

Documents and Debates

THE SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA



Robin Brooke-Smith

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General Editor: John Wroughton M.A., F.R.Hist.S.

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Robin Brooke-Smith B.A., M.Sc.

Shrewsbury School

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General Editor's Preface

This book forms part of a series entitled *Documents and Debates*, which is aimed primarily at sixth formers. The earlier volumes in the series each covered approximately one century of history, using material both from original documents and from modern historians. The more recent volumes, however, are designed in response to the changing trends in history examinations at 18 plus, most of which now demand the study of documentary sources and the testing of historical skills. Each volume therefore concentrates on a particular topic within a narrower span of time. It consists of eight sections, each dealing with a major theme in depth, illustrated by extracts drawn from primary sources. The series intends partly to provide experience for those pupils who are required to answer questions on documentary material at A-level, and partly to provide pupils of all abilities with a digestible and interesting collection of source material, which will extend the normal textbook approach.

This book is designed essentially for the pupil's own personal use. The author's introduction will put the period as a whole into perspective, highlighting the central issues, main controversies, available source material and recent developments. Although it is clearly not our intention to replace the traditional textbook, each section will carry its own brief introduction, which will set the documents into context. A wide variety of source material has been used in order to give the pupils the maximum amount of experience – letters, speeches, newspapers, memoirs, diaries, official papers, Acts of Parliament, Minute Books, accounts, local documents, family papers, etc. The questions vary in difficulty, but aim throughout to compel the pupil to think in depth by the use of unfamiliar material. Historical knowledge and understanding will be tested, as well as basic comprehension. Pupils will also be encouraged by the questions to assess the reliability of evidence, to recognise bias and emotional prejudice, to reconcile conflicting accounts and to extract the essential from the irrelevant. Some questions, *marked with an asterisk*, require knowledge outside the immediate extract and are intended for further research or discussion, based on the pupil's general knowledge of the period. Finally, we hope that students using this material will learn something of the nature of historical inquiry and the role of the historian.

John Wroughton

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The Scramble for Africa

The 'scramble for Africa' is a metaphor applied by historians to the period of very rapid annexation of the African continent by the European Powers in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. It is a much debated historical process upon which strong opinions and diverse views are held. The scramble was indeed a truly remarkable episode representing, perhaps, the most rapid period of imperial expansion in history and the pinnacle of European power and self-confidence; yet hardly more than twenty years later Europe suffered the disastrous calamity of World War I followed shortly by World War II. These two global conflicts were to precipitate the European powers into an equally rapid period of decolonisation.

The causes of imperial expansion, especially of the scramble, remain very much a matter of debate. In 1883 Sir John Seeley, Professor of History at Cambridge, referring to imperialism in the widest context, made the disingenuous comment, 'we seem, as it were, to have conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind'. Well, the phenomenon of the scramble, which of course Seeley could not as yet have been referring to, was so rapid and sudden and often brutal that we are obliged to look for explicit motivations which some of the evidence to be studied in this book suggests were both potent and conscious.

The causes of the scramble include a mixture of economic, industrial, strategic, cultural and domestic. Bismarck explained his reluctant indulgence in colonial acquisition as resulting from the fear that his opponents would capitalise in the polls on the wave of enthusiasm for empire. He did also make his celebrated remark that his map of Africa lay in Europe. Britain occupied Egypt to protect the Suez canal in the face of the rising tide of an indigenous and zealous nationalist movement and of a deteriorating financial situation in Egypt. On the one hand, therefore, domestic considerations appear uppermost, on the other developments in Africa precipitated occupation. It is, however, necessary for the historian to eschew simplistic conclusions and acknowledge that different combinations of motives may have been at work in different parts of Africa and for different European Powers. In Rhodesia commercial factors were strong as in parts of West Africa; in

Egypt and South Africa strategic factors were more important, though how important is a matter of debate. Overarching all these considerations is the stark fact of European military, economic and technological superiority which enabled European powers to achieve an easy hegemony.

A useful starting point is the 'Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Africa (West Coast)' 1865 (Chapter 2), which recommended a halt to Britain's colonial expansion and the beginning of a withdrawal. Many questions arise from this (which you should be better able to answer when you have worked through the book); how and why was this policy so comprehensively reversed during the following 30 years? How important were the actions of other powers? How important were commercial considerations? Given the very poor showing of most of tropical Africa economically from the late nineteenth century well into the twentieth century, why was so much money and effort invested in the panoply and machinery of empire when the returns appear so meagre? Was the Parliamentary Committee Report perhaps right and Britain had little to gain from a continent with such bleak economic prospects?

The book ends (Chapter 8) with a collection of writings and statistics on the historiography of the scramble, considering the works of Lenin, Hobson, Ferry, Lord Cromer, Robinson and Gallagher, Frankel and others. These interpretations range from the contemporary belief that European rule was a great benefit willingly and consciously transferred, bringing civilisation and good government to inferior peoples, to the Marxist view that imperialism was an inevitable and rapacious outcome of capitalist greed and expansionism leading inevitably to communist revolution. A major controversy has surrounded the more recent work of Robinson and Gallagher who identify strategic imperatives as the main determinants of British colonial policy. Thus they emphasise the importance of the Cape and Egypt; other British acquisitions were primarily to secure these vital military/commercial seaways. The 'mid-Victorians', to use their term, had maintained control of these areas through 'influence' and 'pressure'. The growth of French and German rivalry forced British decision makers into formal imperial control; and thus the argument is developed. Ranged against this view are those who see a more complex picture of commercial, cultural, psychological, domestic as well as strategic forces.

At the Berlin West Africa Conference 1884-85 (Chapter 3) the European Powers laid down rules and procedures for the annexation of territory in Africa. This was, in effect, a way of ensuring that the partition of the continent should be carried out without serious conflict between the powers. The very fact of laying down rules and procedures under which powers could 'legitimately' lay claim to African territory by means of effective occupation lent a dynamic and rationale to European

expansion. There was now nothing 'absent minded' – in Seeley's words – about European imperialism. The conference was also a forum in which Bismarck played out his diplomatic manoeuvres, in this case seeking a *rapprochement* – abortive as it turned out – with France.

In West Africa (Chapter 2) we are confronted by the commercial pressures behind the forming of the Royal Niger Company and the government's use of it as an agent of control. There was also a great increase in interest in the area from France in the late 1870s partly for military and partly for commercial reasons. In East Africa (Chapter 4) the greater proximity to India, the importance of the East coast ports, the Nile Headwaters and the so-called 'Egyptian lever' gave strategic considerations a greater importance. Here also the new Germany pressed for her 'place in the sun' with colonial adventurers Carl Peters, Hans Meyer and others leading the way.

South Africa (Chapter 5) is different again and in many ways unique. A good climate, long-standing European settlement by Dutch and British, mounting commercial pressure as its fabulous mineral wealth was revealed, the well-organised military and expansionist nation of the Zulus all combined to create a special mix of circumstances. And over all this South Africa was dominated at this time by the larger-than-life figure of Cecil Rhodes and his special brand of private enterprise colonialism. The astonishing events of the Zulu War of 1879 were to send shock waves through the Empire. Throughout South Africa in the late 1870s and early 1880s there were threatened and actual uprisings of Africans against the white intruders. In this atmosphere Britain decided to pre-empt such risings by taking the war to the Zulus and after an obviously incompetent campaign in which the British camp at Isandhlwana was destroyed, the Zulus were finally decimated at Ulundi.

The Fashoda incident (Chapter 6) with the clash of Britain and France over claims in the lower Sudan illuminates the relations between the two countries as they came to the brink of war. It also highlights the impact of domestic politics on the policies of European governments towards Africa. It is the nearest that two powers came to blows over colonial issues in Africa.

The effects of the scramble upon the continent itself, though not within the scope of this book, should not be forgotten. The national boundaries of modern African states are the legacy of this period, often dissecting tribes and nations with imperial disdain. The economies and cultures of Africa experienced the trauma of rapid and enforced change which often tied Africa with inescapable bonds of dependence. The scramble, therefore, completed the bondage of the continent begun 200 years before with the brutal and savage Atlantic slave trade.

The main sources used fall into the following broad categories:

Official documents, e.g. Public Record Office, Commonwealth

Office, Parliamentary Papers, Hansard, Ministères des Colonies Afrique – Paris, Weissbuch – Berlin.

Newspapers, e.g. *The Times*, *Guardian*, *Le Temps*, *Hereford Times*, *South Wales Daily Telegram*, *Punch*, *Illustrated London News*.

Constitutional documents, e.g. various from S. Africa, E. Africa, Gooch and Temperley's British Foreign Office documents on origins of World War I.

Memoirs and monographs.

Letters, speeches, statistics, diaries, e.g. Cecil Rhodes' speeches.

Papers of famous men, e.g. Salisbury papers, Milner papers.

1 Egypt

Some historians have asserted that the British military occupation of Egypt in August 1882, resulting from a complex series of events, was in some way a trigger or signal for the chain reaction that we have called the scramble for Africa. Indeed Robinson and Gallagher assert, 'From start to finish the partition of tropical Africa was driven by the persistent crisis in Egypt. When the British entered Egypt on their own the Scramble began; and as long as they stayed in Cairo, it continued until there was no more of Africa left to divide'. After the occupation, Britain speedily brought to an end the Dual-Control that she and France had exercised. The ending of Anglo-French understanding in Egypt began a long period of friction and open animosity between the two which was only resolved by the Anglo-French agreements of 1904. It is for this reason that we shall be taking the events in Egypt as our starting point.

Egypt was part of the Ottoman Empire, though with some degree of autonomy, and by geographical location was inextricably tied up with the politics of the 'eastern question'. France established herself as the predominant power in the region during the Napoleonic Wars. This in turn alerted Britain to a possible threat to her links with India. Together with the need to preserve stability in the European states system this led Britain to a commitment to prop up the ailing Ottoman Empire. The building of the Suez canal in 1869 by the Frenchman Ferdinand de Lesseps was from the very first opposed by Britain; but once the canal was completed a whole new quantity was introduced into the middle eastern equation. The canal had huge commercial as well as strategic importance. Indeed by 1882 the canal was carrying 5 074 809 tons of shipping per year.

During the Khedivate of Ismail 1863-1879 the Egyptian government had recklessly raised vast sums of money in European markets often at crippling high rates of interest. When finally bankruptcy faced Ismail, France and Britain jointly took a controlling hand in running Egypt's finances. In the process of 'straightening out' the finances in the interests partly of the creditors, the mass of the Egyptian population suffered great hardship and the added burden of poor rains and failed harvests led to a dangerously unstable political situation and the emergence of a genuine nationalist movement under Arabi Pasha.

This complex situation in Egypt eventually proved sufficient to push Gladstone's liberal government into occupation. 'It is a nasty business, and we have been much out of luck', said the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Granville in June 1882. Sir Charles Dilke who defends the occupation (extract c) was a radical, liberal and friend of Joseph Chamberlain who wanted a forthright policy on Egypt. Randolph Churchill who belittles the importance of the Suez canal (extract e) was a brilliant young member of the conservative opposition. The liberal government had been elected to power on a policy of reversing the 'forward' foreign policy of Disraeli's conservatives and it is safe to say that military intervention is the last thing that Gladstone wanted. It is not surprising, therefore, that historians have taken the Egyptian case and extrapolated theories and patterns to explain the forthcoming partition of the continent. Some emphasise the financial interests which they argue the government could not but defend; others develop the strategic motivations; and yet others see the growth of Anglo-French animosity as important in the subsequent race for territory.

Riots eventually broke out in Alexandria in June 1882, in which a number of Europeans were killed. On 11 July the British fleet bombarded Alexandria, after which Arabi Pasha's army blockaded the city, cutting off water supplies. Military intervention became inevitable as it became apparent that the canal was in danger.

Why was the liberal government drawn into a military occupation of Egypt? What vested interests were at stake? What were the international considerations involved? What would France's reaction be? How long would Britain remain in control? These and other questions are important for a full understanding of this topic.

1 Britain 'acquires' the Suez canal and views on the growing crisis

(a) Disraeli informs Queen Victoria of the purchase

. . . It is just settled; you have it, Madam. The French Government has been out-generaled. They try too much, offering loans at an usurious rate, and with conditions which would have virtually given them the government of Egypt.

5 The Khedive, in despair and disgust, offered your Majesty's Government to purchase his shares outright

Four millions sterling! and almost immediately. There was only one firm that could do it – Rothschilds. They behaved admirably; advanced the money at a low rate, and the entire interest of the Khedive is now
10 yours, Madam.

W. F. Money Penny and G. E. Buckle, *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield* vol v, pp 448–9

(b) *Punch* cartoon of Disraeli and the Sphinx



**(c) Sir Charles Dilke's speech in the House of Commons,
25 July 1882**

Our position seems to arise from necessity . . . because Egypt forms our highway to India and to the East generally As regards the Suez canal, England has a double interest; it has a predominant commercial interest caused by the fact that the canal is the principle highway to
15 India, Ceylon, the Straits and British Burmah . . . also to China.
Hansard, 3rd ser, vol 272, 1720

(d) William Gladstone in August 1887

. . . I turn then to the military question and ask how much Russia will have gained [if she got control of the canal]? The answer is, that she will have introduced an average delay of about three weeks in our military communication with Bombay and less with Calcutta. It seems
20 to be forgotten by many, that there is a route to India round the Cape of Good Hope

The Nineteenth Century, ii (1877), p 155–6, quoted in
M. E. Chamberlain, *The Scramble for Africa* (Longman, 1974)

**(e) Lord Randolph Churchill's speech at Edinburgh,
18 Dec. 1883**

Egypt is not the high road to India. The Suez canal is a commercial route to India, and a good route too, in time of peace: but it never was
25 and never could be, a military route for Great Britain in time of war.

L. J. Jennings (ed.), *Speeches of the Rt. Hon. Randolph Churchill, 1880–88* (Longman, 1889) vol i, p 747

(f) J. C. M'Coan (Liberal MP for Co. Wicklow)

He again asked the committee what were our interests in connection with Egypt? . . . They were first, the Suez Canal; secondly, our trade with Egypt; and, thirdly, the subordinate but still important interest of the bondholders to whom Egypt was indebted. Now as regarded the
30 Canal . . . so vital was it, and so inseparably was it bound up with our interests in our Indian Empire, that if we had in Egypt no other interest, that alone would justify the Government for having taken military action. As he had observed, our interest in the Canal was not merely one of enormous military weight, but there was also the minor, but still
35 considerable interest, of the proprietary shares in that Canal. That interest was now of the market value of about £9,000,000; and upon that point he ventured to express his approval of the original purchase of the shares, which cost the country £4,000,000 four years ago . . . But

40 besides our ownership of the shares, there was the additional fact that four-fifths of the whole traffic passing through the Canal was British – a fact which, in itself, constituted an interest of the very highest importance.

There was also our trade with Egypt, which represented £13,000,000 sterling a-year; and he was quite sure that if it were possible to conceive that trade to be annihilated, there would be a loud cry from Manchester and other places interested in the Egyptian trade. He thought the importance of that question alone would entitle the Government to the vote of every commercial Radical below the Gangway on the other side of the house.

Hansard, 3rd ser, vol 272, 1760

(g) Lord Randolph Churchill's speech at Blackpool, 24 Jan. 1884

50 The whole world, the East and the West, are equally and mutually interested in the freedom of the Suez Canal. Surely you will not be misled by such an obvious and transparent fiction. It was bonds and bondholders and no other power which diverted Mr. Gladstone, greatly hesitating from his path, and which drew the British fleet to
55 Alexandria. It was bonds and bondholders only which commanded the British troops. I pray you mark this. England has never before interfered with the internal affairs of other nations on account of bonds or debts which might be owing to her people. We have always looked upon these matters as altogether outside the range of active government
60 interference. . . . It has been left for Mr. Gladstone's Government to depart from this wise and time-honoured tradition – for this government, whose cardinal principle of foreign policy was non-intervention. . . .

L. J. Jennings (ed.), *Speeches of the Rt. Hon. Lord Randolph Churchill, 1880–88* (Longman, 1889), vol i, p 100

(h) The Egyptian National Party's view

Must Egypt be nothing but a geographical expression? Must her five million inhabitants be as cattle over which are imposed drovers at will?
65 What they ask is to be treated as their brothers in Europe would wish to be treated if placed in the same position as Egyptians are placed . . . Egypt wishes to liberate herself from her debts on condition that the powers leave her free to apply urgent reforms. The country must be administered by Egyptian personalities. . . . She does not
70 always want ministers representing this or the other European influence.

Manifesto of the Egyptian National Party, 1879

Questions

- a In what way do you think the sale of his shares in the Suez canal would be likely to bring the Khedive relief?
- b Explain the feeling of satisfaction that emerges from Disraeli's letter (extract a).
- c Identify the different views concerning the importance of the Suez canal and discuss the relative importance of each.
- d What can you learn from extract a concerning the prevailing British attitude to France? Do you have any reservations about drawing your conclusion from this evidence?
- e To which important vested interests do you think Sir Charles Dilke is appealing in extract c?
- f What was a 'commercial Radical' referred to in extract f, line 48?

2 Financial difficulties facing the Egyptian Government

The report of Stephen Cave

The critical state of the finances of Egypt is due to the combination of two opposite causes.

Egypt may be in a transition state, and she suffers from the defects of the system into which she is attempting to enter. She suffers from the
5 ignorance, dishonesty, waste, and extravagance of the East, such as have brought her Suzerain (*The Turkish Empire*) to the verge of ruin, and at the same time from the vast expense caused by hasty and inconsiderate endeavours to adopt the civilization of the West.

Immense sums are expended on unproductive works after the
10 manner of the East, and on productive works carried out in the wrong way, or too soon. This last is a fault which Egypt shares with other new countries (for she may be considered a new country in this respect) a fault which has seriously embarrassed both the United States and Canada; but probably nothing in Egypt has ever approached the
15 profligate expenditure which characterized the commencement of the railway system in England. . . .

The revenue of Egypt has increased from £55,000 a year in 1804, £3,300,000 in 1830, and £4,937,405 in 1864, the second year of the Khedive's administration to £7,377,912 in 1871

20 (*There follows an account of the crippling and ruinous terms and levels of loans raised by the Egyptian Government for 'pressing requirements'.*)

In 1862 Said Pasha [Khedive] contracted the first loan. The nominal amount was £3,292,800 repayable in thirty years; The interest 7% and the sinking fund 1%. We have no particulars of the amount really
25 received on this loan.

In 1864 the first of the present Viceroy's loans was contracted. The nominal amount was £5,704,200, of which, however, only £4,864,063 was received. The interest and sinking fund on the nominal amount were respectively 7 and 3.87%, but on the amount received they were 30 8.2 and 4.5, or, together 12.7%, instead of 10.87% on the nominal value.

A loan was raised for the construction of railways in 1866. Its nominal amount was £3,000,000 at 7%. The amount received by the state was £2,640,000 which raised the interest to 8%. The full amount 35 of £3,000,000 was repaid by six annual instalments of £500,000 each, from 1 January 1869, to 1 January 1874, a rate equivalent to a sinking fund of 18.9%; so that during six years this loan entailed on the state an average charge of equal to 26.9% of the amount realized.

The debtor and creditor account of the state, from 1864 to 1875, 40 stands thus:-

Receipts

By revenue	£94,281,401
Loans	£31,713,987
Sales of Suez canal shares	£3,976,583
45 Floating debt	£18,243,076
	148,215,047

Expenditure

Administration	£48,868,491
Tribute to Porte	£7,596,872
50 Works of utility Etc.	£30,240,058
Extraordinary expenses	£10,539,545
Interests and sinking funds	£34,898,962
Suez canal	£16,075,119
	148,215,047

Report by Mr Cave on the Financial Condition of Egypt,
23 March 1876, *Parliamentary Papers*, lxxxiii (H.M.S.O.,
1876), p 99

Questions

- * a How important is it to know about Mr Cave, the author of this report? For example, what pressures might he have been under, for what purpose was the report commissioned?

- b What items of information would you single out to show the extent of Egypt's financial difficulties?
- c Can you translate the key information in this report into a more convenient form e.g. graph, pie-chart, bar graph, etc.?
- * d How might the information in Mr Cave's report help a historian to discuss the effects of financial difficulties on the coming Egyptian crisis?
- * e What was the 'porte' (line 49)?

3 Britain, Egypt and the Powers

(a) Lord Salisbury's views during the days of Dual Control. To Sir Stafford Northcote, 16 Sept. 1881

- When you have got a neighbour and a faithful ally who is bent on meddling in a country in which you are deeply interested – you have three courses open to you. You may renounce – or monopolise – or share. Renouncing would have been to place the French across our road to India. Monopolising would have been very near the risk of war. So we resolved to share.

Lady Gwendolen Cecil, *Life of Robert Marquis of Salisbury* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1921–32), vol ii, pp 331–2

(b) Mr Gladstone to Lord Granville, 13 Sept. 1881

I have telegraphed to you today that I am in readiness to meet you in town on Egyptian matters should there be, in your judgment, occasion for it.

- 10 My opinions, however, as at present advised are in conformity with what I believe to be yours. I sum up thus:
1. Steady concert with France.
 2. Turkish General to go if need be.
 3. Turkish troops in preference to any others.
 - 15 4. No British or French force, unless ships be needful for *bona fide* protection of subjects.
 5. Apart from all this, I long for information on the merits of the quarrel; as on them I suppose may depend the ulterior question of reducing, or disbanding the army.

A. Ramm, *Political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876–86* (Historical Society of Great Britain, 1952)

(c) Lord Granville to Mr Gladstone, 2 Oct. 1882, Walmer Castle, Deal

- 20 My Dear Gladstone,
I agree with you that the control must be abandoned. I do not think

the French will struggle much for it, but will try to substitute something in which they have a fair share.

I am not sure that it has absolutely failed.

25 It may have been unpopular, but as long as the Englishman and Frenchman acted together, and retained their moral power – they did good work. . . .

And I do not think that the control can be said to have lapsed. In order to put an end to it, it will require a revision of the Khedivial
30 decree appointing it, and it will be better if possible to have a previous agreement with the French.

It is important that the decree treated it as a provisional arrangement.

Salisbury, without consulting the office, was persuaded by Blignières
35 to agree to this arrangement, which was substituted for Goschen's plan which gave predominance to England.

It has the inherent faults of the Controller's having no real power and no real responsibility – of all good working depending entirely upon the good understanding of the two men who are to work it. It is
40 unpopular in Egypt, and excites jealousy in Europe.

Yours, G.

Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, *The Life of the Second Earl Granville, 1815–91* (Longman, 1906), vol ii, pp 305–6

(d) View of Wilfred Scawen Blunt on changes in Gladstone's ideas on Egypt – spring 1882

(Blunt was an eccentric radical, anti-imperialist and sympathiser with Arabi Pasha and the Egyptian Nationalists.)

Gladstone had been now nearly two years in office, and the enthusiasm for Eastern nationalities and Eastern liberty, which at the election of
45 1880 had carried him to power, had cooled down everywhere, and in official circles had given place to ideas of imperial coercion. . . . The cabinet was divided into two sections of opinion. The great Whig leaders who controlled the chief departments of administration, Hartington, Northbrooke, Childers and the rest were all for strong
50 measures, Gladstone with Harcourt and Bright, almost alone for conciliation, the general feeling in the country was violent against all 'lawlessness' everywhere. . . .

At the Foreign Office the position about Egypt was this. Granville, old and deaf and very idle, finding himself relieved from the incubus of
55 Gambetta's forward policy, was following his instinct of doing nothing and letting things settle themselves as placidly as circumstances would allow him. He did not want to intervene or to take action hostile to nationalists, or, indeed action of any kind . . . he left the work of learning what was going on to his private secretaries, and more

60 especially to the Under Secretary of State, Sir Charles Dilke. . . . Dilke who with Gambetta had been the responsible author of the joint note of 6th January, was, now that Gambetta had disappeared from the direction of affairs in France, become a prime mover on his own account in the policy of intervention. . . .

The Earl of Lytton, *Wilfred Scawen Blunt* (Macdonald, 1961)

(e) Lord Cromer on Turkey and the Powers

65 For years past, the Ottoman Government had been longing to regain their hold over Egypt. The Chanceries of Europe were filled with notes and protests embodying the querulous complaints made by the Porte (*Turkish Government*) against the intervention of the European Powers in Egyptian affairs, and against the insufficient recognition accorded to
70 the sovereign rights of the Sultan. The Turkish opportunity had at last come. The force of circumstances had fought in favour of Turkish pretensions. The Khedive and the two Western Powers had endeavoured to settle the affairs of Egypt independently of the Sultan. They had signally failed in the attempt. All the powers of Europe, with
75 the exception of France, were in favour of employing the authority of the Sultan as the executive arm by which order should be restored in Egypt. . . . The Khedive had asked for the despatch of a Turkish Commissioner to Egypt. The British and French Governments viewed the proposal more or less favourably. It might reasonably have been
80 supposed that the Sultan would seize with avidity the opportunity for asserting his sovereign rights which was thus afforded him. He did nothing of the kind. He was inclined to show his resentment at the way in which he had been enjoined not to intervene at the commencement of the Egyptian troubles, by refusing to act at the instance of England
85 and France when they were favourably disposed towards the intervention. A suggestion was ostentatiously promulgated that the withdrawal of the allied fleet from Alexandria must be a preliminary condition to the despatch of a Turkish Commissioner. The Sultan had yet to learn that his assistance, though desirable, was not indispensable.

Lord Cromer, *Modern Egypt* (Macmillan, 1908), vol ii, p 282-3

(f) Mr Gladstone writes to the Queen, 2 Feb 1882

90 In the matter of Egypt it appeared to the cabinet advisable that Lord Granville should endeavour to draw off the French Government from the idea of an Anglo-French occupation, on account of the likelihood of its raising European difficulties; and should suggest to them the expediency of seeking the aid of the Powers in meeting any serious
95 crisis which may be impending, without prejudice to the existing Control; and even the possibility of being found the least perilous

method of using force, if unhappily force should be required, that Turkey should be employed as the instrument for giving effect to the general will.

Public Record Office, CAB 41/16, quoted in M. E. Chamberlain, *The Scramble for Africa* (Longman, 1974), p 115

(g) Lord Granville to Lord Dufferin on the position of Turkey

100 Walmer Castle, Deal, Oct. 15 1881

My Dear Dufferin,

The Egyptian episode has been very disagreeable. But, being of a sanguine nature, I do not see why there should be more danger of a smash than really existed six months ago.

105 We wish to act cordially with France without allowing her any predominance. We wish the Sultan to be convinced, if it were possible, that we much desire to maintain his present position in Turkey, though we will not consent to his interfering more than he has been accustomed to do with the internal administration of Egypt; that we mean no
110 menace by giving the means of safety to our subjects in case of troubles; but that as long as his envoys are there, it is a proof that the normal state of things is not established.

It is as well that he should know that it does not smooth matters to initiate *coups de main* without consulting a friendly but interested Power
115 like ourselves, and that we believe the *status quo* can be maintained if Turkey, England, and France do nothing to disturb it.

Munster denies that the Sultan appealed to Germany. . . .

Yours, G.

Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, *The Life of the Second Earl Granville, 1815-91* (Longman, 1906), vol ii, pp 252-3

(h) Lord Granville to the British Ambassadors in Berlin, Vienna, Rome and St Petersburg, 11 Feb. 1882

120 Her Majesty's Government are now agreed with the government of France that, in view of the events which might occur in Egypt, it is desirable to ascertain whether the other powers would be willing to enter upon an exchange of views as to the best mode of dealing with the question on the basis of the maintenance of the rights of the Sovereign and of the Khedive; of international engagements and the arrangements
125 existing under them, whether with England and France alone or with those two nations and the other Powers; the preservation of the liberties secured by the Firman of the Sultan; together with the prudent development of Egyptian institutions.

130 The Governments of England and France do not consider that a case for discussing the expediency of an intervention has at present arisen, since on the part of the Chamber of Notables and of the new Government the intention is avowed to maintain international engagements; but should the case arise, they would wish that any such eventual intervention should represent the united action and authority of Europe.

Public Record Office, Foreign Office, *Confidential Print*, 4692, Foreign Office 407/19

(i) Lord Amphill to Lord Granville

135

July 15, 1882.

Dear Lord Granville,

Let me congratulate you most sincerely and heartily on having so tactfully steered out of the inevitable complications of 'entangling alliances' into the independent prosecution of a truly British national policy. Everybody I meet seems overjoyed that we are asserting our right to protect our interests, and have taken the lead of the concert into our own hands. Everybody congratulates me on your policy, with the exception of my French colleague, who is quite broken down with disappointment at Freycinet's weakness and the absence of national pride in the French Chambers. Munster is probably right in thinking that Bismarck will now be reticent and reserved. . . . Although Hatzfeldt does not say so, I can see that he is disappointed at the duplicity and absence of practical sense in the Sultan. . . .

140

145

Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, *Life of the Second Earl Granville, 1815-91* (Longman, 1906), vol ii, pp 268-9

Questions

- * a What role do these sources suggest that Britain wanted Turkey to take? Why was Gladstone's government so keen to involve Turkey?
- b What evidence is there that the Turkish government rejected such a role?
- * c What 'European difficulties' does Gladstone (extract *f*, line 93) wish to avoid by preventing the Anglo-French occupation?
- d Which of these extracts is likely to reflect a view most independent of those of the establishment?
- e What does Lord Granville appear to be angling for in extract *h*? Is there any other source which confirms whether or not he eventually got what he wanted?
- f How greatly had Gladstone's analysis of Britain's best policy changed between Sept. 1881 and Feb. 1882?

- * g How can these extracts be used to support the view that Britain wanted above everything to maintain the concert in her dealings with Egypt?
- h What main differences of viewpoint do these extracts display?

4 Military occupation

(a) Lord Cromer on the riot in Alexandria

The effect of the riot was instantaneous. Sir Edward Malet reported to Lord Granville, on June 13, that Dervish Pasha's mission had altogether failed in its object. The Sultan's Commissioner was obliged to bow to the authority of Arabi. He informed the representatives of the Powers that 'under the urgent circumstances of the case, he would assume joint responsibility with Arabi Pasha for the execution of the orders of the Khedive'

Manifestly something had to be done, for the whole framework of society in Egypt was on the point of collapsing. By June 17, 14,000 Christians had left the country, and some 6,000 more were anxiously awaiting the arrival of ships to take them away. On June 26, ten Greeks and three Jews were murdered by a fanatical mob at Benha. Arabi, following perhaps unconsciously the example of the French Jacobins, proposed to the council that the property of all Egyptians leaving the country should be confiscated.

Lord Cromer, *Modern Egypt* (Macmillan, 1908), pp 288-9

(b) Vice-Consul Calvert to Lord Granville

Alexandria, June 11th, 1882.

Serious riot this afternoon between Arabs and Europeans; many persons wounded. Mr Cookson badly wounded in head, also three of our Consular constables. Police did not interfere to protect Europeans. Engineer of *Superb* killed. Cannot yet ascertain who else killed or wounded. Troops have come to restore order Governor promises public security, but is, I think, quite powerless to maintain order.

Quoted in Rt. Hon. Sir E. Malet, *Egypt 1879-83* (John Murray, 1909), p 404

(c) *The Times*, Tuesday 11 July 1882

From our correspondent, Alexandria, July 10, 12.30 p.m. (by Eastern Companies Cables).

Everything seems to be ready for immediate action I am writing this on board *Helicon*, four miles to the north of Pharos Point. . . . All the shipping left the harbour this morning, except the *Invincible*, *Monarch*, *Bittern*, and *Beacon*, and a few merchantmen which were hurriedly preparing to get under way.

30 The Penelope left her anchorage in the outer harbour at daylight, and took up a position from which she will command Marabout Fort. . . .

The whole French squadron steamed out to sea between 8 and 9 o'clock this morning and the ships have anchored about two miles
35 outside the breakwater. The American, Austrian, Russian and Italian vessels of war have also anchored near them. . . .

News from the shore this morning says that panic prevails among the natives, many of whom are leaving the town for the interior. . . .

The Times, 11 July 1882

(d) *The Times*, Wednesday 12 July 1882

Bombardment of the forts at Alexandria (noon)

40 The first shot was fired at Pharos Fort this morning at 7 o'clock, by the Alexandria. About four minutes afterwards a general signal was hoisted by the Invincible to 'attack the enemy's batteries'. The signal was no sooner made than the Invincible, Monarch, and Penelope immediately
45 opened fire on the Mexs batteries. . . .

The enemy appeared to have been waiting in readiness for they replied at once. . . .

The damage which has been inflicted on the forts is tremendous. In some places nothing but a heap of ruins is to be seen. . . .

The Times, 12 July 1882

(e) Admiral Seymour reports to London, 11 July 1882

I attacked the batteries and succeeded in silencing the forts at 5.30 p.m.

50 I regret to say that the city of Alexandria has suffered greatly by fire and pillage. The Egyptians fought with determined bravery. . . .

Quoted in W. K. Ritchie, *The British in Egypt* (Longman, 1973)
p 38

(f) An English civilian remembers what he saw as the British troops entered Cairo

No one will readily forget the impression produced on him by the seething hoards of panic stricken natives who thronged the streets of that astonished city. They it was, be it remembered, who until the last
55 moment had believed the boasting vamping reports of triumphs over the English, daily published on coarse coloured posters, issued in profusion by the rebel commander.

. . . And now that they found English cavalry in their midst, and Indian troops camped beneath their walls, they could but pace
60 the streets open-mouthed for days and nights together, gazing in

amazement at those strange animals, the Highlanders, and those even more fearsome objects, the Indian cavalrymen. . . .

Quoted in E. W. Latimer, *Europe in Africa in the 19th century* (Chicago, 1896), p 58

(g) A soldier of the 'Black Watch' describes the battle of Tel el-Kebir

We struck camp when it got dark and lit fires, and left our sick men to keep them burning to deceive the enemy, as we were now told we were to surprise him in his entrenchments. After waiting on parade about an hour, the whole highland brigade moved across the plain. The order was spare none of the enemy, bayonet every one of them as they would shoot us treacherously if we passed over them. We were told not a shot was to be fired, to rush over the ditches and earth works and bayonet them before the alarm could be properly given.

Arabi was not to be caught asleep. His cavalry outposts had seen our advance four hours before, and every man was at his post. The day was just dawning when we mounted on a bit of rising ground and we saw . . . his redoubtable fortress. . . . We fixed our bayonets and the sergeants their swords, and in about six seconds after the first two shots were fired, Arabi's artillery on the right and left front, and every direction, opened at once, and the blaze of rifles was horrible. We were ordered to lie down, which we did. After the short run of fifty yards we were all out of breath with the excitement and weight of our ammunition, which was very great. . . .

The 42nd charged over the other fifty yards like tigers, sprang into the trenches while the bullets were whirring, whizzing and pinging like as many bees when they are casting. . . . The pipes struck up 'The march of the Cameron Men'. The first man who fell was a man of my section who was hit in the chest. He threw his rifle into the air and fell backward without a groan, quite dead. . . . We leapt down into the fort and I fired the first shot, for we took the trenches at the point of the bayonet.

Our artillerymen and cavalry . . . now came galloping up into the fort. We gave them a deafening cheer which they returned, galloped in front of us, wheeled about the guns, and poured grapeshot and shell after the now retreating army, we ourselves picking them off like rabbits.

Quoted in W. K. Ritchie *The British in Egypt* (Longman, 1973), pp 42-4

Questions

- a From extracts *d* and *e* can you estimate how long it took to silence the shore guns in Alexandria?

- b The British occupation of Egypt has been described as a 'textbook operation'; what evidence can you find that seems to confirm this judgement?
- c What roles did the infantry and cavalry play in the battle of Tel el-Kebir?

5 French and German attitudes to Britain's role in Egypt

(a) De Courcel to Jules Ferry, 12 Nov 1884

- ... Passing to Egypt, Prince Bismarck told me that the English seemed disposed to make pecuniary sacrifices, and that that was right. I made him see that if they envisaged such a prospect, it was the idea of reserving for themselves a guaranteed position which would be the equivalent of a mortgage on Egypt, and that I thought such a scheme was difficult to reconcile with the rights claimed by other nations; I added moreover that in this event France would not act independently of the rest of Europe, and that if Europe, guided by Germany, left the territory free for the English, she would acquiesce, having decided in advance to wait and see what the other governments did. Prince Bismarck replied that Germany would do little: and that indeed, if she had seen at her side a France ready to forget the past and adopt frankly a policy of interest, she would have supported her, but that she could not risk bad relations with England in the present state of mind of France. . . .

Documents Diplomatiques Français (1871–1914), v, no. 450

(b) Bismarck speaks to the German Reichstag, 2 March 1885

- ... it is assumed that I myself have an 'unfavourable view' of England's Egyptian policy, and it is assumed that this unfavourable opinion stems from my personal irritation that England has not followed the advice that I had given her earlier on the Egyptian question. I regret that my English colleague (Granville) forces me into the position of having to contradict him. I have never criticized to him England's policy on Egypt. . . . Lord Granville is mistaken in assuming that my advice with reference to Egypt was 'to take it', i.e. to take Egypt.

H. Von Petersdorff et al (eds), *Bismarck: Die gesammelten Werke* (Berlin, 1923), vol xiii, pp 4–5

Questions

- * a Why do France and Germany appear to be drawing closer diplomatically at this juncture?

- * b What obstacles did Bismarck think that France was putting in the way of a *rapprochement* when he talks of France not 'forgetting the past' (extract *a*, line 12)?
- * c Why could Germany not risk 'bad relations with England' (extract *a* lines 13–14)?

II West Africa

The causes of the scramble have aroused the sharpest controversies when considered in the light of West Africa. Between the Select Committee Report of 1868 suggesting a withdrawal from West Africa on the one hand, and the eventual massive extension of British colonial control on the other, what forces were at work to cause such a shift? Was Britain reacting to the expansionist policies of others? Was the prime motive even in West Africa strategic, as suggested by Robinson and Gallagher in their important book, *Africa and the Victorians*? How powerful were the commercial lobbies of Manchester, Liverpool, London, etc? Did the government really want to acquire possessions in West Africa or was this an expedient forced on it by a combination of outside pressures?

A comprehensive study of West Africa must take in the extraordinary and maverick manoeuvring of King Leopold of Belgium in extending his control over the Congo basin; it must look closely at French expansion on the Niger, the Congo and elsewhere. It must be asked whether France was reacting to the British occupation of Egypt – was the occupation of Egypt the event which set the scramble going, or were the influences and forces mainly West African? We must also look at the role played by the Royal Niger Company and other commercial companies as the pioneers of Empire.

Perhaps the most intriguing of the issues raised in West Africa are those raised by the involvement of Germany. Why did Bismarck, for so long a reluctant imperialist, launch Germany so wholeheartedly into colonial affairs in West Africa? How do events in West Africa illustrate the working of his famous dictum, 'my map of Africa is in Europe'? And to what effect? Did Germany's insistence upon ground rules for territorial acquisition (the Berlin Act) give a new momentum to the scramble due to the need now formally to occupy territories and then to notify the international community of such occupations?

1 Reluctance to shoulder the responsibility of Empire

(a) A parliamentary committee advocates limiting government involvement in West Africa

Resolved:

That it is the opinion of this Committee

1. That it is not possible to withdraw the British government, wholly or immediately, from any settlements or engagements on the
5 West African Coast.

2. That the settlement on the Gambia may be reduced, by M'Carthy's Island, which is 150 miles up the river, being no longer occupied. . . .

3. That all further extension of territory or assumption of Government,
10 or new treaties offering any protection to tribes, would be inexpedient; and that the object of our policy should be to encourage in the natives the exercise of those qualities which may render it possible to us more and more to transfer to them the administration of all the governments, with a view to our ultimate withdrawal from all, except, probably,
15 Sierra Leone.

4. That this policy of non-extension admits no exception, as regards new settlements, but cannot amount to an absolute prohibition of measures which, in peculiar cases, may be necessary for the more efficient and economical administration of the settlements we
20 already possess.

Proceedings – Article 50. It may be impossible at present to withdraw from settlements and engagements already made, but even these may be capable of immediate reduction and consolidation; and when their chief object, the suppression of the slave trade, is achieved,
25 and the protection of commerce becomes their sole remaining object, they may be still further modified and partially abandoned. Immediate reduction will be an overt act, duly notifying this intention, and most effectually checking the extension, without hazarding the efficiency, of present governments.

Report of the Select Committee on Africa (Western Coast),
Parliamentary Papers, v (1865), pp 3 and 15

(b) An official echoes the policy of 1865 in 1882

30 Personally, I wish the policy recommended by the House of Commons' Committee in 1865 could be carried out, and that we could retire from the West African Colonies.

Minute by A. W. L. Hemming, 19 March 1882, Colonial Office, Public Record Office 806/203, Appendix 1, 7

(c) Lord Kimberley expresses his doubts about a protectorate between Benin and The Cameroons

35 Such an extensive protectorate as Mr. Hewett (British Consul in West Africa) recommends would be a most serious addition to our burdens and responsibilities. The coast is pestilential; the natives numerous and unmanageable. The result of British occupation would be almost certainly wars with the natives, heavy demands on the British taxpayer

Kimberley to Gladstone, 6 April 1882, Colonial Office 806/203, Appendix I, 7

(d) Further misgivings from the Colonial Office in the face of Foreign Office willingness to annex territory

40 The view of the Foreign Office, which was pressed on Lord Kimberley, was that England should annex all unoccupied territory between Lagos and the French settlement of the Gaboon. Now this would be a tremendous undertaking. We would not annex it without making ourselves responsible for peace and order there. This would be a task as heavy as governing the Gold Coast in a country and climate still
45 severer. We should have to obtain a revenue which could only be obtained by levying customs dues, and I doubt English traders wishing for this.

Minute by Meade, 18 March 1883, Colonial Office 806/203

Questions

- a* What reasons can you glean from extracts *c* and *d* that endorse the suggested policy put forward in extract *a*?
- b* What do you understand by 'inexpedient' in extract *a*, line 10?
- * *c* Which of the two departments - the Foreign Office or Colonial Office - was the more reluctant to get involved with formal possession in West Africa? Can you think why this might be the case?
- d* How does Meade in extract *d* cleverly make formal colonisation appear to be against the interests of British traders?
- * *e* Do you think the English traders would agree with Meade's argument?
- * *f* What experiences of Empire, elsewhere in the world, might be said to account for such a reluctance as expressed in these sources?

2 Pressure builds up for British government involvement

(a) Liverpool traders express fears that Portugal and France are taking large tracts of the coast

5 The effect of a Portuguese extension would be to exterminate the British trade in the absorbed territory, as it could not exist under the grinding exactions of a protective Customs Tariff, which would practically prohibit the importation of every manufacture of British origin. A writer who lived for many years in Angola, and who had abundant opportunities of witnessing the miserable state to which that fine country had been reduced by the wretched and corrupt system of government, represents Portuguese rule there as a 'despotic oppression that crushed the whole country under its heel'

10 France of late years has been making vigorous efforts to extend her influence in Western Africa. . . . If France sets so high a value on her future in Africa as to deem it wise to extend her power, and if Portugal does not shrink from the additional cares of an increased territory, it is reasonable to hope that England will not allow the trade at present
15 possessed by her to be confiscated for the benefit of protectionist competitors; but that the influence due to her by virtue of her great colonial and trading interests in Western Africa, which far exceed those of all other nations combined, will be maintained, and, if necessary, her territory extended, in order to prevent the encroachments of foreign
20 powers whose interests are antagonistic to those of Great Britain.

John Holt, leading Liverpool trader, to Lord Granville, 11 December 1882, *Granville Papers*, Public Record Office 30/29/269

(b) A local headman in the Cameroons appeals to the British to keep the French out

I beg to trouble you about these French matter which want to take place. I long time when my father was alive; he told me the land belong to English, but now French want to take it by force. I told them the place belong to English and he says that he will left me a flag; I say
25 know [no?] until I receive orders from you; therefore I want you to come and settle these all matter because I do not want them to rule my country.

Come quick, because soon that people may come, all English traders they do not want French people to come before you. . . .

Message sent to Consul Hewett, quoted in A. D. Nzemeke, *British Imperialism and African Response: The Niger Valley, 1851-1905* (Schoningh, 1982)

(c) The Liverpool and London Chambers of Commerce complain at government reluctance to protect trading interests in West Africa

30 In West Africa the British Governments of the last decade have been

outstripped by Germany and France; the Gambia has dwindled; the Cameroons has been lost; the two foreign powers have intervened between Lagos and Gold Coast Colonies – which Colonies should have been coterminus – the French have spread themselves over
35 Senegambia, and the British Governments have yielded the districts of the Northern Rivers of Sierra Leone . . . the Chamber is of opinion that wherever in the unappropriated territories of Africa a preponderance of British trade existed, there British interests should have been secured, by proclaiming such territories spheres of British
40 influence.

Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, Report on Affairs of the West African Colonies, (1892) Foreign Office 83/1242; quoted in R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians* (Macmillan, 1961), p 382

Questions

- a What economic policy do the Liverpool traders in extract *a* object to in Britain's colonial competitors? And why?
- * b What is 'despotic oppression' (line 8)?
- * c Why was Britain virtually alone among the powers in pursuing a non-protectionist policy?
- * d Why do you think the Cameroons headsman so wishes to be under British suzerainty?
- e What yardstick do the authors of extract *c* suggest for determining the circumstances under which British spheres of influence should be declared? Would the government be likely to accept this yardstick?
- * f Discuss the differences of opinion that might emerge in the cabinet as a result of commercial pressures.

3 The Royal Niger Company's origins

(a) Origins of Sir George Goldie's National African Company

Sir [as was then Mr.] George Goldie came upon the scene of Niger affairs in 1877, when British enterprise was in a diffused state, and foreign statesmanship was preparing to take steps to secure the region. He had not had the advantage of being brought up in the West African
5 school, but had a knowledge of African conditions acquired in Upper Egypt . . . certain members of his family had been investing money in one of the English trading companies in the Lower Niger. This company, in 1877, was financially in a low state, and Sir George Goldie,

10 thinking to combine two laudable undertakings – to see after the company's affairs and then to cross Africa from the Niger to the Nile – went out to the Niger accompanied by his brother . . . he had seen . . . enough of the Niger to realise the worth of it to Britain and the necessity of securing it for her.

15 . . . Sir George Goldie commenced by inaugurating the principle of amalgamation among the trading firms already working on the Niger, and in carrying this important thing through he was aided by Mr. James Pinnock . . . and also by Captain Croft, Mr. David Macintosh, Mr. Edgar, Messrs. Miller Brothers, and others. . . . This group of Englishmen Sir George Goldie welded into the National African
20 Company.

Mary Kingsley, *Story of West Africa*, quoted in D. Wellesley, *Sir George Goldie* (Macmillan, 1934)

(b) The government shows how useful it found the company

[The Company] . . . is perfectly able and willing to discharge the duties of administration for which H. M. G. have become responsible, and unless it sh[oul]d be considered necessary that this country sh[oul]d go to the great expense of setting up the machinery of govt
25 upon the two rivers where the Co now rules supreme, there seems to be no other course open, and certainly no better one, than that of legalizing and affirming the position of the Co and placing the business of administration into its hands.

Memo by Villiers Lister, 30 Jan. 1885, Foreign Office 84/1879

(c) R.N.C. Directors' Report to shareholders complains of having been badly used by the British government

30 The Government gave nothing to the company except the doubtful privilege of taking all responsibilities and all risks in acquiring at its own cost rights which are now to be conveyed to the Empire. The privilege would indeed have become most valuable if the company had been allowed to retain it for a reasonable number of years, as was the case with the East India Company and the Hudson Bay Company. But
35 the Niger Co., after years of heavy risk and initial outlay, had no sooner made its position secure by the crushing defeat which it had inflicted on the threatening Fulah (or Sokoto) power at Bida or Ilorin, than all progress was brought to a standstill by an intimation that the privileges of the charter were to be withdrawn. It is clear that the
40 withdrawal of these privileges must be accompanied by a repayment of the sums which have been so cheerfully, profitably and successfully expended in their use. The position would have been different if the

company had . . . requested the Imperial Government to relieve it of any of its responsibilities. The company had never received the slightest
45 Imperial assistance in dealing with the dense Native population of its territories. It was within neither the duties nor the rights of the company to resist the invasion of the Colonial forces of a European Power, although as a matter of fact, it did offer to take this burden on its shoulders subject to certain reasonable conditions.

Quoted in W. N. M. Geary, *Nigeria under British Rule* (Methuen, 1927)

Questions

- a What evidence is contained in these extracts to support the widely held view that much territorial acquisition in Africa was carried out by and for commercial groups?
- b What grievances did the company express to the government? Were these complaints justified?
- c What according to Mary Kingsley was Sir George Goldie's main achievement in West Africa? Does her testimony of his views support the view that West Africa was a valuable economic asset for Britain?
- d What is meant by 'principle of amalgamation' in (lines 14–15)?

4 The company's monopoly and its effects

(a) The impact of monopoly on natives

They can open and shut any given market at will, which means subsistence or starvation to the Native inhabitants of the place. They can offer any price they like to the producers and the latter must take it or starve. The reason why, is the company's dividends. Why should not
5 the producer sell his stuff to the best advantage, and to whom he likes? He is the aboriginal and the tree whereon the palm-nut grows is his. No, he must sell it to the company or starve. In their territories are thousands of villages engaged in the palm oil trade or would like to be, for the oil is growing at their doors, but the ports of entry at which they
10 are allowed to trade are comparatively fewer in number, so that there are tracts of oil-producing country not worked at all. Why could not duty be paid at the door and trade where you like, as at Accra, Lagos and the Protectorate?

Report by Sir C. Macdonald, Governor of the Niger Protectorate, quoted in W. N. M. Geary, *Nigeria under British Rule* (Methuen, 1927)

(b) Complaint over damage of monopoly

15 Monopoly has been established on the Niger. This monopoly damages British manufacturers and the Native, who is at the mercy of the company. Where there is no competition, the company controls prices absolutely. Natives producing and trading in their areas are not allowed to carry their produce for sale into areas where higher prices are paid.

Complaint by Sir R. Moor, Consul-General in Nigeria in November 1896, quoted in W. N. M. Geary, *Nigeria under British Rule* (Methuen, 1927)

(c) Trade regulations and their effects

20 The practical and efficient monopoly enjoyed by the company is the principal offence. It is true that no European factory, British or foreign, was ever opened on the Niger, and that no merchant vessel, British or foreign, ever navigated the Niger. Persistent attempts were made by the French and German Governments to break down this monopoly. Lieut. Mizon, a French naval officer, twice forced his way up the Niger
25 in a small craft. Flugel, a semi-official German agent, attempted a small trade on the Niger. An acrid diplomatic correspondence with the French and German Governments ensued. . . . The company . . . did not want strangers in its territories, especially traders or lawyers. . . . Complaints that the Niger Company's import duties and licences
30 excluded Native traders from elsewhere, are mainly true. Also that the inhabitants of the territories included in the Niger Company were prevented from freely trading was no doubt true; they lost perhaps profits and markets they would otherwise have made; but that they were starved or nearly starved by reason of the company's regulations is
35 wholly unfounded. . . .

The British Government made no attempt to interfere with these trade regulations, either as to the import or export duties or as to trade licences. . . . The British Government devolved on the Niger Company the expense and trouble of governing the Niger under a
40 British Protectorate; and this may be likened to a slum landlord who employs an agent to collect his rents, whom he remunerates by a commission. . . .

The real profits of the Niger Company arose from its being able to purchase African produce at a very much lower rate than what other
45 firms could buy in the open market at Lagos or in the Niger Coast Protectorate by reason of the absence of competition. With their African produce so obtained cheaply, they could sell in Europe at the ordinary rates, i.e. they bought under the market price and they sold at the market price.

W. N. M. Geary, *Nigeria under British Rule* (Methuen, 1927)

(d) Comparison of rates of duties charged in Lagos and in the Niger Company's territories

	Lagos	Niger	
50	Salt	5/- per ton	£1 per ton
	Tobacco	2d per lb.	6d per lb.
	Gin	6d per gallon	2/- per gallon
	Other spirits	1/- per gallon	2/- per gallon
55	Guns	1/- each	100%
	Powder	2/- per 100lb. barrel	7/- per 25lb. barrel [or £1:8/- per 100lb. barrel]
.....			
	Export Duty	nil	£2 per ton palm kernels £1:7:11d per ton palm oil

Source: Foreign Office 84/2109, Report of Major MacDonald on 'The Administration of the Niger Territories'

Questions

- What responsibilities did the company have imposed on it by the government (extract c)?
- Do these extracts suggest that the company reaped sufficient benefits to outweigh the burdens of rule on the Niger?
- Why does the Consul-General in Nigeria think the monopoly is a bad thing (extract b)?
- How do the import and export duty figures demonstrate the powerful and favourable position of the company?
- On which items was the difference in import duty greatest? Can you think of a reason why the duty should be so great in the company's territory?

5 Royal Charter granted to the National African Company, later called the Royal Niger Company

Victoria by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Etc. . . .

- Whereas an humble Petition has been presented to Us, in Our Council, by the National African Company, Limited, of 34 to 40, Ludgate Hill, in the City of London . . . the objects of the Company, are (amongst others) the following, that is to say:

To carry on business and to act as merchants, bankers, traders, commission agents, shipowners, carriers . . . in the United Kingdom,

- Africa, or elsewhere, and to import, export, buy, sell, barter, exchange,
pledge
- To form or acquire and carry on trading stations, factories, stores and
depots in Africa or elsewhere.
- To apply for . . . privileges, monopolies, licences, concessions. . . .
- To purchase or otherwise acquire, open and work mines,
forests, quarries. . . .
- And whereas the petition further states that the Kings, Chiefs, and
peoples of various territories in the basin of the River Niger, in Africa,
fully recognising after many years experience, the benefits accorded to
their countries by their intercourse with the Company and their
predecessors, have ceded the whole of their territories to the Company
by various Acts of Cession. . . .

AUTHORISATION TO COMPANY

1. The said NATIONAL AFRICAN COMPANY, LIMITED . . . is
hereby authorised and empowered to hold and retain . . . all rights,
interests, authorities, and powers for the purposes of government,
preservation of public order, protection of the said territories
2. The Company shall be bound by and shall fulfil all and singular the
stipulations on their part contained in the Acts of Cession
aforesaid
5. If at any time our Secretary of State thinks fit to dissent from or
object to any of the dealings of the Company with any foreign Power,
and to make the Company any suggestion . . . the Company shall act in
accordance therewith.
6. The Company shall . . . abolish by degrees any system of domestic
servitude . . . and no foreigner, whether European or not, shall be
allowed to own slaves of any kind in the Company's territories.
14. Nothing in this Our Charter shall be deemed to authorise the
Company to set up or grant any monopoly of trade

Quoted in Dorothy V. Wellesley, *Sir George Goldie* (Macmillan,
1934), appendix II

Questions

- * a What similarities are there between the position of the R.N.C. as
laid out in this charter and that of other companies in other parts of
Africa?
- b 'The Company was the vehicle of colonial expansion', discuss this
statement in relation to the R.N.C.
- * c Why was Sir George Goldie so important to the development of
the company in Nigeria?
- d What does 'domestic servitude' refer to in lines 34–5?

6 French Policy moves towards Expansionism

(a) Letters from the Ministry of the Navy and Colonies

[19 Jan. 1883; Jaureguiberry to Duclerc, President of the Council and Minister of Foreign Affairs]

5 You know, Monsieur President of the Council and dear colleague, that in acceding to the demands of King Toffa [who asked France to re-establish its protectorate on Porto-Novo], our foremost thought was to protect our very important and prosperous commerce in the region of the Gulf of Benin. Now the French trading posts do not exist merely in Kotonou or at Porto-Novo, but are established at all the neighbouring points: Gosomey, Abomey, Wydah, Grand Popo, Petit Popo, Porto Segouro . . . I feel that it would be wise to maintain national commerce and to avoid the English taxes that threaten it, to extend the French protectorate on all the small territories which extend along the coast-line of from 20 to 25 miles from the border west of Dahomey to the English villages of Flohou and Adaffi, the last points east of the Colony of Cape Coast Castle.

15 The advantages of this policy that I hope you will approve cannot escape you. With the protection of our flag, French commerce, already of great importance, will assume fresh developments. . . . We will . . . be in a better position to compete with English commerce.

20 [25 Jan. 1883: Jaureguiberry to Duclerc, on the Niger and Benoue]

I believe, after having studied the political and commercial situation of these regions, that it is of interest to affirm our politics from this side and that, for the good of our commerce, it is necessary to develop our influence alongside that of the English.

25 [30 Jan. 1883: Jaureguiberry to the Commander of the Naval Division of the Occidental Coast of Africa]

30 We must foresee the possible annexation by England of the right bank of the Lower Niger. It is to be feared that the day will come when the English trading posts will extend as far as the mouth of the Brass River. I believe it is best to take steps against this contingency in the interests of French commerce now established on the Niger up to Egga, and also on the Benoue where all efforts must be made. It is important that trade should not be affected by English taxes after entering the river.

35 I urge you to study the measures that could be taken towards this goal. It would be especially interesting to know whether the rivers which join the sea to the East of Brass River, among them the new Calebar and Bonny, are not branches which would be navigable from the delta of the Niger. This point is still doubtful . . . I would urge you to find out by sending one of your ships to chart the Eastern part of the Niger.

45 If the new Calebar, the Bonny or some other river has navigable waters which would provide an entrance to the Niger, you should sign political and commercial agreements with the littoral chiefs that would enable us to place these territories under our protectorate . . . I call your attention to the whole coast, from Niger to the Bay of Banoko.

All these extracts are quoted in P. J. M. McEwan, *19th Century Africa* (Oxford University Press, 1968), pp 277–9

(b) Jules Ferry on the need for an expansionist colonial policy

50 Our country must place itself in a position to do what all others are doing and since the policy of colonial expansion is the general motive which nowadays is worshipped by all the European powers, we, too, must pursue this policy; otherwise there will happen . . . what happened to other nations who played a very considerable role three centuries ago and who today find themselves, however powerful, 55 however great they may have been, reduced to third or fourth class.

Quoted in P. J. M. McEwan, *19th Century Africa* (Oxford University Press, 1968), p 283

(c) Joseph Simon Gallieni (political director in Senegal 1879–81 and Commandant of French Sudan 1886–8) outlines some French objectives

- (i) to allow us to give our Sudanese possessions natural frontiers (*des limites naturelles*).
- 60 (ii) to permit us to establish ourselves, within a short period, in Futa Jalon.
- (iii) to assure all lines of communication between our establishments on the upper Niger and those in the southern rivers.
- (iv) to procure for us the commercial and political possession of the immense geographical triangle bounded by the Atlantic Ocean, the Scarcies, the Tinkisso, the upper Niger, the Sahara and the 65 Senegal.
- (v) finally to permit us to constitute a compact colony with the unity it needs – thus replacing this confused group of small native states, all entangled without any unity, and often placed under the 70 influence of foreign powers whose enclaves are such a great obstacle to development of our country's commerce in the Senegambian region.

Archives Nationales, Section d'Outre-mer, Paris, Senegal vi/19/a; note by Gallieni, 20 January 1888

Questions

- a On what basic principles of French expansion do the authors of extracts *a* and *c* agree?
- * b To which European countries is Jules Ferry referring in extract *b* when he refers to 'other nations who played a very considerable role three centuries ago' (lines 53–4)?
- c What evidence do these extracts provide that France was reacting in her colonial policy to her perception of the expansiveness of other European Powers?
- * d Do the extracts suggest any clues as to the causation of the scramble for Africa? Does this tie in with any other evidence you have come across in this book?
- e What are the 'littoral chiefs' (extract *a*, line 45)?

9 The Ja Ja episode

(a) Lord Salisbury on the Ja Ja affair

I gather from these papers that Ja Ja is a sovereign holding a strip of coast near Bonny, and a river call Opobo, which gives access to further creeks and lands in the interior. With respect to this territory of Opobo there is no complaint, but higher up the river is a place called
5 Ohombela, with which European traders have never traded yet, but with which they desire to trade. An attempt on their part to open trade with this place was met with a refusal by the king of it, who stated that it was in the dominion of Ja Ja, who had forbidden any intercourse with Europeans. A number of Ja Ja's soldiers, armed with rifles, were seen in
10 the place. Some of the apparently subordinate chiefs intimated to the merchants that nothing but Ja Ja's prohibition prevented them from trading.

On this it is recommended that two gunboats should be sent to Opobo; that the captain of one of them, carefully concealing his
15 intention, should summon a meeting of Ja Ja and other chiefs on board his vessel, and then, when he had got them there, should carry him off to sea and deposit him in some place which is not named. It is suggested that the other gunboat should remain, in order to see that due access is given to the people of Ohombela to the merchants who wish to
20 trade there.

I am unable, from the papers before me, to see what cause of complaint we have against Ja Ja. If we are to proceed according to any rule of international right, he is evidently sovereign or suzerain of the place Ohombela, and the prohibition to trade with Europeans is a
25 matter perfectly within his discretion. It is said he is contravening the stipulations of a treaty made in 1873. I can find no provision of that

treaty which is contravened by the action that he has taken in this instance. It is said that he is acting against orders that were transmitted to him in a despatch of Lord Rosebery's last year. This would hardly be
30 a sufficient ground of action unless we are satisfied that the orders were such as this country is entitled to carry out by force. But I cannot see that he has resisted the directions given in Lord Rosebery's despatch. That despatch is directed against the practice of using the position at the mouth of the river to intercept the trade going up through that river to
35 the interior. If this had been Ja Ja's proceeding, our course would have been very clear. He could not be allowed to stop a natural waterway. But this is a very different thing from prohibiting access to territories which are confessedly under his control. I cannot at present see that we have any cause of war against Ja Ja. The course of action which is
40 proposed by Consul Hewett would be open to great exception, even if we had a cause of war against this chief. To invite a chief on board your ship, carefully concealing the fact that you have any designs against his person, and then, when he has put himself in your power, to carry him away, is hardly legitimate warfare, even if we had a right to go to war.
45 It is called 'deporting' in the papers, but I think it is a euphemism. In other places it would be called kidnapping.

I append a letter from Admiral Hood, the First Sea Lord of the Admiralty, showing that if necessity or cause arose for hostile measures, they would be attended with some difficulty and probably some
50 expense. The climate would practically forbid the employment of any but black troops for the purpose. But I see no ground for hostile action so far as my present information goes. I think it would be better to request the Admiralty to send a gunboat there, with instructions to remonstrate with Ja Ja and obtain such relaxation of his restrictions as
55 can be done by negotiation. The commander should, however, unless under some unforeseen necessity, be precluded from taking any aggressive action without further orders.

Minute by Lord Salisbury 29 August 1887, quoted in W. N. M. Geary, *Nigeria under British Rule* (Methuen, 1927) p 279-80

(b) A Foreign Office view

Ja Ja is the ablest of the Coast middlemen. He is a man of energy and considerable ability. The African traders of Liverpool who support the
60 middlemen of the Brass river against the Niger Company wish to break Ja Ja in order that they may trade freely in Opobo and Eboe Creeks. In each case they follow their own interests, but if Ja Ja clashes with those interests, it does not follow that he is a criminal for acting in the manner for which the Brass men are approved. The traders wish
65 to throw the trade open, and penetrate into the interior; he wishes to keep his middleman's profits; he is sharp enough to hold his own with

the Europeans, and powerful enough to overcome the Natives in the interior. We consequently fall back on Hewett's recent treaty of 1884. Now as to this, it is the fact that Ja Ja refused to sign the clauses admitting foreigners to freedom of trade and settlement. So that the clause is not in the treaty which he signed. Under these circumstances it would be hardly consistent with good faith to act absolutely as if he had signed. Our course has been quite consistent. We have said, the Livingstone treaty being abolished, we insist on the rights of free passage to the interior, of free transit and free shipment of goods in transit; as regards the produce of your own territories and settlements, you have freedom of action. His envoys claim that all the interior markets, known as Eboe, belong to him. Hewett and the traders say he has no markets at all. A commission should be appointed to ascertain what the actual territory was at the time of the Hewett treaty. I do not believe, in the present circumstances, in deportation; he has done no act to justify permanent imprisonment.

Quoted in W. N. M. Geary, *Nigeria under British Rule* (Methuen, 1927), p 281

(c) Mr H. H. Johnston to the Foreign Office

Ja Ja preparing escape, strong place interior, where he built houses and stored supplies; able there throttle all Bonny and Opobo trade and European building at markets unsafe. Instead of allowing him time to escape summoned him to surrender at discretion, and promised him fair hearing of case by Secretary of State; being unprepared surrendered; now with me on mail steamer proceeding instantly to Accra.

Quoted in W. N. M. Geary, *Nigeria under British Rule* (Methuen, 1927), p. 283

(d) A note by H. H. Johnston

. . . The full story was related in Parliamentary debates in 1888, when the government's endorsement of my action was approved. Ja Ja was little more than a puppet in the controversy, which was really a Liverpool contention for free trade, as opposed to a Glasgow movement for the establishment of a monopoly in palm oil export from the Opobo region. The establishment of such a monopoly would have vitiated our engagements with foreign Powers.

Quoted in W. N. M. Geary, *Nigeria under British Rule* (Methuen, 1927), pp 287-8

Questions

- a What points does Lord Salisbury raise in defence of Ja Ja in extract a?

- * *b* What grievance do the British traders have against Ja Ja?
- c* What course of action is Lord Salisbury in favour of?
- d* What objections did Admiral Hood raise to the idea of 'hostile measures' (line 48)?
- e* What evidence can you find in extracts *b* and *d* that suggests that in some sense Ja Ja was caught in the crossfire between two British trading interests?

III The Berlin West Africa Conference: 1885

The Berlin West Africa Conference (and the Act it promulgated) is often regarded as pivotal in the developing momentum of the scramble. Representatives of fourteen countries met in Berlin in November 1884 at the invitation of Germany and France. It was preceded and precipitated by growing tensions and rivalries in West Africa mainly over control of the Congo basin, but also over territories elsewhere particularly along the River Niger. Stanley had conducted an expedition on the Congo for King Leopold of Belgium in order to establish Belgian influence there and he met the Frenchman De Brazza who was engaged in a similar exploit on behalf of the French. This was accompanied by the ritual signing of treaties with local chiefs – notably the famous treaty with Makoko which was ratified by the French parliament in a blaze of imperialist publicity. The British and Portuguese meanwhile signed a treaty in February 1884 giving Portugal control of both mouths of the Congo.

Into this brew of European animosities entered Bismarck, having shown little interest in imperial expansion thus far. Bismarck seems to have been out to isolate Britain by wooing French support thus using Africa and the Conference to further his European designs. A. J. P. Taylor neatly sums up the German position; ‘. . . Bismarck quarrelled with England in order to draw closer to France; and . . . the method of quarrel was the deliberately provocative claim to ownerless lands, in which the German government had hitherto shown no interest. . . . The German colonies were the accidental by-product of an abortive Franco-German entente’.

Three broad issues were dealt with: freedom of navigation on the Congo and Niger, freedom of trade on the two rivers and rules and procedures to be observed by powers when extending their control into new areas of the African coast. The latter were intended to avoid further embarrassing rivalries.

Sir Frederick Lugard, a pioneer of British East Africa and later of West Africa laments in extract 3a the refusal of the Powers to deal with the hinterland as well as the coast. Sir E. Hertslet, a Foreign Office official, sees West African rivalries getting the scramble going ‘in earnest’. Extract 4 gives the British ambassador in Berlin’s account of the negotiations from the official British position at the Conference.

Historians differ as to whether the scramble started in West Africa or whether British occupation of Egypt prompted France to aggressive expansion in the west thus disturbing the other Powers there. There can be little doubt, however, that the rules of 'conquest' established by the Act of Berlin prepared the ground for the vigorous and determined partition of the continent in the remaining years of the century. For this momentous initiative not a single African ruler was represented at the conference.

1 Bismarck discusses the suggestion of a Conference on West Africa in the light of the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty on the Congo coast

Prince Bismarck to Count Munster. Berlin, June 7, 1884

I have the honour to forward to your Excellency herewith a copy of a despatch from Lord Granville of the 26th ultimo, communicated to me by Lord Amptill, on the subject of the Anglo-Portuguese Congo Treaty of 26th February.

I do not think the Treaty has any chance of being universally recognized even with the modifications which are therein proposed by Her Majesty's Government.

Even the Portuguese Government itself seems, as I had the honour to inform your Excellency on the 20th ultimo, as a consequence of the communications it has received from other Powers, to have become convinced of the necessity of making the Congo question the subject of an international agreement, and has therefore put before certain Powers a suggestion for a Conference.

If this suggestion is approved of by the Powers interested in the Congo trade, we should be ready and willing to name a German Plenipotentiary to take part in the proceedings.

We are not, however, prepared to admit the possession of previous rights by any of the Powers who are interested in the Congo trade as a basis for negotiations. In our eyes, Portugal has no stronger claim to the Lower Congo territories than any other Power which frequents them; trade and commerce in those regions have hitherto been free to all alike without restriction.

His Majesty the Emperor feels it his duty to maintain this advantage for the good of German trade in the future, and, if possible, to strengthen it by an agreement between all the Powers interested.

We are, therefore, not in a position to admit that the Portuguese or any other nation have a previous right there. We share the fear which, as Lord Granville admits, has been expressed by merchants of all nations, that the action of Portuguese officials would be prejudicial to trade, and precisely for this reason, even should it become necessary to

impose dues and taxes for the support of any arrangements tending to promote foreign trade, we cannot take part in any scheme for handing over the administration or even the direction of these arrangements to Portuguese officials.

35 Even the provision for limiting the dues to a maximum of 10 per cent., the basis of the Mozambique Tariff, would not be a sufficient protection against the disadvantages which the commercial world rightly anticipates would ensue from an extension of the Portuguese colonial system over territories which have hitherto been free. . . .

40 In the interests of German commerce, therefore, I cannot consent that a coast which is of such importance and has hitherto been free land should be subjected to the Portuguese colonial system. We are, however, quite ready and willing to cooperate in obtaining a mutual agreement by all the powers interested in the question, so as to introduce in proper form into this African territory by the regulation of its commerce the principles of equality and community of interests which have long been successfully pursued in the far East.

45 I have to request your Excellency to make a communication to Lord Granville in the above sense, and you are also authorized to communicate a copy of this note confidentially to his Lordship.

Parliamentary Papers, C 4284, No 2, 1885

Questions

- * a Why was Germany so opposed to the proposed Anglo-Portuguese Treaty on the coasts of the Lower Congo region?
- * b Is there any justification for saying that the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty gave Bismarck just the opening he wanted in Africa?
- c Why does Bismarck not like the idea of Portuguese officials controlling the trade of the Congo coast and imposing the 'Portuguese colonial system' (line 43)?
- d What do you understand by the 'Congo question' (line 12)?

2 The Berlin Act. Some rules for the conduct of the scramble for Africa

CHAPTER 1: THE CONGO (freedom of trade)

ARTICLE 1.

The trade of all nations shall enjoy complete freedom:—

1. In all the regions forming the basin of the Congo and its outlets.
- 5 This basin is bounded by the watersheds of the adjacent basins, namely, in particular, those of the Niari, the Ogowe, the Schari, and the Nile on the north; by the eastern watershed line of the affluents of Lake

Tanganyika on the east; and by the watersheds of the basins of the Zambesi and the Loge on the south.

10 2. In the maritime zone extending along the Atlantic Ocean from the parallel situated in 2° 30' of South Latitude to the mouth of the Loge. . . .

15 3. In the zone stretching eastwards from the Congo Basin as above defined to the Indian Ocean from 5° of North Latitude to the mouth of the Zambesi in the south. . . .

ARTICLE 2.

All flags, without distinction of nationality, shall have free access to the whole of the coastline of the territories above enumerated. . . .

ARTICLE 6.

20 All the Powers exercising sovereign rights or influence in the aforesaid territories bind themselves to watch over the preservation of the native tribes, and to care for the improvement of the conditions of their moral and material well-being, and to help in suppressing slavery, and especially the slave trade.

25 They shall without distinction of creed or nation, protect and favour all religions, scientific, or charitable institutions, and undertakings created and organised for the above ends, or which aim at instructing the natives and bringing home to them the blessings of civilisation.

30 Christian missionaries, scientists and explorers, with their followers, property, and collections, shall likewise be the objects of especial protection. . . .

CHAPTER 4: THE CONGO (freedom of navigation)

ARTICLE 13.

35 The navigation of the Congo, without excepting any of its branches or outlets, is, and shall remain, free for the merchant ships of all nations equally. . . .

CHAPTER 5: THE NIGER (freedom of navigation)

ARTICLE 26.

40 The navigation of the Niger, without excepting any of its branches and outlets, is . . . Etc. free for the merchant ships of all nations. . . .

CHAPTER 6: NEW OCCUPATIONS ON THE COASTS OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

ARTICLE 34.

45 Any power which henceforth takes possession of a tract of land on the coasts of the African Continent outside its present possessions, or

which, being hitherto without such possessions, shall acquire them, as well as the power which assumes a Protectorate there, shall accompany the respective act with a notification thereof, addressed to the other
50 Signatory Powers of the present Act, in order to enable them, if need be, to make good any claims of their own.

ARTICLE 35.

The Signatory Powers of the present Act recognise the obligations to insure the establishment of authority in regions occupied by them on
55 the coasts of the African Continent sufficient to protect existing rights, and, as the case may be, freedom of trade and of transit under the conditions agreed upon.

General Act of the Berlin Conference on West Africa, signed on 26 February 1885 by the representatives of Germany, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, the USA, France, the UK, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Sweden and Norway, and Turkey. *Parliamentary Papers*, lv (1884–5), p 438

Questions

- a It is generally accepted that there were three main bases upon which the Berlin Act was formulated. Can you identify them in this draft?
- b What evidence is there that the Congo Basin was interpreted as a very extensive geographical region?
- * c Why do you think the signatories of this Act confined themselves to coastal regions when considering the acquisition of territory (*vis* article 34)?
- * d Did all the powers agree to this limitation to the coasts? If not what were their reasons?
- e How would you categorise this extract as an historical source?
- * f Why do you think Germany played such a key role in hosting the conference? And why was she supported by a traditional enemy, France?
- g Which of the articles quoted here do you think was most crucial to the scramble?

3 Interpretation and context of the Berlin Act

(a) An interpretation of the effects of the Berlin Act by Sir Frederick Lugard

When, however, the 'scramble for Africa' followed the Berlin Act of 1885, the popular demand that Britain, as the foremost colonising Power, should not be backward in claiming her share was irresistible,

and it was due to this popular demand to 'peg out claims for futurity' – however little their value was understood at the time – that we owe our African Empire of to-day. It was, moreover, felt that whatever value our existing tropical possessions might have, would be lost if other nations with exclusive tariffs appropriated their hinterlands. . . . The instinct of the nation recognised with Dr. Pearson that 'the permanency of Empire consists in its extension'. The vital importance of the control of the tropics for their economic value had, however, already begun to be realised by the nations of Europe, and France, Germany, and Italy, laying aside their ambitions in Europe, emerged as claimants for large 'colonies' in Africa.

When Great Britain took part in the scramble, she willingly recognised the claims of Germany – a Power newly consolidated. . . . She stood aside in the Cameruns, where the chiefs had more than once asked for British protection. She renounced the territorial claims which she might have asserted in the Congo region . . . and in East Africa she was contented with a fraction of the territory which the Sultan of Zanzibar offered. . . .

The Berlin Conference of 1885 limited the necessity for 'effective occupation' – by which the validity of a claim to territorial acquisition should be tested – to coastlands. . . . The British delegate (Sir E. Malet) had proposed that this rule should be made applicable to interior lands, but the proposal was negatived, largely at the instance of the French delegate (Baron de Courcel). The Conference therefore laid down no definite rule as to the basis upon which the validity of claims to sovereignty in the interior should be recognised.

The principle of the 'voluntary consent of the natives whose country is taken possession of in all cases where they have not provoked the aggression' was put forward by the American delegate (Mr Kasson), and it may be assumed that it was tacitly accepted. . . .

Since the Conference had refused to deal explicitly with the acquisition of territory other than coastlands, 'the hinterland theory' – made in Germany – which had not the sanction of the Berlin Act or any precise definition, gradually received acceptance in so far as the 'rights' of the European Powers and their relations towards each other in the partition were concerned. By this dictum a power in possession of coastlands was entitled to claim the exclusive right to exercise political influence for an indefinite distance inland. Obviously in a very irregularly shaped continent no method could be more calculated to create difficulties, and the climax seemed to have been reached when France claimed to restrict the frontiers of Nigeria, on the ground that they formed the hinterland of Algeria on the Mediterranean.

The Powers, in their haste to declare the 'spheres of influence' which they had claimed, had not in some cases time to go through the formality of making treaties with the natives, and considered it sufficient

50 to notify that they claimed them as hinterlands, or because they had some special interest in them. They were vaguely demarcated by lines of longitude and latitude regardless of tribal limits, or by physical features which later exploration sometimes proved to be scores of miles from their supposed position, or even non-existent.

F. D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (W. Blackwood and Sons, 1922), p 12

(b) The Berlin Act in a wider context

55 . . . The 'scramble for Africa' may be said to have commenced in earnest about the year 1882, when a Belgian Expedition, known as the 'International Association of the Congo,' started for the Upper Congo and Niadi-Quillou, and in that and the two following years entered into Treaties or 'Contracts' with certain Native Chiefs, by which the Association obtained important territorial and other rights over
60 their Territories.

In 1884 a German Colonisation Society penetrated into the Kilimanjaro and other districts of Eastern Africa, beyond the Territories over which it maintained the Sultan of Zanzibar had no jurisdiction or rights of sovereignty, and it also concluded treaties with Native Chiefs . . .
65 while certain other German subjects, about the same time, visited the South-West Coast of Africa (Namaqualand and Damaraland) and the West Coast (the Cameroons District), and concluded important Treaties with Native Chiefs, by which those Chiefs placed themselves under German protection. But British Agents had also concluded
70 Treaties with local Chiefs in these several districts, which led to disputes between Great Britain and Germany, which were, however, eventually settled by mutual Agreements. . . .

The principle European Powers which occupied Territory in Africa in 1882, were Great Britain, France, Portugal and Spain. At that time
75 neither the King of the Belgians (as Sovereign of the Congo Free State), nor Germany, nor Italy held any recognised possessions in Africa.

But as the attention of all the principle Powers of Europe was then attracted to Africa, a Conference was held at Berlin, at the invitation of the German Government, to discuss many important matters relating to
80 the affairs of that vast Continent. . . .

It held its first sitting on the 15th November, 1884, and terminated its labours on 26th February, 1885, on which day a General Act was signed, known as the 'Berlin Act'. . . . It dealt with the following questions:-

- 85 1. Freedom of Trade in the Basin of the Congo.
2. The Slave Trade.
3. Neutrality of Territories in the Basin of the Congo.
4. Navigation of the Congo.

5. Navigation of the Niger.

90 6. Rules for future occupations on the Coasts of the African Continent.

This General Act was ratified by all the Powers assembled in Conference, except the United States. . . .

95 After this, events began to move rapidly in Africa. It was declared by the 'Berlin Act' that whenever any Foreign State should, thereafter, acquire fresh Territory on any part of the African Coasts it should notify the same to all the Treaty Powers; but this did not extend to Acquisitions or Protectorates in the Interior. In accordance with this understanding, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Portugal,
100 have notified to the powers the various Protectorates which they have assumed on the Coasts. . . .

From the preface to 1894 edition of Sir E. Hertslet, *The Map of Africa by Treaty* (H.M.S.O., 1909)

Questions

- * a Given the disposition of British and French territories in West Africa can you account for the fact that Britain wanted to extend the principle of 'effective occupation' to the African hinterland while France wished to limit it to the coast lands (lines 22-4)?
- * b What do you understand by 'the hinterland theory' alluded to by Lugard (line 35)?
- * c What problems had arisen in the hinterlands due to the haste of the Powers to 'declare spheres of influence' (line 46)?
- d What evidence can you find in extract a that Lugard regarded Britain as acting magnanimously in Africa while other European countries were being aggressive?
- * e What do you know about Lugard that might shed light upon the type of views he might express on colonial issues and especially the scope of the Berlin Act?
- f Why do you think 'events began to move rapidly in Africa' (line 94) after the Berlin Act was signed?
- * g What other event occurred in Africa in 1882 that historians have suggested sparked off the scramble for Africa? Is there any clue in the evidence in extract b to help explain the omission?

4 A summary of the events leading up to the Berlin Conference

I. Sir Robert Morier proposes to Lord Beaconsfield that 'the regime of the Congo should form a leading chapter in a large settlement of African affairs' (Lord Fitzmaurice, *The Life of Lord Granville*). One feature of this scheme is that the river 'be placed under some form of

5 international control'. Lord Beaconsfield rejects the idea and Lord Carnarvon repudiates Consul Cameron's proclamation taking possession of the Congo basin in the name of Great Britain.

II. Stanley's discoveries of the mighty fluvial system of the Congo bend all eyes towards Central Africa.

10 III. The King of the Belgians founds an International Association ostensibly to promote 'civilisation and trade' in Central Africa.

IV. France and Portugal take alarm and put forward political claims in that direction.

15 V. King Leopold, fearing for his enterprise, which has already begun to assume a political and . . . financial complexion, appeals to the British Government privately for support.

20 VI. Portugal appeals to Great Britain likewise. She proposes that the River Congo shall be thrown open to the trade of the whole world, that the river itself shall be placed under an Anglo-Portuguese River Commission

VII. King Leopold's scheme is not trusted by the British Government, which favours the Portuguese proposal

25 VIII. King Leopold is, meanwhile, making desperate efforts to capture British public opinion and to influence it against the Anglo-Portuguese treaty. To the philanthropic section of the British public Egypt and South Africa strategic factors were more important, though how important is a matter of debate. Overarching all these considerations is the stark fact of European military, economic and technological superiority which enabled European powers to achieve an easy hegemony.

IX. Germany is in a grumbling mood, and France, encouraged by the home opposition in England, protests against the Treaty.

35 X. The British Government in view of these attacks at home and abroad abandons the Treaty with Portugal and henceforth supports King Leopold's scheme

XI. Agrees to participate in an International West African Conference suggested by Bismarck to settle the question. . . .

40 XIII. Takes a leading part in the Conference at Berlin which results in freedom of commerce, prohibition of monopoly or privilege, and just treatment of the natives being solemnly proclaimed. . . .

E. D. Morel, *Red Rubber* (London, National Labour Press, 1906), pp 20-1

Questions

- a Is there anything about the source of this extract that a historian would bear in mind when using it as evidence?
- b What attitude does the writer take towards Leopold?
- * c What was unique about Leopold's involvement in the Congo?

- * d Why does Leopold want to turn English public opinion against the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty (lines 23–5)?

5 International Rivalry and the Berlin Conference

Stanley and de Brazza come into conflict in the Congo

On November 7, 1880, when Stanley was in the thick of the struggle to establish the route to Stanley Pool, he was surprised to receive near Ndambi Mbongo a visit from a French naval officer, who presented himself as Le Comte Savorgnan de Brazza, Enseigne de Vaisseau. In the friendly conversations which followed his meeting no hint of rivalry seems to have been breathed by his guest . . . it must have been a painful surprise to him to find on emerging at the end of his wearisome journey on the north bank of Stanley Pool that he had been anticipated in the selection of the natural site for the terminus of his road. On his arrival in July, 1881, at the village Bwabwa Njali, he was met by the Senegalese Sergeant Malamine, the faithful and able servant of de Brazza, who produced a treaty purporting to grant to de Brazza as the representative of France the territory from the Gordon Bennet river, . . .

15 The position of Stanley was decidedly difficult: even had he been inclined to ignore the emphatic notification of de Brazza that the territory had been acquired in sovereignty on behalf of France, he would have been unable to obtain the permission of the natives to establish a station either on the spot claimed by de Brazza or in its vicinity, for de Brazza had succeeded by his great charm of personality and energy of character in convincing the natives that it was in their interest to hamper the access of other white men to their territories. . . .

25 The body to which Stanley made in October the full report of his transactions was the Comité de l'Association Internationale du Congo. . . . Stanley's advice to the Association was simple: nothing could be secured without obtaining from the chiefs in the Congo basin the cession of whatever right of government they possessed. . . .

A. D. Keith, *The Belgian Congo and the Berlin Act* (Clarendon Press, 1919)

Questions

- a Compare the roles played by Stanley and de Brazza in the colonial field.
- b What, if anything, does this extract tell us about the nature of the scramble for Africa on 'the ground'?

6 The three main bases for the Berlin Act outlined by Sir E. Malet (British ambassador in Berlin)

Sir E. Malet to Earl Granville

Berlin, Dec 23, 1884

As the Conference has been adjourned I have thought that it may be useful if I put on record a summary of the result of its labours up to the present time, and point out what questions still remain for consideration.

The first basis laid down in the invitation was the freedom of commerce in the basin and mouths of the Congo.

... Your Lordship's instructions were that Her Majesty's Government would wish that the territory should include, besides the basin of the river, the whole coastline between the colony of Gaboon and the Province of Angola. This object has been attained. . . .

The definition of liberty of commerce was the second subject of discussion. Your Lordship had instructed me that Her Majesty's Government accepted the understanding that no import nor transit dues should be levied. . . .

I observe that the stipulation which permits the revision after twenty years of the prohibition of import duties has been commented upon in England. I would therefore remark that the Representatives and Delegates, including those specially representing commercial interests, were unanimously of the opinion that it would be a mistake to lay down a rule that a particular fiscal system, by which import duties are prohibited and export duties permitted – a system in itself disapproved by many Powers and adopted solely with reference to the exceptional conditions of a barbarous country – should remain in force for all time in spite of the expected development and civilization of the country . . . combined action on the part of the Powers will be necessary . . . to effect an alteration. . . .

The second basis, that of the application to the Congo and Niger of the principles adopted by the Congress of Vienna with regard to liberty of navigation, has been settled so far as its terms originally extended.

Her Majesty's Government wished that the principles might be applied to the other rivers of Western Africa and to the Zambesi. The result has so far not been attained. . . .

Sir E. Malet to Earl Granville

Berlin, Feb 21, 1885

In my despatch of 23rd December I gave a summary of the proceedings of the Conference up to the date of the adjournment for Christmas. . . .

The first and second bases had been fully discussed, and in the main settled, before the adjournment; the third was untouched.

The question for consideration with which the latter dealt was the nature of the formalities to be observed in order to render future occupations on the coast of Africa effective. My instructions were that, as the German Government had explained that all that would be required would be the practical application of principles unanimously laid down by the jurists and judges of all lands, including England, I was authorized to accept the discussion on that basis.

When the Project of Declaration was laid on the table it was apparent that it involved new principles of international law. There could be no objection to the provisions contained in it that a Power undertaking a Sovereignty or Protectorate should notify the fact to the other Signatory Powers, but the treatment of Sovereignities and Protectorates as enforcing identic obligations was novel, and required consideration.

... I explained that Great Britain had no wish to avoid responsibility, and that it was in her interest that Powers assuming the control of territories in Central Africa should undertake the obligations resulting from it . . . she could not admit the identity of Sovereignities and Protectorates. . . . To the argument that it was intended to limit the application of the Declaration to the African coasts, I replied that Great Britain could not accept a principle as applicable to one portion of her dominions which she rejected as regards other portions. . . .

Sir E. Malet to Earl Granville Berlin, Feb 21, 1885

As the Conference has practically concluded its labours, I venture to make the following observations upon the work connected with it

Of the general results I think that one of the most considerable will be found to have been the education of the public opinion of Europe as to Central African questions. When the Conference assembled there was much confusion of thought, leading to distrust among the different nations as to territorial and commercial rivalries

It is now an accepted historical fact that during the greater part of the present century two Powers only, England and Portugal, have been established on the Gulf of Guinea and the coast between that Gulf and the Cape of Good Hope.

Gooch and Temperley, *British Documents on the Origin of the War 1898-1914* (Foreign Office, 1927)

Questions

- * a What does Sir E. Malet regard as one of the most important achievements of the Berlin Conference? Do you agree with him?

- b* What do you understand by the expression 'identic obligations' (line 54)? What difficulties did Sir E. Malet see in it?
- c* What are the three bases for the conference discussed in this extract?
- d* Does this extract suggest that Britain had cause for satisfaction or concern over the outcome of the conference?

IV East Africa

While commercial and trading interests played a great role in the acquisition of colonies in West Africa, in the East there were no such long-established and lucrative links. What commercial motivations there were in East Africa were mainly for the future. Professors Robinson and Gallagher argued powerfully in the 1960's that 'the concentration on East Africa shows the preoccupation with supreme strategic interests'. Yet even this point of view is not without its problems as the evidence will suggest. France, for instance, was allowed to occupy Madagascar which lay directly on the route to India. The extracts in this chapter show a considerable concern with the potential economic benefits as well as the strategic considerations.

The governments of Britain and Germany, the two main European powers in East Africa, were happy in the 1870s and early 1880s to maintain their influence informally and to resist domestic pressure for formal empire. Both had long-standing trading interests in Zanzibar. Both Salisbury and Gladstone were determined not to extend the already dominant British position. Section 1 of the extracts deals with the manner in which Gladstone silenced talk of a British Protectorate in Kilimanjaro.

Britain and Germany decided upon the territorial division of East Africa by Treaty in 1886 and 1890. Mercantile pressure (mainly based in Manchester) continued unabated on the British government. The arguments often concentrated on the threat of another Power taking the territory by default if Britain stood aside, while the commercial benefits were essentially for the future.

The extracts in Section 2 show to what extent private enterprise colonialism was rampant under the auspices of the Imperial British East Africa Company, which eventually ran out of money. The German adventurer Carl Peters also collected treaties and vast concessions of territory for the Deutsch Ostafrika Gesellschaft (German East Africa Company). Bismarck gave him no official recognition though privately he encouraged him. In 1885 on Peters' return to Berlin, the government took the territories formally under its protection.

Suddenly in the mid 1880s the land grab was on, after a long period when governments were decidedly coy of formal *imperium*. In 1885

Lord Salisbury was able to observe that all Europe was quarrelling over East Africa whereas it had been largely indifferent when he had left office five years previously.

Sir Frederick Lugard, later to be prominent in Nigeria, entered Buganda in 1890, determined to extend British influence there and he coaxed some wide ranging concessions from the Kabaka (ruler) giving the I.B.E.A. Co. 'suzerainty' over Buganda. The company meanwhile ran out of funds as it could not guarantee sufficient revenues to attract investment. A concerted campaign to establish a protectorate was mounted by Lugard, Lord Rosebery (Foreign Secretary), Sir Gerald Portal (Consul General, Zanzibar) and others both in political and commercial circles (see extracts in Section 2). In 1894 after British diplomacy had failed to keep the threat of foreign incursion from the Upper Nile (strategically important to Egypt and the Sudan), a formal protectorate was declared over Uganda and the following year the East African Protectorate (later Kenya) was declared (Sections 3, 4 and 6).

There was some brave and determined resistance to European rule particularly in Tanganyika against the Germans. Between 1888 and 1891 there was fierce resistance in the Swahili coastlands led by men like Simboja of Usambara, Bwana Heri of Usambara and most famous of all Abushiri of Pangani. Resistance came to a peak in the Maji Maji Revolt in South Tanganyika in 1905. Much of this resistance is covered in Chapter VII.

1 Enthusiasm over Kilimanjaro – Gladstone rejects annexationism

(a) Sir Harry Johnston to Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice (from Kilimanjaro)

July 10th, 1884.

My Dear Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice,

. . . Here is a country as large as Switzerland, enjoying a singularly fertile soil and healthy climate, capable of producing every vegetable production of the tropical and temperate zones, free from the
5 tsetsefly. . . Here is a land eminently suited for European colonization, situated midway between the Equatorial Lakes and the coast. Within a few years it must be either, English, French, or German. The German traveller Dr. Fischer and the French explorer M. Revoil have both directed the attention of their respective Governments to the project of
10 colonizing Kilimanjaro. . . However all these are still hesitating, while I am still on the spot, the first in the field, and able to make Kilimanjaro as completely English as Ceylon, should I receive the necessary authorization. . . A road to the coast will be made, 170 or 180 miles distant; trade will flow entirely into English hands; the ivory,

15 wax, iron, hides of the interior will come to our markets. And this
without overt act beyond the making of an agreement with Mandara
and permitting him to fly the English flag. He desires all sorts of
European things – forges, sewing machines, guns, ammunition, tables,
20 pictures, Etc. In return he will trade in the fine ivory, wax and gums of
his country. . . . Kilimanjaro offers an admirable centre for that
occupation and colonization of Eastern Africa that must inevitably
come from one of the European powers.

Johnston to Fitzmaurice, Foreign Office 84.1687

**(b) Sir Villiers Lister (Assistant Under Secretary, Foreign
Office) to Fitzmaurice**

Oct 17th, 1884.

25 Kilimanjaro [he wrote] seems admirably suited for a British colony so
near the E[ast] C[oast of] A[frica] we have a most powerful effect in
putting an end to the S(lave) T(rade) beyond the seas. . . .

Lister to Fitzmaurice Foreign Office 84.1687

(c) Fitzmaurice to Granville (concerning Johnston's letter)

Oct 20th, 1884.

30 It seems to me a very important letter Could we not send out to
Sir John Kirk (British Consul in Zanzibar) . . . and have the British flag
hoisted if he thinks the opportunity a good one? I would like to pay off
the Germans for the Cameroons.

Fitzmaurice to Granville, Foreign Office 84.1687

(d) Foreign Office to Kirk

Oct 24th, 1884.

Johnston's scheme. It would probably be too late if you await his arrival
to report, as French and Germans are believed to have designs of
annexation

Foreign Office to Kirk, Foreign Office 84.1676

(e) Gladstone to Granville

35 Dec 12th, 1884.

40 The Kilimanjaro papers so far as I can make out their purport, leave
me, I must confess, wholly unsatisfied. I cannot see . . . an adequate
reason for our being 'dans cette galère'. The tone of the Memo
prepared by F.O. people or others disquiets me, and in places savours
of annexationism. As for instance when it is laid down that we are to
seek 'compensation' on the East Coast of Africa for concurring in
measures equal for all on the west Coast.

45 Either I am very blind, or you and the other Ministers concurring in the Draft dispatch must have reasons inside your minds outside what are here presented.

. . . I should have thought that the proper direction to work in, if we work at all, was to procure if possible the application on the East Coast of the principles which it is now attempted to apply on the West Coast.

Public Record Office, Foreign Office 30/29/144

(f) Gladstone to Sir Charles Dilke

50

Dec 20th, 1884.

Terribly have I been puzzled and perplexed on finding a group of the soberest among us to have concocted a scheme such as that touching the mountain country behind Zanzibar with an unrememberable name. . . .

S. Gwynn and G. M. Tuckwell, *Life of Sir Charles Dilke* (John Hurray, 1917), vol 1, pp 83–4

(g) Granville to Kirk

55

Dec 20th, 1884.

Suspend action on my No. 86 and on receipt of it report . . . whether the mountain district referred to can be considered as actually under the Sultan's sovereignty. . . .

Granville to Kirk, Foreign Office 84.1676

Questions

- a What are the main points made in favour of setting up a British colony in Kilimanjaro district?
- b Why was Gladstone so opposed to the idea of a British colony in East Africa?
- * c For what did Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice want to 'pay off the Germans for the Cameroons' (lines 29–30)?
- d Who do you think are the 'soberest among us' referred to by Gladstone (line 52)?
- e What evidence can you find that the extent of the Sultan of Zanzibar's sovereignty was in doubt?
- f What 'principles' is Gladstone referring to in line 48?

2 The pros and cons of colonising East Africa

(a) The government's case

Memo by Clement Hill, Foreign Office.

Oct 20th, 1884.

The geographical position of the East Coast lays it more within the general area of our foreign policy than that of the West Coast. Our alternative route by the Cape to India may at any time make it important
5 that we should have possession of, or at least free access to, good harbours: the importance is not less since the French movements in Madagascar. The Mahomedan element on the East Coast and the large Indian trade which is there carried on . . . make it essential that we should secure preponderating influence over its political future.

10 . . . Apart from the mineral wealth which is believed to exist between the coast and the great lakes, there is unlimited capacity for the production of cattle, cereals, and all usual articles of tropical trade. The climate even as at present understood, is less unhealthy than that of the West Coast, and the great mountain ranges of Kilimanjaro and Kenia, situated
15 between the lakes that give birth to the Nile and the fine harbours of Zanzibar, afford a European climate and sanitorium within easy reach. . . . There is good reason, too, for supposing that the natives are more naturally industrious than most of the West Coast tribes, and they would welcome the establishment of any government strong enough to
20 enforce good order and prevent raids of the more turbulent tribes.

Public Record Office, Foreign Office 84/1813

(b) The commercial case

The principal exports of the mainland are ivory, gum, copal, copra, semsem, millet, hides, orchella-weed, tobacco and india-rubber; the latter was unknown to the natives as an article of commerce until about
1876, but it is now one of the most valuable exports. . . .

25 . . . An analysis of the trade of 1878-9 . . . will give an approximate estimate of the proportions of the whole trade absorbed by England. The imports for that year were £709,900 and exports £870,350 . . . fully one-third of the import and one-half of the export trade of the Zanzibar dominions, for 1878-9, was absorbed by Great Britain. But in
30 the richer and more populous mountain region to the north the cheaper productions find no market. There we find both clothing and ornament of the most solid character. Manchester grey and blue cottons, heavy iron, copper and brass wire are in constant demand, and beyond these, a few beads are the only articles of European manufacture accepted. The
35 manufactures, in short, which are suited for this new market are just those in which England excels, and in which we are, or ought to be, able to defy competition.

Consul Holmwood to J. Hutton 10 April 1884. Public Record Office, Foreign Office, 84.1737

(c) The case against

Sir William Harcourt, Chancellor of the Exchequer, to Gladstone

Sept. 20th, 1892.

40 I am very much exercised in my mind at the news from East Africa and
Mombassa. As you will have observed the East African Company have
'thrown up the sponge' (being as I imagine insolvent), and a determined
effort is being made to force the British Government to take to the
damnosa haereditas. Rosebery has circulated a Memo (for our consideration
45 but not expressing his own sentiments), by Sir P. Anderson (of the
F.O.), in the highest jingo tune advocating the annexation of the whole
country up to the Albert Lakes with a view to the 'reconquest' of the
Sudan via the upper Nile.

Sir G. Portal telegraphs on September 15 saying that as the evacuation
50 of the Company is to take place in December we must send up
'runners' at once to take possession ourselves. Captain Lugard threatens
all sorts of horrors if we do not occupy at once. Bishop Tucker swears
he will remain at his post and die - in short every sort of bogey is
invoked to involve us in this horrible quagmire, which will be as
55 bad as Khartoum.

Captain Lugard declares that as 'an officer holding H.M.'s commission
he has pledged his own honour and that of the British nation to stay
there for ever'. And in order to facilitate the process he has just
annexed two other provinces larger than Uganda, and has provided for
60 the 'honour of the British nation' by garrisoning them with a few
thousand of Sudanese ruffians. . . .

The Company have ordered evacuation because 'the occupation is so
costly' and because the 'territory yields no funds', *ergo* the British
Government are to undertake it! But, even if we are capable of such a
65 folly, how is it to be done?

It takes three months to march from the coast to Uganda; are we to
send British troops up there and establish a regular administration?
There is no time, even if we wished it, to get there before the evacuation
by the Company, and when there we should have no means of
70 communicating with the occupying force. The railway is *projected* but
not *built*, and I hope never will be. If we embark on this desperate
business we shall have no end of trouble with the French and Germans,
as indeed we already have.

Cui bono? Is it *trade*? There is no traffic. Is it *religion*? The Catholics
and Protestants (as they call themselves) are occupied in nothing but
cutting each other's throats, with their bishops at their head. Is it *slavery*?
There is no evidence that there is any slave trade question in this
region. . . .

80 I see nothing but endless expense, trouble and disaster in prospect if we allow ourselves to drift into any sort of responsibility for this business. . . .

The Company have made this terrible mess. . . . Sir J. Kirk and those who knew what they were doing deprecated going to Uganda at all, but advised to advance gradually from the coast.

Quoted in A. E. Gardiner, *The Life of Sir William Harcourt*, 2 vols (Constable, 1923)

Questions

- a What do you consider to be the most important point in the government's case concerning the colonisation of East Africa?
- b Which commercial interests are likely to take comfort from the case put in extract *b*?
- * c In line 53 what do you suppose are the 'horrors' that Lugard threatens?
- d Does the official position held by Harcourt help to explain his line of argument in extract *c*?
- e What piece of evidence in extract *c* do you think could be used to support the view that economic considerations were not of prime importance in the scramble for East Africa?

3 The Egyptian Lever

Sir E. Malet to Lord Iddesleigh concerning Bismarck's use of the Egyptian lever in Zanzibar

Oct. 2nd, 1886.

- 5 He [Bismarck] said that the traditional policy of Germany and the one which was most agreeable was to be on the most friendly terms with England, that it had been a matter of deep pain and regret to Prince Bismarck to be obliged to depart from this traditional policy two years ago, in consequence of the way in which he had been treated by England in regard to the colonial policy of Germany. . . .
- 10 He once more asked for the assistance and friendly action of H.M.'s Govt. in the matter of Zanzibar. In return for that he would reject all the overtures which might be made to him by the new French ambassador to help France in embarrassing us in Egypt and in all questions in which our interests and those of France were in
- 15 divergence, he would not only refuse to go against us but would give us such assistance as might be possible consistently with the necessities of his home position. . . .

20 H.E. [The British Ambassador in Berlin] concluded by pressing on me again the great importance which Prince Bismarck attached to the question and the intimate relation which it bore to the general question of the relations between England and Germany.

Public Record Office, Foreign Office 244/415/71

Questions

- * a What was the Egyptian lever? How could Germany embarrass England in Egypt?
- * b In what respects had England offended Germany in her colonial policy?
- * c Why does Bismarck think that France in particular would wish to embarrass England in Egypt?
- * d Can you think of other areas where British interests were 'in divergence' (lines 14–15) with those of France?
- * e Did Bismarck's broad foreign policy usually lead him to give help to France?

4 The Upper Nile and its Strategic Importance

(a) Lord Salisbury to Baring

Aug. 31st, 1890.

That we should insist upon the command of all the affluents of the Nile so far as Egypt formerly possessed them is agreed. . . .

5 . . . The friendship of Germany is very important to us because she keeps Russia and France in order. In itself the Italian alliance is not very advantageous and has several drawbacks: and one of them is the habit of quarrelling with her neighbours and asking us to back them. I do not therefore put the friendship of Italy so high as some other objects of political desire. . . . We are negotiating in these African matters with
10 somewhat greater ease now that we have agreed with Germany and France.

Quoted in Lady Gwendolyn Cecil, *Life of Robert, Marquess of Salisbury* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1921–32), vol iv, pp 330–1

(b) Lord Salisbury to Baring

Nov. 21st, 1890.

15 Surely if you are not ready to go to Khartoum this people were created for the purpose of keeping the bed warm for you till you can occupy it?

Supposing the authority of the Khalifah were to vanish, what would happen to the Valley of the Nile? . . . There is a meritorious

20 nation . . . whose blessed destiny it is to profit by the trouble of others to gain steadily by occupying the territories for which others have fought and spent and that nation would be happy to be master of the valley of the Nile, to which as you were told at Naples the title of Egypt has lapsed.

25 Ever since Italy has put forward this doctrine to justify her claim to Kassala I have felt that we must reconsider our enmities and friendships so far as Egypt is concerned. . . .

If that is so the Dervishes are rendering us a service in keeping Italy out.

Quoted in Lady Gwendolyn Cecil, *Life of Robert, Marquess of Salisbury* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1921–32) vol iv, pp 330–1

(c) Lugard – archcolonialist; on the source of the Nile

30 The control of the Nile sources, with the significance which that control bears to Egypt and to the commerce which finds its outlet on the Red Sea ports. Here it is necessary to realise not only the advantage to ourselves, but the alternative disadvantage of seeing the Nile basin in the hands of a foreign power. That Power would undoubtedly be France, as is proved by her ever increasing activity eastwards from Senegambia and the French Congo. . . .

35 The position of Uganda, lying as it does between the great lakes of Victoria, Tanganyika, Albert Edward, and Albert, and commanding the Nile sources, has been recognised by Lord Rosebery as ‘probably the key to Africa’.

F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (London, 1893), pp 583–4

(d) Harcourt to Lord Rosebery

Sept. 23rd. 1892.

40 We are to effect the reconquest of Equatoria and occupy the Albert Lakes and the whole basin of the Upper Nile. Why? For fear of the French, the Germans and Belgians Etc., Etc. This is Jingoism with a vengeance. . . .

45 The Nile is to be a freehold from its source to its mouth, and Uganda is the point on which it turns. . . .

Quoted in A. G. Gardiner, *The Life of Sir William Harcourt* (Constable and Co, 1923), vol ii, p 195

Questions

- a Given the fact that in the 1880s Britain was committed to evacuating Egypt as soon as possible, what do these extracts tell us about changes in British attitudes to that country by 1890?

- * b Can you explain why the British attitude towards Egypt had changed so dramatically? Give your answer both in terms of African events and changes in domestic politics.
- c Why is East Africa so important in relation to Egypt some thousand miles distant?
- d What evidence can you find in these extracts for a rising tide of colonial rivalry, and between which countries?
- * e What do you understand by 'Jingoism' in line 42?
- f Prepare a speech to be delivered in the Commons *either* in favour of *or* against the importance of the Upper Nile.

5 International Agreements and The Imperial British East Africa Company

(a) Count Hatzfeldt to the Earl of Iddesleigh

London, Oct 29th, 1886.

My Lord,

The Government of His Majesty the Emperor and that of Her Britannic Majesty have agreed to regulate various questions connected with the Sultanate of Zanzibar and the opposite East African mainland by means of a friendly understanding . . . at which the following articles have been agreed upon:-

1. Germany and Britain recognise the sovereignty of the Sultan of Zanzibar over the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba. . . . On the mainland they likewise recognise as possessions of the Sultan a line of coast which stretches without interruption from the Minegani River . . . to Kipini.

2. Great Britain engages to support negotiations of Germany with the Sultan for leasing to the German African Company of the customs duties at the ports of Dar-es-Salaam and Pangani, in return for an annual payment to the Sultan by the Company.

3. Both Powers agree to establish a delimitation of their respective spheres of influence of this portion of the East African Continent.

Germany engages not to make acquisitions of territory, except Protectorates, or interfere with the extension of British influence to the north of this line; [dividing roughly German Tanganyika and the future British East Africa to the north - running from Lake Victoria to the coast skirting round Kilimanjaro] and Great Britain makes the same engagement as regards the territories lying to the south of this line.

4. Great Britain will use her good offices to promote a friendly arrangement of the rival claims of the Sultan and the German East African Company to the Kilimanjaro districts. . . .

6. Great Britain and Germany will jointly invite the Sultan to accede to the Act of Berlin. . . .

30

I have Etc., HATZFELDT.

British and Foreign State Papers lxxvii, (London, 1893), quoted in G. H. Mungeam, *Kenya* (East African Publishing House, 1978), pp 6-7

**(b) The Imperial British East Africa Company
(I.B.E.A. Co.) Founders Agreement, 18 April 1888**

1. THE UNDERSIGNED hereby agree to form themselves into an Association or Company under the name or style of the 'IMPERIAL BRITISH EAST AFRICA COMPANY' . . . having a nominal Share Capital of £1,000,000. . . .

35 2. The objects for which the Company is formed are *inter alia* as follows:

(a) To take over, acquire, accept, hold and enjoy the concessions, dated the 24th day of May 1887, granted by H. H. the Seyidd Barghash-Bin-Seyyid Sultan of Zanzibar. . . .

40 (b) To apply for and obtain from the Crown a charter or charters incorporating the Company as a British corporate body and under British protection. . . .

(c) To undertake under the terms of the said concessions the entire management and administration of those parts of the mainlands and islands of the Zanzibar dominions on the coast of Africa . . . lying between Wanga and Kipini . . . which are recognised in the Anglo-German Treaty of 1886. . . .

45 (d) Also to acquire from rulers, chiefs, or others . . . lands, territories, and stations, with or without sovereign rights, by concession, purchase, or otherwise, and to administer and govern the same

(e) To make and enforce laws . . . to establish courts of justice, to appoint judges, magistrates, and other officials. . . .

50 (f) To grant or withhold licences, to levy taxes, customs, imports and other dues of any sort. . . .

(g) To construct all roads, harbours, tramroads, telegraphs, telephones. . . .

(i) And generally to acquire, hold, enjoy, and exercise all other powers, privileges, and rights of every kind. . . .

Quoted in P. L. McDermott, *British East Africa* (London, 1893), appendix II

**(c) Concession by Sultan of Zanzibar to I.B.E.A. Co.,
9 Oct 1888**

60 His Highness the Sultan makes over to the I.B.E.A. Co. all powers and authority to which he is entitled on the Mainland in the Mrima, and in

all his territories and dependencies from Wanga to Kipini inclusive . . . the whole administration of which he concedes. . . .

65 His Highness further authorises the company or their representatives to make treaties with subordinate and other native chiefs, such treaties and engagements to be ratified and confirmed by him in any cases in which they are made in the name of His Highness. . . .

His Highness grants to the Company . . . the right to trade, to hold property, to erect buildings. . . .

70 His Highness authorises the Company . . . to occupy in his name all ports and forts at the mouth or mouths of rivers, or elsewhere in his dominions. . . .

His Highness grants to the Company . . . the right to search for and work . . . any mines, or deposits of lead, coal, iron, copper, tin, gold, 75 silver, precious stones, or any metal or mineral, or mineral oils whatsoever. . . .

All the aforesaid powers and privileges to extend over and be available for the purposes and objects of the Company . . . during the whole of the term of fifty years. . . .

Quoted in P. L. McDermott, *British East Africa* (London, 1983), appendix I

(d) Treaty of the I.B.E.A. Co. with M'boli of Ivati, Ukambani, 4 Aug 1889

80 M'boli, chief of Ivati, Ukambani, hereby declares that he has placed himself and all his territories, countries, peoples, and subjects under the protection, rule and government of the I.B.E.A. Co., and has ceded to the said Company all his sovereign rights and rights of government over all his territories. . . . And he undertakes to hoist and recognise 85 the flag of the said Company.

Parliamentary Papers relating to the Mombassa Railway Survey and Uganda (1892, c.6555), Inclosure 2, Treaty No 63

Questions

- * a In what ways is the Imperial British East Africa Company taking upon itself powers normally in excess of those expected of a commercial enterprise?
- b The type of a document is important to the historian; can you say what type of documents the extracts in this section are? Would your conclusion lead you to take any particular approach to the evidence contained in them?
- c Extracts *c* and *d* show two African rulers conceding vast powers and territories to a British Company. Why do you think they are signing such treaties?

- d What sorts of powers and activities does the I.B.E.A. Co. hope to take upon itself? Does the agreement with the Sultan of Zanzibar suggest that it got the powers it wanted?
- e What is implied by the phrase 'with or without sovereign rights' (line 49)?

6 British Protectorate and administration

(a) Sir Gerald Portal recommends the withdrawal of the Company, but the retention of Uganda by the British government

Zanzibar, Nov 1st, 1893.

Sir Gerald Portal to the Earl of Rosebery,

In view of the urgency of now arriving at a settlement of the whole East African question on a basis which offers, at least, some prospect of
5 being definite and permanent, I venture to express my strong opinion that it is now desirable, in the interests of British commerce and of the whole of East Africa, from the Indian Ocean to the Nile Basin, that some arrangement should be arrived at, without further delay, by which the Imperial British East Africa Company shall cease to exist as a
10 political or administrative body, either in the interior or within the limits of the Sultan's territory.

Without wishing to criticise, and still less to blame, the Company's methods of government, the history of British East Africa for the last five years, and its present condition show us clearly that the experiment
15 of combining administration and trade in the same hands has proved a failure, so far as this part of Africa is concerned; and that the sooner this system is discontinued the better it will be for the native races, for British commerce, for Zanzibar, and, as I believe, for the Company itself. As pioneers, the Company's officers have done good work, and
20 have greatly increased our knowledge of East Africa, and there can be no doubt that a great deal of money has been spent in the hope of opening up the country to civilization and, at the same time, of introducing a profitable trade. In fact, to the founders of the Company belongs the sole credit of the acquisition, for the benefit of British
25 commerce, of this great potential market for British goods. . . .

As regards the withdrawal, cancelment, or resignation of the Royal Charter granted by Her Majesty in council in 1888, there would I imagine, be but little difficulty, especially since the Company have
30 now of their own accord practically resigned their rights acquired under this charter by relinquishing any connection with the interior elsewhere than that at the two small posts above mentioned. . . .

35 So long as the present system of transport is maintained along what is called the 'English route', it will be necessary to make greater provision than I have so far sketched for the safety and independence of the local authorities. . . .

Transport from the German coast to the south shore of the lake is cheaper, the road is more frequented . . . Arab and European traders from the south buy their ivory and their slaves in Uganda, Unyoro, and Toru, avoid payment of any kind of duty to any British authority, and take down their caravans to the German coast ports. . . .

40 . . . The presumption, under existing circumstances, is that, if the present system of transport is continued, these articles will be supplied from German sources and by the German route. To put a stop to this system, to effect any real improvement in prosperity or commerce, to efficiently check the slave trade, and for ourselves to reap the benefit of material progress that may be made, there is but one course open. The system of transport by the 'English road' already the shortest in actual distance, must be made the safest, cheapest, and quickest. . . . The only means of effectively doing this is by making a railway.

50 If . . . Her Majesty's Government consider the railway proposals . . . to be impracticable, it will become necessary . . . to make more complete provision for the safety and efficiency of administration to be left in Uganda and for preventing the diversion in other directions of the trade which is essential to the existence of that country.

I venture to submit to your Lordship that the scheme of which I have endeavoured to trace the outline above, or one similar to it, is the only solution to the whole question which can be looked upon as final. . . .

Parliamentary Papers, 1894, c.7303, pp 35-9

Questions

- a Why is the I.B.E.A. Co. planning to withdraw from East Africa?
- * b When Sir Gerald suggests that the I.B.E.A. Co. should cease to exist (lines 5-11), what do you think he has in mind to take its place?
- c What is the problem for trade and trading duties in Uganda that Sir Gerald feels calls for urgent action?
- d What solution does Sir Gerald suggest?
- e What does this extract tell us about the process by which the government became increasingly involved in colonisation in East Africa?
- f Sir Gerald praises the Company and its officers for their pioneering work in East Africa (lines 19-25), what does he find to criticise in its workings?

(b) The East Africa Protectorate is proclaimed at Mombassa, 1 July 1895, by Sir Lloyd Mathews (on behalf of the Company) and A. H. Hardinge, H.M. Agent and Consul-General at Zanzibar (Read in Swahili)

Sir Lloyd Mathews

Governor, Sheikhs, elders and all people of the country under our Lord Seyyid Hamed bin Thwain!

I have come here today by order of our Lord Seyyid Hamed bin Thwain to inform you all that the company have retired from the administration of this territory and that the great English government will succeed it, and Mr Hardinge, the Consul-General at Zanzibar, will be the head of the new administration and will issue all orders in the territory under the sovereignty of His Highness. . . .

10 *A. H. Hardinge*

I announce to you that from today I take over, in the name of the Great Government, the administration of this country and of all the countries inland as far as Kikuyu, and of the whole coast from Wanga to Kismayu. You know that a part of these territories belongs to your Lord the Seyyid; this part is and remains under his sovereignty, but I shall be its administrator and governor. . . .

Further comment by A. H. Hardinge

. . . The Wali rose and . . . promised obedience on behalf of the people to the new administration. The Standard of the Sultan . . . was then saluted with 21 guns by H.M.S. 'Phoebe' and at the same moment the Imperial British East Africa Company's flag was lowered from the top of the Government building . . . my Consular Union Jack being hoisted in its place. This concluded the ceremony of the transfer. . . .

Hardinge to Salisbury, 2 July 1895, Foreign Office 107/36

Questions

- a What do you imagine an articulate African would make of the use of the word 'sovereignty' (lines 9 and 15)?
- b In what sense could the Sultan of Zanzibar be said to exercise 'sovereignty' once British administration was imposed?
- c What effect did the establishment of a Protectorate have on the operations of the I.B.E.A. Co?
- d Imagine you were an African in the assembled crowd witnessing this ceremony; write an account of what you saw and what you made of it all.

(c) **PUNCH** cartoon: 'John Bull reluctantly accepts Uganda'



7 The impact of the Uganda railway

(a) Account by Sir H. Johnston

Even as I write this brief description of what was a few months ago Uganda's Eastern Province, I realise the changes that are taking place day by day in its aspect, owing to the completion of this Uganda Railway, which will prove to be, I think, one of the mightiest forces yet
5 introduced into Central Africa for the transformation of a land of complete barbarism to one at any rate attaining to the civilisation of settled India. I have had the privilege of seeing this country just in time – just before the advent of the railway changed the Rift Valley, the
10 Nandi Plateau, the Masai countries, from the condition at which they were at the time of Joseph Thomson (1882) to one which day by day becomes increasingly different. On grassy wastes where no human being but a slinking Andorobo or a few Masai warriors met the eye; where grazed Grant's gazelle with his magnificent horns . . . where in
15 fact everything lay under the condition of Britain some 200,000 years ago; not only do trains puff to and fro . . . but alongside the railway are springing up uncounted hideous habitations of corrugated iron and towns of tents and straw huts.

The solitude of the Rift Valley has gone. Thousands of bearded
20 Indians, hundreds of Europeans and Eurasians, Negroes of every African type . . . Arabs and Persians trudge to and fro on foot, ride donkeys, mules and horses, pack the carriages like herrings, set up booths, and diverge far and wide a hundred miles in each direction from the railway line, trafficking with shy and astonished natives, who had scarcely realised the existence of a world outside their own jungle,
25 for the beef, mutton, fowls, eggs, and vegetable foodstuffs which are to assist in feeding this invasion. Far away on Baringo natives are extending their irrigation schemes and planting twice as much as they planted before, knowing that there is a market where their spare food can be exchanged for rupees. Farther north still, in the Suk countries,
30 Englishmen, Scotchmen [sic], Goanese, Arabs, Swahilis, and Baluchis are pushing into deserts to buy donkeys, are trading for ivory which the railway will carry to the coast at a rate less than the cheapest porter caravan. The Nyando Valley, for years without human inhabitants other than the shiftless Andorobo, is filling up with Masai, Swahili,
35 and Nandi inhabitants, while for twenty miles at a stretch on the beautiful heights and happy valleys of Mau you are in the presence of an unintentioned European colony, some of which no doubt will melt away with the completion of the railway, but much of which must be the nucleus of the great white colony one may hope to see established
40 on the only land really fitted for its development in Equatorial Africa. The Kavirondo, alas! are wearing trousers and 'sweaters'; . . . Piers and wharves, hotels and residences in corrugated iron, are springing up

at Port Florence, destined, no doubt, to be a great emporium of trade on the Victoria Nyanza.

H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate* (Hutchinson, 1902), vol i, pp 40-2

(b) Poem about the railway

- 45 What it will cost no words can express;
Where it will start from no one can guess;
Where it is going to nobody knows.
What is the use of it none can conjecture;
What it will carry there's none can define;
- 50 And in spite of George Curzon's superior lecture,
It clearly is naught but a lunatic line.

(c) Some statistics on the proposed railway

Length of projected railway	657 miles
Length of routes surveyed by survey	2,724 miles
Total mileage marched by survey parties	4,280 miles
55 Estimated cost of Railway	£2,240,000

Questions

- a* To what extent is Sir H. Johnston being optimistic in extract *a*?
- b* Is your answer to question (a) supported by any other evidence in this chapter?
- c* What advantages seem to flow from the railway in Sir H. Johnston's view?
- d* See if you can find an answer to each of the rhetorical questions posed in the poem in extract *b* in either extract *a* or *c*.
- e* Why according to Sir H. Johnston is the railway likely to become the lifeblood of a great new colony?

V South Africa

The colonisation of South Africa is in many ways unique. European occupation began much earlier than elsewhere – the Dutch settling in the Cape in the sixteenth century and the British securing it during the Napoleonic wars. South Africa was climatically well suited for European settlement and unlike the rest of Africa it had fabulous mineral wealth in the form of diamonds and gold. It became a major theatre of conflict between the Dutch Boers and the English, especially when the Transvaal with its mineral wealth eclipsed the power of the British Cape Colony. It was also the home of the Zulus, one of the most formidable African military nations, and the Zulu War of 1879 was to prove a major shock to British military complacency when several army columns were heavily defeated. Over all these features looms the outsized figure of Cecil Rhodes who, having ‘made it big’ on the Rand goldfields in the Transvaal, developed an extravagant vision of the British African Empire (extract 7*d*) and of a swathe of British territory from the Cape to Cairo welded together with a grandiose railway scheme running through the continent. Nor was he a mere dreamer; he cleverly and often unscrupulously pursued a startling career of ‘private enterprise’ imperialism bringing in his train the not always enthusiastic participation of the British government. Extract 7*b* captures this reluctance very well.

This chapter includes some vivid evidence of the dramatic defeat of the British army at Isandhlwana and its heroic stand at Rorke’s Drift. The Zulu War is a brilliant and symbolic illustration of the conflict of culture and interests at the heart of the scramble. Do we hear in Zululand echoes of other wars in another continent across the Atlantic between European and Native?

After the defeat of the Zulus the Boers protested vigorously against the annexation of the Transvaal in 1878. The evidence in this chapter should help to illustrate some of the forces that drew the British government inexorably into full involvement in the heart of South Africa. There developed a long and protracted struggle between Boer and English culminating in the Boer War 1899–1901.

The drive north to establish the territory of Rhodesia led by Cecil Rhodes is symbolised by the dubious Rudd Concession signed with the

Matabele king Lo Bengula (extract 7a). Rhodes persuaded many large scale investors to sink capital in the dubious ventures of the Chartered Company and also won over government support.

In 1884 the Germans took over the vast territory of South West Africa (modern Namibia) and in response Britain, determined to remain the chief Power in Southern Africa, annexed Bechuanaland (modern Botswana) in 1885 – a buffer zone between the Transvaal and South West Africa.

The strategic dimension and the close parallels with Egypt are made much of by Robinson and Gallagher in pursuance of their theories of imperial policy in Africa (see Chapter VIII). South Africa and Egypt were astride the two sea routes to India and so it was inconceivable, given the importance of India, that these two areas should be controlled by any other power than Britain.

1 Annexation of the South African Republic to the British Empire (12 April 1877)

Whereas at a meeting held on the sixteenth day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty-two, at the Sand River, between Her Majesty's Assistant Commissioners, Major Hogge and C. M. Owen Esq., on the one part, and a deputation from the emigrant farmers then residing north of the Vaal River, at the head of which was Commandant-General A. W. J. Pretorius, on the other part, the said Her Majesty's Assistant Commissioners did 'guarantee in the fullest manner on the part of the British Government to the emigrant farmers north of the Vaal River the right to manage their own affairs, and to govern themselves according to their own laws, without any interference on the part of the British Government': . . .

That some few farmers, unwilling to forfeit homes which they had created for their families, and to which they held grants from the Government of the Transvaal . . . made terms with the native chiefs, and now occupy their farms on conditions of periodical payments to those chiefs, notwithstanding the acknowledgment which such payments involve.

That this decay of power and ebb of authority in the north is being followed by similar processes in the south under yet more dangerous circumstances, people of this state residing in that direction having been compelled within the last three months at the bidding of the native chiefs, and at a moment's notice, to leave their farms and homes, their standing crops . . . all to be taken possession of by natives. . . . The Government has fallen into helpless paralysis from causes which it has been and is unable to control or counteract. And that the prospect of the election of a new President . . . is looked forward to by all parties as most likely to result in civil war. . . .

Now, therefore, I do by virtue of the power and authority conferred upon me . . . proclaim and make known that . . . the South African Republic . . . shall be and shall be taken to be British territory. . . :

And I hereby further proclaim and declare that I shall hold responsible all such persons who in the Transvaal shall venture opposition, armed or otherwise, to Her Majesty's authority hereby proclaimed. . . .

And I further proclaim and make known that the Transvaal will remain a separate Government, with its own laws and legislature . . .

Equal justice is guaranteed to the persons and property of both white and coloured; but the adoption does not and should not involve the granting of equal civil rights, such as the exercise of the right of voting by savages. . . .

The Native tribes living within the jurisdiction and under the protection of the Government must be taught due obedience to the paramount authority, and be made to contribute their fair share towards the support of the state that protects them.

G. W. Eybers, *Select Constitutional Documents Illustrating South African History* (Routledge, 1918), pp 448–53

Questions

- * a Why did the British government feel it necessary to annex the South African Republic?
- * b What international tensions was the annexation of the South African Republic likely to arouse?
- * c Who is the prospective 'new President' referred to (line 26) and why might his election result in civil war?
- * d What sort of people is the government referring to when it talks of 'persons who in the Transvaal shall venture opposition' (line 32)?

2 Selected evidence on the massacre of Isandhlwana in the Zulu War, January 1879

(a) Massacre at Isandhlwana: an eyewitness account by Lieutenant Horace Dorien-Smith

On the 21st January an order came to me, then stationed at Rorke's Drift, to go out to advanced camp. . . . At about three a.m. on the morning of the 22nd the General sent for me and told me not to take the waggons, but to convey a dispatch to Colonel Durnford, who was at Rorke's Drift, with about 500 mounted black fellows, as a battle was expected. . . .

When I arrived in camp, I found the greater part of the column gone out with the General to meet the Zulu force. . . . The first Zulu force

10 appeared about six o'clock in the morning. Two companies of the 24th
were sent out after them. The Zulus seemed to retire. . . . At about ten
thirty the Zulus were seen coming over the hills in thousands. They
were in most perfect order. They were in a semi-circle round our two
flanks and in front of us and must have covered several miles of ground.
15 Nobody knows how many there were of them, but the general idea is at
least 20,000.

Well, to cut the account short, in half an hour they were right up to
the camp. . . . Bullets were flying all over the place, but I never seemed
to notice them. The Zulus nearly all had firearms . . . and lots of
ammunition. . . . On looking round we saw that we were completely
20 surrounded and the road to Rorke's Drift was cut off. The place where
they seemed thinnest was where we all made for. Everybody went pell-
mell over ground covered with huge boulders and rocks until we got to
a deep . . . gully. We had to go bang through them . . . lots of our men
were killed there. I had lots of marvellous escapes, and was firing away
25 at them with my revolver as I galloped along. . . . This lasted till we
came to a kind of precipice down to the river Buffalo.

I jumped off and led my horse down. There was a poor fellow of the
mounted infantry (a private) struck through the arm, who said as I
passed that if I could bind up his arm and stop the bleeding he would be
30 alright. I accordingly took out my handkerchief and tied up his arm.
Just as I had done it, Major Smith of the Artillery came down by me
wounded, saying, 'For God's sake get on, man, the Zulus are on top of
us'. I had done all I could for the wounded man and so turned to jump
on my horse. Just as I was doing so the horse went with a bound to the
35 bottom of the precipice, being struck with an assegai . . . the Zulus were
all around me . . . I rushed off on foot and plunged into the river,
which was little better than a roaring torrent.

I was being carried down stream at a tremendous pace, when a loose
horse came by me and I got hold of his tail and he landed me safely on
40 the other bank. . . . About twenty Zulus got over the water and
followed us up the hill. . . .

Well, to cut it short, I struggled into Helpmakaar, about twenty
miles off . . . to find a few men who had escaped.

Lieut. H. L. Dorien-Smith, letter in *The Brecon County Times*,
29 March 1879, quoted in F. Emery, *The Red Soldier* (Hodder
and Stoughton, 1977), pp 87-91

(b) Eyewitness account of Isandhlwana by Private Patrick Farrell

. . . Dear brother, when the column got well out from camp, Zulus
45 came on the camp and took away everything there; killed sixteen

officers and five companies of the 1/24th, five officers and 179 of the 2/24th. . . .

50 About six o'clock we came back towards camp, and it was dark, so we had to take the camp ground at any price, but the rascals fled . . . so we slept that night amongst dead bodies (black and white) . . . and in the morning, to look at the camp; what a state! 1,000 white men, and 5,000 black men killed! waggons broke! bullocks killed! tents all gone! It was the most horrid sight that was ever seen by a soldier, dear brother. . . . Worst than ever was done in the Indian Mutiny. . . . All
55 the boys from Tredegar are safe. . . .

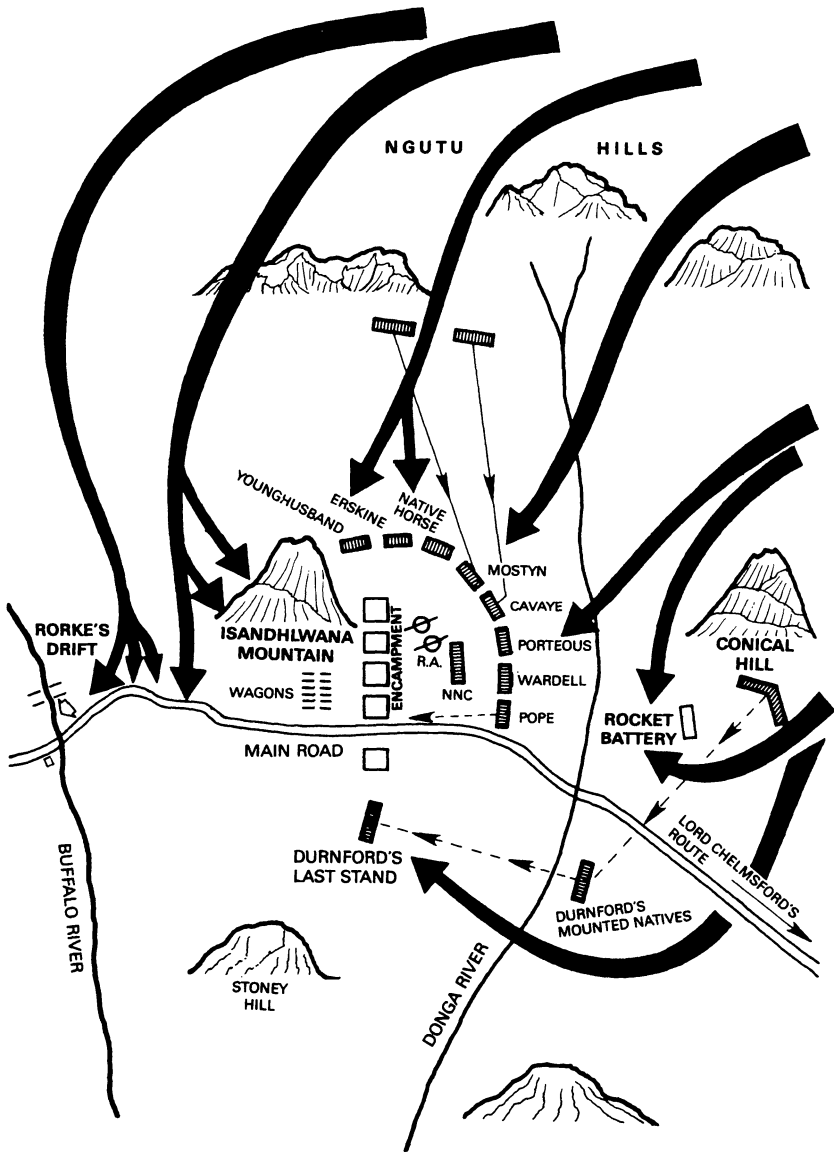
P. Farrell, letter in *The South Wales Daily Telegram*, 27 March 1879, quoted in F. Emery, *The Red Soldier* (Hodder and Stoughton), p 96

(c) Account of the Battle of Isandhlwana by Lieutenant Cochrane to Assistant Adjutant-General

. . . The Zulus appeared in force in front of us and to our left. They were in skirmishing order but ten or twelve deep, with supports close behind. They opened fire at us about 800 yards, and advanced rapidly. We retired steadily in skirmishing order . . . when we came upon the
60 remains of the Rocket Battery, which had been cut off and broken up; there was a hand-to-hand engagement going on with those that remained. . . .

A few mounted men and a great many natives managed to escape from the camp, but had to ride hard over very rough country to the
65 Buffalo River . . . under fire from the enemy the whole way. The ground was so bad for horses that the Zulus on foot were able to run as fast as the horses could travel. I should judge that more than half the number that left the camp were killed before they arrived at the Buffalo, and many more were drowned, there being no drift, the water
70 running rapidly. . . . The fighting lasted from about eleven thirty a.m. till one p.m. . . . There must have been at least 15,000 Zulus, beside the reserves, and I should compute the numbers killed at from 2,000 to 2,500. The Zulu system of attack . . . is easily traceable, the main body being opposite the left centre of the camp; the horns thrown out to the
75 left rear and right front. Had the Zulus completed their scheme, by sending a column to the Buffalo River to cut off the retreat, not a man would have escaped to tell the tale.

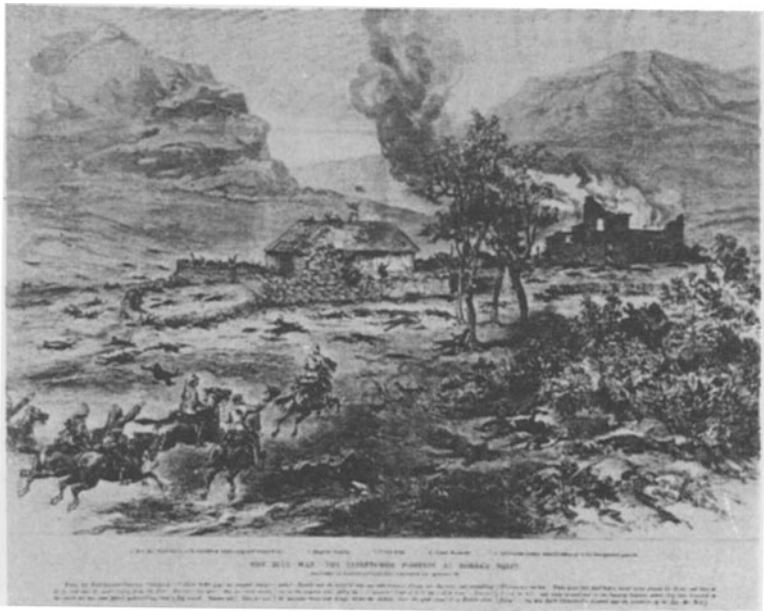
Lieut. W. F. B. Cochrane, 32nd L.I., *The Hereford Times*, 29 March 1879, quoted in F. Emery, *The Red Soldier* (Hodder and Stoughton), pp 76-80



The Battle of Isandhlwana, 22 Jan 1879.



The Zulu War: The field of Isandhlwana revisited.



The entrenched position of Rorke's Drift.

Questions

- a On what points of detail can you find corroboration between the three extracts *a*, *b* and *c*?
- b Are there any points of difference between the extracts?
- c Using the evidence above write your own account of the events at Isandhlwana.
- * d What do the events of the Zulu War, and in particular events like the massacre at Isandhlwana, show us about the policies of the Zulu chief Cetshwayo? To what extent did these policies represent a change from those of his predecessor, Mpande?

3 Rorke's Drift

(a) The evidence of Pvt. Henry Hook V.C. in a very tight spot

5 Just before half past four . . . suddenly about five or six hundred Zulus swept round, coming for us at a run. Instantly the natives bolted towards Helpmaaker, and their officer a European sergeant went with them. . . . We fired after them. The sergeant was struck and killed. . . .

10 The Zulus came on at a wild rush, and although many of them were shot down they got within about fifty yards. . . . During the fight they took advantage of every bit of cover there was. . . . It was the hospital they assaulted most fiercely. I had charge . . . of a small room with only one patient in it. . . . At last they managed to set fire to the thick grass which formed the roof. . . . We were either to be massacred or burned alive, or get out of the building. . . . Fire and dense choking smoke forced me to get out and into the other room. . . . Suddenly in the thick smoke I saw John Williams, and above the din of battle . . . I heard him shout, 'The Zulus are swarming all over the place. They've dragged Joseph Williams out and killed him' . . . We were pinned like rats in a hole. Already the Zulus were fiercely trying to burst in through the doorway. The only way of escape was the wall itself, by making a hole big enough for a man to crawl through into an adjoining room. . . . Williams worked desperately at the wall with the navy's pick. . . .

15 . . . A big Zulu sprang forward and seized my rifle, but I tore it free and . . . shot him point-blank. . . . All this time Williams was getting the sick through the hole. . . . Watching for my chance I dashed from the doorway, and grabbing Colney I pulled him after me through the hole. His leg got broken again. . . . As soon as we left the room the Zulus burst in with furious cries of disappointment and rage.

Pvt. H. Hook V.C., 2/24th Regt, *The Royal Magazine*, Feb 1905, pp 339–48, quoted in F. Emery, *The Red Soldier* (Hodder and Stoughton)

(b) Mr J. W. Shepstone gives a Zulu view of the situation at Rorke's Drift

30 The force that attacked Rorke's Drift (so they told me) was the reserve which had not taken part at Isandhlwana. The intention in crossing over into Natal was simply, as they said and I fully believe, to get some cattle. On their way they saw the tents; and, being only three-quarters of a mile away, they made for them. They thus prevented the main body from going any further, as they fought for the greater part of the night and were only too thankful to return quietly next morning across 35 the Buffalo. Here they met Lord Chelmsford and the force with him on the way from Isandhlwana to Rorke's Drift. Some of the officers begged that they might be allowed to attack the force of Zulus; but Lord Chelmsford forbade them attempting anything of the kind. On my telling the Zulus this, in Zululand afterwards, they remarked, 'We 40 felt that day that the spirits had watched over us. For, had the white force attacked us, we could have offered only feeble resistance, having had little or nothing to eat the day before, no sleep during the night; whilst having crossed the Buffalo twice, we were completely exhausted'.

45 I asked them whether, had they won the day at Rorke's Drift, they would have gone on into Natal. They replied that they could not have exceeded the King's orders, which were that they were to resist to the utmost in Zululand, but not to invade Natal.

Quoted in R. Furneaux, *The Zulu War* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1963), pp 135-6

(c) J. Sivewright to Mrs A. Merriman, 26 Jan 1879, commenting on possible faults in military leadership at Isandhlwana

50 . . . already two clearly defined parties are being formed, one blaming Durnford, the other the General [Chelmsford]. . . . Those who are wise after the event say that the whole campaign was a mistake, and that these enormous wagon trains winding snake-like over the face of the country ought never to have been allowed to enter Zululand. . . . Such men are the General's accusers, who go on to urge that in the face 55 of his own instructions, no effort was ever made to entrench their camp nor form a laager of their wagons. . . . They ask what was being done in the matter of spies or patrols when the existence of a huge horde like this hovering over them was, if not undreamt of, at all events unknown? . . . See what a handful at Rorke's Drift did. That was a 60 splendid affair, and although it would be little short of high treason, in certain quarters, to say so I don't know which most to admire - the besiegers or the besieged. The Zulus rushed up time after time simply to be mowed down. They seized the muzzles of H.M. Rifles when they

65 projected from the loopholes and tried hard to unscrew the bayonets. . . .

P. Lewsen, *Selections from the correspondence of J. X. Merriman* (Yale University Press, 1960), pp 61–2

Questions

- a Is there any evidence in any of the extracts on either Isandhlwana or Rorke's Drift to substantiate the charges levelled at the military command of incompetence?
- b Does the Zulu evidence in extract *b* suggest that Lord Chelmsford may have slipped up in his military judgement?
- c Which act of bravery on the part of the Zulus mentioned by Sivewright in extract *c* is confirmed in detail by the eyewitness account in extract *a*? What does this tell you about the authenticity of the account?

4 Cetywayo gives his own version of events

The following narrative has been taken down from the lips of Cetywayo, by Captain J. Ruscombe Poole, R.A. . . . (it) contains nothing that has not been received direct from Cetywayo. . . .

5 As soon as the English troops had crossed into Zululand, Cetywayo called out the whole of his army, and sent out three armies to meet the three English columns; he held a very large reserve at Ulundi. . . .

10 Cetywayo hoped to be able to crush the English columns, drive them out of the country, defend his border, and then arrange a peace. He knew the English in Natal could not bring a very large force into the field. . . .

15 The first news that reached Cetywayo of the doings of his three armies was by a messenger who said that the camp of the middle column from Rorke's Drift had been taken and plundered, and nearly the whole of the English column destroyed. The messenger said he saw on his way the rest of the column returning, that when he left he thought the whole of the column had been destroyed; he spoke of it as a great victory. After this came news that Godidi's army had been defeated by Pearson, and had scattered; and in another day or so came the news that the army sent against Wood had been defeated, and had scattered and gone to their homes. Of the Rorke's Drift fight, Cetywayo received most imperfect news. Dabulamanzi reported that he had successfully stormed and taken 'the house'; he attacked, and then retired, but admitted he had suffered heavily. The army that had fought at Isandhlwana had lost very heavily. It remained encamped
25 close to the battlefield for three days, chiefly owing to the large

number of wounded . . . Cetywayo was much disturbed at finding his losses so heavy; one regiment alone had lost over 500 men at Isandhlwana.

30 Cetywayo asked the *Indunas* when they reached Ulundi where the guns and plunder were, and also how it was they had not taken any officers prisoners. They told him that the guns were left on the battlefield, and that one was capsized and broken; as for taking officers prisoner, that was impossible in the heat of the fight. . . . Cetywayo replied . . . 'Don't you see how useful it would have been to me to
35 have had some officers as prisoners?' . . .

During June and July, Cetywayo had decided on no definite plan of operations. . . . On the arrival of Lord Chelmsford's force there, he saw that it was impossible for General Crealock to come up in time, so he decided to give his whole attention to Lord Chelmsford . . .
40 Cetywayo sent peace messages to Lord Chelmsford and General Crealock with tusks. He saw that the war must go against him, but his people were headstrong and insisted on fighting. . . . All Cetywayo's regiments were represented at Ulundi; the force was about equal to that sent against Lord Chelmsford at Isandhlwana.

Cetywayo kaMpande, *A Zulu King Speaks* (University of Natal Press, 1978), pp 29-34

Questions

- a What is Cetywayo referring to when he mentions 'the house' (line 22)? (It can be identified in the account of Rorke's Drift by Pvt Hook, extract 3a).
- b What use would Cetywayo want to make of officers taken prisoner? Why was he so cross that his warriors had not taken any officers prisoner?
- c What can you learn about Cetywayo's planning and style of leadership from this extract? Is there anything to suggest he was not fully in command of his warriors?
- d What reservations might a historian justifiably have about this evidence of Cetywayo?

5 The ending of the Zulu War and the question of confederation

- (a) Sir H. B. E. Frere (Governor of the Cape) to Sir M. Hicks Beach (Secretary of State for the Colonies),
2 September 1879

1. I have the honour to forward for your information extracts from the Cape Town newspapers on the subject of a scheme for Confederation published by Mr. John Paterson, M.L.A.

2. The close of the Zulu war has considerably altered the position which this question occupied when I last addressed you on the subject, but it has not . . . removed the main difficulty which cautious men here feel to pledging themselves to any Confederation with Colonies in the present position of Transvaal and Natal. . . .

7. The Colonial Secretary informs me that he, and his colleague the Attorney-General, hope to be able to visit Griqualand West. . . .

They will thus be enabled to discuss every question affecting the union of Griqualand West and the Cape Colony . . . and to furnish without delay the materials for a scheme of union. . . .

Parliamentary Papers, C, 2482, 1880

(b) Cape Times – Cape Town, Wednesday 27 August 1879

The first session of a Parliament which was elected expressly on the question of Confederation is quietly passing away without one word on the subject . . . Our relations with the Imperial Government have not been so smooth as could be desired, while the progress of a war on the borders of Natal has embarrassed the consideration of union with that Colony, and necessarily deferred its practical settlement. The question, however, must again present itself, if not in consequence of the necessities and impulses of South African communities, by reason at all events of pressure exerted from without. . . .

Parliamentary Papers, C, 2482, 1880, p 240

(c) The Standard and Mail, Cape Town, Tuesday 2 September 1879

Cetywayo's capture by Lord Gifford has brought the great question of the day – the union of British South Africa into a self-defending dominion – a good deal nearer its solution. Whatever may be said by the sympathisers of the captured Zulu King in England, he is sure not to be allowed once more to reign over Zululand, and his country will be divided into a number of provinces, each governed by a chief of its own. . . . There is no longer a great and dangerous military power on the other side of the Tugela, but the overthrow of that power can hardly be called definitive. It might have been so had Zululand been formally annexed to Her Majesty's possessions. . . .

Parliamentary Papers, C, 2482, p 245

Questions

- * a What is the significance of Griqualand West mentioned in extract a by Frere? Why is the government so keen to effect union with Griqualand?

- * b What is the author of the article in the *Cape Times* in extract *b* referring to when he mentions 'pressure exerted from without' (line 22)?
- c What sort of policy is the author of extract *c* arguing for and what are his reasons?
- * d Why has the Zulu War brought the creation of a Union of British South Africa closer as suggested in extract *c*?

7 Cecil Rhodes

(a) The Rudd Concession

Know all men by these presents that whereas Charles Dannel Rudd of Kimberley, Rochfort Maguire of London, and Francis Robert Thompson of Kimberley, herein-after called the grantees, have covenanted and agreed, and do hereby covenant and agree to pay to me

5 my heirs and successors the sum of one hundred pounds sterling British currency on the first day of every lunar month, and further to deliver at my Royal Kraal one thousand Martini-Henry breech-loading rifles, together with one thousand rounds of suitable ball cartridges, five hundred of the said rifles and fifty thousand of the said cartridges to be

10 ordered from England forthwith and delivered with reasonable despatch, and the remainder of the said rifles and cartridges to be delivered as soon as the said grantees shall have commenced to work mining machinery within my territory, and further to deliver on the

15 Zambezi River a steamboat with guns suitable for defensive purposes upon the said river, or in lieu of the said steamboat, should I so elect, to pay the sum of five hundred pounds sterling I, Lo Bengula, King of the Matebele, Mashonaland, and other adjoining territories, in the exercise of my sovereign powers, and in the presence and with the consent of my Council of Indunas, do hereby grant and assign unto the said

20 grantees, their heirs, representatives, and assigns, jointly and severally, the complete and exclusive charge over all metals and minerals situated and contained in my kingdom . . . together with full powers to do all things that they may deem necessary to win and procure the same, and to hold, collect and enjoy the profits and revenues . . . and whereas I

25 have been much molested of late by divers persons seeking and desiring to obtain grants and concessions of land and mining rights in my territories, I do hereby authorise the said grantees . . . to take all necessary and lawful steps to exclude from my kingdoms, . . . all persons seeking land, metals, minerals or mining rights therein, and I

30 do hereby undertake to render them such needful assistance as they may from time to time require for the exclusion of such persons and to grant no concessions of land or mining rights from and after this date without their consent and concurrence. . . .

35 This given under my hand this thirtieth day of October in the year of
our Lord eighteen hundred and eighty eight at my Royal Kraal.

Lo Bengula
Signed

his X mark
C. D. Rudd
Rochfort Maguire
F. R. Thompson
Chas D. Helm
J. G. Dreyer

40

Witnesses

Parliamentary Papers, li (1890), 545

**(b) Colonial Office doubts on the legality of the Rudd
Concession and the operations of the British South
African Company**

It is understood that the concession from Lo Bengula never actually
passed, in full proprietary right, to the Chartered Company, but is
leased by the 'United Concessions Company' (another company
45 controlled by Rhodes) to the Charter Company for a payment of one
half the net profits of all their present and prospective undertakings,
which, however, have to be conducted entirely at the expense of the
Chartered Company. . . .

Sir R. Herbert wrote, 'It may be safely stated that no persons
50 connected with Her Majesties Government had any idea that such a
scheme was in contemplation with the charter was being considered
and settled. If it had been disclosed the charter would certainly have
been refused. It may even be a question whether the announcement of
it now does not render it necessary to consider whether the Charter
55 should be revoked. That would be a very objectionable course, because
it would involve the establishment of an administrative protectorate
over all the Company's territories. . . .

Memorandum on the Origin and Operations of the British
South Africa Chartered Company, 13 Oct 1892, Public Record
Office, Colonial Office 879/37

(c) An assessment of Cecil Rhodes as a financial king

When Mr. Rhodes died, the most conspicuous figure left in the English
speaking race since the death of Queen Victoria disappeared. Whether
60 loved or feared, he towered aloft above all his contemporaries. There
are many who hold that he would be entitled to a black statue in the
Hall of Eblis. . . . It was his distinction to be the first of the new
Dynasty of Money Kings which has been evolved in these later days as
the real rulers of the modern world. . . . Although there have been
65 many wealthier men, none of them, before Mr. Rhodes, recognised the
opportunities of ruling the world which wealth affords its possessor.

The great financiers of Europe have no doubt often used their powers to control questions of peace and war and to influence politics, but they always acted from a strictly financial motive. Their aims were primarily the shifting of the value of stocks. To effect that end they have often taken a leading hand in political deals. But Mr. Rhodes inverted the operation. With him political considerations were always paramount. If he used the market he did it in order to secure the means of achieving political ends.

W. T. Stead, *The Last Will and Testament of Cecil J. Rhodes* (1902)

(d) Rhodes advances his theory of English racial superiority

I contend that we are the first race in the world, and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race. I contend that every acre added to our territory means the birth of more of the English race who otherwise would not be brought into existence. Added to this, the absorption of the greater portion of the world under our rule simply means the end of all wars. . . . The furtherance of the British Empire, for the bringing of the whole civilised world under British rule, for the recovery of the United States, for the making of the Anglo-Saxon race but one Empire. What a dream! But yet it is probable. It is possible.

W. T. Stead, *The Last Will and Testament of Cecil J Rhodes*, pp 58–9, quoted in M. E. Chamberlain, *The Scramble for Africa* (Longman, 1974)

(e) J. X. Merriman to Mrs A. Merriman, 21 Feb 1886, on Rhodes' character

I think that I may now really tell you that the whole thing is at an end. On Friday I learnt from Currey that Rhodes had told him, and presumably other people too, that he – Rhodes – did not intend the scheme to go through and that he did not see why outsiders should interfere in the amalgamation of the mines and so forth. Putting two and two together we came to the conclusion that he was hanging on just to raise the price of De Beers' shares and to further some private plans of his own [this private plan was to carry through amalgamation through De Beers – wealth was a means to power for Rhodes and control of the diamond market was part of his long-term plan for development and colonisation of the north] – so we determined to break off the whole thing. . . . It is a great pity, for if Rhodes had run straight the thing would have gone through but he is as unstable in business as he is in politics. . . .

P. Lewsen, *Selections from the correspondence of J. X. Merriman* (Yale University Press, 1960)

Questions

- a What picture do you get of Rhodes' character and personality from extracts *b, c, d* and *e*?
- b What evidence can you find in this section that Rhodes had embarked upon a major scheme of colonial expansion behind the backs of the British government?

8 The Jameson Raid

(a) The jingoistic spirit of the age – a poem by the poet laureate, Alfred Austin

- Wrong! Is it wrong? Well, may be;
But I'm going just the same,
Do they think me a Burgher's baby,
To be scared by a scolding name?
5 They may argue and prate and order;
Go tell them to save their breath;
Then, over the Transvaal border,
And gallop for life or death!
- Let lawyers and statesmen addle
10 Their pates over points of law;
If sound be our sword, and saddle,
and gun-gear, who cares a straw?
When men of our own blood pray us
To ride to their kinsfolk's aid,
15 Not heaven itself shall stay us,
From the rescue they call a raid.

(b) Letter to Dr Jameson from discontented 'Uitlanders' in the Transvaal with an invitation to ride to their rescue

Dear Sir,

- The position of matters in this state has been so critical that at no distant period there will be a conflict between the Government and the
20 uitlander population. It is scarcely necessary for us to recapitulate what is now a matter of history. Suffice it that the position of thousands of Englishmen, and others, is rapidly becoming intolerable. Not satisfied with making the uitlanders pay, virtually, the whole of the revenue of the country, while denying them representation, the policy has been to
25 encroach upon the liberty of the subject. . . .

A foreign corporation of Hollanders is, to a considerable extent, controlling our destinies. . . . The internal policy of the Government is such as to have roused into antagonism not only, practically, the whole

body of the uitlanders, but a large number of the Boers, whilst its
30 external policy has exasperated the neighbouring states. . . .
. . . The Government called into existence all the elements necessary
for armed conflict. . . .

We feel constrained to call upon you to come to our aid should
disturbance arise here. The circumstances are so extreme that we
35 cannot avoid this step, and we cannot but believe that you and the men
under you will not fail to come to the rescue of the people who would
be so situated. We guarantee any expense that may be incurred by you
in helping us, and ask you to believe that nothing but the sternest
necessity has prompted this appeal.

40 We are, yours, faithfully,
CHARLES LEONARD,
FRANCIS RHODES,
LIONEL PHILLIPS,
JOHN HAYES HAMMOND,
45 GEORGE FARRAR.

Text of Uitlanders' letter to Jameson, quoted in C. M. Rodney,
Jameson's ride to Johannesburg, reprinted by The State library in
Pretoria, 1970

Questions

- * a Who are the burghers referred to in line 3?
- b Which line of the poem (extract a) refers to the letter (extract b)?
- * c What were the main grievances of the 'uitlanders population'
(extract b, line 20) in the Transvaal?
- * d How did uitlander grievances lead to the outbreak of the Boer War
in 1899?

(c) Letter to Jameson from members of the Reform Committee

This letter was brought to Jameson by two cyclists. Jameson and
Willoughby and one or two others read it and then it was torn up and
the pieces were left scattered on the veld. By an extraordinary turn of
fate some of the pieces were later found by a Boer exactly where they
5 had been left. The weather-stained bits when pieced together revealed
the following words:

Dear Dr.

The rumour of massa
Johannesburg that started you to
10 relief was not true. We a right
feeling intense. We have armed

a lot of men. Shall be very glad
to see you not in possess
town men to
15 fellow.

Yours ever,
F.R.

'We will all drink a glass along you.'
L.P.

20 31st, 11.30 Kruger has asked for
go over and treat; armistice for
to. My view is that they are in a funk at
Pretoria, and they were wrong to agree from here.

F.R.

(d) Famous telegram from the Kaiser to President Kruger

25 I express my sincere congratulations that, supported by your people,
and without appealing for the help of friendly Powers, you have
succeeded by your own energetic action against armed bands which
invaded your country as disturbers of the peace, and have thus been
enabled to restore peace, and safeguard the independence of the
30 country against attacks from outside. – William, I.R.

Questions

- a* Who are F.R. and L.P. in the letter (extract *c*)?
- b* Attempt a reconstruction of the letter (a likely correct version is to be found at the end of the book).
- * *c* What might have been read into the comment 'without appealing for the help of friendly Powers' (line 26)?
- * *d* In extract *d* what status does the Kaiser seem to be giving to the Transvaal that it did not in fact possess?
- * *e* Why does the telegram from the Kaiser (extract *d*) represent such a great indiscretion?
- * *f* How typical was the telegram of the Kaiser's style in foreign affairs? Can you give similar examples of his supposed indiscretions?

VI *The Fashoda Crisis*

The Fashoda Crisis marks the closing stages of the scramble for Africa. Most of Africa (with the exception of Abyssinia and Liberia) was under European rule, and armed conflict between the colonising Powers had been avoided. In 1898 Britain and France found themselves on the brink of conflict over the remote and unconquered Southern Sudan.

Britain considered the whole of the Nile Valley as her domain, connecting the Great Lakes of East Africa with Egypt and the Mediterranean. The more fervent British colonialists also saw it as a vital link in the chain of British territory running from the Cape to Cairo, which some hoped to bind together with a great railway project running the length of Africa.

France had built her African Empire in the West and North West and elements in her colonialist lobby also had dreams of a swathe of French dominion across North Africa with the Sudan as part. The Fashoda Crisis should, therefore, be viewed in the wider context of Anglo-French rivalry in West Africa, where constant boundary disputes arose as each extended her territories into the interior. It has been argued that to Salisbury and his cabinet, 'West Africa was to provide the makeweight to sweeten the French on the Nile' (C. J. Lowe, *The Reluctant Imperialists*, vol i, pp 210–11). By the same token it is probable that the French felt that their presence on the Upper Nile would give them bargaining weight elsewhere and perhaps for another Egyptian conference.

In the event French and British expeditions converged on the small town of Fashoda in the southern Sudan. Captain Marchand set out from the Congo to reach Fashoda via the very heart of Africa. Although the Marchand expedition had official approval, evidence suggests that this was manipulated by key ministerial officials. In Jan. 1899 Monson (British ambassador in Paris) said that in France, 'questions of serious international moment' were often 'dependent upon the manipulation . . . of irresponsible officials'. Marchand provocatively hoisted the French tricolour over the former government buildings in Fashoda.

The British expedition to lay claim to the Upper Nile was led by Sir Herbert Kitchener. Its purpose was to confront any French attempt at occupation (extract 3a) and to assert British control over the southern

Sudan. On its way south it crushed the Mhadist forces in Omdurman, and with its Anglo-Egyptian force it made a point of hoisting both the Egyptian flag and the Union Jack at Fashoda some 500 yards from the French position. Thus two great European colonial Powers met apparently on the brink of war over a barren and remote region. Frantic diplomatic activity took place in London and Paris and public opinion in both countries was greatly excited (extracts 6a-g).

The French position was complicated by the simultaneous re-emergence of the long-running Dreyfus scandal and Cavaignac, Minister for War, resigned and Colonel Henry was arrested and charged with forging incriminating evidence against Dreyfus. Thus the whole balance of French internal politics was upset.

Meanwhile Marchand was left 'high and dry' in an impossible military position and was eventually ordered to withdraw by his government.

The crisis marks a turning point in Anglo-French relations. Some say it hastened a reconciliation by clearing the air. Others, notably the French foreign minister, M. Delcasse, said it delayed a *rapprochement*. Nevertheless France and Britain moved smoothly to a general agreement over colonial matters in the 1904 Anglo-French agreements. These agreements were to serve as the basis for the new Anglo-French entente which was to have important repercussions for European diplomacy.

1 The background and diplomatic setting to the Fashoda Crisis

(a) Memorandum on the Sudan Question by Baring

The purely Egyptian aspect of the Soudan Question is very simple. The objections to any retreat are obvious. An unaided Egyptian advance is, for the time being at all events, out of the question. Therefore, if it be once admitted that the maintenance of the present position for any considerable length of time is either impossible or highly undesirable – as to which I am not yet convinced in one sense or the other – an English expedition becomes an unavoidable necessity, and the sooner it is undertaken, and the present financial and military tension is made to cease, the better.

10 But there is a good deal to be said outside the purely Egyptian view of the case.

As a matter of personal opinion, I greatly dislike the idea of an English expedition to the Soudan, either now or at any future time. I need not state at any length my reasons for holding this opinion, but I may say that my view, briefly is: (1) that the reoccupation of the Soudan by Egypt, though not of such paramount importance as is often represented, is a considerable Egyptian interest; (2) that it is worth the

while of the Egyptian Government, within reasonable limits, to make some sacrifices in order to attain that object; but (3), that so long as
20 England, as at present, possesses merely a leashold of Egypt, it is not worth the while of the English Government to sacrifice the valuable lives and to incur the heavy expenditure . . . if effected by English arms.

25 Whilst holding these views, I am prepared to admit that the English government may be placed in such a position as to render an English expedition inevitable. If, for instance, it were clearly proved to me that the Egyptian army could not, without undue risk, maintain its present position. I should then be most reluctantly obliged to admit that the
30 despatch of an English expedition was imposed on the Government by the circumstances of the situation, for it must not be forgotten that it was the sudden decision to advance to Dongola, taken in March 1896, which has brought about the present dilemma, and that as the English Government is responsible for that decision they are bound, as a matter of justice and policy, to see the Egyptian Government through its
35 present difficulties. . . .

There remains for discussion the immediate point raised by Lord Wolsey's letter to Lord Lansdowne of 26th October, namely whether 'we ought to push on to Khartoum this winter'.

40 Lord Wolsey thinks we should do so, on the ground that 'the French are now working hard to forestall us on the Upper Nile, and if they do so we may have to face serious complications with them when we attempt the job in the autumn of 1898'.

. . . I am unable to support Lord Wolsey's recommendation. . . .

45 As regards this argument, I have, in the first instance, to say that, although I should of course much prefer that the French did not establish themselves on the Upper Nile, at the same time I do not share the somewhat extreme views – as they appear to me – which are often held as to the absolute necessity of preventing them from doing so.

50 What is it, after all, we want in Africa? I presume that we do *not* want to acquire on behalf of ourselves or the Egyptians large tracts of useless territory which it would be difficult and costly to administer properly. What we want, as it seems to me, is to trade with Central Africa. For the purposes of trade it would certainly be preferable that no portion of
55 the waterway of the Nile should be in the hands of an European Power. Let us, therefore, by all means do all that can be done by diplomacy, by negotiations with Menelek, who is a most important factor in the situation, and possibly by affording some reasonable aid to Egypt, whose affairs are in English hands, to prevent any such consummation. But whether
60 it is desirable, merely in order to forestall the French on the Upper Nile, to send a large expedition to Khartoum . . . appears to me to be very questionable. . . .

My contention is, therefore, that for all important commercial purposes the French are, to a great extent, already forestalled, for the trade of the regions for which there is now some competition, must in the end almost inevitably find its way either to Uganda, or else via Berber or Dongola, to Suakin or Alexandria. I should add that my belief is that the importance of the trade in question is not so great as is often supposed.

... It is to be observed that the capture of Khartoum this winter affords no certain guarantee that complications with the French will be avoided. It may be admitted that those complications with the French are likely to be more serious if the French are found in effective occupation of some part of the Upper Nile Valley than in the contrary case. But they will, under any circumstances, probably take place. Whenever we, or Egypt acting at our instigation, advance beyond Khartoum, the French will cry out.

Memo by Baring, 5 Nov. 1897, Cab/37/45/46

Questions

- a What are Baring's reasons for disliking the 'idea of an English expedition to the Soudan' (line 13)?
- b What circumstances are likely, in Baring's view, to make an English expedition inevitable?
- * c What do you think the 'serious complications' are that Lord Wolseley contemplates with the French on the Upper Nile (line 41)?
- d Baring asks the question 'What is it, after all, we want in Africa?' (line 50). What do you understand his answer to this question to be?
- * e Why did Salisbury sanction an expedition to the Upper Nile in 1898 in spite of the advice given in this extract?
- * f From your knowledge of the domestic political scene, can you judge whether the opinions in this extract are likely to be in line with the majority in the cabinet?

2 The military position on the Upper Nile and the capture of Omdurman

(a) The Marquess of Salisbury to Lord Cromer

Foreign Office, Aug 2, 1898

My Lord,

It is desirable that you should be placed in possession of the views of Her Majesty's Government in respect to the line of action to be followed in the event of Khartoum being occupied at an early date by

the forces now operating in the Soudan under the command of Sir Herbert Kitchener.

10 . . . at Khartoum the British and Egyptian flags should be hoisted side by side. This decision will have no reference to the manner in which the occupied countries are to be administered in the future. It is not necessary at present to define their political status with any great precision.

. . . The Sirdar is authorised to send two flotillas, one up the White Nile and the other up the Blue Nile.

15 . . . Sir Herbert Kitchener should in person command the White Nile flotilla as far as Fashoda, and may take with him a small body of British troops. . . .

20 The officer in command of the Blue Nile flotilla is authorised to go as far as the foot of the cataract, which is believed to commence about the Roseires. . . .

There are two points to which Sir Herbert Kitchener's attention should be specially directed.

25 The first of these is that in dealing with any French or Abyssinian authorities who may be encountered, nothing should be said or done which would in any way imply a recognition on behalf of France or Abyssinia to any portion of the Nile Valley.

The second point, which you should press strongly on the attention of Sir Herbert Kitchener, is the necessity of avoiding, by all means, any collision with the forces of the Emperor Menelek.

30 It is possible that a French force may be found in occupation of some portion of the Nile Valley. . . . Her Majesty's Government entertain full confidence in Sir Herbert Kitchener's judgment and discretion. . . .

Quoted in Gooch and Temperley, *British Documents on the Origins of the War 1898-1914* (Foreign Office, 1927), p 159

(b) *The Times*, Monday 5 Sept. 1898

FALL OF OMDURMAN

Complete defeat of Dervishes

35 The following telegram has been received from the General Officer Commanding in Egypt, dated Cairo Sept 3rd 11.48 p.m. . . .

"The Dervishes left us undisturbed last night, but early this morning our scouts reported their entire army advancing against us.

40 "We received their bold and determined attack in position, and after an hour's fighting, during which they endeavoured to envelope both our flanks, we drove them off, and at 8.30 a.m. I began to advance towards Omdurman, but had not gone far before I was again heavily attacked on the right.

45 "This necessitated a change of front, and the Dervishes were again driven off with heavy loss, and their army, which was under the

personal command of the Khalifa, was completely dispersed by noon.

50 "The force watered at Khor Skambat (Shamba?) and at 2.00 p.m. again advanced on Omdurman, which was occupied with slight resistance during the afternoon. The Khalifa . . . fled as we got in and is now being pursued by cavalry and gunboats"

(c) *The Times*, Monday 5 Sept. 1898

Omdurman Sept 2nd 2.00 p.m.

I sit writing this despatch in a suburb of the capital of Mahdism waiting to see whether the final occupation will take place today. . . .

55 Much as the Dervishes are held in detestation for their barbarous cruelty, it was impossible for anyone who witnessed it not to feel moved by the heroic bravery they displayed. Time after time their dispersed and broken masses were reformed and hurled against the line, until they melted into units and ceased to exist. The Emirs would
60 dash forward, spurning death, to encourage their following. Some almost reached our lines before they sank under the stream of lead, and the wounded were even seen to turn in their death agony to fire a parting shot.

(d) An ordinary British soldier salutes the bravery of the Sudanese soldiers

65 So 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Soudan;
You're a poor benighted 'eathen but a first-class fighting man;
An' 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, with your 'ayrick 'ead of 'air-
You big black boundin' beggar - for you broke a British square.

Rudyard Kipling, *Fuzzy-Wuzzy*

(e) A French perspective

Logically, the capture of Omdurman should bring with it . . . the evacuation of Egypt. But the moment is not perhaps, opportune to
70 remind the British of their engagements The British will not stop at Omdurman, but they will take advantage of the circumstances to establish continuity of their possessions from the Cape to Cairo - a dream long cherished and how very near realisation. We have interests to defend. Let us take care not to lapse, and the sooner we arrive at a
75 friendly understanding with Great Britain the better for everybody.

Le Temps, Paris, 5 Sept. 1898

(f) Domestic political distractions for France

Resignation of M. Cavaignac

Paris, Sept. 4th

The Minister of War has resigned. Last evening the President of the

Republic at Havre received a telephone message informing him that M.
80 Cavaignac had abandoned the ship.
The Times, 5 Sept. 1898

Questions

- a What can you learn of Britain's official position vis à vis other powers involved or likely to be involved in the Upper Nile Valley from the Foreign Office despatch (extract a)?
- * b What do you think is the strategic importance of the fall of Omdurman?
- c Does the view of *Le Temps* in extract e shed any light on the importance of Kitchener's victory of Omdurman?
- d What evidence is there for the bravery of the Sudanese soldiers? Which piece of evidence do you think is most to be relied upon and why?
- e What bearing do you think the news announced in extract f had upon the approaching storm of the Fashoda Crisis?
- * f *Le Temps* speaks about the British dream of an African Empire running in an unbroken line from the Cape to Cairo, what was the equivalent French dream?
- * g What do you know, or can you discover, about the political background of M. Cavaignac in line 80?

3 Kitchener and Marchand meet at Fashoda

(a) Telegram from Kitchener after the meeting

I have just returned here from Fashoda where I found Captain Marchand, accompanied by eight officers and 120 men, located in the old Government buildings, over which they had hoisted the French flag; I sent a letter announcing my approach the day before my arrival
5 in Fashoda. . . .

When we arrived at Fashoda, Captain Marchand and M. Germain came on board, and I at once stated that the presence of a French force at Fashoda and in the Valley of the Nile was regarded as a direct infringement of the rights of the Egyptian Government and of that of
10 Great Britain, and I protested in the strongest terms against their occupation of Fashoda and of their hoisting of the French flag in the dominions of his Highness the Khedive. In reply, Captain Marchand stated that he had precise orders to occupy the country and to hoist
15 the French flag over the Government buildings at Fashoda, and that it was impossible for him to retire without receiving orders from his Government to that effect, but he did not expect that these orders would be delayed. On my pressing him to say whether, seeing that I

had a preponderating force, he was prepared to resist the hoisting of the Egyptian flag at Fashoda, he hesitated and replied that resistance was impossible. I then caused the flag to be hoisted on a ruined bastion of the old Egyptian fortifications about 500 yards south of the French flag. . . . Before leaving for the south, I handed to Captain Marchand a formal protest in writing, on behalf of the British and Egyptian Governments, against any occupation by France of any part of the Nile Valley. . . .

I appointed Major Jackson to be Commandant of the Fashoda district, where I left a garrison consisting of one Soudanese battalion, four guns, and a gunboat. . . .

The position in which Captain Marchand finds himself at Fashoda is as impossible as it is absurd. He is cut off from the interior, and his water transport is quite inadequate; he is, moreover, short of ammunition and supplies, which must take months to reach him; he has no following in the country, and nothing could have saved him and his expedition from being annihilated by the Dervishes had we been a fortnight in crushing the Khalifa.

The futility of all their efforts is fully realised by Captain Marchand himself, and he seems quite as anxious to return as we are to facilitate his departure. . . .

Gooch and Temperley, *British Documents on the Origins of the War 1898-1914* (Foreign Office, 1927), vol i, p 167

(b) Churchill's account of the Fashoda meeting

Onward and southward toiled the flotilla, splashing the brown water into foam and startling the strange creatures on the banks, until on the 18th September they approached Fashoda. The gunboats waited . . . to allow a message which had been sent by the Sirdar to the mysterious Europeans, to precede his arrival, and early in the morning of the 19th a small steel rowing-boat was observed coming down stream to meet the expedition. It contained a Senegalese sergeant and two men with a letter from Major Marchand announcing the arrival of the French troops and their formal occupation of the Soudan. . . .

A few miles' further progress brought the gunboats to their destination, and they made fast to the bank near the old Government buildings of the town. Major Marchand's party consisted of eight French officers, and 120 black soldiers drawn from the Niger district. They possessed three steel boats fitted for sail or oars, and a small steam launch, the *Faidherbe*. . . .

. . . Major Marchand, with a guard of honour, came to meet the General. They shook hands warmly. . . .

The Sirdar politely ignored the French flag, and, without interfering with the Marchand Expedition and the fort they occupied, hoisted the



The British and Egyptian flags hoisted at Fashoda, 1899.



Marchand on the way to Fashoda.

British and Egyptian colours with all due ceremony. . . . A garrison was established at Fashoda, consisting of the XIth Soudanese, four guns of Peake's battery, and two Maxims, the whole under the command of Colonel Jackson, who was appointed military and civil commandant of the Fashoda district. . . .

. . . On this dismal island, far from civilisation, health or comfort, the Marchand Mission and the Egyptian garrison lived in polite antagonism for nearly three months.

W. S. Churchill, *The River War* (Longman, Green and Co., 1900), p 307

Questions

- a On what points do extracts *a* and *b* agree?
- b On what points do extracts *a* and *b* disagree? How do you account for these differences?
- c Are both the extracts eye-witness accounts? Give reasons for your answers.
- d Why does Churchill refer to the French as 'mysterious Europeans' (lines 42-3)?
- * e Explain the significance of the two flags hoisted by the Kitchener Expedition.

4 The French viewpoint and the Dreyfus dimension

(a) Delcasse discusses the long-range perspective with Maurice Paleologue (Special Intelligence Assistant at Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

'I see,' he [Delcasse] said to me, 'that you have understood my position quite correctly. Henceforth, the Dreyfus Affair must remain on the juridical plane. In any case I will not allow it to impede my political action. . . .'

5 Then he spoke to me of his negotiations with England which are well underway. The evacuation of Fashoda will soon be no more than a sad memory. At the same time he said that he was delighted by his personal relations with Muraviev.

10 At this point I recounted to him what the Emperor's uncle, Grand Duke Wladimir, told me recently at dinner at the home of Countess Tallyrand: 'I hope I live long enough to see England near death: that's the ardent prayer I address daily to God!'

15 Delcasse reacted immediately and, like someone in a trance replied: 'What an error! What blindness! . . . For both Russia and France, England is a rival and a competitor whose conduct is often harsh and extremely disagreeable. But England is not an enemy, and above all,

England is not *The Enemy*. . . . Ah! My dear Paleologue, if only Russia, England and France could conclude an alliance against Germany!

M. Paleologue, *Journal de l'affaire Dreyfus*, p 154

(b) The delicacy of Delcasse's position

20 Delcasse has judged quite correctly as to the utter impossibility of the French Government conceding the recall of M. Marchand. Such a step would involve, I am convinced, the immediate fall of the Cabinet, and would be disavowed by their successors. The irritation of the army and of a large portion of the public over the Dreyfus 'affair', renders the situation of the Government more than usually delicate; and any
25 symptom of weakness on the Fashoda question would be the signal for their downfall within twenty-four hours of the meeting of the Chamber. . . .

Monson to Salisbury, 1 Oct 1898, P.R.O., F.O. 78/5051, no 491

(c) Monson on the domestic political dimension in France

30 People of various stations in life and of various political complexions seem to be disturbed at the turn events are taking in France in connexion with the Dreyfus case. But it appears to me that we are still very far off from the moment when Paris will descend into the streets, and start a fresh revolution; although when one sees how very little ballast the vessel of State really carries, one cannot help feeling that she would labour terribly even in a moderate gale; while a sudden squall might
35 capsiz her altogether.

Monson to Salisbury, 21 Jan. 1898, *Salisbury Papers*, A/116

Questions

- a What measure of agreement is there between the three extracts with regard to the importance of the Dreyfus Case on the Fashoda Crisis?
- * b What is the international significance in extract *a* of Delcasse's warm comments towards Muraviev (lines 7–8)?
- * c Does extract *a* give the historian any useful clues with regard to the events leading to the outbreak of World War I in the West?
- * d What alliance does the hope expressed in lines 14–18 prefigure?
- * e Why was the army likely to be irritated over the Dreyfus Affair (line 22)? And why might this irritation be compounded by the Fashoda Crisis?

- * *f* Write a full explanation of why the Dreyfus Case was likely to make the position of the French government very awkward in the Fashoda Crisis. Give specific attention to the composition of the cabinet and the internal balance of forces in French politics.
- g* From your reading of the evidence so far in this chapter do you think the Fashoda Crisis represents the 'moderate gale' or 'sudden squall' (line 34) mentioned in extract *c*?

(c) The French Case on Fashoda

Paris, Sept. 28 1898

Fashoda. Minister for Foreign Affairs (M. Delcasse) initiated to-day a conversation on this burning question by stating that French Minister in London was instructed to speak to your Lordship about it. . . . His
 5 Excellency was just as determined as ever upon the right of France to occupy territory practically abandoned by Egypt, and contested the right of Great Britain to warn off other Powers which had not recognised her sphere of influence or to assert that France was committing an unfriendly act in advancing on Upper Nile. He at the
 10 same time declared his conviction that honest discussion between the two Governments would soon result in an understanding. He reiterated that it is the desire of the present French Government to make a friend of England, adding that between ourselves he would much prefer an Anglo-French to a Franco-Russian Alliance. He again entreated me to
 15 take account of existing excitement in France, which is becoming dangerous and might in an instant break out into overt acts, repeating what he had said yesterday: 'Do not ask me for the impossible; do not drive me into a corner.' . . . He said: 'You surely would not break with us over Fashoda?' To which I answered that it was exactly that which I
 20 feared. Another observation was: 'In such event we shall not stand alone; but I repeat I would rather have England for our ally than that other.' Personally, I can see very little hope of their sending M. Marchand an order to leave Fashoda, but I must state that Minister for Foreign Affairs has several times referred to possibility of
 25 'transaction'.

Monson to Salisbury, quoted in Gooch and Temperley, *British Documents on the Origins of the War 1898-1914* (Foreign Office, 1927), p 171

Questions

- * *a* What 'transaction' is being referred to in line 25?
- * *b* When Delcasse says France will not stand alone in the event of a breach with England (lines 20-1), who will be standing with her?
- c* What evidence in extract *c* supports that in extracts *a* and *b* to the effect that the French government is in a tricky domestic situation?

5 A sample of British press reactions

(a) *The Manchester Guardian*, 10 Sept. 1898

The immorality of the expedition consists of this, that we have used Egypt in this matter merely as a stalking-horse of our own ambitions in the Upper Nile.

(b) *The Evening News*, 13 Sept. 1898

5 There is no need to argue the point; if a householder finds a man in his back garden, he does not go to arbitration about the matter or enter into elaborate arguments to show that, he, the householder, is the owner of that garden. He simply orders the trespasser out, and, if he will not go out of his own accord, he has to go in another fashion.

(c) *The Spectator*, 1 Oct. 1898

10 It is quite clear that Fashoda must be retained, even at the cost of war.

(d) *The Times*, 10 Oct. 1898

15 We cannot conceal from ourselves that Lord Salisbury and his colleagues have taken a position from which retreat is impossible. One side or the other will have to give way. That side cannot, after the publication of these papers (Official blue book), be Great Britain.

(e) *The Morning Post*, 25 Oct. 1898

20 The British Nation has set its heart on the Nile Valley from end to end. If the French nation seriously intends to interfere with the fulfilment of that British purpose, the queen's subjects will accept the sacrifices to make it good. There is nowhere any inclination to compromise in this matter.

(f) *The Daily Chronicle*, 28 Oct. 1898

To refuse to yield a single mile of swamp is magnificent, but it is not business.

(g) *The Manchester Guardian*, 12 Oct. 1898

25 Neither the French Government, nor the French people, is, it seems to us, so anxious for the possession of Fashoda as the English, and the stronger will is usually the one to prevail.

Questions

- a Which of these newspaper extracts represent the most conciliatory attitude towards the French?
- b Which of the extracts do you think is most jingoistic?
- c What do these newspaper extracts tell you about the role of the press in the formation of public opinion?
- * d Can you expand on the case that *The Manchester Guardian* is making in extract *g*?
- * e If you were arguing against the view expressed by *The Evening News* in extract *b* what would you single out as the weakest point in their argument?

VII African Viewpoint

This section contains documentary sources that pose great problems for the historian. There is very little written evidence from nineteenth-century Africa because most societies were non-literate; in many regions nobody could write and the languages had never been put into written form. There is, therefore, a severe shortage and more often a total lack of normal written documentary material. This means the historian has to rely upon sources that modern academic orthodoxy often finds hard to accept. For example the historian Basil Davidson has relied upon anthropological sources and oral tradition as well as more normal sources when they are available in his work on African history. And yet, whatever were the causes of the scramble and whatever the difficulties with indigenous sources, there is no doubt that the consequences were very profound for the peoples who were colonised. It is therefore important to tackle this difficult area.

In much writing on African history in the past, Africans play only a minor role and, in cases where they are mentioned, little interest was shown in the nature of their authority or the origins of their resistance to European penetration. Of course resistance figures like Samori, Chaka, Cetuyayo, Ja Ja, Bai Bureh and Lobengula could hardly be ignored, but it was usual until quite recently to regard the African ruler as 'but a barbarous potentate, living in a big hut, surrounded by a kraal'.

The shortage of sources from indigenous peoples has inevitably led to a gross imbalance in which the European view of events has usually dominated because there has not often been any other view to turn to. We do, however, have one glimpse in this section, for example of the Zulu chief Cetuyayo's version of events in the dispute over territory leading up to the outbreak of the Zulu War. In this, as in other examples in this section, the African voice is mediated through a white interpreter, white secretary and white editorship. An African proverb says, 'Until lions have their historians tales of hunting will always glorify the hunter'.

There are, therefore, special and challenging problems for the historian of nineteenth-century African history. He must take special care to redress in his mind the imbalance of sources and allow for the

large gaps in our knowledge that flow from a lack of indigenous material.

In this section we have a variety of sources from all parts of Africa attempting to outline the sorts of attitudes that Africans had towards the Europeans. There are sources also to show the kinds of response some African communities made to European penetration. These responses are, as you might expect, very varied; sometimes bitter, often belligerent and even prophetic. Caution must be exercised with these sources, as they are isolated and scarce and it is dangerous to generalise too widely without further corroborating examples which may or may not come to hand; it may be necessary to say frankly that we do not know for sure because of insufficient evidence. We must not 'generalise from false premises based upon inadequate evidence'. Of course this is true for all our work in this book, only it is more acute in this section with its special problems.

The best documented areas are the Islamic North where Koranic (Muslim) schools had provided for some literacy and the Swahili culture of Eastern Africa where once again Muslim influence had led to some literacy. For the rest there was no literacy except where contact with European culture had been sustained, such as on the coast of West Africa.

1 European attitudes and growing hostility in East Africa

(a) Arab attitude to the European invaders in the Swahili coastlands

Abushiri was brave as a lion and intolerent of oppression. . . . They [*the Europeans*] wanted all the towns; indeed had bought them. At Kilwa and Dar es Salaam there was a *plague of Europeans*. There was no free speech; they held all the country. . . . In all the harbours wherever you looked
5 you would see warships. . . . [The Europeans] came to Pangani full of wrath; they fitted up the house and laid cannon. With the ship at Maziwe the whole town was humbled and the Europeans strode about the streets. The town was silent; no one spoke; not a free man said a
10 word. The Europeans arose and charged the Moslems, demanding judgement against them. . . . Every morning he [*Zelewski*] and his twelve soldiers, Christians, walked about the town. If they saw any women, they seized them and did what they liked with them; when we asked them why they did this, they told us it was a German custom.

Hemedi bin Abdallah al-Buhriy, *Utenzi wa Vita vya Wadachi Kutamalaki Mrima 1307 A.H.*, translated and edited by J. W. T. Jones (Dar es Salaam, 1960)

(b) The people of Pangani complain to Bishop Smythies (of the Universities Mission), Nov. 1888

- 15 We are loyal to the Sultan of Zanzibar, but we know that he lives on an island and can easily be overawed by big ships and big guns; we cannot believe that it is his real wish that strangers should come into his dominions and cut down his flag or hoist another beside it; that they should beat his people, defile their places of worship, and insult their women.

The Times, 31 Dec. 1888

(c) Abushiri expresses his very clear views on the nature of the European occupation and the need for African resistance. These views were made to the Germans Baumann and his colleague Hans Meyer, whom he held captive for a short time in October 1888

- If [he said] the Germans had come in friendliness, limited themselves to toll administration, and tried everything to win over the ruling class of Arabs, they would still be sitting peacefully today in the coastal towns. But these men conducted themselves recklessly, tore down flags and raised others, gave us orders and regulations, and everywhere conducted themselves as though they were the lords of the land and we were their slaves. We observed these things for a while, and then we chased the whites away, as one chases away impetuous children.

Oscar Baumann, *In Deutsche-Ostafrika während des Aufstandes*, (Vienna and Olmutz, 1890), p 142

(d) African defiance in Tanganyika

- 30 The Indian financiers feared such precarious conditions and would not make any loans to us. But what could we do without loans? How could we equip caravans without money? No one would help us, so we helped ourselves. . . . I will show the Europeans, just as I showed Mirambo, that I have an iron fist.

Hans Meyer, 'Ueber meine letzte Expedition in Deutsche-Ostafrika', *Verhandlungen der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin*, XVI (1889), p 89

Questions

- a What similarities of content can you detect in the above extracts with regard to European attitudes in East Africa?
- b How well does each of the extracts a-c convey the tensions between Africans and Europeans?
- c Which of the above extracts is most authentically an African voice?

2 Coastal Resistance in East Africa is Defeated

(a) Hamed bin Abdallah al-Burhiriy recalls the rout of Abushiri's fort outside Bagamoyo on 8 May 1889

Wherever I put my hand there was a bullet. . . . The bullets went on coming with a monstrous whistling and all at once the Europeans flung themselves on the stockade. The place was full of Europeans and they watched all the paths; there was no way of escape and we wretches
5 were in distress. Outside they surrounded us and their cartridges were ready for us. . . . When our leader [Abushiri] saw that we were defeated he was the first to flee. I was watching him there inside the stockade and I saw a good place to jump. . . . I commended myself to God and I bent down and ran. While we were showered with bullets men pursued us,
10 opposing us like a storm. The cannon roared like thunder and we were hit as we fled. . . . We ran straight on, not turning at the sound of a rifle, and the bullets were like bees or drops of rain. . . . When we had gone some way we saw the stockade on fire; the Europeans were sacking it and doing as they wished. The whole stockade was on fire
15 and they took the loot, and the corpses lay about unminded.

Hamed, *Utenzi* pp 69–71

(b) H. W. Woodward, a British missionary, describes a trick to get support against the Germans

Many people, foolishly listening to [Upanga] and his declarations of what should be when the coast men triumphed again, made a number rally around him. He had also plenty of money, it seems. He said the successful ones should be made chiefs, and take as many wives as they
20 pleased when they returned, and so forth.

So, in spite of warnings, off they went to Mgombo, on the Pangani road, together with a number of Maholola. Before long, the Germans came out to attack them, and the coast leaders said to the Bondeis, 'You stay in the village, and we will go out and fight'.

25 They went out, but, instead of fighting, hid themselves in the woods, and left the Bondeis to their fate. The poor simple creatures thought they would be safe inside the stockade, and their astonishment was unbounded when they saw the German leader draw his men up outside the entrance, instead of keeping under cover as much as possible,
30 according to the approved African fashion, and himself boldly saw through the supports of the door, and calmly walk in. They said their hearts failed them so, they could scarcely fire at all, for the white man was certainly a 'Shetani [devil]', or a 'Spirit', or 'Jinni [water sprite]',
They fled back to Mkuzi gunless and miserable, and the chief of Segala
35 was left dead on the field.

H. W. Woodward in *Central Africa*, VIII, Feb. 1890, pp 28–9

Questions

- a What evidence do these extracts give to show that the Europeans were held in great awe?
- * b Explain why the Germans were attacking Abushiri's fort in the context of the pacification of the Tanganyikan coasts.

3 African views of European rule

(a) Chief Kabongo of the Kikuyu in Kenya describes the arrival of a white administrator at the beginning of the twentieth century

A pink cheek man came one day to our Council. . . . He came from far, from where many of their people lived in houses made of stone and where they had their own Council. He sat in our midst and he told us of the King of the Pink Cheek who was a great king and lived in a land over the seas. 'This king is now your king,' he said, 'and this land is all his land, though he has said you may live on it as you are his people and he is your father and you are his sons.' This was strange news. For this land was ours. . . . We had no king, we elected our Councils and they made our laws. . . . With patience, our leading elders tried to tell this to the Pink Cheek, and he listened. But at the end he said, 'This we know, but in spite of this what I have told you is a fact. You have now a king . . . and in the town called Nairobi is a Council or government that acts for the king. And his laws are your laws . . .'

Quoted in D. Killingray, *A Plague of Europeans*, (Penguin, 1973) p 72

(b) An Arabic poem from north Ghana written in 1900

. . . A sun of disaster has risen in the West,
15 Glaring down on people and populated places.
Poetically speaking, I mean the catastrophe of the Christians,
The Christian calamity has come upon us
Like a dust cloud.
At the start of the affair they came
20 Peacefully,
With soft sweet talk.
We've come to trade!! they said,
'To reform the beliefs of the people',
'To halt oppression here below, and theft',
25 'To clean up and overthrow corruption',
Not all of us grasped their motives,
So now we've become their inferiors.

They deluded us with little gifts
And fed us tasty foods. . . .

30 But recently they've changed their tune. . . .

Quoted in *Salapa: The Struggle for Power* by J. A. Braimah and
J. R. Goody (Longman, 1967)

(c) The local view of Portuguese rule in Angola

Generally considered as being outside the accepted social circle [of
Metropolitan Portuguese], the sons of the colonies are allowed
a significant role only when the Portuguese need them to elect to
Parliament that gang of rogues which the Government chooses to give
35 it a vote of confidence; that mess of pastry-cooks which robs the official
ministers of the action of justice. The sons of the colonies, moreover,
possess no nationality because the government of the metropole and
their delegates are those most interested in condemning [the Africans]
40 as foreigners, depriving them of the exercise of the first public offices
now filled by certain rats they send us from Portugal . . . they do not
use their intelligence in the civilisation of a people for whom they have
no respect, and this is proved by the saying that

com preto e mulato
nada de contrato!!!

45 [With mulattoes and blacks
no need for contracts]

José de Fontes Pereira, *o Futuro D'Angola*, 29 April 1882 (Pereira
was half Portuguese and half African)

**(d) A cry of defiance from Macheмба a chief from
southern Tanganyika (Lindi) to the German District
Officer at Lindi who had ordered him to give himself
up at the coast**

I have heard your words, but I do not see any reason why I should obey
you. I should rather die. I have no relationship with you and I cannot
recall that you have ever given me a pesa or a quarter-pesa or a needle
50 or a thread. I search for a reason why I should obey you and I cannot
find even the smallest. If it is a matter of friendship, I shall not refuse,
today and always, but I shall not be your subject. . . . If you want to
fight, I am prepared, but never shall I be your subject . . . I shall not fall
down at your feet, for you are a creature of God, and so am I . . . I am
55 Sultan of my people; you are Sultan of your people. Look here, I do not
tell you that you must obey me. I know that you are a free man. Since I
was born I have not set foot on the coast; shall I now go there because
you call me? I shall not come. If you are strong enough, come and get
me. I should rather lose your respect than surrender to you.

Quoted in Muller, *Deutschland*, pp 455-6

(Three German expeditions were sent inland to punish Machelmba for this brilliant piece of impudence, but they all failed to get to grips with Machelmba's warriors and they were constantly harrassed by surprise attacks. The Germans therefore destroyed villages and crops and caused great suffering among Machelmba's people. Machelmba therefore finally decided to give himself up and presented himself at Lindi in March 1891.)

Questions

- a List some of the actual events in Kenya that Chief Kabongo is alluding to in his story of the Pink Cheek.
- b What is the 'sun of disaster' (line 14) mentioned by the poet in extract *b*?
- c How does the picture of colonialism painted in the Arabic poem (extract *b*) rate as evidence of the processes of imperialism?
- d What can you find out about what kind of person the author of extract *c* was? How is his anger towards the Portuguese expressed?
- e Why was Machelmba's cry of defiance likely to do him little good?

4 Protest from South Africa

(a) 'Muzzling the Natives', an editorial in *Imvo Zabantsundu*, 23 March 1887, on the government's unfair restrictions on the franchise

The Bill which the Sprigg Government has given notice of introducing next Parliamentary Session, with the ostensible object of making 'better provision for the registration of persons entitled to the electoral franchise' is about the severest blow that has ever been aimed at Native rights since representative institutions were introduced into this country. . . .

The 'Cape Argus', no blind partisan of the Natives, describes it as a 'dishonest measure'

Under the first and third clauses of the Bill it is proposed to do away with the present lists compiled four months ago. . . . The object of this is of course obvious: the general election coming off next year, the ministry dread an appeal to the country on the present complete lists; and the register must needs be manipulated to suit their designs. Field coronets are the officers entrusted with . . . placing on the roll such persons as they may deem entitled. . . . As it would be absurd to expect a Field-coronet to have a personal knowledge of any but a few natives in his ward, it is fair to conclude that whites alone would be enrolled. . . . Then, as if these stupendous difficulties were not enough to keep our countrymen from their rights . . . the government proceeds

20 to enact in clause 17 that 'No person shall be entitled to be registered as a voter by reason of his sharing in any communal or tribal occupation of lands, or place of residence.' . . .

In a truly statesmanlike speech delivered in 1877 by the Prime Minister in East London . . . Mr Sprigg said:

25 'Can it be affirmed that any evil has arisen in the past from our natives having the same civil rights as ourselves? I am unable to say that it has. . . . It is, in my opinion, extremely dangerous under representative government to establish the principle that the larger part of the population shall have no voice in the councils of the country. The true way to
30 remove discontent is to provide a channel for its true utterance. . . .

T. Karis and G. Carter, *From Protest to Challenge: a documentary History of African Politics in South Africa 1882-1964*, vol 1 (Hoover Institution Press, 1972), p 13

(b) A petition to Queen Victoria from 'the Native inhabitants of the Location of Oxkraal', July 1887 (handwritten, 2 pages)

We your Majesty's most loyal and dutiful subjects the Fingos . . . desire humbly to approach your most gracious Majesty. We consider it the highest honour to be under your Majesty's benign sway and the subjects of a Government distinguished for justice, mercy and all
35 temporal and spiritual privileges. We are remnants of the once powerful tribes dispersed by Tshaka and prior to the year 1835 were scattered amongst the Amaxosa tribes on the border of this colony, but when your majesty's troops led by the then Governor Sir Benjamin D'Urban, Lieutenant Colonel Smith and Colonel Somerset
40 fought against the great and powerful Amaxosa Chiefs Hintza and Hreli we asserted our independence, became allies of the British Government and were finally permitted to enter the colony and settle down in the District of Peddie and elsewhere. Thirty three years ago
45 Parliamentary Government was conceded to the Colony and a fairly low franchise was agreed upon viz. the occupation of landed property of the yearly value of £25 and for the last thirty three years we have been allowed the great privilege of recording our votes at Parliamentary elections on the same footing as our fellow countrymen of European
50 extraction but during the present session of the Cape Parliament the House of the Legislative Assembly has already a Bill that will curtail, nay in most cases completely take away, our privileges under the former just politic measure. We therefore pray your most Excellent Majesty that in the event of the said measure which is most obnoxious and quite adverse to our best interests as Natives passing both houses of
55 Parliament Your Majesty will exercise your Royal Prerogative in our favour.

60 Your Majesty's loyal subjects deeply lament to learn that the delegates sent to the late conference have come back with the intelligence that a distinct understanding if not actual pledges that no further Imperial interference so far as we Natives are concerned shall take place in the future. If this be true Your Majesty's loyal Subjects feel that they are doomed and handed over and sacrificed to their old enemy the Dutch. This intelligence fills us with dismay.

T. Karis and G. Carter, *From Protest to Challenge* (Hoover Institution Press, 1972), p 15

(c) S. N. Mvambo compares the strict unity of purpose of the Europeans with the divided Africans, December 1883

65 Anyone looking at things as they are, could even go so far as to say it was a great mistake to bring so many church denominations to the Black people. For the Black man makes the fatal mistake of thinking that if he is an Anglican, he has nothing to do with anything suggested by a Wesleyan, and the Wesleyan also thinks so, and so does the Presbyterian. Imbumba must make sure that all these three are
70 represented at the conference, for we must be united on political matters. In fighting for national rights, we must fight together. Although they look as if they belong to various churches, the White people are solidly united when it comes to matters of this nature. We Blacks think that these churches are hostile to one another, and in that
75 way we lose our political rights.

T. Karis and G. Carter, *From Protest to Challenge* (Hoover Institution Press, 1972), p 12

Questions

- * a Outline the pressures and forces at work in South Africa that led to progressive repression of civil rights among Africans that is complained of in extract *a*. Take your starting point as far back as the 50th Ordinance if you wish.
- b Why was Prime Minister Sprigg's view so admired by the authors of extract *a*? Why are they now disappointed with Sprigg?
- c What internal European animosities do the authors of extract *b* play upon?
- * d What does S. N. Mvambo consider in extract *c* that the blacks lacked which the Europeans had in the colonial struggle? Can you cite any corroborating examples to either support his view or reject it?

5 Testimony of Cetshwayo (Cetywayo) a Zulu king

(a) The following narrative has been taken down from the lips of Cetywayo, by Captain J. Ruscombe Poole, Royal Artillery, who brought the ex-king from Zululand to Capetown. . . . The story itself . . . contains nothing that has not been received direct from Cetywayo, through Mr Longcast, an able and trustworthy interpreter. . . .

. . . Towards the end of Panda's reign, the Boers encroached a good deal, both east and north, building and settling down on the Zulu side of Utrecht. . . . They were often reminded that they were on Zulu soil, and told to leave off cutting wood, but it had no effect. . . .

5 The Boers at one time endeavoured to buy the Utrecht district; they sent 200 head of cattle to Panda . . . but he refused to sell the land. He however accepted 100 hundred head as a toll . . . for the Boer living at Utrecht; but it was never considered as the price of the land. . . . After this the Boers kept on encroaching, and treated the border Zulus with much harshness.

10 Panda was averse to war, and would not press his rights. . . .

After Panda's death, while Cetywayo was king, the same sort of trouble continued. . . . When Mr Shepstone came to Cetywayo's coronation, the latter spoke to him about the difficulties that had arisen

15 between the Zulus and the Boers, on account of the encroachments of the latter in Zululand. Mr Shepstone said he would make enquiries, and sent two Natal Kaffir chiefs, with two of Cetywayo's, and a white man, to see and report on the disputed territory. . . . When they returned, the white man told Cetywayo that the Boers were in the wrong, and

20 they they would tell Mr Shepstone so.

After the annexation of the Transvaal by the English, Mr Shepstone met the Zulus at Conference Hill, to hear the boundary dispute. Every Zulu chief of any note came. It was a great gathering of chiefs. Only a few Boers were present. . . . He (Mr Shepstone) asked them to tell him

25 what they considered was their boundary. They replied that they claimed the Buffalo River, as the original and proper Zulu boundary. Mr Shepstone replied, 'Oh, that is too hard. You have allowed the Boers to settle round and about Utrecht so long, you cannot expect to turn them out of so much country now.' But the Zulus would not

30 give in. . . .

The chiefs then complained to Mr Shepstone, saying, 'Why do you talk? Why do you not sit and listen, as the representative of the Queen? The Boers now belong to the Queen of England, and we consider the Queen our mother, since she sent her representative to crown

35 Cetywayo.'

. . . Mr Shepstone then arranged that there should be a meeting

to settle the question at Rorke's Drift. Cetywayo was to send his representatives, and the Boers theirs. . . .

40 Cetywayo, on sending off his representatives, told them that they were to claim the Buffalo River as their boundary, and to call upon the Boers to show what right they had to the Utrecht and Luneburg districts, and to produce their claims. When the Boers were at this meeting, it is said that Landtman admitted that they had no right to the district beyond Utrecht, and that they had no legal claim to that
45 country, as he was allowed to settle there on condition that he kept back the Boers from going any further into Zululand. . . . Mr John Shepstone told the Zulus that they had the best of it, and that he would go home and tell the Government so, who would settle the question.

50 This was the last the Zulus heard of the boundary question, until the award was received at the same time as the ultimatum (Dec 1878).

The young men in Zululand were getting very restless and quarrelsome, being anxious to get a chance of 'washing' their spears.

Cetywayo's Story of the Zulu Nation and the War, from *A Zulu King Speaks: statements made by Cetshwayo kaMpande on the history and customs of his people*, eds C. de B. Webb and J. B. Wright (Pietermaritzburg and Durban, 1978)

(b) Cetywayo's letter to the Governor of the Cape

55 Oude Molin, March, 1881.

. . . I say it will be good for Mr Shepstone to tell the English nation, in order that the English nation may know what he is doing, when he is destroying my country, taking it away from me, throwing me out of it, and giving it to the Boers. Shortly afterwards a messenger came and
60 told me to send my chiefs to meet the English under Mr Shepstone at the Umsinyati (Buffalo River) at Rorke's Drift. My chiefs then went up there. . . . When they came to Mr John Shepstone they said, 'We are come to listen to what you, the assembly of Natal, have to say.' . . . The Zulu chiefs then said they wished Gininiza to say what he knew about
65 this tract of country, as he was one (a Boer) who first came to Mpande – when the Boers were driven out of Natal by the English – to ask if Mpande would allow him to live on the Umzinyati, where Langelibalele used to live. The king Mpande said, 'No, I do not wish you to live there, because you will draw more white men into my
70 country.' Gininiza said, 'No, I just wish to live there for the purpose of keeping out the Boers.' Mpande then allowed him to live there. Now it happened that whenever the Boers pushed on, acquiring new territory, that Gininiza moved on before them, till they have now got right into Zululand. Gininiza then at last replied, and said, 'I am not going to say

75 much, but I say that it is true that the Boers are in the wrong, and that all the country that the Zulus claim is theirs [the Zulus], and that the Boers have taken it away gradually. I will not reply otherwise, as the Boers wish to put the blame on me, a man who was allowed to live here by Mpandi.’

80 The English then said that the Boers had been beaten by the Zulu chiefs in argument;

Cetewayo Ka Mpande.

P.S. . . . Does the English nation think that I am a man that would have been so stupid as to plan an invasion of any of their territory? Was it not
85 a good proof that I never intended to do anything against the English, in that I never moved out of my country, while the troops were laying waste, to enter Natal? . . .

Dictated by the ex-Zulu king, Cetewayo, and translated and written by Mr Interpreter Samuelson.

J. Store Lister, *Custodian*, 5/6 April 1881, Rondebosch, quoted in Cetshwayo kaMpande, *A Zulu King Speaks* (University of Natal Press, 1978), pp 41–63

Questions

- * a What event is Cetywayo referring to in extract *a* when he says ‘The Boers now belong to the Queen of England’ (line 33)? How had this come about?
- b What basic problems concerning native African sources do these extracts highlight?
- * c What insights does the evidence given by Cetywayo give us into the origins of the Zulu War?
- * d In what way had Panda’s policy towards the Europeans been very different from that of Cetywayo’s? Why might Cetywayo be making a point of mentioning his predecessor?
- e In the two accounts of the meeting at Rorke’s Drift by Cetywayo what differences can you find?

6 Letter from the Mahdi to General Gordon

In the name of God the merciful and compassionate:

Praise be to God, the bountiful Ruler, and blessing on our lord Mahomed with peace.

5 From the servant who trusts in God – Mahomed the son of Abdallah.

To Gordon Pasha of Kartoum: may God guide him into the path of virtue, amen!

10 Know that your small steamer, named *Abbas* – which you sent with the intention of forwarding your news to Cairo, by the way of Dongola, the persons sent being your representative Stewart Pasha and two Consuls, French and English, with other persons, has been captured by the will of God.

15 Those who believed in us as the Mahdi, and surrendered, have been delivered; and those who did not were destroyed – as your representative afore-named, with the Consuls and the rest – whose souls God has condemned to the fire and to eternal misery.

20 That steamer and all that was in it have fallen prey to the Moslems, and we have taken knowledge of all the letters and telegrams which were in it. . . . All has been seized and the contents are known . . . we prefer to send you part of the contents and mention the property therein, so that you may be certified; and in order that the truth may make a lasting impression on thy mind – in the hope that God may guide thee to the faith of Islam, and to surrender. . . .

25 Now the first (among the documents seized) is the cipher dated Sept. 22, 1884, sent to Mustafa Jawer, Mudir of Dongola, in answer to his letter dated 30th August, 1884, European reckoning, (saying) that you have given him the rank of Liwa – on the back of which is your telegram to the Khedive of Egypt, asking that he will confirm the said appointment. We have also taken knowledge of the journal (*Col. Stewart's Journal*) of the provision in the granary . . . namely 3374 ardebs of dhoora; 4 ardebs and 1/3 and 1/4 of wheat, Etc. . . .

30 Also your letters, [written] in European [language], all about the seige of Kartoum, and all about the arranging of the steamers, with the number of troops in them, and their arms, and the cannon, and about the movement of the troops, and the defeat of your people, and your request for reinforcements. . . .

35 Also many letters which . . . stating the number of Europeans at Kartoum, 3 English, 2 Austrians, 1 Prussian, 1 Frenchman, 4 Italians, 40 Greeks.

40 Also the diary of the arms, ammunition, guns and soldiers sealed by Faraj (Ferratch) ez Zainy, Commander of the Army, which has 2 Krupp guns and 284 shells; 11 mountain field-pieces, and their ammunition (? cartridges), numbering 2303; 2 matchlock guns and their ammunition, 315; 5 mortars and their ammunition, 565; . . . 8 howitzers . . . 7064
45 Remington rifles and 1205 percussion muskets; . . . Etc., Etc. (*The Mahdi continues with an immensely long and meticulously detailed list of weaponry and men and also further letters on other subjects, covering all the intercepted intelligence.*)

50 . . . We never miss any of your news, nor what is in your innermost thoughts, and about the strength and support – not of God – on which you rely. We have now understood it all. . . .

Notwithstanding all this, as we have now arrived at Mushra'el

55 Koweh', at a day's journey from Omdurman, and are coming, please God, to your place . . . surrender to his order and that of his Prophet, and believe in us as the Mahdi. . . .

Dated (Wednesday) 7th day 2nd of Moharram, 1302.

Oct. 22, 1884.

(seal)

There is no God but ALLAH.

Mahomed is the prophet of ALLAH.

60

Mahomed the Mahdi ABD-ALLAH.

(The seal is square and very large. It is roughly engraved, and the inscription forms a triplet, each line ending with the name of God.)

From the Journals of Major General C. G. Gordon at Kartoum (London, 1885), pp 360-5

Questions

- a Why do you think the Mahdi is going to such lengths to tell Gordon the contents of all his letters which he (Gordon) already knew?
- b Which pieces of intelligence do you think would be most useful to the Mahdi?
- * c How does the tone of this letter differ from much of the material from sub-Saharan Africa?

Further Work

Select about half a dozen extracts from this section that interest you. Take one sheet of paper for each extract and divide each one into eight sections with the following headings and fill in what details you can:

- i) *Frame or focus* . . . What is it, letter, diary, newspaper, etc. or don't know?
- ii) *Information* . . . Make a list of the information; e.g. when? where? what? why? etc. Are any words or sentences important?
- iii) *Gaps* . . . Is there anything missing? Do you need to look something up that is not explained?
- iv) *Trust* . . . Can this extract be trusted? Do you accept it as it stands? Is it biased? Question it in whatever way you think necessary.
- v) *Period* . . . Is there anything that gives a clue as to the date or period of the extract?
- vi) *Significance* . . . Is it any use? Should it be thrown away? What is its use to the historian?

vii) *Questions . . .* What questions does this extract raise? How would you use it to take you further into the topic?

viii) *Record . . .* How would you go about recording what you have found?

(N.B. this formula or a variation on it can be applied to any extract in this book.)

VIII *Historiography and Statistics*

In the introduction we started with the words of Sir John Seeley in 1881; 'We seem, as it were, to have conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind'. We have now reached the point at which we must attempt to sketch the motivations of the imperialists and to see if there is any truth in Seeley's comments.

In this chapter we will look at a variety of contemporary interpretations of imperialism in Africa and compare them with some more modern views. Interpretations divide broadly into the economic and the strategic. The economic view emphasises the need of capitalist industrial countries to find outlets for surplus investment capital. This view is expressed in differing ways by Lenin, Hobson, Ferry, Brailsford and others. The high priests of the strategic view are Robinson and Gallagher writing in the 1960s. Their emphasis focuses on the paramount importance attached by statesmen in Britain to the need to safeguard the old Empire by securing trade routes to India via the Suez canal and the Cape. They, therefore, see the occupation of Egypt as pivotal.

The theory that economic imperatives of the European capitalist industrial system powered the scramble, has become widely accepted. However, the range of statistics given at the end of this chapter underlines the difficulty of this view with regard to Africa. In the nineteenth century European capital and trade were inexorably drawn to the economic growth points of the world. These were most definitely America, Australia, India and South Africa. Economic growth in tropical Africa was stubbornly slow. The Marxist and Liberal economic analysis is plausible except insofar as it awkwardly refuses to fit the statistical evidence for Africa. And yet were the imperialists fools? Did they make a ghastly economic mistake? Evidence in this chapter from King Leopold of Belgium and Jules Ferry of France suggest that European rulers had high economic hopes of tropical Africa.

If the economic returns were really so poor, then perhaps the policy makers did have a 'fit of absence of mind'; did they make a thoroughly bad investment? Was the scramble a huge mistake commercially? Was it a massive loss-making exercise? There was in addition a school of

thought best represented by Lord Cromer in extract 3 which regarded Empire as a civilising mission, as a burden to be born by the advanced nations to improve the lot of the 'poor benighted heathen'. Having read this chapter and all the preceding material you will have to make up your own mind as to the motivation for the partition of Africa, though it would seem unlikely in the extreme if such a massive conquest were not inspired by the hope of a major economic return.

1 Imperialism as a natural extension of the forces of capitalism

(a) Vladimir Illyich Lenin argues that capitalism inevitably leads to imperialism and to its own eventual downfall

It is characteristic of capitalism in general that the ownership of capital is separated from the application of capital to production, that money capital is separated from industrial or productive capital, and that the rentier who lives entirely on income obtained from money capital, is separated from the entrepreneur and from all who are directly concerned in the management of capital. Imperialism, or the domination of finance capital, is that highest stage of capitalism at which this separation reaches vast proportions. . . .

Typical of the old capitalism, when free competition had undivided sway, was the export of *goods*. Typical of the latest stage of capitalism, when monopolies rule, is the export of *capital*. . . .

It goes without saying that if capitalism . . . could raise the standard of living of the masses, who are everywhere still half-starved and poverty-stricken, in spite of the amazing technical progress, there could be no talk of a surplus, of capital. . . . But if capitalism did these things it would not be capitalism. . . . As long as capitalism remains what it is, surplus capital will be utilized not for the purpose of raising the standard of living of the masses in a given country, for this would mean a decline in profits for the capitalists, but for the purpose of increasing profits by exporting capital abroad to backward countries. . . .

But when nine-tenths of Africa had been seized (by 1900), when the whole world had been divided up, there was inevitably ushered in the era of monopoly ownership of colonies and, consequently, of particularly intense struggle for the division and redivision of the world. . . .

From all that has been said in this book on the economic essence of imperialism, it follows that we must define it as capitalism in transition or, more precisely as moribund capitalism.

V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (New York International Publication, 1972)

(b) Lenin uses statistics to support his idea of imperialism being fuelled by the need for capital to find a profitable outlet

30 The necessity for exporting capital arises from the fact that in a few countries capitalism has become 'over-ripe' and (owing to the backward state of agriculture and the impoverished state of the masses) capital cannot find 'profitable' investment.

Here are the approximate figures showing the amount of capital invested abroad by the three principal countries:

35 CAPITAL INVESTED ABROAD (fig 1)
(in billions of francs)

Year	G.B.	France	Germany
1862	3.6	—	—
1872	15.0	10(1869)	—
40 1882	22.0	15(1880)	?
1893	42.0	20(1890)	?
1902	62.0	27-37	12.5
1914	75-100.0	60	44.0

45 This table shows that the export of capital reached formidable dimensions only in the beginning of the twentieth century. Before the war the capital invested abroad by the three principal countries amounted to between 175,000,000,000 and 200,000,000,000 francs. At the modest rate of 5 per cent, this sum should have brought in from 8 to 10 billions a year. This provided a solid basis for imperialist oppression and the exploitation of most of the countries and nations of the world; a solid basis for the capitalist parasitism of a handful of wealthy states! . . .

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55 APPROX. DISTRIBUTION OF FOREIGN CAPITAL
(ABOUT 1910) (fig 2)
(in billions of marks)

Continent	G.B.	France	Germany	Total
Europe	4	23	18	45
America	37	4	10	51
60 Asia, Africa and Australia	29	8	7	44
TOTAL	70	35	35	140

V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (New York International Publication, 1972)

Questions

- * a What do you understand by the terms 'rentier' and 'entrepreneur' used by Lenin in extract *a*, lines 4 and 5?
- b Why is Lenin critical of the existence of surplus capital for export in extract *a*? What does he think surplus capital should be used for?
- c What difference does Lenin identify between the old and new capitalism?
- * d What evidence can you find that Lenin thought imperialism would mark the end of capitalism? Why is this a predictable view for such a man?
- e Draw a graph of the figures for 'Capital invested abroad' (fig 1) and mark on it the years of the scramble for Africa. Is the rise in foreign investment by Britain and France steady or variable? Are there any conclusions to be drawn?
- f What do the statistics in figs 1 and 2 fail to tell us about European investment in Africa? Does this cast doubt on the theory that Lenin is trying to uphold?
- g What examples of polemical writing can you identify in extract *b*? What are the limitations of such material to the historian?
- h How useful is the material by Lenin as evidence? What reservations, if any, should the historian have about Lenin's work?

2 J. A. Hobson argues that imperialism amounted to the hijacking of the resources of the state to further the interests of a narrow commercial group. This he argues is the only explanation of an imperial enterprise that was such a bad investment for the nation as a whole

Seeing that the Imperialism of the last six decades is clearly condemned as a bad business policy, in that at enormous expense it had procured a small, bad, unsafe increase of markets, and had jeopardised the entire wealth of the nation in rousing the strong resentment of other nations, we may ask, 'How is the British nation induced to embark upon such unsound business?' The only possible answer is that the business interests of the nation as a whole are subordinated to those of certain sectional interests that usurp control of the national resources and use them for their private gain. . . . Careful analysis of the existing relations between business and politics shows that the aggressive Imperialism which we seek to understand is not in the main the product of blind passions of races or of the mixed folly and ambition of politicians. . . . It is not too much to say that the modern foreign policy of Great Britain has been primarily a struggle for profitable markets of

15 investment. To a larger extent every year Great Britain has been becoming a nation living upon tribute from abroad, and the classes who enjoy this tribute have had an ever-increasing incentive to employ the public policy, the public purse, and the public force to extend the field of their private investment, and to safeguard and improve their existing
20 investments. [None of this would be necessary if mal-distribution of wealth did not lead to chronic underconsumption at home.] It is this economic condition of affairs that forms the taproot of Imperialism. If the consuming public in this country raised its standard of consumption to keep pace with every rise of productive powers, there could be no
25 excess of goods or capital clamorous to use Imperialism in order to find markets. . . . It is not industrial progress that demands the opening up of new markets and areas of investment, but mal-distribution of consuming power which prevents the absorption of commodities and capital within the country.

J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: a study* (1902)

Questions

- a On what points is Hobson in agreement with Lenin?
- b In what sense does Hobson consider imperialism to have been condemned as 'a bad business policy' (line 2)?
- c What explanation does Hobson advance for the fact that the British government had pursued a policy so unsatisfactory to itself and the tax payer?
- d What does Hobson regard as the taproot of imperialism?
- e How does Hobson suggest the export of surplus goods and capital could have been rendered unnecessary?

3 Lord Cromer, one time Governor of Egypt, expresses the view that British rule was entirely benevolent leading to great benefits to the ruled

No one can fully realise the extent of the change which has come over Egypt since the British occupation took place unless he is in some degree familiar with the system under which the country was governed in the days of Ismail Pasha. The contrast between now and then is, indeed, remarkable. A new spirit has been instilled into the population of Egypt. Even the peasant has learnt to scan his rights. Even the Pasha has learnt that others beside himself have rights that must be respected. The courbash [whip] may hang on the walls of the Mourdirieh, but the Moudir [Provincial Governor] no longer dares to employ it on the backs
5 of the fellaheen. For all practical purposes, it may be said that the hateful corvee system has disappeared. Slavery has virtually ceased to exist. The halcyon days of the adventurer and usurer are past. Fiscal
10

burthens have been greatly relieved. Everywhere law reigns supreme. Justice is no longer bought and sold. Nature, instead of being spurned and neglected, has been wooed to bestow her gifts on mankind. She has responded to the appeal. The waters of the Nile are now utilised in an intelligent manner. Means of locomotion have been improved and extended. The soldier has acquired some pride in the uniform which he wears. He has fought as he has never fought before. The sick man can be nursed in a well-managed hospital. The lunatic is no longer treated like a wild beast. The punishment awarded to the worst criminal is no longer barbarous. Lastly, the schoolmaster is abroad, with results which are as yet uncertain, but which cannot fail to be important.

Lord Cromer, *Modern Egypt* (Macmillan, 1908), vol ii

Questions

- a Is Lord Cromer's viewpoint likely to be biased? Explain your answer.
- b In what areas does Lord Cromer see improvements in Egypt?
- c What is a 'corvee system' (line 11)?

4 Jules Ferry a leading French politician during the first twenty years of the French Third Republic concocted clever theories to justify French colonial expansion

(a) Colonial policy is the daughter of industrialism. For rich states, where capital abounds and accumulates rapidly, where the industrial system is continually growing and where it attracts, if not the majority, at least the most alert and ambitious section of the labouring class; where even the cultivation of the land must become industrialised to survive, exports are essential to political good health; and the field open for the employment of capital, like the demand for labour, is controlled by the extent of the foreign market. . . .

It is because she was the first to foresee these distant horizons that England took the lead in the modern industrial movement. It is because she saw the potential danger to her hegemony which might, following the secession of the United States of North America, result from the separation of Australia and India that she laid siege to Africa on four fronts: in the south, by the plateau of the Cape and Bechuanaland; in the west, by the Niger and the Congo; in the north-east, by the valley of the Nile; in the east by Suakim, the Somali coast and the basin of the great equatorial lakes. It is to prevent British enterprise from obtaining for its sole profit the new markets which are opening up to the products of the west that Germany meets England with her inconvenient

20 and unexpected rivalry in all parts of the globe. Colonial policy is an international expression of the eternal laws of competition.

J. Ferry, *Tonkin et la Mère-Patrie* (Paris 1890), quoted and translated in D. K. Fieldhouse, *The Theory of Capitalist Imperialism* (Longman, 1967)

(b) To rich countries colonies offer the most profitable field for the investment of capital. The famous Stuart Mill devoted a chapter of his work to demonstrate this, and he summarizes it thus: 'For old and rich
25 countries colonization is one of the most profitable enterprises to indulge in' . . . France, which has always had a surplus of capital and has exported considerable quantities of it to foreign states – in fact, the export of capital made by this great and rich country must be counted in
30 millions of francs – I say that France has an interest in considering this side of the colonial question.

But, gentlemen, there is another and more important side of this question, which is far more important than what I have just been discussing. The colonial question is, for countries like ours which are, by the very character of their industry, tied to large exports, vital to the
35 question of markets. . . . From this point of view . . . the foundation of a colony is the creation of a market. . . .

J. Ferry, *Discours et Opinions de Jules Ferry*, ed. P. Roubiquet, (Paris 1896–7), quoted and translated in D. K. Fieldhouse, *The Theory of Capitalist Imperialism* (Longman, 1967)

Questions

- * a On what points does Ferry agree with Lenin? Is this agreement surprising and how do you account for it?
- * b Is Ferry advancing a purely economic explanation for imperialism or does he see strategic interests for Britain in Africa? Which modern interpretation does his view tend to support?
- * c What reasons of domestic politics did France have for pursuing colonial expansion? Why does Ferry ignore them in these extracts?

5 H. N. Brailsford articulates the liberal viewpoint on imperialism

There can be no science of foreign politics so long as foreign affairs are in the hands of small cliques, among whom personal caprice is liable at any moment to upset calculations. . . . To defend the interests of Lord Rothschild and his fellow bondholders, Egypt was first occupied, and
5 then practically annexed by Great Britain. . . . The hunting of concessions abroad and the exploitation of the potential riches of weak

states and dying empires is fast becoming an official enterprise, a national business. We are engaged in Imperial trading, with the flag as its indispensable asset, but the profits go exclusively into private pockets.

10

This Imperial trading has its questionable aspects from the standpoint of the British public and also of the nation with which our diplomacy deals. But it has another consequence which is no less serious. It brings us continually into conflict with the diplomacy of the other Powers which are engaged in competing for the same concessions on behalf of their own financiers. It is not the rivalry of merchants engaged in selling goods which makes ill-feeling between nations. The merchant rarely invokes diplomatic aid to enable him to keep or secure a customer. The trouble arises only over concessions, loans and monopolies which bring the European financier into relations with a foreign Government. The rivalry is indeed felt to be so intolerable and so risky, that modern diplomacy now seeks wherever possible to avoid it, by mapping out exclusive areas of exploitation, 'penetration', or 'influence'

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Why, then, is it that capital seeks to export itself? There are many cogent reasons abroad. At home the fundamental fact is the rapid accumulation of surplus capital. It grows in the hands of trust magnates, bankers and ground landlords more rapidly than the demand for it at home. It tries continually to get itself employed at home, and the result is that periodic over-production, which shows itself in a 'slump' of trade and a crisis of unemployment. Capital, like labour, has its periods of unemployment, and its favourite method of meeting them is emigration. When rates of interest fall at home, it begins to look abroad for something at once remunerative, and not too risky, and it is to diplomacy that it turns to protect it from risks. If, further, we go on to ask why capital cannot get itself properly employed at home as fast as it is accumulated, the answer is briefly that its too rapid accumulation has stood in the way of a simultaneous development of the consumers who might have given it employment. . . .

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The other reason which is most potent in inducing capital to flow abroad is the elementary fact that coloured labour can be more ruthlessly exploited than white, that the supposed risks of foreign investment enable him to charge usurious interest, and that on both grounds the profits to be made abroad are greater than the profits to be made at home. . . . The capitalist hears the East 'a calling' mainly because there are no factory acts east of Suez. That was literally true of Egypt while Lord Cromer reigned. . . .

50

To complete our survey of the motives of 'real politics', it is necessary to glance at two powerful but secondary interests which Imperialism calls into action as it develops. There is first of all the social pressure due to the fact that Imperialism makes careers for 'younger

sons'. . . . There must be tens of thousands of families, all relatively wealthy, influential and well educated, to whom the sudden ending of the Empire would mean financial ruin and social extinction. . . .

55 The influence of another powerful economic factor upon the growth of imperialism has always been suspected. . . . A spirited or apprehensive foreign policy . . . involves an increase of armaments; this increase creates a great industry, which naturally uses the whole of its influence, in the press, in society and in parliament, to stimulate the demand for
60 further armaments. . . .

All over the world these forces, concentrated, resolute and intelligent, are ceaselessly at work to defeat the more diffused and less easily directed forces which make for disarmament and peace. . . .

H. N. Brailsford, *The War of Steel and Gold* (London, 1915)

Questions

- a What does Brailsford mean when he says that capital tries to overcome its 'unemployment' by emigration (line 32)?
- b What justification is there in Brailsford's claim that Britain occupied Egypt in order to rescue Lord Rothschild and his fellow bondholders?
- c What legislation is Brailsford referring to when he says there are 'no factory acts east of Suez' (line 46)?
- d How important do you think is the influence of the outlet for careers mentioned in this extract as a pressure for colonisation in Africa?

6 S. H. Frankel discusses investments in Africa

From 1870 to 1914, Europe, and in particular Great Britain, played the role of the world's financier to an extent which had not been reached previously, and may not for long be reached again. . . . British dominance in world commerce finally led also to direct penetration
5 into tropical areas, most of which had previously been connected with the mother country only by a series of strategic outposts and trading stations.

Up to the last decades of the century the desire to avoid entanglements which might prove costly to the mother countries
10 remained the dominant feature of colonial policy. . . . At the end of the nineteenth century a new era was inaugurated in which both new objectives of colonial policy were conceived, and owing to the growth of wealth in Europe, fresh means of realizing them were available. The widespread industrialization led to rising income levels which could
15 find their expression only in the development and satisfaction of new wants. The potential wealth of the tropics, therefore, suddenly assumed

a new importance which was expressed in the political rivalry that marked the partition of the African continent. When the European powers assumed control of their new African possessions, they inaugurated colonial policies based on the deliberate exploitation of the natural resources previously neglected. Many complex factors contributed to this new development of colonial policy. Basically, however, it was made possible owing to the fact that the accumulated wealth of Europe, and in particular of Great Britain, began in the seventh decade of the nineteenth century to grow at a rate incomparably faster than ever before. . . .

The general atmosphere of optimism engendered by glowing descriptions of, and imperialist propaganda about, the potentialities of the new African possessions had a powerful effect in making not only the loan issues of Colonial Government, but also the shares of innumerable exploitation, mining and financial companies acceptable to the investor. That Rhodes could continue for years to get money from a large circle of shareholders in the Chartered Company, in spite of the fact that the payment of even a single dividend was successfully deferred for half a generation, indicates how the direction of investment could be affected by vague and general expectations combined with patriotic and sentimental considerations. . . .

To represent the development of Africa in the last fifty years as the result merely of financial or imperialist greed is to miss the real implications of the vast changes which this period has inaugurated. The motives of individuals and of western nations were doubtless mixed, but the main outcome was that, by the end of the nineteenth century, Europe found itself irretrievably engaged in the task of incorporating the African continent into the income-creating stream and the economy of the world. For this purpose, it was necessary to divert enormous resources to Africa in order, first, to obtain access to the interior, and, secondly, to commence the arduous task of revitalizing the habits and work of its backward peoples.

S. H. Frankel, *Capital Investment in Africa* (Oxford University Press, 1938)

Questions

- a What does Frankel see as the main engine of colonial policy in the last quarter of the nineteenth century?
- b What measure of agreement does Frankel receive from other sources in this chapter?
- c When Frankel talks about 'glowing descriptions' and 'imperialist propaganda' (lines 27-8), what do you think were the sources of these?

- d What dramatic example is given to support the idea that 'imperialist propaganda' was able to persuade capitalists to invest in very unpromising enterprises?
- * e Given three main schools of thought on imperialism – Marxist, Liberal and Imperialist – to which of these do you think Frankel's ideas most closely approximate?

7 Two opposing modern views

(a) Robinson and Gallagher, a modern refutation of traditional economic explanations of the scramble

Did new, sustained or compelling impulses towards African empire arise in British politics or business during the eighteen eighties? The evidence seems unconvincing. The late Victorians seem to have been no keener to rule and develop Africa than their fathers. The businessman saw no greater future there, except in the south; the politician was as reluctant to expand and administer a tropical African empire as the mid-Victorians had been; and plainly parliament was no more eager to pay for it. British opinion restrained rather than prompted ministers to act in Africa. Hence they had to rely on private companies or colonial governments to act for them. . . .

West Africa seemed to offer better prospects of markets and raw materials than East Africa and the Upper Nile; yet it was upon these poorer countries that the British government concentrated its efforts. . . . No expansion of commerce prompted the territorial claims in Uganda, the east coast and the Nile Valley. . . . Territorial claims here reached out far in advance of the expanding economy. . . . Their [ministers'] territorial claims were not made for the sake of African empire or commerce as such. They were little more than by-products of an enforced search for better security in the Mediterranean and the East. It was not the pomps or profits of governing Africa which moved the ruling *elite*, but the cold rules for national safety handed on from Pitt, Palmerston and Disraeli.

According to the grammar of the policy-makers, their advances in Africa were prompted by different interests and circumstances in different regions. Egypt was occupied because of the collapse of the Khedivial *regime*. The occupation went on because the internal crisis remained unsolved and because of French hostility which the occupation itself provoked. Britain's insistent claims in east Africa and the Nile Valley and her yielding of so much in west Africa were largely contingent upon the Egyptian occupation and the way it affected European relations. In southern Africa, imperial intervention against the Transvaal was designed above all to uphold and restore the imperial influence which economic growth, Afrikaner nationalism and the

35 Jameson fiasco had overthrown. Imperial claims in the Rhodesias, and
to a lesser extent in Nyasaland, were contingent in turn upon Cape
colonial expansion and imperial attempts to offset the rise of the
Transvaal. The times and circumstances in which almost all these claims
and occupations were made suggest strongly that they were called forth
40 by crises in Egypt and south Africa, rather than by positive forces
arising in Europe.

To be sure, a variety of different interests in London – some religious
and humanitarian, others strictly commercial or financial, and yet
others imperialist – pressed for territorial advances. . . . In west Africa,
the traders called for government protection; in Uganda and Nyasaland,
45 the missionaries and anti-slavery groups called for annexation;
in Egypt, the bondholders asked government to rescue their
investments. . . .

. . . Britain's strength depended upon the possession of India and
preponderance in the East, almost as much as it did upon the British
50 Isles. Therefore, her position in the world hung above all upon safe
communications between the two. . . . The decisive motive behind
late-Victorian strategy in Africa was to protect the all-important stakes
in India and the East.

Why could the late-Victorians after 1880 no longer rely upon
55 influence to protect traditional interests? What forced them in the end
to imperial solutions? The answer is to be found first in the nationalist
crises in Africa itself . . . and only secondarily in the interlocking
of these crises in Africa with rivalries in Europe. . . . The compelling
conditions for British advances in tropical Africa were first called into
60 being, not by the German victory of 1871, nor by Leopold's interest in
the Congo, nor by the petty rivalry of missionaries and merchants, nor
by a rising imperialist spirit, nor even by French occupation of Tunis in
1881 – but by the collapse of the Khedivial *regime* in Egypt.

65 From start to finish the partition of tropical Africa was driven by the
persistent crisis in Egypt. When the British entered Egypt on their own,
the Scramble began.

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

(b) Jean Stengers challenges the central theme of Robinson and Gallagher

The Times wrote (in 1889) an admirable leader which summed up the
whole matter.

70 'Our large charter companies ought to be able to draw into their nets
most that is worth having in Central Africa. [It was essential that they
should.] Whatever the commercial and economic value of Central
Africa may be, there are other reasons why England should keep

herself well to the front in its partition. We cannot, with so many eager competitors in the field, afford to neglect any country likely to yield new fields for commercial enterprise; nor can we afford to allow any sections even of the Dark Continent to believe that our Imperial prestige is on the wane. . . .

75

This urgency stemming from public opinion, the implicit protest against the idea that England could be 'left behind in the race for possession of the equatorial regions of Africa', the pressure which those directing affairs felt from that point on, all seem to have been very poorly perceived by Robinson and Gallagher.

80

Immersed in the events of 1890, they speak on the contrary, of a 'popular dislike of African entanglement', and write: 'Public opinion in the broadest sense was still indifferent to the issues of tropical Africa'. This they see in the very same year that Salisbury found himself overwhelmed, in his African policy, by a veritable wave of excitement . . . an excitement which a contemporary termed a 'craze' . . .

85

But, one might ask, were the policy makers also subject to contagion of this truly imperialistic spirit? Robinson and Gallagher portray them to us as apparently reasoning, weighing and calculating with a coldness worthy of their predecessors. Did they not in certain cases let themselves become caught up in this conquering spirit? One of the scenes which is lacking in *Africa and the Victorians* is that of the visit to Hatfield, in July 1888, by the young vice-consul Johnston, and his conversation with Salisbury, from which emerged an entire plan for the partition of Africa. . . .

90

95

Furthermore, were the principal authors of the Partition, the actual policy makers, really those London statesmen whose actions and gestures are so closely studied by Robinson and Gallagher? Were not the real leaders those who headed the imperialist movement and left their mark on it, both in London and even more so in Africa itself – men such as Mackinnon, Goldie, Rhodes and Johnston? And was there not evident among these men who, more than any others, produced this imperialism, an element of passion? A French diplomat who met Cecil Rhodes in February 1891 was struck by the 'sacred fire which burned within him' . . .

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105

Finally, let us return to Egypt. Without the occupation of Egypt would things have happened as they did happen in Africa south of the Sahara? Would French public opinion have embraced the cause of Brazza as it did if the Egyptian question had not given it a desire and a need for revenge? . . .

110

But the scramble also sprang from economic causes. There can be no possible doubt: with or without the Egyptian problem economic factors would, certainly sooner or later, have started the movement.

115

. . . from the moment that the economic penetration of the Black

Continent began, there had been the strongest temptation for each country to keep for itself advantages of one kind or another in the regions which were opened up. The march towards the interior was to be almost necessarily synonymous, in many cases, with the acquisition of economic privileges.

120
125 Leopold II had been in this respect the great precursor. In 1877, confiding in a Belgian diplomat, he wrote: 'We must be both prudent and ready to act . . . in order to procure for ourselves a piece of this magnificent African cake.' . . .

130 But whether this was done by Leopold II in the first phase, or by Goldie, or by the French on the Benoue, Africa, or, rather, the interior market of Africa in the 1880's, began to be taken over by commercial competition which would have engendered the scramble in any case, even if Egypt had not existed.

Jean Stengers, 'Nationalism and Imperialism: an alternative view', in P. J. M. McEwan, *Nineteenth Century Africa* (Oxford University Press, 1968)

Questions

- a On what main points does Jean Stengers disagree with Robinson and Gallagher?
- * b With what justification do Robinson and Gallagher highlight the British occupation of Egypt as the key event in the scramble for Africa? What reason do they give for Britain's acquisition of Egypt and to what extent is their explanation plausible?
- c In what ways and with what success do Robinson and Gallagher counter the assertions of *The Times* and King Leopold II that imperialism was driven by economic forces?
- d What differences do Robinson and Gallagher see between the mid and late-Victorians? Do you think the distinction is justified or important?

8 Statistics of Empire

(a) Export tonnage of cocoa in the Gold Coast and Nigeria (by five-year averages)

YEAR	GOLD COAST	NIGERIA
1892-1896	12	32
1897-1901	329	144
1902-1906	4,711	462
5 1907-1911	20,934	2,375
1912-1916	58,306	6,002
1917-1921	118,290	17,294
1922-1926	205,858	37,017

Source: 'Report of the Commission on the marketing of West African Cocoa', in sessional papers, 1937-38, Cmd. 584, IX, 191, p 16

(b) Total value of exports to the U.K., 1865-1879 (in £'s)

	1865	1866	1867	1868	1869
10 Lagos	96248	148443	-	244396	365161
Gold Coast	-	-	-	121397	203470
Sierra Leone	-	73874	69093	66077	140042
Gambia	29823	19201	34305	33712	-
	1870	1871	1872	1873	1874
15 Lagos	298939	357260	247981	229161	283957
Gold Coast	19764	155423	235228	-	-
Sierra Leone	81456	152599	122944	101830	131656
Gambia	22183	24505	19290	15176	32082
	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879
20 Lagos	270975	265228	not stated	254989	221620
Gold Coast	240819	352505	268722	297523	305069
Sierra Leone	113060	79966	103565	128934	65215
Gambia	16831	17472	18580	15082	16522

Source: *Parliamentary Papers* 1881, XCIV, Statistical Tables

(c) Value of imports from the U.K., 1865 to 1879 (in £'s)

	1865	1866	1867	1868	1869	
25	Lagos	59126	128740	–	224829	290622
	Gold Coast	–	–	–	95361	178512
	Sierra Leone	–	200265	224798	223986	219963
	Gambia	67915	64825	104367	67087	–

	1870	1871	1872	1873	1874	
30	Lagos	272085	299670	267725	189375	269128
	Gold Coast	156065	179978	177313	–	–
	Sierra Leone	212024	243034	332518	39477	341611
	Gambia	45464	39733	43100	58098	63776

	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	
35	Lagos	330822	326779	397457	307946	271780
	Gold Coast	270152	364730	244420	303040	273455
	Sierra Leone	252884	206393	302237	382599	280877
	Gambia	80996	41747	43987	81966	91611

Source: *Parliamentary Papers*, 1881, XCIV, Statistical Tables

(d) Trade and revenue of Lagos (in £'s, round figures)

	Imports	Exports	Revenue	Debt	
40	1871	392,000	590,000	45,000	14,000
	1881	334,000	460,000	116,000	716
	1890	501,000	595,000	56,000	none
	1895	816,000	986,000	142,000	none
	1900	830,000	885,000	211,000	1,000,000

Source: *Parliamentary Papers*, various 1884–1901, quoted in Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians* (1961), p 387

(e) Statistics for Royal Niger Company's Territories (in £'s)

	Years	Revenue	Expenditure	Imports	Exports
45	1887	42,396	71,324	73,819	223,450
	1888	55,771	73,830	120,878	230,073
	1889	57,652	82,870	139,465	260,846
	1890	62,430	92,258	180,692	260,846
50	1891	89,667	107,975	224,729	335,000
	1892	103,155	107,115	181,012	341,800
	1893	110,756	99,255	159,989	405,935
	1894	74,160	104,001		
	1895	87,806	108,963		
55	1896	102,330	117,905	} 'cannot be stated'	
	1897	94,045	135,637		
	1898	113,305	135,093		

Source: *Parliamentary Papers* 1901, LXXXVI, 988

(f) Value of British trade via the Cape of Good Hope and the Suez Canal in 1878 (in £'s)

	To or from	via Cape	via Suez Canal
60	India, China and the East	59,033,000	54,416,000
	Australasia	21,525,000	11,244,000
	South Africa	10,794,000	—
	Totals	91,352,000	65,660,000

Source: *1st report of the Royal Commission on Colonial Defence*, 3 Sept. 1881, Colonial Office, 812/38

(g) British trade with tropical Africa before and after the Partition (in £1000's as annual average)

	1. Total Exports	2. Exports to Trop. Africa	3. Total Imports	4. Imports from Trop. Africa
65	1877-79	194,427	1,249	375,394
	1898-1901	267,266	3,062	500,161
				1,805
				2,572

Source: W. Schlote, *British Overseas Trade from 1700 to 1930's*, 1952, quoted in Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians* (1961), p 51

Questions

- a Which of these extracts gives the most convincing support to the thesis of Robinson and Gallagher that the scramble for Africa hinged upon the strategic importance of routes to India? Give reasons for your answer.

- b* Using extracts *b* and *c* assess which of the British West African territories was most successful. Give your reasons.
- c* What does extract *d* tell us about the balance of trade between Britain and Lagos? Which interpretation given in this chapter do these figures tend to support?
- d* Using extract *e* (i) state in which year the R.N.C. made a cash surplus on revenue over expenditure; (ii) draw a bar graph illustrating revenue, expenditure, imports and exports; (iii) does the graph draw you to any obvious conclusions?
- e* By comparing extract *f* with the statistics in extracts *a–e* what do you discover about the relative size of Britain's commercial involvement in Africa compared to that with other parts in the world?
- f* Look at extract *g* and work out the % ratio of columns 2–1 and 4–3. What conclusion does this lead you to about the importance of Britain's African trade?

Answer to question c on pp 85-6

Likely reconstruction of torn letter to Jameson from members of the Reform Committee. N.B. Italics represent fragments of the letter that were never found.

Dear Dr.

The rumour of *massacre in Johannesburg* that started you to *our* relief was not true. *We are all right and are*, feeling intense. We have armed a lot of men. Shall be very glad *when we come* to see you. *We are* not in possession *of the town*. *I shall send out some men to ?? . . .*
You are a fine fellow.

Yours ever,

F.R. (Col. Francis Rhodes)

'We will all drink a glass along o' you.'

L.P. (Lionel Phillips)

31st, 11.30. Kruger has asked for *some of us* to go over and treat; armistice for *24 hours agreed* to. My view is that they are in a funk *now* at Pretoria, and they were wrong to agree from here.

F.R.