill. Some anti-Imperialists voted against the Bill probably to demonstrate that the House of Commons now had de facto powers of treaty making. But Labouchere pointed out that the 1881 South Africa Act (infra chapter 8) had never been submitted to the Commons because the Lords would have thrown it out. For his part, Labouchere was glad that Heligoland was got rid of if only because Britain would not be tempted to waste money upon its fortifications. At the same time, Labouchere warned that because of an 1862 Treaty, France would have to be party to any future status of Zanzibar. But Storey said that Heligoland was worthless and he disputed Germany and Britain's right to barter territory which was not theirs to begin with.⁹

But anti-Imperialists were pleased with its sequel, the Anglo-French Agreement, and noted with satisfaction that Salisbury was prepared to jeopardize Protestant missionary work in Madagascar for the

⁸H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 347 (1890), p. 773, Harcourt.

⁹H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 347 (1890), p. 955, Storey.

sake of harmony with France.¹⁰ Salisbury's Mediterranean Agreement had of course not been a declaration of friendship for Italy, but a means of keeping in closer communication with Germany. By the making of the Anglo-French Agreement on August 5, 1890, Salisbury risked disfavour with Italy by signing away the Sahara to France although he would not permit further French gains in Tunisia. Further, to guarantee French recognition of Britain's protectorate in Zanzibar and Pemba, he let France have Madagascar and extensive territories in Central and West Sudan. Salisbury believed that this might also remove French pressure on Egypt and the Nile.¹¹ The following year Salisbury went as far as to tell the Italians to evacuate Kassala.

When Rosebery entered the Foreign Office in 1892, he inherited a situation in which Uganda had been virtually sealed off. Britain's share of East Africa now extended northwards all the way from Lake Victoria to the "confines" of Egypt. Although he was not Prime Minister, Rosebery's position was solidly enough entrenched that he could employ a threat of resignation to bring Gladstone's Cabinet to heel.¹² During the next three years relations between Britain and France would deteriorate

¹⁰H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 348 (1890), p. 545, Campbell.

¹¹H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 348 (1890), p. 458, Salisbury.

¹²C.J. Lowe, The Reluctant Imperialists, p. 172.

in Africa although they improved with respect to the Far East. A broad continuity in policy implied that most Liberals applauded Salisbury's work of the previous five years by which Britain had broken out of the isolation that Gladstone had imposed upon her. At no point did Rosebery seriously consider evacuation of Egypt which for a while pleased the Triple Alliance. But Rosebery was to commit one great blunder by his ill-fated attempt to secure an Anglo-Congolese agreement in 1894. By this year Germany had clearly given up the idea of a Quadrilateral Alliance--hinted at in 1890--and she even weakened the Mediterranean Agreement by deliberately turning France against England, which she achieved by adopting a pro-French line in the Cameroons and the Congo, and in the Far East by a resurrection of the Samoa question.¹³

In retrospect, it was with reference to Russia and the Far East that Rosebery obtained his greatest success. Not only did he prevent Russia's encroachment upon the possessions of Hindu Kush but he was kept from coming to a comprehensive agreement with Russia on the Eastern Question itself by only the Armenian Question. These successes were of little consequence in Africa, where Rosebery appeared to be thinking in terms of a closer accommodation with Germany (via Austria), with the object of employing a common policy against Russia at the Dardanelles.

¹³Ibid., p. 174.

On March 5, 1894, Rosebery approached King Leopold because he was apprehensive of a future Franco-German collaboration in the Cameroons, and because he wished to prevent a close co-operation between Belgium and France (both of which countries had already planned an expedition to the Bahr-el-Ghazel). The proposed Anglo-Congolese Treaty conceded the "Lado Enclave" to Belgium, and in its Third Article, leased to Britain a twenty kilometer strip of the Congo behind German East Africa. Rosebery later had to drop this Third Article because he could not carry his cabinet with him. In consequence Belgium signed a fresh treaty with France and all that was left of the Anglo-Congolese Treaty was a Belgian recognition of "Britain's sphere of influence on the Nile." The Third Article--which was disputed by Germany could have been avoided had Rosebery studied the Anglo-German Agreement of 1890 more carefully. France herself had contested the validity of the Anglo-Congolese Agreement by virtue of her own 1884 Agreement with the International Association of the Congo and she particularly objected to the limitation of the Congo's sphere of influence. Anti-Imperialist opposition to any action which might provoke France caused anti-Imperialists to view the Anglo-Congolese Treaty with alarm. Labouchere went so far as to describe it as a "quasi declaration of war."¹⁴

¹⁴W.L. Langer, European Alliances and Alignments 1871-1890, p. 265.

Yet in the meantime, Rosebery had won an important victory over the Moderates and the anti-Imperialists. Upon the occasion of his accession to the Premiership April 12, 1894, an official announcement was made that Uganda would be administered as a British protectorate.¹⁵ Even Harcourt who next to Morley was the most "anti-Imperialist" of the Cabinet Members had reluctantly accepted this decision, if only to permit the continuation of the Ministry.¹⁶ The Uganda Debates played a most important part in the Imperial controversy. In these, the most contentious issue was the building of the Uganda Railway from Mombassa to Kikuyu which had been part of Salisbury's Dongola strategy and whose extension to Lake Victoria he would urge in 1895. On November 23, 1892, one month before the East Africa Company's charter was to expire, the Liberal Cabinet confirmed the appointment of Sir Gerald Portal as Imperial Commissioner to Uganda. Portal's Report was at last presented to the Cabinet on December 20, 1893 but it merely suggested that Uganda be administered as a "sphere of influence".¹⁷ Anti-Imperialists suspected that Portal had been given blank treaty forms and that his entire mission and subsequent Report had been rigged. Yet it was the Nonconformist lobby and not the Report, which upheld Britain's need to "civilize"

¹⁵H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 23 (1894), p. 180.

¹⁶R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians, p.328.

¹⁷A.G. Gardiner, Life of W.V. Harcourt, Vol. 2, p. 112.

Uganda. As early as September 20, 1892, a memorandum prepared by Sir Percy Anderson--the Foreign Office's expert on African affairs--had been circulated in the Cabinet and this paper, according to Harcourt "was in the highest Jingo tune."¹⁸ Anti-Imperialists employed the most virulent language with respect to future Uganda policy. Labouchere not only doubted the independence of Portal's judgement but even insinuated that his party "would steal like magpies".¹⁹ Labouchere emphasized that Uganda--which he reminded the House had not even been discovered until 1862 by Speke--was seven hundred miles from the coast. Evidently anti-Imperialists were not opposed on principle to viable coastal trading activity but Labouchere claimed that Salisbury had only sent in the East Africa Company to forestall the Germans and had not intended to permanently "protect" the area. Morley agreed on this point: "I would point out to the House that so long as gentlemen opposite me were in office, nothing was done, and not a word was spoken to show that they did not contemplate the abandonment of Uganda after the withdrawal of the East Africa Company."²⁰

Labouchere's "revolt" on the question of Portal's mission did

¹⁸A.G. Gardiner, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 159.

¹⁹H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 10 (1893), p. 549, Labouchere.

²⁰H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 8 (1893), p. 328, Morley.

not seriously threaten the government.²¹ But Labouchere accused the government of withholding from the House the contents of another Report (Lugard's Report) on the state of the Company. He refused to concede that the Government should accept responsibility for Company Treaties, because these had expired and had not been ratified with the Foreign Office in accordance with the original terms of the East Africa Charter. He anticipated arguments of later imperial critics by suggesting that such Protectorates as Uganda actually impeded the march of domestic policy:

I am perfectly satisfied to look after the interests and well-being of the British Empire. I do consider that in a large enough business we should take the beam out of our own eye before taking the mote out of the eyes of Chinese and Africans.²²

It is possible to extract certain characteristic arguments of the anti-Imperialists in connection with the Uganda debate, and in particular with regard to the endorsement of the construction of the Railway. Because Conservatives had believed that the railway was the sine qua non of any future colonial presence, anti-Imperialists believed that its prevention would effectively jeopardize the whole projected administration of Uganda. As it was, Parliament could not say that it controlled colonial ventures merely because it managed the purse.

²¹Division List No. 33 (1893), 46 Ayes to 368 Noes.

²²H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 8 (1893), p. 455, Labouchere.

Labouchere argued that in reality this often meant that Parliament was merely obliged to shoulder the expense of faits accomplis.²³ Even with respect to trade, Labouchere had ridiculed arguments of retentionists by suggesting that "the natives wanted only opera glasses and white asses."²⁴ But the episode had involved more than the mere payment of compensation to the Chartered Company in the event of its failure. It implied that the British government itself had assumed the function of a Chartered Company. Labouchere believed that commercial concessions extracted locally should never be interpreted as negotiable assets on behalf of a company. Such assets existed only on paper and could not mitigate the fact that the government was underwriting the Company's liabilities and obligations.

Anti-Imperialists also deprecated the prospect of the building of a Cape-to-Cairo Railway although they displayed no personal animosity towards Rhodes, provided that his actions were within the scope of his own facilities. That is why they welcomed the annulment of Article 3 of the Anglo-Congolese Agreement (i.e., the 15 mile strip between Tanganyika and Lake Albert Edward) and why they protested against Sir Edward Grey's wish to extend influence over territory connecting the concession strip with Uganda.

²³H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 10 (1893), p. 539, Labouchere.

²⁴H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 34 (1894), p. 1102, Labouchere.

Anti-Imperialists also condemned any suggestion that government support should be given to missionary work. Lawson argued that such work should always be "voluntary". Labouchere denounced the more militant missionaries as graduates of the "Maxim gun school" and thought it would be more expedient to evacuate all converts.²⁵ Such a ludicrous situation presented an excellent opportunity for Labouchere to express his peculiar brand of impiety. Evidently Protestant-Catholic feudings had already carried the region to a state of civil war, and on this point, anti-Imperialists were supported by the great majority of the "moderates" within the party. Gladstone himself, in fact, found support of religious groups by military means to be highly objectionable.²⁶

Since anti-Imperialists clearly objected to the slave trade on principle, they suggested that the elimination of the slave market itself was a pre-requisite for intervention. They cited the example of Zanzibar whose Sultan had theoretically though ineffectually ended slavery by statute on January 1, 1890. Labouchere accused the government of hypocrisy in pretending that this law was not flouted.²⁷ Labouchere had pointed out that the East Africa Company (in the absence of a railroad) had made use of slavery for the conveyance of goods down to the coast.²⁸

²⁵H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 8 (1893), p. 455, Labouchere.

²⁶Peter Stansky, Ambitions and Strategies, p. 7.

²⁷H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 25 (1894), p. 212, Labouchere.

²⁸H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 8 (1893), p. 455, Labouchere.

Dilke quoted the Aborigine Protection Society to the effect that the railway would do more to promote slavery than destroy it.²⁹ This all underlined a basic apprehension of the anti-Imperialists, that they would merely be playing into the hands of the expansionists to delegate responsibility to local authorities if such authorities lacked the confidence of indigenous populations.

Parliamentary endorsement of the annexation of Uganda was a foregone conclusion; even Harcourt reluctantly accepted this decision, and as Chencellor of the Exchequeur, his capitulation was crucial in the matter.³⁰ Throughout the Uganda Debates, Harcourt rejoiced in being derided as a "Little Englander", surely not because of the stigma of irresponsibility attached to it--indeed he had a firm sense of party principles in respect of foreign policy--but because foreign policy to Harcourt was the crucial aspect of government which affected expenditure and, in consequence, the character of domestic government.³¹ The whole Uganda controversy--and in particular the Anglo-Congolese Agreement--had jeopardized the benevolent impartiality that Britain might yet have entertained towards Continental Powers. Many Liberals recognized that the Government was becoming provocative. Paradoxically, Harcourt was

²⁹H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 25 (1894), p. 194, Dilke.

³⁰A.G. Gardiner, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 312.

³¹Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 239.

becoming increasingly involved in foreign affairs to fight Jingoism. Like other anti-Imperialists, he viewed the Chartered Company as a thinly disguised imperium in imperio and was indignant that it was given a new activity in "protectorate" form by Government action.

Anti-Imperialists and the Return to the Sudan

Unknown to the anti-Imperialists was a French plan launched by President Carnot as early as May 3, 1893 to converge on the Nile at Fashoda. Uganda had thus become the pivot of Rosebery's strategy which explains why he did not hesitate to authorize Portal to make any Treaties he wished with indigenous rulers. Anti-Imperialists attributed the rapid deterioration in Anglo-French relations to the abortive Anglo-Congolese Agreements of 1894. However, as early as February 11 of that year, the Foreign Office had learned that the strategy of permitting Germany to extend its holdings up to the western watershed would fail to keep the French out of the Nile Valley. Their fears that Germany herself had agreed to let the French in were confirmed on March 15 when the Foreign Office was officially notified by Berlin of Germany's "concession" in this regard.³² The "Imperialists" within the Liberal Party, sensitive to the pressure of European diplomacy and realizing that the control of the Nile Valley was at stake, still insisted that all territory in

³²A.J.P. Taylor, "Prelude to Fashoda", English Historical Review, LXV, (1950), p. 53.

the Western watershed of the Nile Valley was a British sphere of influence. Dilke, however, had previously warned Rosebery of the danger of encouraging the Germans to expand eastwards from the Cameroons because of the Francophile implications that this move carried.³³ In this dangerous situation the protectorship over Uganda was confirmed and ratified by the Commons on June 1, 1894.³⁴ Rosebery's decision was defended by Grey, his Under-Secretary, at which time Grey declined to indicate whether the Government would proceed with a railroad. Even the question of the Charter's renewal was to be deferred.

"Forwardist" spokesmen, such as Ashmead-Bartlett warned that because France had advanced a thousand miles in five years, gun-boats should be sent as far as Fashoda.³⁵ When Grey lent some support to this view, Labouchere interpreted this as a quasi "declaration of war" against France.³⁶ Labouchere saw no reason why France should expect to be kept out of the Nile Valley, or why she should be intimidated to delimit her northern frontier or sphere. When in July 1896 a request was made by the new Salisbury administration for 3 million to build the

³³H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 11 (1893), p. 1634ff., Dilke.

³⁴H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 25 (1894), p. 270. Division List No. 70 (1894), 218 Ayes to 52 Noes.

³⁵H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 32 (1894), p. 403, Ashmead Bartlett.

³⁶H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 32 (1894), p. 416, Labouchere.

Uganda railway, no reference was of course, made to political strategy out of deference to public opinion in France.³⁷

Joseph Chamberlain as Colonial Secretary, now vigorously attacked Radicals for denying what he termed "manifest destiny". He had previously expressed this very forcefully two years earlier:

If you lay down the principle that the lines of the empire are settled you will put such a barrier in the way of the enterprise of our people that you will materially alter their character.³⁸

But whereas Salisbury and even Rosebery had been taciturn on the subject of Uganda, Chamberlain now equated the potential of Uganda with that of the most prosperous territories of South Africa.

The only Radical who could effectively answer this kind of rhetoric was Dilke who added a new note of responsibility to the connotation of "anti-Imperialism". The remaining Radicals had clearly been weakened and reduced by the three years of Liberal Imperialism. In fact, after the 1895 election there were scarcely thirty Members who would reliably support anti-Imperialist amendments, although this hard core would continue to plead for the rights of lesser nations and advocate arbitration for the settlement of colonial problems. Paradoxically, the Conservative victory of 1895 might be interpreted as much a victory for Rosebery as for Salisbury. Rosebery himself had never

³⁷H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 43 (1896), pp.705-724, 1094-1109.

³⁸H.P.D., 4th. Ser., Vol. 25 (1894), p. 252, J. Chamberlain.

been happy with the Premiership, and his Francophile policies in colonial and foreign affairs had been neither popular nor understood in the country at large.

As early as August 1895, a number of Radicals, notably Labouchere, Dilke and Stanhope, discussed a proposal for the formation of a Radical Committee to advance radicalism in both domestic and colonial affairs. The composition of this group illustrated how the term "radical" had by now assumed an anti-Imperialist connotation.³⁹ This proposal was subsequently forwarded to Harcourt himself but although this move would measurably undermine Rosebery's position, Harcourt was not pleased by the prospect of its adoption. There was evidently fundamental agreement on both Egyptian and East African affairs--in spite of the fact that Harcourt had compromised himself over the Egyptian question--and some broad agreement on South African matters, but the question of naval expansion introduced division. In any case, the suggestion of choosing a Radical Whip suggested by the above correspondence could not be implemented. Moreover the failure of Anglo-French discussions in 1895 indicated that the polarity of views within the Liberal Party would probably widen further within the year to come. There was therefore some prospect that many of the Moderates within the Party might more

³⁹S.L. Gwynn, The Life of C.W. Dilke, Vol. 2. H. Labouchere to C.W. Dilke, August 1 and 6, 1895. Stanhope to C.W. Dilke, August 2, 1895.

willingly associate with the anti-Imperialist faction. Leonard Courtney even suspected that there was also even evidence of a divergence of opinion amongst the new Government supporters.⁴⁰

Salisbury by now was seriously considering the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire and was contemplating the convening of a conference to discuss possible deposition of the Sultan. He could not entirely ignore British public opinion, which, unlike that on the Continent, was strongly pro-Armenian. But the heavy handling that the ill-fated Anglo-Congolese Agreement had received and the recent despatch of the Kruger telegram had made the likelihood of any immediate understanding with Germany improbable. The Admiralty had recommended an accommodation with Russia and may have influenced Chamberlain in adopting that view.⁴¹ To everyone, Gladstonians included, the European Concert was non-existent. Britain had embarked upon a period of "splendid isolation". Thus, Salisbury had everything to gain by obtaining a broad understanding with France as soon as possible.

Even before the fall of the Liberal Government in 1895, Sir Edward Grey had stated that a French advance into the Nile Valley would be regarded as an unfriendly act. Yet by the autumn of that year, the

⁴⁰H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 38 (1896), p. 1052, Courtney.

⁴¹C.J. Lowe, The Reluctant Imperialists, p. 201.

French colonial ministry had endorsed Major Marchand's proposal to advance from the West African hinterland to the Bahr-el-Ghazel and from there to proceed to the Nile. And in addition, on the eastern side, the French were already conspiring with Menelik.⁴² It was the Italian disaster at Adowa that then gave Salisbury his excuse to advance up the Nile although Labouchere argued that Chamberlain had deliberately pushed Salisbury into that position.⁴³ Chamberlain justified the British advance by saying that the interests of Italy and Egypt were identical: neither could tolerate the fall of Kassala to the Khalifa.⁴⁴ "Thus the motive for opening the Dongola Campaign lay in the strategy of the Nile Valley more than in the play of the European balance."⁴⁵ Yet it was really a European question, by virtue of Italy's defeat at Adowa.

The Dongola expedition was debated on March 20, 1896, when Morley moved an amendment criticizing the Foreign Office.⁴⁶ This was a

⁴²Menelik II. Emperor of Abyssinia (1844-1913). Signed Treaty (1889) placing Empire under Italian domination, abrogated Treaty (1893); defeated Italians at Adowa and established independence of Abyssinia; negotiated boundary settlement with British Sudan (1902).

⁴³H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 35 (1896), p. 1512, Labouchere.

⁴⁴The Khalifa, "the adviser" (1846-1899). Dervish leader who succeeded the Mahdi in 1885 and extended his dominions (1885-98); defeated at Omdurman by Kitchener (1898).

⁴⁵R. Robinson, J. Gallagher, op. cit., p. 349.

⁴⁶H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 38 (1896), p. 1478, Morley.

felicitous occasion for anti-Imperialists, because Morley had not spoken on the Sudan question for six or seven years, and now he compared his present action with the resolution he had made in connection with Gordon's expedition. Thus he was able to justify his position as both consistent and unpartisan. In fact, Morley was respected on both sides of the House for his consistency.⁴⁷ Morley thought that the new proposed advance would harm Britain's position with regard to Armenia. The advance was ostensibly in the name of Egypt and thus it made Egypt a nominal "Imperial Power" even though Egypt was not master of her own domestic situation. Anti-Imperialists such as Morley hoped that Britain could at least prevent the Sudan from becoming a European problem; they believed Britain was courting that very risk. Yet it really was a European question by virtue of Italy's defeat at Adowa. Labouchere was correct in predicting that Britain would not stop at Dongola, but would continue on to Omdurman and Darfur. In the opening of the debate four days earlier, Labouchere had based his argument largely on the effect that the Dongola march would have on Anglo-French relations, citing a pledge that Gladstone had given the French through Drummond Wolff in 1886, namely that Dongola would never be reoccupied.

The fact that this earlier mission was recalled showed that

⁴⁷H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 38 (1896), p. 1496, J. Chamberlain.

anti-Imperialists believed in disengagement, but also that they recognized in the light of the current situation that the reopening of those same negotiations would not be feasible. Suspecting that Salisbury--in the presence of Liberal Unionists--was compelled to surrender to the "Jingoes" within his own cabinet, Labouchere thought to differentiate Salisbury's policy from the rash actions of Chamberlain. He drew laughter by suggesting that no one with the exception of himself was more of a "Little Englander" than Lord Salisbury.

This debate revealed quite clearly that the anti-Imperialist "Cabal" mentioned above had not materialized. Even Radicals were embarrassed at some of Labouchere's remarks. Morley would not accept Labouchere's reference to the Khalifa as a "William Tell". Courtney queried Labouchere's sincerity and suggested that he was stirring up party feuds for the sake of it.⁴⁸ Nevertheless Labouchere was proved correct in certain details, e.g., that Caisse funds could not finance the expedition unless unanimous consent was given by the European Powers.

In this debate, Chamberlain clearly laid down the basis of both Salisbury and Rosebery's policies--that the Nile was Egypt's life line. But in the scrupulous questioning of legality, anti-Imperialists either rejected or ignored this axiom. The Liberal Imperialists however accepted

⁴⁸H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 38 (1896), p. 1052, Courtney.

it: in fact Grey differed from the Government only insofar as he thought the advance should have been from Suakin.⁴⁹ As predicted, both Russia and France would not permit Caisse funds to be used, and supplementary estimates were voted to cover the Dongola expedition. The funds subsequently requested approached the sum of 800 thousand, of which, 270 thousand were to be used to build a light railway between Wadi Halfa and Abu Hamed. It is significant that anti-Imperialists defended the action of both Russia and France in this regard.⁵⁰ Much as they deprecated the situation the anti-Imperialists felt it useless to defy France and Russia with respect to the Egyptian question, especially since their arguments were bolstered by Courtney's technical grasp of finance. He invalidated the Government's statement that the Caisse could have paid for the Dongola venture by comparing Egypt to a bankrupt party which, under the law of liquidation, had appointed a joint trustee to administer her affairs; if such a trustee should administer affairs outside of the bankrupt party's immediate responsibility, then such action would be ultra vires.⁵¹ Despite this, only fifty-seven opposition members voted against the Government's loan; both Salisbury and Chamberlain must have been surprised at the extent of its victory.⁵²

⁴⁹H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 38 (1896), p. 1520, Grey.

⁵⁰H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 45 (1897), p. 1449, Morley, p.1465, Harcourt.

⁵¹H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 45 (1897), p. 1476, Courtney.

⁵²Division List No. 19 (1897), 169 Ayes to 57 Noes.

In retrospect, the advance to Dongola may be viewed as a consequence of Salisbury's decision to prepare for the abandonment of Constantinople. On October 28, 1896 the Department of Naval Intelligence confirmed that Alexandria had to be permanently held as a principal naval base.⁵³ There were undoubtedly other considerations for such a move could serve as a belated gesture on behalf of Italy, but, as Salisbury knew that both France and Russia were assisting Menelik in Ethiopia, he was not prepared to restore Italy to her former colonial position. In fact, the Mediterranean Agreement had become a dead letter and there could be no dependency upon it, nor could there be any association with the Triple Alliance, by Britain.

But at the same time, Salisbury was ready to give the Mediterranean Agreement at least token support. There is a chance that Menelik might join with the Dervishes and perhaps Salisbury calculated that after Italy's crushing defeat at Adowa, there was less chance of offending France if he did so. But there is no evidence that in 1896 Salisbury wanted to go beyond Dongola, and he would not have authorized the march there without a promise from the Italians that they would remain at Kassala.⁵⁴ The operation had been consistent with his Nile Basin strategy but only in the next eighteen months when he became aware of the sheer technical difficulties involved in building the Uganda railway

⁵³R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, op. cit., p. 356.

⁵⁴C.J. Lowe, op. cit., p. 197.

did Salisbury realize that he could only achieve his objective via the northern overland route; which would necessitate the final advance of 1898.

Salisbury also knew that France's relative position had become much weaker in the previous two years because of Russian preoccupation with Port Arthur and Britain's benefit from the Spencer Naval program of 1894. The anti-Imperialists could argue that France was being ostracized from East Africa, but unknown to them, the French had conspired with Menelik to extend Ethiopian territory to approximately one hundred miles south of Khartoum.⁵⁵ Thus the Khalifa's potential allies were strengthened. In anticipation of the Anglo-French confrontation at Fashoda, Salisbury sought to isolate France diplomatically; he renewed his courtship of Russia by offering her a dominant position in Turkey and China.⁵⁶

A request for the remission of the loan advanced in February 1897 to Egypt was made by the government sixteen months later. It met with only scattered resistance from the Liberal benches. But anti-Imperialists interpreted this as a political commitment. It was to be the last opportunity for debate before Omdurman. Dilke demanded to know

⁵⁵R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, op. cit., p. 360.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 366.

what kind of control the government expected to exercise between Uganda and Khartoum.⁵⁷ However the government refused to commit itself. The division on this occasion did not give an exact picture of imperial feeling as the measure was also debated from the viewpoint of financial purism.⁵⁸

Kitchener did proceed beyond Khartoum to Fashoda, having been able to avoid collision with Menelik. By early November--Marchand having already left--official instructions were sent from Paris and the threat of immediate war with France was removed. Britain's exclusive possession of the Nile was confirmed by the Anglo-French declaration of November 21, 1899. Perhaps the rising spirit of "Jingoism" does in part explain the Government's boldness.⁵⁹ Even the Foreign Arbitration Association thought that arbitration in respect to Fashoda was inappropriate.⁶⁰ By tacit consent both front benches endorsed the Nile strategy. But while Dilke understood this strategy, he felt it to be unnecessary. Anti-Imperialists failed to recognize the Nile's worth even though they had no personal wish to imperil India. To them, possession of the Nile

⁵⁷H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 60 (1898), p. 277, Dilke.

⁵⁸H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 60 (1898), p. 286. Division List June 27, 1898. 151 Ayes to 81 Noes.

⁵⁹W.S. Blunt, My Diaries, Vol. 2, p. 303.

⁶⁰R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, op. cit., p. 377.

was not worth jeopardizing relations with the Great Powers. Although it is improbable that he kept up-to-date on recommendations of the Department of Naval Intelligence, Labouchere declared that in wartime the Suez Canal would be unusable.⁶¹ He epitomized the extremist view which considered Egypt to be an unsought burden in addition to India.

The Dreyfus case had undoubtedly given rise to the suspicion that France had created a military diversion to take attention off the domestic crisis. Anti-Imperialists had no wish to take Fashoda from the Sudanese to give to France. Courtney noted that "we could fairly claim that Major Marchand should lure his flag and that Fashoda should not be French territory."⁶² Harcourt reasoned that France had committed a blunder by occupying what they themselves had asserted to be a permanent possession of Egypt.⁶³ But nevertheless Harcourt criticized Chamberlain for rubbing vitriol into French sores.

Salisbury's decision to push south of Dongola--made earlier that year--reflected France's intransigence and unwillingness to be bought off in West Africa. Kitchener's campaign was to solidify Britain's possession of the Nile without any further concession having been made to France.

⁶¹H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 38 (1896), p. 1480, Labouchere.

⁶²G.P. Gooch, Life of Leonard Courtney, p. 358.

⁶³A.G. Gardiner, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 470.

If the moral leadership of the "Little Englanders" belonged to anyone it was to John Morley. The silence of John Morley on the subject of African affairs during this critical period is largely explained by his desire to salvage something from the Home Rule issue. But it should not be construed that Morley was indifferent to new developments, particularly in East Africa. He was however greatly depressed by the situation. In February 1899, he had resolved to move a reduction of the vote for the Sudan but evidently he then tried to get someone else to do this for him and finally made a rather desultory and an ineffectual speech. Although he had planned to read out extracts from a speech made by Rosebery to condemn the imperial strategy, he never used them.⁶⁴

At the end of 1898, Harcourt resigned the official leadership of the Liberal Party. Now at the end of his public career, he disavowed the compromise he had made four years earlier with Rosebery and now, identified himself with the anti-Imperialists. Henceforth, Campbell-Bannerman would lead the Moderates, and now even he disavowed Rosebery's Imperialism.⁶⁵ In fact, Campbell-Bannerman had spoken in support of

⁶⁴H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 67 (1899), p. 459, Morley. Refer D.A. Hamer, op. cit., p. 333.

⁶⁵Spender, Life of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Vol. 1, pp. 209-212.

Morley in the 1899 debate.⁶⁶

Evidently, even the anti-Imperialists were now fully resigned to the breakup of the Ottoman Empire. They had hoped that Britain could prevent the Sudan from becoming a European problem and, in so doing, they formally acknowledged the demise of the European Concert. Not that they had believed it to be a "holy alliance" but they had traditionally, at least, cited its presence to query the wisdom and validity of the Mediterranean Agreement. When British troops were despatched to Berber in 1898 to help the Khedive against the Khalifa, Harcourt had observed that six months previously, to doubt the efficacy of the European Concert would have been indictable cause for "lesé majeste"; but its failure to resolve even the Armenian crisis made any hope as to its value chimerical. He noted that even the Balkans Arrangement which had brought peace was but a private compact between Russia and Austria.⁶⁷ Yet, had the European Concert existed even in 1887, it would surely have endorsed the Anglo-Turkish Convention. As it was, in 1899 the anti-Imperialists felt it useless to defy France and Russia with respect to the Ehyptian question, if only because these Powers had the right to veto with respect to the Caisse.⁶⁸ On the whole, anti-

⁶⁶H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 67 (1899), p. 513, Campbell-Bannerman.

⁶⁷H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 53 (1898), p. 71, Harcourt.

⁶⁸H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 45 (1897), p. 1449, Morley.

Imperialists had consistently taken a "pro French" line with respect to African affairs. For this reason they had been happiest with respect to the situation in West Africa, where Salisbury had been willing to make concessions. They bitterly resented Rosebery's apparent Franco-phobia and the apologetic line adopted by his Commons spokesman, Sir Edward Grey.

The Liberal "Imperialists" had been understandably apprehensive about the possibility of France filling the vacuum created by Leopold's renunciation of the Anglo-Congolese Agreement. Labouchere had repeatedly resented Grey's insistence that France had to stay away from the Nile if Britain refused to define the northern limit of her sphere of interest. And in the same speech Labouchere perhaps correctly pointed out that because France had not immediately rejected the Anglo-Congolese Agreement, it did not mean that she necessarily accepted it.⁶⁹

It was not until late in the eighteen-nineties that anti-Imperialists found that they were an intensely "unpopular" minority. By the end of that decade, Stead had modified his tone and would condemn the situation in South Africa. But the control of such media as the Daily News by the "Jingoes", not only coloured the public's interpretation of South African events but successively confused them

⁶⁹H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 32 (1896), p. 416, Labouchere.

with problems connected with the boundaries of the Sudan. Anti-Imperialists had looked to earlier "liberal" methods, even to the techniques of Palmerston who had always sought to work through national sentiments. But Cromer's administrative talent had incorporated methods used in India, and so, like India, Egypt was also to be an exception to the liberal-stated preference for devolution in imperial matters. But Baring did argue that "the arguments of the new Imperialism were ex post facto justifications of advances, they were not the original reasons for making them."⁷⁰

The anti-Imperialists tended to feel that the British administration itself had been responsible for the decay in native self-government. All the processes of British expansion were reaching their peak, and since the Little Englanders understandably confused these processes--which were so different in Egypt and in South Africa--they assumed they were equally dictated by a self-aggrandising metropolitan society. Yet these processes were not isolated phenomena occurring for the first time in 1882. They represented a culmination of methods and assumptions which had been developing for nearly fifty years. Just as much as the "Jingoes", the anti-Imperialists tended to confuse the issue. In fact at times Little Englanders equated the government's reaction to imperial symptoms of disintegration with the demand for collectivism

⁷⁰R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, op. cit., p. 472.

at home, because like the Gladstonians, anti-Imperialists tended to be anti-collectivist (*supra* chapter 2). Like most late Victorians, they believed in an organic natural social evolution which favoured particular groups. As Morley once remarked perhaps with gravity: "the future my dear Harrison lies with the Teutons rather than with the Celts, who can take deeper draught."⁷¹ Labouchere viewed the Anglo-Saxon as superior but he assumed that this superiority could be displayed "naturally" rather than militarily.⁷² Because the anti-Imperialists saw that superiority was not being maintained effortlessly they sensed that something was wrong. The changed circumstances of the nationalist rejection of liberal policies proved to be as great a traumatic experience for them as it did for the Jingoists.

⁷¹P. Fraser, Joseph Chamberlain, Radicalism and Empire, p. 26.

⁷²H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 45 (1897), p. 1480, Labouchere.

CHAPTER VIII

THE JAMESON RAID: CRISIS IN IMPERIAL DEVOLUTION

In 1867, the simultaneous discovery of diamonds near the Orange River and of gold in Matabeleland, presaged a new chapter in the political and economic history of South Africa. The subsequent incorporation of Basutoland in 1868 and of Griqualand West in 1871 indicated a deliberate effort by Britain to prevent the new mines from falling into the hands of the Transvaal. But, constitutionally, these movements implied a wider political responsibility in the exercise of self-government for the Cape Colony. The Conservative Government suggested that where Europeans could handle local problems, they should rule locally and not request bureaucratic direction from London.¹ Thus in 1872, the Cape Colony became self-governing, as did Natal in 1893. But Griqualand emerged as a new Crown Colony, which necessitated in turn, a more exact delimitation both of the Transvaal and of the Orange Free State, thus hardening Boer suspicions in the critical period following the first Boer uprising of 1880.

But Imperial questions were not to be confined to problems between European people. Gladstonian Liberalism could not be expected

¹R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians, p.456.

to countenance the sweeping annexation of indigenous people. In spite of the discovery of diamonds, the Ashanti Wars of the eighteen-seventies were to cool interest in the subjugation of the South African interior. Positivists vigorously condemned the Livingstone cult and pleaded against native conversions. In their estimation, the missionary deserved less protection than even the informal trader.²

Bright warned against subjugation of the South Africa perimeter and deprecated the establishment of independent self-governing settlements.

The time will come and I trust before long--when Parliament acting on the opinion of one of its committees--will consider that it will be wise to withdraw absolutely from that coast. There's no slave trade to put an end to there now. Trade flourishes better where there are no forts. The country I am speaking of is one in which English life is scarcely to be maintained.³

When the Transvaal was annexed in 1877, the anti-Imperialists were alarmed. The move had been taken largely at the initiative of Lord Carnarvon⁴ and his action was criticized even by his own party as

²R. Congreve, Essays: Political, Social and Religious, p. 248.

³J. Bright, Speeches on Questions of Public Policy, October 23, 1873.

⁴Henry Howard Molyneux, 4th Earl of Carnarvon (1831-1890). Colonial Secretary (1866-67, 1874-78); introduced Bill for federation of North American Provinces (1867); introduced Bill for federation of South Africa (1877); Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1885-86). (Conservative).

premature. Annexation failed largely because there was no local figure capable of exercising the kind of leadership that Rhodes would offer ten years later. Carnarvon probably conceived of this annexation as a preliminary step to precede a regionalized federation and this move was a noticeable exception to the devolutionary process in South Africa. Although Gladstonians attached only a limited importance to the strategic and economic factor of the Transvaal--and in the Midlothian Campaign, the rapid deterioration in Anglo-Boer relations received but fleeting and secondary notices--the 1877 South African Act was not immediately repealed upon Gladstone's accession to power in 1880.

Gladstone's equivocation and temporary acceptance of the South African status quo may be contrasted with his firm action at Pendjeh. The South Africa Act however had been designed to facilitate Britain's "paramountcy" out of respect for her naval and military interests and these interests Gladstone could not now overlook. Thus, although the investor and merchant did not lobby for new policies in South Africa until after 1885, the Liberal opposition had made no concerted effort to challenge the action of Disraeli's government in 1877. Two years earlier, Dilke had criticized Carnarvon's suggestion to send Froude to canvass South Africa in advocacy of federation, on the grounds that it would cast a slur on the local colonial government.⁵

⁵S.L. Gwynn, The Life of C.W. Dilke, Vol. 1, p. 271.

Significantly, when Leonard Courtney queried the wisdom of the Bill, he was half-heartedly seconded by Dilke. Both Chamberlain and Bright expressed disapproval of Sir Bartle Frere's policy of native suppression and this criticism was part of a general condemnation on their part of the continued British presence in the Transvaal.⁶

The acquiescence of the Liberals in the policy of the previous government may be better understood by realizing that the Gladstonian position had adopted a "humanitarian" view towards South Africa. This justified a continued presence in the interior because of the alleged injustice of handling the Bantu over to Boer rule.⁷ Evidently a limited agreement between the Humanitarians and the anti-Imperialists was more possible during periods of liberal opposition. But the military disaster at Isandlwana in 1879--which resulted in the massacre of eight hundred British troops to a man by the Bantu--opened a schism between the Humanitarians and the anti-Imperialists. In May 1880, Chamberlain pressed for a reversal of government policy in virtually all colonial spheres. Chamberlain assumed that sooner or later the Boers would pressure the government into granting their independence.⁸

⁶H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol.252 (1880), pp. 459-464.

⁷H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 256 (1880), pp. 860-880.

⁸J.L. Garvin, Life of J. Chamberlain, Vol. 1, p. 439.

Chamberlain's early anti-Imperialism was not doctrinaire but based upon pragmatic considerations. In fact, while criticizing the British treatment of the Bantu, Chamberlain--like the Colonial Secretary Lord Kimberley⁹--advocated the retention of Sir Bartle Frere on the very grounds that his authority now lent him a superior influence with the colonists.¹⁰ If anti-Imperialism had come to sound a pro-Boer note, quite plainly it would not have been able to claim concern for native rights. Soon after assuming office in 1880, Gladstone de-emphasized his concern for native rights by his intimation that it was not within the Government's power to consider either the general footing of Sir Bartle Frere as Governor of South Africa,¹¹ or the relations of his administration to the principles and ideas of colonial government which it then entertained. In point of fact, Frere was retained by the new administration to consummate federation.

⁹Kimberley, John Wodehouse. 1st Earl of Kimberley (1826-1902). Colonial Secretary (1870-74, 1880-82); Secretary for India (1882-85, 1886, 1892-94); Foreign Secretary (1894-95). (Liberal).

¹⁰F.W. Hirst, Early Life and Letters of John Morley, Vol. 2, p. 81. "(In Chamberlain) you miss the notes of piety for the victims of tyranny, of indignation against wrong-doers. But in the public eye from 1875 to 1885, Chamberlain was the uncompromising radical and Little Englander. Where he differed from John Morley was in tone and temper, seldom in policy." (Chamberlain's commitment to Imperialism dates particularly from 1882 when he first associated with the South African Committee).

¹¹Frere, Sir Henry Bartle Edward (1815-84). Chief Commissioner of Sind (1850-59); governor of Bombay (1862-67); first high commissioner of South Africa (1877); demands on Cetewayo precipitated the Zulu War (1879).

The most percipient critic of Gladstone's prevarication over South Africa was Leonard Courtney, who argued that the insolvency of the Transvaal's economy which had seemingly justified annexation in 1877 lay uncorrected. In respect to the constitutional problem, Courtney maintained that both Boer territories had been stunted as the nuclei of future political units as a result of the British action. He believed that the legislative assembly of the Transvaal had been made so subservient to its executive government that at any time it could have been dissolved by it. Any union, to succeed, would have to be effected spontaneously and in accordance with local interests. He could not fathom why a Conservative government could withdraw from an anarchic situation that had developed in Afghanistan while a Liberal Administration could remain in the Transvaal.¹²

Criticism of Gladstone's policy towards South Africa assumed a new urgency after 1881 when the Boer Proclamation of Independence at Paardekraal (December 16, 1880), brought Gladstone face to face with a "conciliation or coercion" dilemma. A radical motion condemning the 1877 South Africa Act, but which ignored the native question, found only marginal support. But a crushing defeat inflicted by the Boers at Majuba Hill on February 26, 1881, caused Gladstone to re-examine the

¹²G.P. Gooch, Life of Leonard Courtney, p. 160.

whole strategic policy with reference to South Africa. The subsequent Convention of Pretoria--which replaced the offensive term "supremacy" with the more nebulous "paramountcy"--presaged a new chapter in Anglo-Boer relations and was applauded as a courageous move by the anti-Imperialists.

Now that a measure of partial independence had been conceded to the Boers, the South African Debates turned specifically to the problems of "native" trusteeship. Generally speaking, both parties stressed the obligation to the "natives" in the Transvaal. But self-government for white dependencies had come to be accepted by now, and the Cape Colony was still permitted to disarm the Basuto without imperial interference. For the next three years, the Cape Colony was to wage--with little enthusiasm--a protracted struggle against the Bechuana. Yet it seemed that the entire Bechuanaland area might have to become a British protectorate--not only because of the Cape's apathy--but because under the 1881 Pretoria Convention, the Transvaal's external relations together with associated native supervisory problems, had been re-emphasized as an Imperial responsibility.

This responsibility necessitated a fresh confrontation with the Transvaal over the recent establishment of the Boer "Protectorates" of Goschen and Stellaland, which had resulted in the expulsion of freebooters from Bechuanaland. Many of these freebooters were British

deserters and John Morley devoted a portion of his maiden speech to demand an unqualified "bag-and-baggage" policy with respect to the Transvaal and to deplore Britain's failure to withdraw from South Africa within a month of taking office.¹³ In this way, Morley was denouncing the Imperial commitments still retained under the 1881 Pretoria Convention. Morley attacked any appeal to the notion of a "white man's burden" and he argued that the Basuto Chieftain--Menkoroane-- whose territorial integrity was an imperial responsibility, had in fact brought much of the trouble upon himself. It was a significant occasion because Morley was adopting a position opposed to that held by the Humanitarians. Morley's presence assured a growing cleavage in the Liberal administration although he did not sit at this time on the front bench.

The polarization of views with respect to South Africa was intensified by the publicity of the Reverend John MacKenzie, who played a leading part in the formation of the South African Committee in 1882. This Committee rapidly mobilized humanitarian support and proceeded to indoctrinate a public that had previously been totally ignorant of native realities. Within a year, the Committee's propaganda had obtained tangible results in the annexation of Basutoland. The most significant

¹³H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 277 (1883), p. 477, Morley.

immediate achievement of that Committee was MacKenzie's success in re-converting officialdom to the concept of federation in South Africa; he was himself to be appointed Deputy-Commissioner for Bechuanaland in 1884.

Largely under the impetus of the South African Committee, Chamberlain seemed to defy his anti-imperialist colleagues by proposing the expulsion of freebooters from Bechuanaland and the relief of the Chieftain Montsoia and Mankoroane.¹⁴ This policy was regarded as madness by the Liberal ministers such as Derby¹⁵ and Kimberley, although they were themselves to implement it eighteen months later on September 30, 1885 after the success of a military expedition.

The assumption of the Colonial Office that native welfare was a British responsibility did not necessarily imply that any interference was to be made in the sovereignty enjoyed by white colonists. The London Convention of 1884, which designated the Transvaal as the South African Republic minimized Britain's nominal control of the Transvaal's external relations. But the Convention was also interpreted by some as a recognition of the Cape Colonies' soundness in administration:

¹⁴J.L. Garvin, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 490.

¹⁵Stanley, Frederick Arthur, 16th Earl of Derby (1841-1908). Secretary for War (1878-1880); Colonial Secretary (1885-86); Governor-General of Canada (1888-93).

The Dutch element in the Cape Colony, appears to be sufficiently strong to prevent any colonial action in opposition to Boer pretensions: It is rather a hopeless task for the Imperial Government to attempt to secure the colony against contingencies which it views with alarm.¹⁶

Although mining activity in the Rand would rapidly transform the economic position of the Transvaal after 1886, it was clear even by 1885 that the center of gravity of the political stage in South Africa had in fact moved to Cape Town. But the economic transformation of the Rand in 1886 threatened to move this center which had previously been associated with the Cape Assembly to the Transvaal. For a decade Cecil Rhodes--in the Cape government--had attempted to broaden his political base by weening the Cape Dutch (under Hofmeyr) away from the narrow provincialism of Kruger to such an extent that within the Cape Colony Rhodes gave the impression of being pro-Dutch. In fact by 1890, Rhodes had acquired a reputation among some groups as an Afrikaner. In 1894, when quarrelling with the Colonial Office over Matabeleland, Rhodes even threatened separation, and Salisbury spoke of him as an enemy of Empire. In addition, Rhodes maintained a cynical view towards the Basuto Missions which made him non grata to the South African Committee. But like Rhodes, the Colonial Office took a more conciliatory view of Boer activity, if only from fear of crossing pan-Afrikaner sentiments.

¹⁶The Times, September 15, 1885.

The Colonial Office's attitude towards expansion was ambivalent. Between 1885 and 1890 there took place a period of extremely rapid territorial expansion in South Africa, by which over 1,200,000 square miles were added to the British Crown. Yet for much of this period, there was less friction between Salisbury and the anti-Imperialist faction in respect to South Africa than might have been expected. Rhodes' plan to control the Delagoa Railway by purchasing a controlling interest--against an Imperial guarantee--and to defend it in the event of confiscation by either Portugal or the Boers was firmly condemned by Salisbury. In fact, as a matter of policy, Salisbury refused to pursue "white elephant" protectorates. Salisbury satisfied the anti-Imperialists in declining to assist the missionaries' African Lakes Company in its appeal for assistance against the Portugese in Northern Zambesia.

On at least two counts Rhodes' policies appeared more acceptable to anti-Imperialists than did the aspirations of the South African Committee. When, in March 1889, Rhodes was in London he met Labouchere and Harcourt and both were amenable to the chartering of the British South Africa Company.¹⁷ This was to be the first time that a Charter was granted to a provincial leader with an independent base of political power. To oblige the Colonial Office, Rhodes offered to build

¹⁷R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, op. cit., p. 237.

the Bechuanaland Railway and he cited the Rudd Mining concession from Lobengula--the King of the Matabele--as evidence of the area's potential solvency.

In retrospect, it is remarkable that the anti-Imperialists did not foresee the new diversions that would result from the chartering of the South Africa Company. They were soon disenchanted when the South Africa Company, having obtained Salisbury's support, entered Mashonaland in defiance of Portuguese claims. The incident was a signal for a radical re-appraisal of the initial activity sponsored by the South Africa Company. Labouchere argued that Rhodes had embarked upon a dangerous precedent by which Lobengula--in his own right--could cede to the Company any territory that he had acquired. Having noted that Britain had not become a signatory with Germany and France on the occasion of Portugal's Delimitation Treaty of 1886, Labouchere pleaded for arbitration, a method which he said was finding favour among the artisan classes. But Salisbury rejected such advice on the grounds that the Shire was not a freetrade area. But Labouchere's most serious charge was that Papers relating to the chartering of the South Africa Company in the previous year had not been laid before the House.¹⁸ Suspecting the Company's capital

¹⁸H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 341 (1890), p. 221, Labouchere.

had been "faked", he assumed that it had seized Matabeleland to save itself from bankruptcy. He moved to reduce the Colonial Secretary's salary on the grounds that he had failed to detect in the Company "a financial scheme in the very worst sense of the word."¹⁹ Labouchere felt so outraged by the conduct of the Company that he actually proposed that the Colonial Office act as a trustee and send out independent persons to stand between the natives and the governing powers.

Those anti-Imperialists who criticized the Chartered Company on these occasions constituted only a small minority. Between 1892 and 1895 when the Liberals were in office, South African policy did not really constitute a front-bench issue between the two Parties. Indeed Chamberlain himself did not regard imperial questions in South Africa as an issue upon which to fight the General Election of 1895.

The rank and file of the Liberal Party found little interest in the Uitlander franchise question and it would not in any case become Rhodes' "Red Herring" until 1894. It was in this year that the appearance of Germany as a political factor in the Transvaal moved the Liberals to intervene more directly in South African affairs. Lord Ripon, as Colonial Secretary, went out of his way to impress both the Transvaal and Germany of Britain's need to enforce Suzerainty and he

¹⁹H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 355 (1891), Labouchere.

took the Transvaal to task for not having submitted for ratification a treaty it had made with Portugal.

But any federal union which Ripon envisaged for both English and Boer provinces in South Africa assumed a British hegemony in only the loosest sense. Evidently the Cape Colony offered no real objection to Ripon's work--in fact on the franchise question Ripon was anticipating future Uitlander arguments rather than bowing to them--provided that the Coast itself remained in British hands. But Ripon continued to deprecate the language of paramountcy although he was obliged to arbitrate with increasing frequency.

While Conservatives attacked the Liberal government for limiting the actions of the South Africa Company and for trading the land held by the Swazi, anti-Imperialists argued that the Government did not sufficiently limit the actions of the Chartered Company.²⁰ Thus the Liberals could not take issue with Chamberlain's references to "paramountcy". Even Labouchere accepted the need for it because he agreed that it was most necessary to keep the Germans out of South West Africa.

²⁰H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 12 (1893), p. 70, Labouchere.

Yet salient differences did exist between the major parties. There was a growing connection between sympathy for Home Rule and dissatisfaction with the conduct of the South Africa Company. Militant Unionists adopted an anti-Transvaal position and in supporting the British South Africa Company championed the Uitlanders and native rights in the Transvaal. The anti-Imperialists--many of whom were "Home Rulers"--tended to keep silent about Uitlander rights and local rights of the Swazi in the Transvaal but were strong in support of local rights of the Matabele in "Rhodesia".

Ripon's emphasis on "good will", rather than on a revised constitutional status for South Africa, was acceptable to the anti-Imperialists. However, his Cape policy of trying to develop harmony between the English-speaking population and the Bond--while acceptable to them on principle--led Ripon to condone the Matabele campaign, which the anti-Imperialists sharply criticized. Labouchere suspected that Rhodes had encouraged this war to resuscitate the Company on the stock exchange. Evidently the Company's value had dropped sharply as a consequence of the completion of Kruger's railway to Delagoa Bay. But anti-Imperialists were disquieted by the prospect of Ripon sending an imperial force to Johannesburg in the event of revolt within the Transvaal although Ripon was entitled to do this very thing by virtue of the London Convention. There has been speculation that Ripon, as

well as Chamberlain, had made some offer along these lines, and if he had it is quite understandable why Harcourt did not pursue his enquiries more thoroughly during the Jameson Raid Enquiry.

Peace, retrenchment and reform were pointless when only a strong central government could prevent rash actions by colonists. Liberal administrators could no longer indefinitely transfer territory to colonial governments against the wish of indigenous people, even though such practices had been part of a long tradition. For this reason the Liberals had delayed in transferring the Bechuanaland Crown Colony to the Cape Government, and it seems improbable that they would have arranged this in 1895 had they known that it would be the base of military operations against the Transvaal.

The Jameson Raid accomplished what Ripon had most feared in South Africa. Not only did it separate Rhodes from the Cape Bond, but it destroyed the very prospect of a loose federation among the Provinces of both national groups. The Liberal front bench now in opposition, felt hamstrung over the matter. The Kaiser's telegram to Kruger had exacerbated national feeling--and Labouchere, conspicuous among the anti-Imperialists, did not reprove the Kaiser for having sent it--because it coincided with his Anglo- American quarrel in Venezuela.²¹

²¹Jeffrey Butler, The Liberal Party and the Jameson Raid, p. 66.

However, the Raid was a prelude to a period of sustained criticism of Imperial conduct. John Morley was skeptical about the claim that neither the British High Commissioner nor the Colonial Office knew in advance about the collection of armed men on the frontier, and Morley went out of his way to praise Kruger, whom he believed had no cause to give the vote to "avowed enemies of the Republic."²² Both Salisbury and Hicks-Beach spoke of Morley as a "Little Englander" because of his taking up of Uitlander rights.²³ Hicks-Beach even questioned Morley's patriotism:

He (Hicks-Beach), had no doubt that had the people of the Transvaal who were asking for these rights had been Irishmen, Scotsmen or Welshmen, they would have commanded the active sympathies of Mr. Morley, but they were English and Mr. Morley being one of the "Little England" school, thought that their claim could not be properly pressed upon President Kruger.²⁴

Significantly the "Little Englanders" did not personally attack Chamberlain after the Jameson Raid. Initial criticism of Chamberlain came ironically, from such front-bench Imperialists as Sir Edward Grey.²⁵ Throughout the Jameson affair, Harcourt managed to retain a high personal regard for Chamberlain, even if this supposed magnanimity

²²The Times, January 21, 1896.

²³Ibid., March 4, 1896.

²⁴Ibid., February 7, 1896.

²⁵Ibid., March 4, 1896.

permanently damaged his own reputation and position within the Liberal Party. From the outset, Harcourt doubtless suspected that Rhodes had known of the Raid in advance although he probably interpreted Rhodes' conduct as from the point of view of his being a company official. Only secondarily did Harcourt relate Rhodes' conduct as a possible indication of collusion with the Colonial Office.²⁶ When the matter was debated, he, as did other anti-Imperialists, saw the Enquiry into the Jameson Raid as a means of re-establishing understanding with the Boers.²⁷

But Labouchere felt that the suspicions which he had entertained towards the South Africa Company since 1891 were now confirmed. He moved an amendment--which subsequently he withdrew--that any inquiry into the Jameson Raid should not be limited to that Raid but should review the "financial and political action of the Company since the Charter was granted."²⁸ But it is significant that Labouchere did not suggest any criminal charge by which Rhodes might be indicted, although he expressed anger that Rhodes had been allowed to return to the Cape after only a brief hearing in London. Two months later, (May, 1896), Labouchere formally demanded that action be taken against the ~~directors~~

²⁶Jeffrey Butler, op. cit., p. 273.

²⁷H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 37 (1896), pp. 90-96, Harcourt.

²⁸H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 37 (1896), pp. 282-289, Labouchere.

of the Company. He believed that the concessions upon which the Charter had been based, and the methods which the company had employed to raise capital were of especial relevance.²⁹ Unlike Harcourt, Labouchere was dissatisfied with the prospect of the mere removal of personnel; rather Labouchere wanted a complete rescinding of the Company's Charter.

Labouchere knew that nothing could be undertaken that might prejudice Jameson's forthcoming trial in London or, for that matter, in the trial of the Reform Committee's leaders in Pretoria. Labouchere fully accepted the sub judica plea that even a Select Parliamentary Enquiry would have to delay its sitting. Chamberlain went so far as to indicate in his correspondence that he would prefer Labouchere to serve on the proposed Select Committee where he would inevitably be more or less influenced and restrained by his colleagues.³⁰ In swallowing a hook baited by Chamberlain, Labouchere actually exceeded Chamberlain's expectations. In fact, Chamberlain's hope that Labouchere would help remove his own stigma was to be borne out by the Enquiry. Labouchere allowed himself to be overruled by Chamberlain--who was Chairman--not only in his cross-examination of witnesses, but in his desire to prove that

²⁹H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 40 (1896), p.(400),Labouchere.

³⁰Joseph Chamberlain, Private Papers 10/6/1/8. Quoted in Jeffrey Butler, op. cit., p. 114.

Rhodes had acted primarily from economic motives. While this could have been relevant to a general debate on imperial policy, it was only marginally relevant to the Enquiry.

Both Labouchere and Harcourt seem to have preferred a Select Commons Committee rather than a Judicial Commission, and this accorded with the anti-Imperialists "tradition" that imperial questions should be settled only by a parliamentary body. Some members in Rosebery's Imperialist group favoured a Judicial Commission, but Harcourt understandably wished to minimize Rosebery's influence in this situation. Otherwise, the argument that the Judiciary was not considered competent to judge matters of Imperial administration would have seemed inappropriate to the mind of one who had so championed the ideal of arbitration in international affairs. And so in August 1896, when rumours of government complicity were rife, Harcourt accepted the principle of a Select Parliamentary Committee drawn mainly from the front benches; an arrangement which almost certainly would come to operate as a screening device rather than as a genuine enquiry.

Chamberlain announced that he was prepared to offer a "Home Rule" solution for the Rand, but he appears to have deliberately published it before Kruger could receive a copy of his proposal. Thus both Labouchere and Harcourt were made to feel that the Parliamentary Committee would be meeting in the shadow of very important negotiations

with the Transvaal. This partly explains why Chamberlain had acted quickly by himself in suggesting an enquiry into the Raid. His own law councillors suggested that the terms of reference of the Enquiry should be limited "so as to prevent enquiry into the guilt or innocence of any persons against whom criminal proceedings were pending, and to delay the investigation of any specific question which might be raised in the criminal proceedings until such proceedings were terminated."³¹ The course which the Enquiry proceeded with largely followed the outline of Chamberlain's own Memorandum. Yet Chamberlain always claimed, and he was technically correct--that he had only met with the wishes of the Opposition. It was the Opposition who had voluntarily diverted their terms of reference.

The work of the Enquiry could not proceed until completion of the two trials. Although Jameson was found guilty, his trial was not sensational because he did not allow his counsel to take up the matter of official responsibility.

The South Africa Select Commons Committee met to start its real work in January 1897. It had a combined strength of fifteen members and included such "Moderates" as Campbell-Bannerman, Buxton³² and Harcourt.

³¹Law Officers (Sir Richard Webster and Sir Robert Finlay) to Mr. Chamberlain. February 3, 1896, Chamberlain Private Papers, 10/1/29. Quoted in Jeffrey Butler, op. cit., p. 76.

³²Buxton, Sydney. 1st Earl Buxton (1853-1934). M.P. (1883-85), (1886-1914); Under-Secretary of State for Colonies (1892-95); Postmaster-General (1905-10); Governor-General of South Africa (1914-20). (Liberal).

Apart from Labouchere, there were two radical anti-Imperialists, Ellis³³ and Blake³⁴ who represented the Irish Nationalists. But Labouchere and Ellis would not cooperate, and Blake--who might have signed Labouchere's Minority Report--left the Committee early.

Throughout its thirty-five days of hearings, the Parliamentary Committee functioned as a second debating chamber. When answering to cross-examination, Rhodes attempted to describe general conditions in South Africa as being inimical to Liberal Party teaching, with the implication that such conditions could therefore be rectified by unilateral action anywhere in South Africa by virtue of his capacity as Cape Premier. Labouchere had particularly wanted to discredit Rhodes because it was the Company rather than the Colonial Office that he suspected at this time. Labouchere therefore inquired into the gravity of alleged Uitlander grievances and franchise disabilities; he cast suspicion--not so much on the need for "paramountcy", which even he was prepared to accept in accordance with the London Convention--as on the the doubtful "Transvaal-German conspiracy", which was alleged to have undermined this. But on the very question of Chamberlain's foreknowledge of the Jameson Raid, Labouchere's questioning of Rhodes was perfunctory

³³Ellis, John E., (1841-1910). M.P. (1885-1910); Quaker, (Liberal).

³⁴Blake, Edward (1833-1912). Canadian lawyer; Premier of Ontario (1871-72); M.P. (1892-1907). (Irish-Nationalist).

and without penetration.³⁵ Labouchere even allowed himself to be over-ruled by Chamberlain with respect to his interrogation of Sir John Willoughby, who, even at this stage, had been suspected of writing compromising letters to the War Office before the Raid.

Labouchere was thus unlikely to portray the Colonial Office as a co-conspirator in the matter. Labouchere's emphasis was consistently on the status of the Uitlanders or the excess profits of the gold magnates. In fact the more distinguished and moderate Liberal members of the South Africa Committee, e.g., Campbell-Bannerman and Harcourt, allowed themselves to be drawn too closely to Chamberlain. Harcourt openly admitted that he would not press any question on Rhodes which might incriminate agents of the Colonial Office. This is revealing of Harcourt's entire career, because although an anti-Imperialist, his concept of the role of Opposition Leader was essentially one of collaboration with, rather than repudiation of government policy. Thus, although already looked upon as a Little Englander, Harcourt often found himself the apologist for imperialist ventures by virtue of his seniority in the party.

Labouchere had hoped to show that there was a connection between stock exchange manoeuvres and the Jameson Raid. But as stock brokers

³⁵Van der Poel, op. cit., p. 204.

would not reveal identities of their clients, Labouchere could not obtain the evidence for which he was looking. However, Labouchere's constant emphasis on what he alleged to be the "financial" aspect of the whole business was largely responsible for the note of anti-semitism with which anti-Imperialism subsequently became associated. By this association, Labouchere anticipated some of the assumptions which Hobson was to incorporate in his study of the nature of Imperialism. Other Liberal members of the Committee were plainly embarrassed by Labouchere's attitude, but more particularly by the analogy that he came to draw between the situations in Crete and the Transvaal. But Labouchere knew that he did not possess sufficient evidence to marshal or prove his case. In subsequent correspondence with Harcourt, Labouchere revealed his bitterness.³⁶

³⁶Labouchere to Harcourt, May 28, 1897. (Harcourt Private Papers). Quoted in Jeffrey Butler, op. cit., pp. 175-176. " . . . the Rhodes Group has subordinated everything to the Stock Exchange. It started with a huge paper Capital, on the Chartered Company, having then alone Mashonaland. Finding no gold there, it seized on Manicaland from the Portugese. When no gold was forthcoming, it seized on Matabeleland . . . What I wanted to show today (in the Committee hearing) was that Beit was so largely interested in the Rand Mines and in the Chartered Company that he acted as a capitalist in supporting the Raid, and that his plea of general Grievances was merely a pretext . . . never since the South Sea Bubble has there been such an impudent financial speculation against the public."

The Committee's Majority Report--drawn up by Harcourt--criticized Rhodes' conduct. Labouchere's Minority Report which was more judicious in tone and which deplored the failure to obtain the telegrams allegedly sent by the South Africa Company before and after the Jameson Raid, implied however, a minor culpability on the part of the Colonial Office.³⁷ Evidently Labouchere at the time of the Minority Report, assumed that the telegrams--which Hawkesley declined to produce³⁸--were in themselves untruthful and that they had been composed only to convince interested people in South Africa that the Colonial Office approved of their plot. Three years later, Labouchere formally rejected this earlier hypothesis, and he enlarged the responsibility of the Colonial Office in the whole business.³⁹

It was on the specific request of both Labouchere and Lawson that the Commons debated the Report.⁴⁰ The anti-Imperialists committed a parliamentary blunder when Stanhope, simultaneously moved an amendment that not only condemned the Majority Report, but also demanded that

³⁷J. Van der Poel, op. cit., p. 229.

³⁸Hawkesley, Bouchier (1851-1915). Solicitor to Cecil Rhodes and British South Africa Company; on Rhodes' instruction, refused to hand over the telegram to the South Africa Committee; Liberal Candidate (1900).

³⁹H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 79 (1899), p. 679, Labouchere.

⁴⁰H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 51 (1897), p. 311, Labouchere.

Hawkesley be called to the bar to account for the missing telegrams.⁴¹

Harcourt, in representing the majority of the Liberal Party, would not have objected to the summoning of Hawkesley, but Harcourt could not be expected to allow the Liberal opposition to repudiate the Report which he himself had written. An amendment to divide Stanhope's motion into two parts was then cleverly defeated by Balfour and who steered the motion already on the order paper away from the control of the Radical anti-Imperialists.

Thus the ensuing debate inevitably resulted in Stanhope's motion being defeated and Rhodes' conduct being partially exonerated on technical grounds. When pressed by Hicks-Beach,⁴² in this debate, Labouchere admitted that he still did not think Chamberlain had been implicated in the affair. He did however explain that he thought there were now two Imperialist attitudes towards the Transvaal; those who looked to see "reasonable reform" in South Africa, and those who wanted to destroy the republic and place the British flag there.⁴³

Courtney then lent support to Labouchere's "pro-Boer" proposal

⁴¹H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 51 (1897), p. 1102, Stanhope.

⁴²Hicks-Beach, Sir Michael Edward (1837-1916). M.P. (1864-1906); Colonial Secretary (1878-1880); Chancellor of the Exchequer (1885-86); (Conservative).

⁴³H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 51 (1897), p. 1102, Labouchere.

to strike out Rhodes' name from the Privy Council. Courtney criticized Harcourt for arguing against the previous anti-Imperialist resolution as if it impugned the honour of the House. Thus Harcourt was himself now the victim of the kind of personal criticism which "anti-Imperialists" often levelled against their Imperialist opponents. Courtney now intimated that it would have been preferable not to have used a Parliamentary Committee at all in investigating the Jameson Raid.⁴⁴

Paradoxically, Chamberlain defended the Chartered Company concept of administration on the very grounds that, for the people concerned, it was preferable to status as a Crown Colony, because the English treasury would never agree to the necessary expenditures.⁴⁵ But it would appear that after 1895, in spite of Chamberlain's vigorous supervision of the local situation and of the function of the Enquiry itself, the Colonial Office had really lost overall control of the political situation. Chamberlain had become responsible for imperial interests at a time of Britain's relative decline in world affairs. This made it all the more difficult to effect a measure of cooperation between Kruger and Rhodes, without which no advance towards federation could be made. This was unlikely on two counts; the Transvaal's commercial success had already undermined British influence, and the

⁴⁴H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 51 (1897), p. 1129, Courtney.

⁴⁵H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 51 (1897), p. 1163, Chamberlain.

Jameson Raid had made even loyalty of the Cape Colony doubtful. Thus Chamberlain's heavy-handed actions partly explain why Lord Salisbury had become increasingly mistrustful of "Dominion status" as a panacea for South Africa.

By the end of 1897, the "Moderates" and the anti-Imperialists in the Liberal Party had come to regard the policies of the Liberal Imperialists as indistinguishable from Salisbury's. This underlined the melancholy fact that in spite of the Convention of 1881, which had attempted to undo the harm of the South Africa Act of 1877, a friendly Transvaal had not emerged. By 1899, the Liberal Party had become increasingly divided over which white groups were to be supported. Chamberlain and Milner assumed that the future majority would be British and they countenanced a policy of supporting "loyalist" groups rather than the particular Provincial Governments of the times. But after the defeat of Rhodes' Cape Party, this became an increasingly dangerous course to follow. It abjectly ignored the very principles of "Liberal" representative government and forced the opposition Liberal Front Bench into adopting either a rigid pro-Boer policy, which the anti-Imperialists were accused of doing, or a pro-Uitlander stand. This led them close to the kind of inconsistency sometimes attributed to the anti-Imperialists who condemned local administrations in "Rhodesia" only to ignore their defects in the Transvaal.

When the Commons debated the opening hostilities of the Second Boer War, a large number of Liberals--including Morley and Harcourt--voted against the government.⁴⁶ The new leader of the Liberal Party was a Moderate, Campbell-Bannerman, who had hoped that the Party would not discuss the Estimates when Hicks-Beach presented them on October 23, 1899. Any such discussion would plainly split the party wide open because, while the imperialist wing under Grey and Asquith was prepared to criticize the Government on its execution of policy, it was not prepared to discuss moral issues. In the final months preceding the Boer War, the Liberal Imperialists had been affirmatively supported by the Government whenever they had disagreed with their colleagues. However, the center of gravity within the Liberal Party began to move perceptibly towards the "anti-Imperialist" end of the spectrum following the declaration of war. Nevertheless, as late as July, 1900, more Liberals voted for the government--on the basis of future policy in South Africa--than voted against it.⁴⁷

The anti-Imperialists were to take great exception to the analogy that Chamberlain drew between Indian, Crown Colony and military types of government. At such a critical juncture in imperial affaire, Labouchere

⁴⁶H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 77 (1899), pp.254-367. Division List No. 4, October 19, 1899. 356 Ayes to 158 Noes.

⁴⁷H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 86. Division List No. 243, July 25, 1900. 176 Ayes to 41 Noes.

suggested that the Rand might be separated from the rest of the Transvaal. He feared that unless the mine owners were detached, they would monopolize whatever form of government was introduced for the Transvaal.⁴⁸ Courtney still demanded complete independence for the Transvaal.⁴⁹

Perhaps the shock of the Khaki Election of 1900 was not in the defeat of the Liberal Opposition--the Liberals lost very few seats--but in their failure to recapture seats lost five years earlier. On the occasion of this election only anti-Imperialists could afford to make appeals to the issue of "native races". Their goal now was not to bring about Chamberlain's downfall so much as to attempt to keep him out of any final settlement for South Africa. In this matter they were to be victorious, although the circumstances which dictated this were not of their making.

It had been the Jameson Raid rather than the war itself which had generated a resurgence of anti-Imperialism. In fact the Raid stands with the reconquest of the Sudan, the Fashoda Crisis, as an emotive issue. But like most anti-Imperialist arguments, the Raid divided the Liberals and not the Conservatives. This largely explains why the Liberal leaders

⁴⁸H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 86 (1900), p. 1218, Labouchere.

⁴⁹H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 86 (1900), p. 1243, Courtney.

had wanted to drop discussion of the Raid after the termination of the Enquiry. Until the Jameson Raid, Imperialism in its more responsible official vein had been always restrained and even defensive. Prior to the Jameson Raid, the difference between a "Little" and "Big" Englander was much less than the terminology employed might suggest. In both parties there were perhaps mute sections who took expansion for granted but they desired nothing that involved sacrifice or discomfort. The anti-Imperialists, however, regarded South African politics as but essentially a "second order arbitral function."⁵⁰ But unless this attitude is contrasted with its antithesis, e.g. Milner's faith in the ability of a "parent" state to shape the society which it administered, the composite anti-Imperialist faction must appear amorphous. However the polarization between the opposing "schools" had been accelerated by circumstances which neither side had anticipated.

Public opinion--previously stirred in 1895 by the "women and children" letter in the Times--found itself carried by a new momentum which political leaders were temporarily obliged to follow. The "Jingoistic" press was influential as a vehicle of propaganda and election strategy, but it necessarily deprived Imperialism of its decorum.⁵¹ By the end of 1899, only two daily newspapers, the Morning

⁵⁰Eric Stokes, "Milnerism", Historical Journal, V, (1962), p.47.

⁵¹F. Whyte, Life of W.T. Stead, Vol. 2, p. 172.

Leader and the Star in addition to the Manchester Guardian were opposed to the War.

As long as Imperialism assumed only a devolutionary or even consolidationist position in South Africa, it attracted a wide spectrum of radical support. Those statesmen who had attempted to make Imperialism otherwise by burdening the Imperial government with provincial matters, e.g. Carnarvon, Lytton and Milner--were invariably isolated at a time when crucial policy making decisions were taken. But Milner's brinkmanship at the Bloemfontein Conference drove such diverse Radicals as Stead or Dilke into the "pro-Boer" camp as anti-Imperialists or "Little Englanders". Paradoxically, Milner had grumbled at the scandal and jobbery of the Rhodes fiasco as much as Labouchere. But whereas Rhodes had had to contend only with Boer parochialism, Milner had to face a flood of nascent nationalism and to the anti-Imperialists; a pro-consular mind such as Milner's was a lost mind.⁵² Thus the moral fervour--which some Radicals like Stead found so attractive--had within the space of less than a decade, become so suspect to the anti-Imperialists that Milner stood as convicted as Rhodes. To such critics, it seemed that Imperialism had marked a

⁵²A.P. Thornton, The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies, p. 80.

recrudescence of the Jesuitical spirit.⁵³

No Radical illustrated the dilemma of the anti-Imperialist better than John Morley. His apologists recognized that he did not know how to translate his anti-Imperialism into an active role.⁵⁴ Like other anti-Imperialists, he had defended the initial work of the South Africa Committee in 1897, but in voluntary "retirement" throughout the Boer War, Morley pondered why England had committed a crime against nationality. He still did not disown his own innate preference for Anglo-Saxon institutions. It was not to these that he attributed the demoralizing decade. But he believed that England had adopted a hypocritical stance in world affairs. Her professions at The Hague Conference amounted in his view only to polite formality. The Jameson Raid had been invoked to show that Englishmen were in danger of sharing the fate of Armenians--whereas in fact it was the prelude to an act as infamous as the "despoilation of Poland." Morley would not have disputed that the object of patriotism might be to justify Saxon institutions and even to promote a condominium of the English-speaking races. But in his view the Imperialists behind Chamberlain had engineered an extemporized crises and had willfully failed to explain what their patriotism sought to uphold.

⁵³F.W. Hirst, Liberalism and the Empire, p. 180.

⁵⁴F.W. Hirst, In the Golden Days, p. 188.

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⁵³F.W. Hirst, Liberalism and the Empire, p. 180.

⁵⁴F.W. Hirst, In the Golden Days, p. 188.

CHAPTER IX

ANTI-IMPERIALISM AND THE PROBLEM OF

IMPERIAL DEFENCE

Naval Reform

An attempt will be made in this chapter to illustrate and summarize the attitudes of anti-Imperialists towards the problems of securing Imperial defense. Perhaps it is of some significance that in diverting their line of criticism from the Colonial Office to the Rand manipulators, anti-Imperialists were prudently avoiding reference to the significance of the Cape in Imperial defence. Protection of the Cape was vital to the Cabinet because the Kruger telegram had drawn attention once more to Britain's vulnerability in a period of splendid isolation and the diplomatic legacy of the Kaiser's intervention meant that the efficacy of two-power standard which for seven years had formed the basis of British naval policy was now questioned by the British Government.

By way of introduction, it will be recalled that the amorphous tradition associated with the memory of Richard Cobden had cultivated an ideal of pseudo-pacifism among many Radicals. Historically, Cobden had never embraced pacifism, but "pacifism" in his lifetime had in any case not attained its subsequent dogmatic connotation.

As early as 1849, Cobden had suggested that arbitration might become the basis for future settlement of political differences. But Cobden was given little encouragement by the Manchester School and in 1856 he warned Sturge not to base his "Peace League" there. In that year, Manchester traders had been directly or indirectly involved in the notorious "Arrow" affair which resulted in the bombardment of a Chinese port by British warships.

"Pro-Boers" drew some comfort from the fact that because of Cobden's attitude to the Eastern Question, Cobden himself had once been denigrated as a "Pro-Russian" forty years before.

Defence spending was to become an important issue in Cobden's lifetime. In 1859, differences with France were to lead to a resurgence of naval construction, and it is to Cobden's credit that, in spite of this prevailing difficulty, he was able to negotiate a free-trade agreement with France the following year. However, in 1868 this construction was curtailed on the grounds of economy, and it was not to be revived even by the succeeding Conservative Ministry. In fact, it was not Gladstone, but Disraeli who was reputed to have coined the expression "bloated armaments". But in spite of numerous Imperial problems, relations between the Great Powers from 1878 until 1884 were not of a kind to make naval or military rearmament appear strategically imperative.

Nevertheless, 1881 was the last year to be free of a need for supplementary estimates for either of the services--although even then there had been a request for a small sum in connection with the Transvaal Campaign.¹ The defeat at Majuba Hill had admittedly been a severe setback to British military prestige, but in Egypt, both the Army and the Navy accomplished their immediate objectives in the following year. Parliamentary debates suggest no outward concern on the part of the Liberal Party for generalized problems of imperial defence; only in 1884 did there come an indication that a new look would have to be taken at the Imperial Services.²

On September 15, 1884, the Pall Mall Gazette began its "Truth about the Navy" series which aroused national interest. It began as a journalistic scoop, but because Stead went to the Admiralty to personally interview the First Sea Lord, Sir Cooper Key, it caused Morley to conclude that the agitation had been initiated by professional navalists. Some of the articles which followed were signed by Beresford³ and

¹H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 323 (1888), p. 629, Childers.

²H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 288 (1884), p. 1731, Northbrooke.

³Beresford, Lord Charles (1846-1919). M.P. 1874 f.f.; participated in bombardment of Alexandria (1882); in Nile expedition (1884-85); advocated "Big Navy" policy in Parliament; leaked classified memoranda to Pall Mall Gazette advising nonexistence of Admiralty war plans in event of war.

Fisher.⁴ The significance of the series can hardly be overstated.

In May, Lord Northbrook said the Navy was so perfect that if he had another £1 million thrust into his hands he would not know what to do with it. In November, he declared that he must have an extra 5 million to put the Navy in proper condition. Nothing had altered in the meantime, but the "Truth about the Navy" articles.⁵

The debate on the supplementary estimates (December 2, 1884) found the new naval policy described as "offensive" by both orthodox Gladstonians and anti-Imperialists. Unlike the Nonconformists, who were invariably militant on Imperial questions involving native trusteeship yet frequently pacifist inclined on questions of militarism per se, the anti-Imperialists did not dispute in principle the need for British Naval supremacy, but they assumed--perhaps irrationally--that this supremacy could be maintained without reference to the current naval policy of other nations. Thus it can be imagined how the combined presence of Service Officers and anti-Imperialists in the same House of Commons would have polarized attitudes towards naval reform. But this situation was acerbated by new house procedures. Estimates from now on would itemize the cost of individual vessels under construction and the

⁴Fisher, John Arbuthnot. 1st Viscount Fisher (1841-1920). In Egypt 1882; commander of gunnery school "H.M.S. Excellent" 1883-85; director of naval ordinance 1886; First Sea Lord 1904-10, 1914-15.

⁵J.W. Robertson, The Story of the Pall Mall Gazette, p. 125.

professional navalist therefore held the stage because meaningful discussion had to encompass technicalities.

In 1886, Gladstone's short-lived Third Ministry had to contend with a growing demand from the Admiralty for torpedo boats, destroyers, and heavy ironclads. As Chancellor of the Exchequer, Harcourt predictably argued against expansion and he adamantly refused Beresford's suggestion that the "Sinking Fund" be suspended to facilitate rapid implementation of a new naval program, and he insisted that the "credit of the nation remain intact."⁶ Harcourt later felt justified by immediate events. In fact, during the first two years of Salisbury's succeeding Administration, the estimates were actually reduced, suggesting that the Conservatives had been satisfied with the condition of the Navy at the time of Gladstone's resignation in 1886. In fact the recurring tenet of the Moderates within the Liberal Party even after they had accepted the need for the two-power standard was that the proposed programme be contained as a matter of principle within the estimates.⁷ Thus, if anti-Imperialists were dismayed by Naval expansion they would have been placed in a less conspicuous position by virtue of the Gladstonians. Even at a time of wage depression, Liberals lamented the magnitude of the existing level of naval expenditure.

⁶H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 303 (1886), p. 891, Harcourt.

⁷H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 333 (1889), p. 1313, Campbell-Bannerman.

The Imperial Defence Act of 1886--a mildly expansionist measure which need not have antagonized Liberal feelings--was nonetheless voted on according to the basis of party although on this occasion there was considerable abstention. Of fifty-seven Liberals who participated in the division, only fourteen supported the Bill and these included the "shadow" War Secretary, Campbell-Bannerman, and such Liberal back-benchers as Haldane and George Campbell. Campbell was conscious that his attitude to previous campaigns in Egypt and the Sudan might make his conduct in this debate seem erratic but he suggested that Dilke would have taken the same stand as he had adopted, were he sitting in the House. Thus it was possible to criticize the government for its involvement in Egypt and the Sudan without becoming a strenuous opponent of military preparedness.

The basic circumstances leading to the 1889 Naval Defence Act deserve brief mention. Two reports issued by the new Department of Naval Intelligence in 1887 and 1888 intimated that the wisest strategy for Britain to employ in time of war was that of blockade. It was calculated that to be effective this strategy would require a numerical superiority in the ratio of three to one or even four to one so as to allow for ships being absent for coaling or refitting. It was further disclosed that, in the event of war with France, a naval blockade would prove effective at Toulon. For this, a minimum superiority of three to two in capital

ships was required. This requirement made the whole Mediterranean strategy uncertain; but what was more disconcerting to Salisbury, was the disclosure that foreign and naval policies had been proceeding on lines divergent from each other.⁸ Ever since 1885, Salisbury had been trying to break out of the position of isolation in Europe which he had inherited from Gladstone. Attempts to resolve this by overtures to France and the Sultan had proved abortive. However, in other directions, diplomatic moves proved more fruitful and in 1887 the Mediterranean Agreement was signed. But in February 1888, a new war-scare developed between Italy and France. Salisbury had therefore to decide whether to turn the Mediterranean Agreement of the previous year into a quadrilateral Alliance. Feverish preparation was made by France at Toulon in anticipation of a German-Italian Alliance. In February Salisbury ordered the British Mediterranean Fleet to visit Genoa and La Spezia to clarify the implications Labouchere pressed the government to explain its action.⁹

The Government's reply appeared to satisfy the rank and file of the Liberal Party. Evidently the Admiralty had no illusions of blockading Toulon without its three to two majority, and it was understood that even in the event of imminent war with France, the British capital ships would

⁸C.J. Lowe, The Reluctant Imperialists.

⁹H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. (1886), p. , Labouchere.

remain at Gibraltar.

Thus it was not surprising that in the following year (1889) the two-power standard was crystallized by announcement of an ambitious program to be spread over five years. The anticipated cost of the construction of seventy vessels was estimated at £21,500,000. However the financial arrangements were unorthodox and controversial; at least seven annual parliaments would be committed to stipulated installments. Approximately £10,000,000 of the total was to come from a Consolidated Fund, with the balance to be voted by Parliament.

This expenditure involved only an annual increase of approximately £400,000 over recent expenditures, but the unorthodoxy behind the funding of the debt distressed the Gladstonians. In the ensuing debates the Moderates and anti-Imperialists blindly attempted to prove what was not really disputed: that at that particular time the navy was not inferior to the French and Russian navies combined.

One Radical who represented Labour interests--Randall Cremer--suspected that the Government was soft peddling on the word "imperial" in this debate. But his self-deprecating attitude to such a controversy--he freely admitted that he felt unqualified to address the House Committee--made Cremer personally popular with even government supporters. Cremer's principal objection was typical of most opposition arguments.

The Government had not even attempted to justify the need for a strengthened Navy. Although the Government had Intelligence Reports at its disposal, it had not indicated to the House the exact size of foreign navies. Gladstonians and Radical anti-Imperialists thus found themselves frequently at cross purposes.¹⁰ Gladstonians were dubious about the wisdom of encouraging Service Members to sit in the Commons even though they were the ones best qualified to describe Britain's changing naval position. However, such Service Chiefs who did play a leading part in debates had to be well-versed in mercantile data, as otherwise their words would have fallen on deaf ears. Beresford cited the increase in total imports and exports in the previous twenty years to illustrate that while trade had more than doubled, current naval estimates were actually down by £1 million.¹¹ Perhaps even more impressive was the fact that although the amount of imported food had risen by eighty-eight per cent in that twenty years, domestic food production had remained stationary.¹²

Unshared by anti-Imperialists was Salisbury's realization that in the months following the Mediterranean Agreement, Britain's influence at Constantinople had virtually collapsed. There was a need to keep the

¹⁰H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 333 (1889), p. 1207, Cremer.

¹¹H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 334 (1889), p. 1658, Illingworth.

¹²A.J. Marder, The Anatomy of Sea Power, p. 85.

Russian fleet bottled up in the Black Sea, but the Admiralty had been advised by its Intelligence that, due to the total inattention paid by the Porte to the Turkish Navy since 1865, a party of 25,000 Russian troops could, without difficulty, take the Bosphorus and press on to Constantinople. The threat of a Franco-Russian entente rumoured by 1888 had already jeopardized the projected balance of naval strength. But anti-Imperialists and Non-Conformists would not accept this exigency as Britain's problem; it was up to Italy and Austria to withstand Russian aggression.¹³

In addition to the diplomatic obligations, anti-Imperialists shared with the Moderates a grave mistrust of the function of the House of Lords, which had, of course, accepted whole heartedly the principle of a two-power standard. As "shadow" War Secretary, Campbell-Bannerman realized that he could count on considerable support when he criticized the unconstitutional precedent of passing an Act facilitating payment of naval expenditures because this effectively made the Lords co-partners with the Commons in determining annual expenditure.¹⁴ Labouchere objected to pledging future Parliaments to fixed expenditures in this way.¹⁵

¹³H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 334 (1889), p. 1658, Illingworth.

¹⁴H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 334 (1889), p. 1260, Campbell-Bannerman.

¹⁵H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 335 (1889), p. 1297, Labouchere.

Because the aggregate Service Estimates were expected to stay below a ceiling, Lawson felt the service votes, military and naval, could not be dissociated.¹⁶ If this practice of financial integration were followed, it would be possible to "rob" the War Office to "pay" the Admiralty; a practice which would encourage closer co-operation between what had hitherto been entirely separate departments. Even from the viewpoint of technical supervision, this assumption was reasonable in view of the fact that the bulk of naval and military weapons were basically indistinguishable.

Labouchere's share in the 1889 Naval Defence Bill debate was quite disproportionate. But in this debate he revealed a percipient grasp of detail. He knew that there was little Liberal agitation--only one Liberal appears to have spoken for it and he was one of the larger ship-owners in the country--and he had nothing to lose by giving voice to sentiments which were shared by many in that Party.¹⁷

Being particularly critical of the Mediterranean Agreement and what he believed to be Salisbury's anti-Russian crusade, Labouchere predicted that the two-power concept would help cement a Franco-Russian alliance. He maintained that even without the two-power standard, Britain

¹⁶H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 333 (1889), p. 1533, Lawson.

¹⁷H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 334 (1889), p. 1307, Palmer.

could effectively blockade France and Russia so as to prevent either country from obtaining coal. But on this point, Labouchere was ill-informed. Disquieting lessons had been learned as far back as the occasion of the 1885 manoeuvres, and these had led the Admiralty to believe that the motor torpedo boat had ended once and for all the possibility of a Nelsonian blockade.¹⁸

Labouchere built up a theoretical argument on the basis of jurisprudence. He had previously indicated that in wartime the prohibitive cost of insurance would necessitate its underwriting by the government. Citing terms made under the Treaty of Paris (1856), he argued that "free ships made free goods." This was a liberal doctrine which he so interpreted as to suggest that in time of war all goods other than contraband could be carried by neutrals even to the port of a belligerent power. But the problem of insurance would--in Labouchere's view--drive most mercantile shipping into flying neutral flags. Thus he predicted that in any future major war as far as Britain was concerned, there would be no mercantile fleet to defend. In support of this he cited the example of American trade which had fallen into British carriers during the Civil War.¹⁹ But Labouchere did not question whether such a contingency would result in any permanent loss of carrying

¹⁸A.J. Marder, op. cit., p. 111.

¹⁹H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 335 (1889), p. 1297, Labouchere.

trade to Britain. This was a serious omission, because all Liberals--whether imperialist or anti-imperialist--valued Britain's function as an entrepôt. He had conspicuously ignored the example of France's refusal to accept counter-transfer in the Far East War of 1884-1885, a situation which would repeat itself in the subsequent Siamese War of 1893, on which occasion France declared even rice as contraband. Admiral Aube's Jeune École expressly denied the immunity of private property in time of war.

Anti-Imperialists had tended to confuse naval reform with the continental militarism which the Cobdenites traditionally had found so obnoxious. This tradition of Cobden, they treated as a "dogma" which forbade pragmatic response to the changing relationships of naval strength. But in 1889, naval reform was still regarded as heretical by the Gladstonian "rank and file" on account of the unorthodoxy of the financial arrangements necessary to effect it. The only contribution Gladstone made to the 1889 debate was an amendment deprecating financial heresy. Yet the seed of future conflict between the supporters of retrenchment and the champions of preparedness had already begun to germinate and this development would create an almost irreparable cleavage, even before the Liberals were to return to power in 1892. Only temporarily could a common appeal to "constitutional" precedents mitigate the growing polarization of views. Liberals from diverse

backgrounds were becoming increasingly perturbed at the prospect of other nations attacking British interests with impunity.

Paradoxically, it was the Conservative Government which cited Cobden in defence of the new policy. Cobden, it appeared, had regarded the Navy as the first, second, and third lines of defence.²⁰ Cobden was alleged to have been willing to spend 100 million if necessary to prevent France from attaining a position of parity with Britain.²¹ But in reply, the "anti-navalists" argued that in an age when entirely new navies were being launched, a "two-power standard" was unrealistic because Cobden had predicted that France would always spend two-thirds of what Britain did on her own navy.²²

However, the Liberal "rank and file" did not seriously anticipate repeal of the Naval Defence Act. By questioning the government's means rather than its aims, they were in effect accepting the Act unenthusiastically. If they still believed the warning of the anti-Imperialists that naval superiority would exacerbate international relations, they were now evidently prepared to accept the risk.

²⁰H.P.D., 3rd. Ser., Vol. 335 (1889), p. 1322, Fowler.

²¹H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 336 (1889), p. 430, Admiral Mayne.

²²H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 335 (1889), p. 1376, Shaw Lefevre.

During the years immediately following, many Radicals found themselves disinclined to vote against a preparedness measure and voted with the Moderates to form an enlarged "center block". Many of these Radicals doubtless, had thought no more about the specific needs of the Navy than had the more militant anti-Imperialists, but they were prepared to take the "two-power standard" for granted. Indeed, by 1893, the British public--alarmed by a new "scare" story on the development of Toulon--would have permitted no deviation.²³

The 1893 Debate--in which Labouchere and Lawson played no significant part--was generally considered to be the most important since 1889. It effected the final conversion of the Moderates to the cause of Naval reform and it hastened the demise of Gladstone himself. Played out in the shadow of Mahan's The Influence of Sea Power On History--which even Gladstone was obliged to call the "Book of the Age"--it attempted to determine how Britain might effectively maintain a two-power standard. Professional opinion suggested that such superiority had been retained with respect to cruisers, but not to battleships. It revealed that Britain had twenty-two first class battleships against fifteen French and ten Russian. The First Sea Lord drew up a provisional program of seven new battleships, representing an increase of $\frac{1}{2}$ million in new construction. The Admiralty was now seriously seeking to verify

²³The Times, October 31, 1893.

whether Britain could maintain her position in the Mediterranean. Heavy dockyard maintenance at Gilralter and logistics problems in connection with the re-supply of Malta necessitated a substantial lead in ships if Britain were to retain even an operational parity with the French Navy. The "minimum" program that he called for would have given Britain a bare numerical equality with France and Russia.²⁴

Because Dilke had envisaged the Royal Navy as the chief instrument in Imperial defence, he therefore took a special interest in the subsequent debate and argued that the Admiralty needed a five-to-three ratio in battleships against the combined French and Russian total.²⁵ By navalists, Dilke was acknowledged as the one man in the House of Commons who was invariably right in naval affairs.²⁶ With his friend and collaborator Spenser Wilkinson--a co-founder of the Navy League--Dilke came round to the view that heavy losses in the event of a war would necessarily presage collapse of the Imperial System; and that even the concentration of the Navy in home waters would involve abandonment of the rest of the Empire. Subsequently, Dilke was persuaded to

²⁴A.J. Marder, op. cit., p. 191. On November 21, 1893, the DNI and DNC produced two Five Year Programmes. The "minimum" called for the laying down of 7 capital ships, the "desirable" for 10. Both programmes called for 82 new destroyers and 30 torpedo ships.

²⁵H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 19 (1893), p. 1813, Dilke.

²⁶Bacon, Fisher, Vol. 1, p. 159. Quoted in A.J. Marder, op. cit., p. 197.

perceive the Navy's role in an aggressive light, by which squadrons would be placed at every one of the enemy's military ports. Thus Dilke was greatly alarmed by the fact that the British Channel and Mediterranean Fleets were actually outnumbered by the French. This was particularly serious to him as he did not wish to see Britain drawn needlessly into the Triple Alliance.²⁷

Evidently the position of the Liberal Party had eased considerably on the question and even Harcourt now openly espoused the cause of "strength for neutrality".²⁸ However, he managed to ensure that the Division split along traditional or correct party lines.²⁹ Harcourt was made aware that the 1893 "minimum" program had considerably underestimated Franco-Russian naval strength and without a further supplementary program, Britain would be outnumbered in capital ships twenty-nine to twenty-two. Harcourt therefore agreed to endorse Spencer's "minimum" program which was economically unacceptable to Gladstone. Harcourt argued that politically it would permit Britain to remain outside of European alliances. But Gladstone--as did even Shaw-Lefevre for a while--continued to oppose the scheme as unjustified

²⁷C.W. Dilke, Problems of Greater Britain.

²⁸H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 22 (1893), p. 749, Harcourt.

²⁹Division List No. 388, 1893.

by the circumstances of the time. But Harcourt realized that the entire Liberal administration was being jeopardized for an annual increase of £500,000. Feverish attempts were made to overcome Gladstone's intransigence. Lord Acton assisted in this attempt by drawing parallels between the situations of 1859 and 1884, but Gladstone was recalcitrant and believed the occasion was one of the momenta of his life.³⁰ In fact, Gladstone was so obdurate that he would not even accept Lord George Hamilton's proposal that the government--following the precedent of 1884--should make a statement before the recess of the cost and scope of the new shipbuilding program, so that the House of Commons could express an opinion before expenditures were finally settled and embodied in the 1894-95 estimates. Gladstone argued that the circumstances of 1884 had been exceptional; that the time gained would be very small and that it would be contrary to the maxim that the House should not exercise executive functions.³¹ Anti-Imperialists could still learn much from Gladstone in the art of appealing to conservative principles. But for once, Gladstone could not appeal to public opinion. Anglo-French relations were barely recovering from their lowest ebb and no attempt to undermine the Naval Defence Act could expect to prove effective. Gladstone's resignation signalled

³⁰Peter Stanski, Ambitions and Strategies, p. 31.

³¹H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 18 (1893), p. 348, W.G. Gladstone.

the ignominy of the anti-Imperialists, or at least of those who were also "Small Navalists".

Most Radicals appeared apathetic towards augmentation of the Naval Estimates in 1894. Cremer noticed that not one member of the Radical "Cabal" had protested against increased expenditure.³² The traditional radical attitude momentarily reappeared in the debate on the 1895 estimates when Lawson moved a token reduction of the vote by 1,000, but the gesture was intended less than as an attempt to undermine numerical supremacy than as a censure of the Government for its failure to resolve current international disputes.³³ Only thirty-one members supported Lawson, fewer than the fifty who voted against the Uganda Bill.³⁴ On this occasion, Lawson publicly was ridiculed as a Rip Van Winkle.³⁵

Conflicting ideas were held by Admiralty authorities on the possible future disposal of British ships: the "Mediterranean School" protagonists believed in maintaining power in that area, while the "Channel School" believed that it was imprudent to antagonize France in this way when the Mediterranean was only four days away by steam.

³²H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 22 (1894), p. 731, Cremer.

³³H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 31 (1895), p. 1286, Lawson.

³⁴Division List No. 28, 1895. 32 Ayes to 153 Noes.

³⁵H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 31 (1895), p. 1291, Allen.

At this time some theorists believed that, although Gibraltar might be retained as a political counter, its strategic value was questionable in view of its vulnerability to attack from Spanish Howitzers. Ceuta, on the Spanish Moroccan coast was thought of as a useful exchange which would better command the mouth of the Mediterranean.³⁶

Two years later, a further suggestion was offered by which the British fleets would be withdrawn from the Mediterranean, with exits being sealed at Gibraltar and Perim. This would ensure food supplies on the grounds that Britain would be strong everywhere except the Mediterranean.³⁷ Labouchere was aware of these indigenous theories and actually endorsed the "Scuttle School" described above. This he did, perhaps on the grounds that it afforded the most obvious excuse for abandoning Gibraltar. Thus even Cobden could be indirectly linked with the "Scuttle School".³⁸ Labouchere was contradicting himself, because it would transgress the concept of "free passage for free goods."

This idea was taken one step further the following month by a plan for the formal evacuation of Malta, Egypt and Cyprus provided that

³⁶W.L.Clowes, "The Millstone," The Nineteenth Century, XXXVII, (March, 1895), pp. 367-381.

³⁷H. Elsdale, "Holding the Mediterranean in War," Nineteenth Century Review, XXXVIII (February, 1895).

³⁸H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. (1895), p. , Labouchere.

these areas were placed under the jurisdiction of neutral powers. This was to ensure that the "sealing" at the above points should be effective.³⁹ This strategy endorsed a fundamental tenet of anti-Imperialists that Egypt could never serve as a road to India in wartime. Another factor that made it attractive to anti-Imperialists was that it precluded any possibility of Britain joining the Triple Alliance.

In the later debates, it was evident that many Radicals were not really aware of the true state of working-class opinion. Once the terms of the contracts awarded by the 1889 Act were fulfilled, the threat of redundancy reappeared in Government dockyards. It was the shipyard workers who had secured the defeat of Morley at Newcastle-on-Tyne in the 1895 election on account of his "Little Navy" policy. Yet in that same year, Cremer had glibly pointed out that not a single working man's petition could be found in favour of naval expansion.⁴⁰ But this did not by itself constitute an anti-Imperialist argument, it merely confirmed that working-class opinion was inarticulate. The Spencer Program, which helped raise the shipbuilding industry from a state of collapse, all but eliminated anti-Imperialist opposition to the Estimates for 1896. The old cause was most nostalgically recalled by

³⁹William Laird Clowes, "Nautilus", Nineteenth Century, LIX, March, 1895.

⁴⁰H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 31 (1895), p. 1312, Cremer.

Lawson:

We hoped two or three voices would be raised tonight in support of the good old cause of peace, retrenchment and reform. (Laughter) Yes, the whole thing had become a joke now . . . He believed these Members represented their constituents in so regarding it . . . Working men were as keen on spending their money as was the House of Commons.⁴¹

.. The anti-Imperialist attitude to naval defence rested upon several a priori assumptions. First, anxiety not to antagonize France caused them to overlook the potential threat of Franco-Russian collaboration that became evident after 1888. Second, their conviction that no combination would attack them if Britain remained neutral caused them to regard any concept of a naval balance of power with suspicion. In their view, large estimates implied hidden commitments abroad. Third, they believed food in wartime need not be considered as contraband and that an almost unlimited list of supplies might be carried without fear of loss in neutral ships. Fourth, their instinctive pro-American sympathies led them to believe that an isolationist policy for Britain would enable her to prosper without a large Navy. And fifth,-- by paradox--the anti-Imperialists still half believed that one Englishman was worth three Frenchmen or five Russians⁴²--a Victorian prejudice which had also survived in the Music Hall but which no serious navalist would

⁴¹H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 38 (1895), p. 492, Lawson.

⁴²H.P.D., (Ibid.)

have countenanced for a moment. In this respect the sentiments of "Little Englandism" coincided with those of "jingoism". Even Harcourt had pretended to believe it. Labouchere was too sophisticated to employ this rhetoric unless he was expressing a tongue-in-cheek humour. Very often he lauded the superficially diminutive aspects of Britain as advantages by referring to lessons learned at Trafalger, Salamis, Actium and Lepanto, Labouchere claimed that great sea battles had invariably been won by smaller fleets.⁴³ He described Britain's greatest naval assets as "immutable" because they were vested not only in creative resources but in the strategic position of her seaports. But what was potentially the most telling argument of all, money could better be spent on the working classes, was not exploited effectively by anti-Imperialists until after the twilight of the Gladstonian era.

In 1905, the Department of Naval Intelligence was to claim that it was the two-power standard which had preserved the political stability of Europe for almost two decades and which had played a decisive role in restraining friction over the Siamese War (1893) and at Fashoda (1898). But anti-Imperialists had repudiated this contention. Labouchere had charged that the estimates were too small to make the Navy invincible, yet too large to be rational.⁴⁴ Although lip service was paid to the

⁴³H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 335 (1889), p. 1297, Labouchere.

⁴⁴H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 31 (1895), p. 1286, Labouchere.

Navy by Little Englanders, they constituted a group which refused to recognize this service as the sine qua non of security.

Army Reform

Dilke expressed surprise that the "Little Englanders" should frequently attack the Naval estimates and not the Military estimates. Perhaps this suggests that anti-Imperialists were instinctively reacting against the frenzy created by the Pall Mall Gazette. Among Liberals, only Dilke attempted a coherent definition of the army's role, and between 1885 and 1892 he was--for personal reasons--excluded from the House of Commons. But during this period he was able to make effective comparisons between the Indian and Home Armies. Dilke envisaged a technical army, and one from which volunteers might withdraw as they might from a trade. His interest in the Army was intensified by his conviction that "force" now held a stronger place in European politics than at any time since the fall of Napoleon. His enforced absence from the Front Bench had further convinced him that the party system was in itself a serious obstacle to overcome before effective military reform could be achieved. This system had shown itself too ready to compromise the safety of the Empire for the sake of immediate popularity.⁴⁵

⁴⁵C.W. Dilke, "The British Army - 1891," The Fortnightly Review, LV (1891).

Even the anti-Imperialists, e.g., Labouchere and Lawson, had respected the spirit of Cardwell's Reforms and were not opposed to their more efficient implementation. But their participation in debates upon military estimates was infrequent and usually touched only problems of expansion. They were repelled by the prospect of the Continental levée en masse, as indeed were the great majority of members from both sides of the House. Anti-Imperialists particularly objected to the suggestion that conscription might be offered as the price of a free education. Some Radicals seriously suggested that Britain could hold her own in world markets because of her freedom from compulsory service.⁴⁶ Like Cobden, such Radicals would have been moved to wrath by the sight of barracks. But their view of the optimum strength of the Army was ad hoc and was effected particularly by their attitude towards the Sudan Campaign.⁴⁷

The 1888 debate on the role of the Army was considered by Sir Randolph Churchill to have been the most important since the Cardwell Reforms. A considerable number of Members present did not consider the question of military reform to be a party dispute. In this debate, Radicals challenged the traditional concept of the total separation of

⁴⁶H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 5 (1892), p. 772, Howell.

⁴⁷H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 299 (1885), p. 452, Rylands. Division List No. 220, 1885. 12 Ayes, 98 Noes.

the War Office from the Admiralty. This move was endorsed by a leading navalist who pleaded that army matters should not be considered in vacuo but by reference to simultaneous needs and functions of the Navy.⁴⁸ The Army had traditionally supplied the Navy with both munitions and gunnery equipment. Technically, Army and Naval guns were basically similar until about 1850 although designs differed radically by the time of the 1888 debate. But, administratively, the two Services had to effect a measure of amalgamation to economize fiscally, in order that specific requirements of the two Services might be more adequately met.

One Member subsequently moved a Resolution to appoint a Royal Commission because of his fear that reform had hitherto been only piecemeal and because senior officers had been unable to communicate with the Cabinet upon matters in which only they were competent.⁴⁹ Thus he asked for the terms of reference to cover not only army matters but even the condition of both military and mercantile ports, as well as of coaling stations. Of great importance was to be the examination of the circumstances which had led to a breakdown in the Reserves system established by Cardwell. Regiments had become so undermanned that other regiments next on the rota had been called upon to furnish drafts. It

⁴⁸H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 323 (1888), p. 229, Captain Columb.

⁴⁹H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 323 (1888), p. 239, Barttelot.

was for this reason that the Indian Reserve had been called upon to furnish required strength for Egypt.

Paradoxically, unlike a great many on the Front Benches, anti-Imperialists welcomed the terms of reference accorded to this Commission for several reasons. The Commission implied the superiority of the Navy, it threatened the remaining sinecures which had made the Army a form of "outside relief" for the aristocracy, and it appeared to be the best means of averting future misappropriation of Indian troops. One member believed that it might well prevent "alarmists" from dragging Britain into a jingoistic war in which Britain would play the European game of "brag".⁵⁰ However he did introduce a note typically unmilitary for an anti-Imperialist by his recommendation that a contented population in India would provide a greater security against Russia than would a large army. Other anti-Imperialists welcomed the appointment of such a Commission in the hope that civilian figures would be included in it. But John Morley, the most anti-Imperialist of the opposition leaders, may have been the only Liberal front-bencher who voted in favour of the Commission. In fact no anti-Imperialist appeared to speak against it, and it might be presumed that they were among the many Liberals who voted in favour of it.⁵¹

⁵⁰H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 323 (1888), p. 636, Farquharson.

⁵¹Division List No. 33, 1888. 268 Ayes to 63 Noes.

For the Government's front bench, Sir H. Stafford Northcote objected to the Commission on the grounds that it would place foreign policy in the hands of a military executive, a move which he questioned as objectionable. He argued that the only positive value of the Commission would be in its inventory which could be less expensively obtained by other means.⁵² For the Liberal opposition, Childers also expressed objection to the Commission, but noted the absence of criticism from other Liberals in the face of the proposed increase in expenditure. He believed that a Royal Commission would be expensive, that it would take four years to make its report, and that it would relieve the Government from the responsibility of planning for the defense of the Empire. Campbell-Bannerman also deprecated the Resolution on the grounds that it made soldiers responsible for policy as well as administration.⁵⁴

The division had suggested differing attitudes toward reform in the Liberal Party. Anti-Imperialists had supported the proposed Commission because they held the whole system in disrepute. Admittedly, Dilke's professional attitude towards the whole problem of defence may have

⁵²H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 323 (1888), p. 294, Northcote. Henry Stafford Northcote (1846-1911), son of Sir Stafford Northcote. Governor General of Australia (1904-08).

⁵³H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 323 (1888), p. 629, Childers.

⁵⁴H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 323 (1888), p. 664, Campbell-Bannerman.

seemed incomprehensible to many of them. But they were at least in agreement with Dilke that if there was to be any army, it should at least be administered upon businesslike principles. Campbell-Bannerman was the official liberal spokesman, yet the Protection of the Empire Debate of 1888 had been a great victory for Dilke in absentia. Right down until the "snap" Cordite Division of 1895--on which occasion Dilke was to vote against Campbell-Bannerman--the War Secretary had repudiated the role of the soldier as a policy maker. It says much for the hold of Gladstonian thinking on the Liberal Party and on public opinion in 1888 that Campbell-Bannerman's biographer spoke of him as a "more acceptable Secretary for War because he was a man of peace."⁵⁵

Campbell-Bannerman could hardly have been unaware that the Short Service Organization had suffered because the War Office had failed to preserve the balance between the numbers serving at home and abroad. His somewhat sanguine attitude towards the whole military status quo is perhaps explained by his presumption that the army machine, improved by Cardwell but suffering from poor recruitment was, essentially sound. He believed that the system had never been given a full chance. By temperament, he was more at home with an ageing Commander-in-Chief, like the Duke of Cambridge, than with the emerging type of officer who

⁵⁵J. Spender, Life of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, p. 99.

"sat and cogitated." He entertained a strong dislike for the civilian expert on military affairs.⁵⁶

The appointment of the Royal Commission under Lord Hartington was subsequently announced by W.H. Smith.⁵⁷ Later, it issued two Reports. The first--in July 1889--proposed a joint naval-military council to be presided over by the Prime Minister himself. This was more acceptable to the Cabinet than an alternative suggestion that a senior officer should have a regular place in the Cabinet. Campbell-Bannerman did ambiguously welcome these proposals on the grounds that a Prime Minister could arbitrate the views of the two services as presented by civilian heads.⁵⁸

A second report, put out in February, 1890 suggested the abolition of the office of Commander-in-Chief and the appointment of a Chief-of-Staff freed from executive duty. Although he had served on this Commission, Campbell-Bannerman dissented on this point on the

⁵⁶J. Spender, op. cit., p. 144.

⁵⁷H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 325 (1888), p. 1370, W.H. Smith. Smith, William Henry (1825-91). News-agent; M.P. (1868); first Lord of the Admiralty (1877-80); leader of the House of Commons from 1886.

⁵⁸This ambiguity remained when Campbell-Bannerman became War Secretary in 1892. Two years later Dilke moved that a Prime Minister should have a personal responsibility in defence, although he withdrew his motion when he saw that it had the fundamental concurrence of both parties. Refer H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 22 (1894), p. 462, Dilke. Also Gwynn, Life of C.W. Dilke, Vol. 2, p. 422.

grounds that it implied the needless imitation of a Continental system when Britain had no designs upon other Powers. He wanted but a single army which would be largely decentralized and he believed that the appointment of a Chief-of-Staff would effectively prevent such decentralization at a single stroke.

Paradoxically, Campbell-Bannerman also campaigned against the notion of separating the Indian army from the Home army--not on the grounds of centralization--but on account of the added militarism that this would introduce into the Indian government, even though he agreed that Indian military policy could best be settled in India itself and not in Pall Mall. To this extent, Campbell-Bannerman had himself become an anti-Imperialist, although he spoke for the moderate Gladstonians.

Campbell-Bannerman also disagreed with the recommendations of the Wantage Committee, which had met between May and December of 1891, to discuss military reform. This Committee had sought to encourage recruitment by permitting regulars to extend their service by returning to the colours from year to year, so doing up to twelve years in all. Campbell-Bannerman, who became War Secretary again in 1892, until exposure of his alleged incompetence by his handling of the Cordite issue in 1895, refused to countenance any change that might have affected the

nature of the Reserve.⁵⁹ This debate is relevant because it was the occasion for a blistering attack upon the competence of the War Office on its maladministration and failure to anticipate contingencies.⁶⁰ The House was reminded that the Home Army was as large as the army of Switzerland or of Roumania, that it could not even horse its own cavalry. At Woolwich, it was alleged there were insufficient guns to supply an experimental battery for the instruction of cadets, and those which were available were of an obsolete type. But Campbell-Bannerman refused to take to heart criticism of the two existing Army Corps because he could not foresee any time when they might be despatched to the Continent.⁶¹ It was poor justification for the expenditure of 35 million, but provided that the estimates did not rise, anti-Imperialists would not go out of their way to censure the Government for inefficiency.

Nevertheless, even anti-Imperialists made charges that extravagance was leading to abuse and corruption.⁶² But in point of fact there was a wide gulf between Dilke's criticism and the desultory kind

⁵⁹H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 9 (1893), p. 1710, Campbell-Bannerman.

⁶⁰H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 9 (1893), p. 1506, Arnold-Forster.

⁶¹H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 9 (1893), p. 1540, Campbell-Bannerman.

⁶²H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 5 (1893), p. 716, Picton.

of discontent occasionally voiced by anti-Imperialists. Dilke had underlined the poor return that Britain had received for her military estimates and in so doing, had criticized those Radicals who had given too much regard for the factor of economy in public service, instead of the primary matter of efficiency. And as in the 1894 debate, Dilke phrased a resolution demanding the joint preparation of naval and military estimates.⁶³

At this time, Labouchere was less concerned about military reform than about the increased presence of British troops in Egypt. In fact, Labouchere noted that even Morley had acquiesced in the recent despatch of a further 905 men to Egypt although Morley had always supported Labouchere's previous motions of censure in respect of Egyptian occupation.⁶⁴ Thus, no effective support was given to Dilke on the question of the administrative reform of the services by anti-Imperialists even though such reforms held out the prospect of considerable economic cutback, the funds of which could be passed on to the Exchequer.

Neither Labouchere nor Lawson contributed to the debate on the 1895 Military Estimates which was the last time they would be presented by the Liberals for eleven years. Unlike Dilke, all anti-Imperialists

⁶³H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 22 (1894), p. 462, Dilke.

⁶⁴H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 22 (1894), p. 546, Labouchere.

would appear to have supported Campbell-Bannerman on the Cordite issue. The Bricks-and-Mortar School to which Dilke subscribed, failed to capture popular imagination. Unlike the case of the Navy, there was no "Army League" to create propaganda for reform. Anti-Imperialists had appeared apathetic towards it largely because of the "Conservative" inertia of the Liberal Party. The Boer War was to reveal the effective strength of the Army and to raise the question of reform out of its previous academic context. One anti-Imperialist, who identified himself as a "disciple" of Bright and Peel--well expressed their position by his assertion that because England could never expect to fight on the Continent as a principal, any attempt to anticipate this would merely advertise Britain's position of subordination.⁶⁵

⁶⁵H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 334 (1889), pp. 1658-64, Illingworth.

CHAPTER X

ANTI-IMPERIALISM AND THE LEFT

In the controversies concerning reform of imperial defence, it is evident that the Little Englanders found that they were in broad agreement with opinion to the "left" of the Liberal Party. This would not imply that anti-Imperialists were necessarily socialistically inclined, but in rounding out a composite picture of anti-Imperialism it might be appropriate to mention trends in socialist theories of Imperialism prior to the First World War.

To the surprise of socialists, Marx himself never developed a systematic theory of Imperialism and this can largely be explained by the fact that he associated it with a pre-capitalistic period¹ and could not therefore identify it as a manifestation of the monopoly stage of capitalism. Thus Marx scarcely used the word "imperialism" and then only in connection with Napoleon III. In an advanced stage of capitalism there seemed to be no time to evoke any new plan of colonialism.

It was left to the Revisionist, Kautsky, to explain the significance of late nineteenth century capitalism in terms of the

¹Marx, Capital, I, p. 825.

appearance and evolution of Imperialism. He reasoned that the "peaceful" period of mid-nineteenth century Imperialism had put capitalist owners at variance with each other. It was no longer produce, but capital itself, which was being exported, and this encouraged binding contracts between lending and borrowing countries, leading in turn to each nation seeking a self-contained imperial system. While he believed that Imperialism was the product of a highly developed industrial capitalism, he made no distinction between industrial and financial capital. Subsequently, Kautsky came to the conclusion--during the First World War--that imperialism was not inevitable or unalterable under capitalism but might yet attain a higher synthesis or "ultra" or "super-Imperialism" under which a peaceful policy might be adopted as in the days of "Manchesterism". Rosa Luxemburg developed the idea that Imperial expansion consisted primarily of the penetration of capitalism into purely agrarian or non-capitalist regions. She believed that non-capitalists milieux must exist in order that capitalism could draw the surplus value on which it continued to thrive, and that as non-capitalist areas gradually dwindled, so capitalism would sow the seeds of its own decay. Hilferding thought that the "new imperialism" presaged nothing less than war between capitalist powers but he was careful and interpreted imperialism not as a stage but as a policy of capitalism. This view might be compared with the views of Jaures who wanted new "socialist" states not to be dependent upon

capitalist states for raw materials. Jaures wanted France, for example, to retain her peaceful penetration of China because he believed a doctrinaire attitude of anti-colonialism was negative and barren. He argued that "native" rights were only those of pre-emption. Even Marx had conceded that the right to use soil belonged to those who could use it best. Late in his life, Jaures worked for an international control of Morocco, and like other socialists, he anticipated the mandate system.²

Lenin opposed the Revisionists for suggesting that Imperialism was a policy rather than a monopolistic stage of capitalism. Lenin, in objecting to revisionism, argued that any peaceful stage was but an episode. Clearly, if Lenin was to denounce imperialism he could look neither to Marx nor to Revisionists. He freely interpolated the work of J.A. Hobson⁴ so as to depict imperialism as a phenomenon of capitalist decadence. Even if Kautsky's prediction of a peaceful period of imperialism was realized, Lenin argued that such a development was not a significant policy or stage but merely a temporary episode. It would appear that the First International never pronounced itself upon

²Brynjolf, J. Hovde, "Socialist Theories of Imperialism Prior to the Great War," Journal of Political Economy, XXXVI (1931), pp.569-571.

³Ibid., p. 584.

⁴J.A. Hobson, Imperialism, A Study. (1902).

imperialism per se. Even the Second International gave it hardly more attention. As late as 1900, colonialism was only the fifth most important item on its agenda.

Continental Marxists exerted little influence on the early British Labour Movement, although prior to 1872, there had been contacts between British Labour leaders and the First International. In 1904, the Labour Representation Committee was to associate itself officially with the Second International. At this time British Marxists themselves looked more to the Socialist League of William Morris than they did even to Hyndman's Democratic Federation. But Hyndman heeded Marx's advice to encourage the working class to take a less parochial interest in international politics. Hyndman denounced British rule in India as an atrocity in a way which was reminiscent of Marx's own correspondence on the subject in the 1850's.⁵ But Hyndman never understood the "liberal" character of the British Trade Union Movement and he condemned the industrial pacifism of its leaders. His associate, E.B. Bax, who was one of his principle collaborators did formulate what is perhaps the first neo-Marxist anti-Imperialist idea but it was essentially journalistic and confined its attention to commercial rather than

⁵K. Marx and F. Engels, On Colonialism, pp. 24-207. Cited in B. Porter, Critics of Empire, p. 97. (Marx had bitterly arraigned British rule in India by writing letters to the New York Daily Tribune.)

financial capitalism.⁶ Because he assumed that no social formula could be superceded until it had exhausted all the forces under which it could possibly maintain its existence, Bax interpreted Imperialism as merely an economic contrivance which must play out its role.

It should be realized that the theoretical definitions of Imperialism were not articulated in the British House of Commons. However, it is necessary to describe the background to worker representation in Parliament to appreciate to what extent anti-Imperialism can be related to the Parliamentary "left". The Labour Representation League had been first created in 1869, the year after the original formation of the Trades Union Council. Having fought the general elections of 1874 and 1880, the League was subsequently dissolved in 1881 and replaced by a Labour Election Committee. The new organization understandably sought a broad alliance with the Liberal Party in order to promote the interests of the Trades Unions but it had no agreed policy with respect to Imperial or foreign affairs. Its collaboration with the Liberal Party made it unwilling to embarrass that party in non-essential matters although this only in part explains the ambivalence of working class members towards Imperial questions. In 1893, the Independent Labour Party was created as an autonomous group, but not one

⁶E.B. Bax, Reminiscences and Reflections. Quoted in B. Porter, op. cit., p. 99.

of its twenty-eight candidates was returned in the election of 1895. Those M.P.'s who sat in the House of Commons during the closing years of the nineteenth century and whose interests were specifically directed to the working class might be described as "Lib-Labs".⁷ Occasionally such members spoke on matters other than trade-union reform, and quite frequently their ideals were similar to those of the anti-Imperialists or Little Englanders.

For example, in 1881, Sir Randall Cremer supported Gladstone's proposal not to take revenge for the crushing military defeat at Majuba Hill.⁸ But in the following two years, no Lib-Lab expressed direct opinions on British policies in Egypt. This may have indicated either acquiescence or indifference on their part to what was a new feature in British political experience. Nevertheless, they voted against Gladstone's request to credit Wolseley with an annuity.⁹ Broadhurst and Burt subsequently supported Morley's censure of the government's decision to send Gordon to Khartoum.¹⁰

⁷The approximate number of Lib-Labs in each Parliament was: 1880-85 (3); 1885-86 (11); 1886-92 (10); 1892-94 (16); 1895-1900 (14).

⁸H. Evans, Sir Randall Cremer His Life and Work, p. 106.

⁹H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 278 (1883), p. 693, Broadhurst.

¹⁰H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 294 (1884), p. 1052. See Division List March 2, 1885.

Prior to Drummond-Wolff's Mission, the Lib-Labs urged recall of all British troops from Egypt, by which time they had adopted the significant anti-Imperialist view that it was the bond holder who kept British troops in Egypt.¹¹ Significantly, Cremer seconded Labouchere's objection to Britain ultimatum to Portugal on the occasion of the South Africa Company's venture into Mashonaland.¹² However it would appear that Cremer's protest was directed less at Britain's claims than at her manner of pressing them. Between 1891 and 1899, Britain attempted to develop areas which she had already annexed in Africa and it was during these years that the Little Englander view had established its minority position as custodian of a Cobdenite tradition within the Liberal Party. Lib-Labs shared anti-Imperialist suspicions that Chartered Companies were abusing their privileges. They demanded a closer inspection of company activities and the assignation of a definite date for termination of their privileges.¹³ It is no surprise that the "Lib-Labs" voted with Labouchere against the Uganda Railway grant,¹⁴ and that they also gave him support when Labouchere demanded the return of Sir Gerald Portal.¹⁵ They endorsed John Morley's censure of Kitchener's

¹¹H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 309 (1886), p. 892, J. Rowlands. H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 310 (1886), p. 656, W.R. Cremer.

¹²H.P.D., 3rd Ser., Vol. 341 (1889), p. 259, Labouchere.

¹³H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 4 (1892), p. 1525, Graham.

¹⁴H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 2 (1893), p. 50.

¹⁵H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 10 (1893), p. 539, Labouchere.

performance in the Sudan.¹⁶ Although they had felt no outrage when the Jameson Raid itself had taken place, the Lib-Labs supported Labouchere's minority resolution deploring the inconclusive character of the Select Committee then investigating the Jameson Raid.¹⁷

Subsequently, suspicions were aroused about the activities of all the Companies. Even the least offending Company--the Royal Niger--was criticized.¹⁸ Burns seconded a motion from Dilke calling for a conference to consider measures for the more equitable treatment of African people but although Burns supported this demand, he used the occasion to compare favourably the British record in tropical Africa with those of other Imperial Powers.¹⁹ He doubted that civilization was of benefit to the Africans in general and he believed that in most instances signed treaties were a discredit to Britain. But as positions adopted by the "Lib-Labs" in support of the anti-Imperialist opposition became more consistent so in the public mind, Lib-Labs became associated with the Little Englanders. The support which they gave John Morley is perhaps significant in view of his own opposition to the Eight Hours Bill which Lib-Labs had helped sponsor. There appeared to be no overt

¹⁶H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 67 (1899), p. 457.

¹⁷H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 51 (1897), p. 1093.

¹⁸H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 73 (1899), p. 1289.

¹⁹H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 40 (1897), p. 447, Burns.

ulterior motives behind the Lib-Lab opposition to forwardist policies. Certainly they had arrived at no common position on either Socialism or Imperialism. In fact, the affinity which Lib-Lab members felt for the Liberal Party as a whole is indicative of the fact that the ideological impulse behind the Parliamentary Labour Movement came not from Marx or even the Revisionists but from John Stuart Mill, the Positivist Auguste Comte, and perhaps Henry George, the land reformer, who had made an extensive lecture tour in 1882.²⁰ But like the Social Democratic Federation, the I.L.P. urged that its members take a broader interest in imperial affairs.

I am glad to say that it is not necessary to urge this point, because practically everyone concedes the contention that our socialism does compel us to take note of and to define our position towards this movement of expansion.²¹

This kind of writing did have a measurable effect upon the Lib-Labs sitting in the House of Commons. John Burns who had earlier spoken on South Africa in terms of redolent of contemporary Jingoism began in 1900 to condemn Government policy in South Africa. In fact only one Lib-Lab--Havelock Wilson--appears to have consistently supported the Liberal Imperialists in respect to the Boer War. Yet it would be

²⁰George, Henry (1839-97). American economist, published Irish Land Question (1881), demanding tax burden be laid on land.

²¹S.G. Hobson, "Imperialism, A Socialist View," Labour Leader, December 16, 1899, p. 396. Quoted in Bernard Porter, op. cit., p. 124.

unrealistic to pretend that the I.L.P. evolved a coherent doctrine of Empire by the turn of the century. Keir Hardie did say that he had more direct interest in native labour than in any other part of the South African question.²² But in 1900 the I.L.P. articulated a significant demand when it insisted that the Government "withdraw the iron and unnatural dominance of our western political ideas, and allow the development of native forms of rule."²³ The I.L.P. had embraced a concept of cultural relativism:

The religion, the history, the circumstances of the people, you cannot carry it about with you, a western civilization cannot be imposed upon an eastern, or a temperate upon a tropical people. We can no more send our civilization to central Africa than we can send our climate there.²⁴

Perhaps because it was primarily an extraparliamentary body even after the 1900 general election, the Independent Labour Party was better able to rationalize its position. The Lib-Lab group in the Commons, meanwhile, had pressed home its limited argument upon "Capitalist Imperialism". Burns, its principal spokesman, continued to speak in the Commons vehemently, although inconsistently. His argument was colourful

²²H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 88 (1900), p. 758, Hardie. Hardie, James Keir (1856-1915). M.P. 1892; founded the Independent Labour Party (1893); helped found Labour Representation Committee (1900); became leader of Parliamentary Labour Party (1906).

²³I.L.P. Annual Report, April, 1900. Quoted in Bernard Porter, op. cit., p. 136.

²⁴Imperialism: Its Meaning and Its Tendency, published by the City Branch of the I.L.P. Quoted in Bernard Porter, op. cit., p. 136.

and plain and is well exemplified by his remark: "it is not our business to go to the four corners of the earth adjusting religious differences between Buddhist Passive Resisters and High Churchmen there."²⁵ Two years earlier he had intimated that: "He believed in the imperialism of the old fashioned type, the establishment of coast trading stations and commerce extended by winning the confidence of natives by fair dealing."²⁶ Although this remark was inserted almost as an afterthought, it suggested the germ of the idea of Indirect Rule, shortly to be taken up far more earnestly by E.D. Morel.

Lib-Labs were giving vent to an eclectic anti-Imperialism which befitted a group which had never been imperially conscious and which had never anticipated that it might be called upon to draw up a responsible colonial policy of its own. Thus no significant or constructive criticism of the Colonial Office was made by Lib-Lab members after the Tory-Unionist victory of 1895. But when war appeared almost inevitable following the failure of the Bloemfontein Conference of May 1899, the Lib-Labs supported Dillon's motion to reduce the appropriation for mobilization prior to the declaration of war.²⁷ That this was more than a traditional "pacifist" reflex action was suggested by Broadhurst's

²⁵H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 130 (1904), p. 1042, Burns.

²⁶H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 116 (1902), p. 958, Burns.

²⁷H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 70 (1899), p. 489.

persuasion that the Transvaal had every right to protect itself. The Lib-Labs voted for arbitration whenever the opportunity presented itself.

It is improbable that the Lib-Labs would have disturbed themselves had it not been for a change in attitude on the part of the Trades Union Congress. Prior to September, 1898, the Trades Union Congress had seldom discussed African affairs, and even then it was only to discuss forced labour in South Africa and Rhodesia. Evidently, the Trades Union Congress did not wish to discuss what it then termed a parochial "party" question", it would only do so if the situation in South Africa could be construed as a "social question". This it was prepared to do and in 1899 the Trades Union Congress leadership, sensing an uneasiness among the rank and file, saw the deteriorating situation in South Africa as prejudicial to the interests of all working men.²⁸

In spite of the sweeping Conservative victory of 1900, the I.L.P. now became officially represented and its members adopted positions broadly identical with those of the Lib-Labs. In December 1900, Broadhurst, Burns and Hardie demanded an armistice, but the general demand in Parliament for a continuation of hostilities was overwhelming.²⁹ The Labour Representation Committee endorsed the Independent

²⁸T.U.C., Annual Report, 1899. Quoted in Bernard Porter, op.cit.

²⁹H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 80 (1900), p. 303.

Labour Party's position at its first conference in February, 1901.

While its interest in Empire was less parochial, the Committee tended to be very class-orientated and it would consistently emphasize the theme of exploitation until the Liberal victory of 1906. While great hostility was expressed by its members towards the South Africa Company, it was not primarily directed towards capitalism per se. This theme of exploitation was one that would be continued after the conclusion of the war, in fact the debates upon Chinese labour were really a continuation of those started during the Boer War, and it is most significant that the labour problem was also brought up in the Uganda Debate and the Ashanti War. On these occasions it was the Foreign and Colonial Offices rather than the Chartered Companies that were the culprits. By now the older Lib-Labs appeared well to the "right" of the Labour Representation Committee. But as a heterogeneous group whose raison d'être in participating in the parliamentary process at all had been primarily to repeal the Criminal Law Amendment Act, the "Lib-Labs" had succeeded in expressing an ad hoc anti-Imperialist critique.

The most significant criticism of Imperialism from the moderate "left", apart from that of Hobson, was contributed by J. Ramsay MacDonald.³⁰ His contribution marked a watershed in the attitude of

³⁰MacDonald, James Ramsay (1866-1937). Joined Independent Labour Party (1894); M.P. 1906 ff.; Prime Minister (1924), (1929-35).

Labour. His justification of a new post-Boer-War-Commonwealth Imperialism could appeal to the younger anti-Imperialists, though it could not stir the older Radical Little Englanders such as Lawson or Labouchere. To MacDonald, an exclusively negative view of Empire was a denial of history. It was inexcusable in his view that a civilized power could turn a blind eye upon a primitive people's misery.

In 1885, MacDonald had joined the Social Democratic Federation (the same year as the group had espoused Marxism), but he never viewed Imperialism with unbridled condemnation and he believed that a case could be made for it on altruistic grounds. In MacDonald's view, international humanitarianism could be practiced by a collectivist society. This was important, because MacDonald completely rejected the Gladstonian concept of individualism with its associated concepts of peace, retrenchment and reform. MacDonald saw that Burke's dictum that "politics was morality writ large" was applicable to Imperial theory. But a simple "Home Rule" theory could not by itself facilitate an improved Empire, because the central Imperial authority would often have to overrule the local interests of provincial members for the sake of a larger equity. There would have to be a close correlation between Imperial and domestic policies: no country could administer its colonies despotically and remain a democracy at home.³¹ Most significantly of all,

³¹J.R. MacDonald, Labour and The Empire, p. 64.

MacDonald assigned to the Labour Movement a respect for cultural relativism. Indigenous civilization was the only basis of a genuine native liberty and it could not be artificially detached from its own roots. Any improvements of civilization could only be built upon lines already determined by tribal experience. But it is significant that in rejecting the traditions still popularly associated with the Manchester School, MacDonald had to justify Empire.

In view of his faith in the future of Empire, it may be queried why MacDonald resigned from the Fabian society together with twelve other members of the I.L.P. The I.L.P. believed that the Fabians' apologia for empire was not essentially different from that of the Tories. In December 1899, differences over the Boer War resulted in the I.L.P. members being placed in a Fabian minority. Their resignations were over the functions and methods of the Fabian Society which the war had brought to a head.

Many of the Fabian "coefficients" belonged to the Imperialist wing of the Liberal Party. Sidney Webb³² defended Rosebery on the grounds that he offered the most intelligent leadership on Imperial matters.

³²Webb, Sidney James. 1st Baron Passfield (1859-1947). Civil Service Clerk in Colonial Office (1888-91); a co-founder of the Fabian Society; Member London County Council (1892-1910); taught economics, University of London (1912-27).

It was a tactical move which Webb later regretted, although he believed it consistent with Fabian attempts to permeate all major political parties. In 1901 Webb condemned the "socialist leaders" as ultra-Gladstonian because they had no significant or relevant contributions to make to foreign policy.

they (the socialist leaders) acknowledged Mr. Morley in their utterances on the burning topic of the day; and now the Independent Labour Party is as hopelessly out of running as the Gladstonian Party. On the issues of "nationalism" and the Empire, Mr. Hyndman and Mr. Hardie find themselves, in fact by closest conviction on the same platform as Sir Wilfrid Lawson and Mr. Labouchere.³³

Nonetheless, it is difficult to pinpoint precise differences between the Fabians' proposals for Empire and those later propounded by MacDonald. The Fabians implied a fatalistic acceptance of social darwinism which was reminiscent of Benjamin Kidd who had consistently called for "social efficiency". But there is also the suspicion that because the Fabians had ignored Imperial controversy completely before the Boer War, that they were not necessarily more Empire-conscious than the Liberal Little Englanders. Webb had once held a minor position in the Colonial Office although only one of the Fabian writers--William Clarke--had ever written specifically on foreign policy prior to the Boer War. Thus the exigences of the Boer War had precipitated a schism

³³Sidney Webb, "Lord Rosebery's Escape from Houndsditch," Nineteenth Century Review, L (September, 1901), p. 374.

that otherwise need not have occurred. Both Shaw and the Webbs demonstrated an exaggerated respect for the powerful forces dominating domestic politics and they suspected that their own brand of collectivism might lose its potency if they adopted a seemingly unpatriotic course. Webb had little sympathy with the universal cosmopolitanism that the "left" had traditionally cherished. He believed that such an attitude represented a distortion of Mazzini and Cobden.³⁴ The appeal of the Empire to the Fabians lay in its rational, rather than in its historical aspect. Quite clearly, Gladstonian scruples were obsolete and inefficient.

Mere old fashioned free trade talk will have no effect upon a generation which has not been educated in Manchester economics. Nothing but a positive alternative policy will save us from floundering into reaction, and there is no practicable alternative except bringing the power the information and the organization of the Empire to the help of the enterprise of the industrial traders.³⁵

This kind of advice could easily be formulated at home.

Although the urban-minded Fabians were essentially parochial; they thought Imperial affairs did not really matter and that Imperial interests could be disposed of in a way that would most effectively serve domestic reform. They were less impressed by the organic scope of the empire

³⁴Bernard Semmel, Imperialism and Social Reform, p. 132.

³⁵G.B. Shaw, Fabians and the Empire, p. 12.

itself as by the "utility" of Imperialism and Imperialists. It was an expression of insular pride which rested upon the premise that society must be collectivized. Self consciously they turned upon the Gladstonians for tying Liberalism to its classical laissez faire premises, but they would not identify "anti-Imperialism" as the cardinal sin.

Old fashioned (liberal) dissent is pointless--because in corporate society each individual will obviously dissent from some action of the community of which he is a member-- . . . it is not "Little Englanderism" that is the matter with them; it is as Huxley and Matthew Arnold have correctly diagnosed, administrative nihilism.³⁶

The humanitarian crusade could be upheld by either an individualist or a collectivist society, but Imperialism per se demanded a collectivist society. It was thus inevitable that the Labour Movement identified itself with Imperialism, but in a way which would be in essential harmony with its altruistic and internationalist pretensions. J. Ramsay MacDonald came to depict the kind of Imperialism that the Labour Party envisaged. But at first their reaction against Jingoism produced an anti-Semitism similar to that expressed by Liberal "Little Englanders", although their impugning of capitalism became more striking as Labour forces marshalled ideological strength. "Wherever we examine there is the financial Jew operating, directing, inspiring the agencies

³⁶Sydney Webb, op. cit., p. 374.

that have led to this war."³⁷ At first it had seemed possible to unite the Labour and the Lib-Lab attitudes against Empire by means of a National Democratic League.³⁸ As a Lib-Lab M.P. Broadhurst had introduced the "capitalist conspiracy" theory to the Commons a year earlier but it was applied exclusively to the South African situation.³⁹ The proposed union did not come about, but it is significant that a new thesis of Empire based upon the "Capitalist Conspiracy" was accepted by some Liberals and nearly all Labour M.P.'s.

The real originator of the "Capitalist-Conspiracy" thesis was J.A. Hobson. Hobson provided the "Lib-Lab" alliance with an intellectual critique of Imperialism that obviated the negativism of the traditional Liberal Little Englanders. Hobson began to develop his anti-Imperialist thesis at a time when he exercised a dual membership of two intellectual groups, the "Ethical Movement" and the "Rainbow Circle". Both these groups were away from the mainstream of Liberal Radicalism with which Liberal "Little Englanders" has been associated. The Ethical Union had been formed about 1896 with a purpose similar to that of the Positivists of forty years earlier except that its tenets were less dogmatic or pseudo-religious. Although it was predisposed towards political Socialism,

³⁷H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 78 (1900), p. 785, Burns.

³⁸G.D.H. Cole, History of Socialist Thought, Vol. 3, p. 195. Quoted in Bernard Porter, op. cit., p. 127.

³⁹H.P.D., 4th Ser., Vol. 77 (1899), p. 672, Broadhurst.

it attracted such Liberal idealists as Bernard Bosanquet and R.B. Haldane. Hobson himself preferred to associate with the South Place Society--a local unit within the Ethical Union--where he remained for forty years. The Union published a journal, the "Ethical World" which drew upon a wide spectrum of contributors including H.M. Hyndman and G.B. Shaw. This is indicative of the wide spectrum of "progressive" thinkers who were thinking simultaneously about collectivist society. The other group, "The Rainbow Circle" ran its own publication, the short-lived "Progressive Review". This journal attracted collectivists for and against Empire. Rejecting the traditional patterns of the two major parties, the introductory issue sought a "strenuous social policy" which would "apply clear rational principles of political and economic theory with proper regard to the conditions of historical development."⁴⁰ It is significant that this article happened to be written by the only Fabian who took an interest in foreign and colonial affairs prior to the Boer War.

Before attacking Empire per se, Hobson attacked the sanctity of unlimited thrift, a hallowed doctrine of laissez faire Liberalism. Hobson's theory of under-consumption made him a precursor of the Keynesian Revolution. By his so doing, Hobson was not only revolutionizing but

⁴⁰William Clarke, "Introduction", Progressive Review, I, p. 9. Quoted in Bernard Porter, op. cit., p. 167.

humanizing economics by his plea that "Man must control economics not vice versa."⁴¹ The "unseen hand" that had constituted a sufficient explanation of the Cobdenite world of self-interest was repudiated:

We contradict the generally accepted dogmas that the saving of the individual must always and necessarily enrich the community, that the individual seeking his own advantage necessarily works for that of the community, and that wages can only rise at the expense of profit, or profit at the expense of wages, or both at the expense of rent.⁴²

No stronger indictment of individualist society could have been expressed. But Hobson did not totally reject classical Liberalism--in fact, he owed a great deal to Herbert Spencer for his sociological ideas. Utilitarian formulaw might still be used as a yardstick provided they were employed in a qualitative rather than a quantitative sense. The Manchester business mentality had corrupted the real meaning of such terms as "wealth" and "gain". By reacting against the economics of the Manchester School, Hobson in effect set up a system of "anti-economics" which stressed the superiority of human law and rationality. Seen in this light, Hobson's anti-Imperialism constituted a new compassionate and highly sophisticated Imperialism. Hobson wished to reconcile the State and the Individual without one becoming the master of

⁴¹Bernard Porter, op. cit., p. 167.

⁴²J.A. Hobson, The Physiology of Industry, pp. iv-vii. Quoted in Bernard Porter, op. cit., p. 169.

the other. Individual societal actions would have to be fused sufficiently to permit "psychical" progress of the community as a whole. This was a view perhaps equidistant from Liberal Individualism and neo-Hegelianism. It was a rationalized and optimistic view of social-darwinism that assumed the compatibility of both individual and social goals.

In pursuing this line of reasoning, Hobson was avoiding the functional implications of cultural relativism, upon which Positivists had placed such emphasis. Hobson was primarily concerned with the ills of English society, which, he believed could be healed by rational actions. The ethics of Empire could be respected if subordinated to this problem. This rationality enabled Hobson to distinguish the motives of imperial expansion from its morality or ethical basis. One of the reasons why Liberal "Little Englanders" had failed to produce a convincing anti-Imperialism was their failure to systematize the problem in this fashion. The criteria which Hobson proceeded to use were qualitative, organic and ethical, all three of which constituted the basis of "social utility". The connotation of this term was not "efficiency" in the sense that the Fabians used the term, because in Hobson's scheme there was still to be an "individualism" within a collectivist society. To the Fabians this would imply a contradiction in terms, but to Hobson it would be a genuine harmony.⁴³

⁴³J.A. Hobson, The Social Problem. See Bernard Porter, op. cit., pp. 177-179.

As the Manchester type of individualism had failed society on a domestic level, so too its judgement of international affairs expressed in the Gladstonian respect for the rights of nationalities, was inappropriate. If a single nation could realize its "national end" by expanding without prejudicing the interests of another people, and if by so doing it could add to the aggregate of world civilization, it might do so on the grounds of social utility. But the criteria of such action was not military or commercial efficiency; the validity of such a move could not be decided unilaterally. Hobson believed that possibly the Transvaal Boer had a valid and viable civilization. And on this point his judgement echoed the bitterness and the anti-semitism of the entire Liberal and Labour Movements.

Who is to determine whether the slow-going civilization of the Transvaal Boer is really lower or less profitable for the world in the long run than a more rapid development of the speculations by English and German Jews.⁴⁴

At this point, Hobson applied the doctrine of cultural relativism to the problem of "social utility". Alien cultures could only gradually absorb some characteristics of the imperializing power.⁴⁵ This application of psychology and sociology made it almost impossible to come

⁴⁴Progressive Review, II, p. 454. Quoted in Bernard Porter, op. cit., p. 181.

⁴⁵J.A. Hobson, The Social Problem, p. 276. Quoted in Bernard Porter, op. cit., p. 182.

up with a snap judgement. In India, the utilitarian argument in favour of the British presence was strong as far as immediate humanitarian and commercial prospects were concerned. But England had done nothing to enable her people to "realize their higher possibilities in the arts of political and moral self-government."⁴⁶ Hobson was highly skeptical that the Indian experiment was nothing but a veneer which disguised greed and reaction.

Hobson's visit to South Africa in the summer of 1899 as correspondent of the Manchester Guardian led him to formulate a doctrine which assigned Imperialism to the conjunction of International Capitalism. A visit to Johannesburg in August convinced him that the "uitlanders" question was little more than a "red herring". Behind political action was economic pressure, and he became convinced that only a conspiracy of speculators (many of whom he alleged to be Jewish) could explain the tangled quarrel in South Africa. Hobson's own letters to C.P. Scott contained an even stronger vein of anti-semitism than is reflected in his public writing. Perhaps Hobson's anti-semitism was tautologous in that it suggested that the gains which would accrue from a British victory would be cosmopolitan.⁴⁷ Because speculators needed forced

⁴⁶J.A. Hobson, The Social Problem, p. 456. Quoted in Bernard Porter, op. cit., 9. 83.

⁴⁷Bernard Porter, op. cit., p. 202.

native labour, it was necessary that they secure political as well as financial power. But what made this explanation different from the anti-Semitism of the Liberal Little Englanders was Hobson's emphasis:

that British traders and investors who had surpluses to export were now on the periphery, instead of at the center of the imperial nucleus; and the economic forces directing foreign policy were now international and sinister instead of domestic and social.⁴⁸

Hobson's definitive work was published in 1902, the year of the Peace of Vereegning. The "conspiracy" theory was now no longer confined to the problems of native labour but was elaborated into a general theory of domestic under-consumption. Hobson wished to illustrate that the entire motivation for British expansion in Africa was "irrational". The statistics that he compiled were cited with that end in view. By suggesting the paucity of returns in African dependencies, Hobson argued that the domestic market itself was being needlessly restricted. If it were not restricted, "if the productive power is disposed in industries which meet the rising demands of the consumer," then supply and demand would obviate the need for foreign markets.⁴⁹ As business interests would not knowingly injure themselves, these interests had unwittingly or involuntarily subordinated themselves to the interests of arms and

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 205-206.

⁴⁹J.A. Hobson, The Social Problem, p. 26. Quoted in Bernard Porter, op. cit., p. 209.

shipping industries, career seeking aristocrats and international financial pressure groups.⁵⁰ The financiers had influenced foreign policy because of speculation. Financiers served as a "governor of the imperial engine," whose motive power was supplied by pioneer frontiersmen.⁵¹ The activities of financiers was largely unseen, even though they had permeated the social fabric and had controlled public opinion.

Hobson did not always clearly identify whom he was referring to when he described the powers of finance. He tended to sympathize with industrialists and investors when he felt that their personal circumstances were beyond their control and he reserved his virulence and acrimony for his descriptions of the cosmopolitan operators of the Rand. By contrast the smaller financiers and traders who were victimized now constituted, in his view, a "great capitalist proletariat."⁵² If it seems that Hobson appeared more preoccupied with the machinations of financiers and traders than with the more general legitimate functions of capital and trade, it was that unless he could affix the significant

⁵⁰J.A. Hobson, The Social Problem, pp. 56-61. Quoted in Bernard Porter, op. cit., p. 210.

⁵¹J.A. Hobson, The Social Problem, pp. 66-67. Quoted in Bernard Porter, op. cit., p. 211.

⁵²J.A. Hobson, Evolution of Modern Capitalism, p. 238. Cited in Bernard Porter, op. cit., p. 218.

blame on a few financiers the non-deterministic basis of his critique would be nullified.

Hobson was not condemning capitalism per se, in fact he strenuously preserved the idea that the "system" was capable of rectification. It could only be so if the culpable speculation was unrepresentative of financial activity as a whole. If imperialism were solely the product of a corrupted public sentiment, the matter would be beyond repair. Had all the facts been presented clearly, Hobson reasoned that the victimized "proletariat" would have acted rationally and regained their authority.

By contrast with the ad hoc complaints of Liberal Little Englanders, Hobson appeared intellectualist. His whole approach seemed scholastic rather than empirical. Yet Hobson wished to vindicate the role of democracy in imperial policy. For a solution, Hobson proposed that a more equitable distribution of wealth by which domestic consumption would be raised, and the establishment of a genuine democracy--not merely in the sense of universal manhood suffrage--but in the election of representatives who would be wholly answerable to the electors.⁵³

On a number of grounds, Hobson was to justify Britain's retention of tropical dependencies. He believed that the "hands-off"

⁵³J.A. Hobson, Imperialism, A Study, p. 382.

attitude of the Liberal Little Englanders was unrealistic. But at the same time he would not countenance either the proposals of Benjamin Kidd or the policies of the Fabians. The Fabian or social-darwinist concept of Empire was too much oriented towards the interests of the imperializing power. He felt that these attitudes were retarding the progress and rational development of democracy. Hobson's doctrine of social utility was perhaps less elitist than that of the "New Imperialists." His ideas were far more acceptable to the Independent Labour Party and this largely explains why Labour had a sophisticated doctrine of Empire before either Lenin or even Kautsky were able to interpolate or "revolutionize" Hobson's thesis according to the Marxist pattern. It reveals why the Fabian and Labour solutions were strongly incompatible: the Fabians tended to equate utility with determinism and efficiency, while Labour was depicting utility in terms of the simultaneous elevation of human standards and the rational protection of sub-culture. Hobson's thesis represented a correction of Gladstonian liberalism where the economic process had clearly broken down and it enunciated a redefinition of imperial responsibility along more scientific and compassionate lines. Although it was idealistic, it would reject the extreme "nationality for nationality's sake" of the Gladstonians, and would replace it with a less self-righteous if equally earnest plea for internationalism. But like Gladstonianism, the policies of Labour would

be unrevolutionary and according to the parliamentary tradition. And unlike the Liberal Little Englanders, Labour would not be too anti-Imperialist to concern itself with constructive policy.

The anti-Imperialism of the Lib-Labs and the interests of organized Labour might not have broadened beyond the parochial considerations of trade union reform. However, the situation in South Africa provided new data, but it is doubtful that Liberal Little Englanders by themselves would have used this data to formulate a systematic critique of Empire.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION AND EPILOGUE

In retrospect, the Imperialism of the eighteen-nineties had become synonymous with Jingoism. Yet this confusion obscures the problems which Imperialists had faced over the previous thirty years. In a conservative sense, "Imperialism" had been concerned essentially with preventing Britain's recently acquired settlements from seceding. That danger seemed past and was not really a matter of public debate at the turn of the century even if "Little Englanders" had seemingly adopted an ambivalent attitude towards this consideration. Predictably they had--almost without exception--opposed the acquisition of new territories, and had ignored the implication that this expansionist phase of "Imperialism" had actually grown out of concern for the retention of existing dependencies. In this sense, Imperialism itself was negative because it sought to prevent rather than create unnecessary burdens. The difference between the "Big" and the "Little" Englanders was thus much less than has been popularly imagined. Both believed that Britain enjoyed a dominant position, but Little Englanders were more surprised when this superiority could not be maintained effortlessly. The fact that Little Englanders had no viable position within

the Liberal Party necessarily made their position precarious. But to their credit, Little Englanders had recognized a new facet of "Imperialism", which had been uncovered by the Jameson Raid, and this devious activity they condemned as "stock-jobbing" Imperialism.

Hobson's "Jewish Conspirators" were alleged to be doing what Labouchere said the Egyptian bondholders were doing twenty years earlier. It was this "sordid" aspect of Imperialism that Hobson attacked. But because Hobson's critique was better organized than the ad hoc protests of "Little Englanders", his work seemed more rational. "Little Englanders" had confused domestic and Imperial issues, but Hobson found a relation between these complementary questions. Hobson believed that Britain suffered from a domestic under-consumption, which in turn created a superfluity of capital. This unused capital was, however, invested in decadent territories, which he alleged had been deliberately annexed for this purpose. But Hobson never proved a causal connection between under-consumption and superfluous capital, and the relationship that he assumed to exist between these phenomena depended upon a basic priority. But, like the Little Englanders, Hobson believed that the phenomenon of "Imperialism" since 1880 had represented a discontinuity in British colonial practice. Hobson tended to ignore the local or particular political exigencies of Imperialism, because such exigencies did not easily fit into his all-embracing system. Yet his "system"

sheds valuable light on the very Cobdenite premises upon which the Liberal "Little Englander" position had been based.

Hobson adopted the "conspiracy" theory suggested by the Jameson Raid as a general explanation of colonial practice. He meticulously tabulated the quantity of territory annexed and the amount of capital invested. He came to the conclusion that although investment in newly acquired territories was marginal, it was nevertheless enough to explain the connivance of colonial authorities. The export of this capital, he believed not only jeopardized living standards at home but also persuaded the Colonial and Foreign Offices to adopt belligerent policies abroad so as to protect such territories.

Hobson minimized the jingoistic fervour of the general public because he was anxious to exonerate it from culpability or complicity in Imperial expansion. The "Khaki-Election", he felt, represented only a "quasi-democratic" exercise in the public's conduct. A liberal democracy had been corrupted by a subtle but forceful propaganda. Hobson was evidently unwilling to face the prospect that "aberrant" features of colonial policy were being supported by a large section of the public as a whole.

Like the "Little Englanders", Cobden believed that free trade had been and would be the only legitimate basis of colonial activity.

The non-economic orientation of Little-Englander reaction to Empire had discouraged renunciation of the belief that there must inevitably be an equilibrium between supply and demand. Although--with the exception of Courtney--no Little Englander had written much on economic theory, this belief seemed an integral part of the Cobdenite system. Hobson built his case on the imbalance of supply and demand because it was under-consumption at home which had necessitated export of capital to "decadent" areas abroad. Hobson, therefore placed greater emphasis upon the domestic market than perhaps Cobden would have done, although, like Cobden, Hobson was careful not to malign manufacturers or businessmen as a class. The prevalence of domestic under-consumption could not be easily proved to have been the work of individual capitalists, but Hobson made sinister reference to a surreptitious speculation on the part of "the central ganglion of international capitalism" composed chiefly of "men of a single and peculiar race." The influence of these "conspirators" had intensified the imbalance between supply and demand, but to do this, these conspirators had obtained the acquiescence of both political and financial executives. By suggesting the influence of Jewish finance, Hobson was writing in a vein common among many Liberal writers, and by doing so, he could acquit himself of the charge that by being "anti-Imperialist" he was necessarily being unpatriotic.

Hobson would not admit that "Imperialism" was supported by society as a whole. Like Cobden, he supported democracy by intuition but he appears to have placed a greater emphasis upon its "organic" content than did Cobden. This is corroborated by a sophisticated social philosophy that Hobson enunciated. In this Hobson queried whether enlightened self-interest could benefit the community as a whole. The Cobdenite tradition--which "Little Englanders" had subscribed to--had suggested that there was an antithesis between the "state" and the "individual", and this implied that society in the foreseeable future would have to remain in conflict. Hobson, on the other hand, saw society as a rational, evolving organism. Its progressive evolution demanded corporate social action concerned with qualitative change.

Hobson's critique of Empire was essentially within the Utilitarian tradition. In effect, Hobson repudiated the Gladstonian respect for the "rights" of nations, a matter which had long confused "Little Englanders" and which had been the source of innumerable contradictions. Hobson appealed to a social utility or "standard of value" in which the individual might play a harmonious and constructive role. No nation could unilaterally decide that it could offer to natives a superior civilization. Like individuals, nations, even if genuinely representing cultural units, had no pre-eminent historical

rights.¹

Hobson would permit no paternalistic attempt to anglicize the African or for that matter, to plant a British civilization per se anywhere. But to increase the aggregate of "social utility" and to enable the particular community to inherit the full value of its indigenous culture, Hobson was willing to endorse a "non-military" Imperialism. Hobson was not endorsing even the Utilitarian tradition in India, because in his view, there was to be no interference in the social life of alien people. A genuine civilization must have an organic connection with its native existence. Civilization should not be thought of as a disconnectable part of a country's bureaucracy because this would imply no more than the erecting of artificial institutions.² Rather, the civilizing power should concentrate on the introduction of basic skills. Cultural relativism would have to be respected whatever the disparity between educator and native. However, Hobson admitted that there might be a legitimate case for territorial aggrandizement if a nation thought this would facilitate realization of its "natural end". The status quo of existing boundaries was not necessarily just historically, but expansion could only be justified if

¹ Ethical World, November 19, 1898. Quoted in Bernard Porter Critics of Empire, p. 179.

² Progressive Review, Vol. ii, p. 456. Quoted in Bernard Porter, op. cit., p. 183.

the coveted territory was sparsely populated. But as far as Britain was concerned, this only provided a tenuous, or even hypothetical argument for Empire.

In the closing years of the nineteenth century, as far as the theory of Empire was concerned, the focus of parliamentary debate turned more meaningfully towards the situation in East and West Africa. Although beclouded by the Boer War hysteria, a new colonial ideology was being created by the "Liverpool School" and in particular by the work of Mary Kingsley.³ A self-admitted "Imperialist" who advocated the creation of a contiguous belt of territory from the East to the West coast of Africa, Mary Kingsley despised "stock-jobbing" Imperialism as much as she did the negative criticisms of "Little Englanders". She wanted the unofficial traders to play a role in preference to professional administrators or the evangelical agents of Exeter Hall.

E.D. Morel⁴ composed an "imperial theory" which emphasized respect for cultural diversity but which also viewed the function of free trading as indispensable. "Trading (he wrote) is the greatest civilizing agent. The steps upward in the ethical development of the human race

³Kingsley, Mary Henrietta (1862-1900). Traveler and ethnologist, travelled extensively in West Africa, keeping careful record of her experiences and observations; died of Typhoid Fever while nursing in Boer War.

⁴Morel was never completely immersed in the affairs of the Congo Reform Association, nor would he limit his "trade" principle to the territory of the Congo.

have been synonymous with the spread of commercial relations."⁵ The concept of free trading as a positive agency was vital to Morel's view of an imperial standard. Morel succeeded in publicizing maltreatment of natives, but the rationale of the Congo Reform Association--with which he became identified--was that the morality of Imperialism per se lay in its economic foundations. It was the abuse of these foundations which had resulted in a situation of de facto slavery. An enlightened "Imperialism" could justify itself only by free exchange. Morel was compelled to realize that the kind of altruistic free trade that he had at first had in mind was unobtainable by laissez faire methods because colonial agents would show scant respect for "Peasant Proprietorship". Morel would not accept Hobson's premise that a nation was a unit in a world federation and could therefore in certain circumstances act to its own advantage and to that of the world at large. Morel's argument "was a curious mixture of various attitudes and strands of thought: anti-capitalism, anti-militarism, anthropological empiricism, the old fashioned Cobdenism of laissez faire and free competition, and nostalgic reactionary idealism (and) a flavour of "self-help."⁶

⁵E.D. Morel, Affairs of West Africa, pp. 21-22. Quoted in Bernard Porter, op. cit., p. 258.

⁶Bernard Porter, op. cit., p. 288.

The "Liverpool School", with which Morel's name had become associated, was perhaps the first "anti-Imperialism" that looked at particular colonial problems from a local level. It criticized militarism in the sense that Cobden and the Liberal "Little Englanders" had done, and capitalism in the way that Hobson had done. But this was an anti-Imperialism which was compassionate and constructive, even if it was administratively impractical.

The Congo Reform Association synthesized some of Hobson's arguments with those of the humanitarian Imperialists by taking them out of their deductive framework and relating them to the inductive lessons of particular economic and social structures. There was no single solution for Britain's problems in Africa, but at least the Imperial argument could no longer be conducted against the background of a self-interested academic cosmopolitanism that had been traditionally associated with Adam Smith and Richard Cobden. To the new Reformers, the implications of an organic society were self-evident and from them sprang the demand for an "imperial standard". It was the re-interpretation of what had been an anti-Imperialist idea which justified the superiority of human rights. If these human rights were jeopardized, so then, ultimately was liberty, and they could only be safeguarded by an imperial authority. In terms of practical British Colonial policy, Morel's ideas were proved deficient, but they filled a void where

previously there had been a dearth of ideas.

Little Englanders had not supplied these ideas but they had inadvertently publicized the fact that there was a void. By turning to an irrelevant tradition, they had presumed Cobden to have been "anti-Imperialist," when in fact he had been "un-Imperialist". They had condemned Imperialism largely because they had found it incomprehensible. Their "anti-Imperialism" was essentially "conservative" and it would have to be replaced by a more progressive Liberal doctrine that would eradicate Gladstonian anachronisms.

But it had been by a tradition of ideas distantly derived from early laissez-faire orientated protests of anti-Imperialism that Britain's involuntary yet anticipated abdication of Empire two generations later, may appear as both rational and acceptable. Nevertheless, the veiled insularity of Little Englanderism appears illiberal today. Perhaps Little Englanders had been excessively anglo-centric and had looked at all imperial crises as if they were only a mirror reflecting English decadence.

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