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978-0-521-82453-8 - The Lion and the Springbok: Britain and South Africa since the Boer War

Ronald Hyam and Peter Henshaw

Excerpt

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1 The uneasy special relationship: dynamics and divergencies

Of all the regions of the world where imperial Britain sought to exert influence, none exhibited more contradictions, and therefore such intractable dilemmas and frustrations, as South Africa. Cape Colony was conquered from the Dutch in 1806 and retained in 1815 because of its strategic importance on the route to India. Control of the hinterland inevitably followed. Britain thus acquired a foreign settler community of some 40,000, who resented a more intrusive government than they were used to and doctrines of race relations which seemed to them wrong-headed. Many Boers trekked into the interior from the 1830s, determined to assert their right to a quiet sweet life (*lekke lewe*) of their own choosing, free from interference, and to preserve what they regarded as 'proper relations between master and servant'.¹ The fundamental constitution (*grondwet*) of the South African Republic (Transvaal) made their intransigent Bantu policy all too plain (clause 9): 'The people will admit no equalising (*gelijkstelling*) between the white and coloured inhabitants whether in church or state' (February 1858). It was not simply that the Boers would not accept or admit black *equality* (for which the word would have been *gelijkheid*), but, more uncompromisingly, no assimilation, no *making equal* or treating *as if equal*.² Treks enormously enlarged the area of contact and potential conflict on the highveld with spirited and sometimes highly mobile African chiefdoms determined to resist subjection. In 1879 at Isandhlwana the Zulu inflicted humiliating defeat on a contingent of the British army, although the Zulu were unable to prevent the destruction of their kingdom. The threat of a major African uprising thereafter loomed ominously in the background and further complicated relations between barely compatible white communities. Africans were seen overwhelmingly as 'the Other', but despite this some Africans sought imperial support or protection against local oppression.

Although British settlers had arrived in the Eastern Cape in 1820, South African conditions were not attractive to emigrants in the decades which

¹ G. M. Theal, *History of South Africa, from 1828 to 1846* (London, 1904), pp. 266–7 for manifesto of Piet Retief, 22 Jan. 1837; for the latest account, N. Etherington, *The Great Treks: the transformation of Southern Africa, 1815–1854* (London, 2001).

² P. Mason, *An essay on racial tension* (London, 1954), p. 85.

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followed. Until the discovery of diamonds in 1867 and gold in 1886, South Africa's economic future looked bleak, and even the maintenance of viable European-style states in the interior was in doubt. British policy-makers were always perplexed as to what to do. Withdrawal without first providing some sort of collaborative structure (perhaps through federation) would imperil strategic and humanitarian interests. Gladstone came to the conclusion that South Africa was an insoluble problem. In these circumstances, it is hard not to accept the validity of Jan Smuts's critique of British rule and intervention in South Africa as a perfidious record of duplicity and fraud, violence and vacillation, by an alien, remote, and, in its 'native policy', quite possibly hypocritical government, a record which he summed up in the title of his polemic as *A century of wrong* (1899). Many well-informed English observers agreed with him: men like the Anglican archdeacon Augustus Wirgman, who described the British handling of the Transvaal as 'a series of miserable blunderings and tactless ineptitudes'.³ There were in fact five formal changes in British relations with the Transvaal in a little over fifty years (six if you include an adjustment made in 1884): recognised as independent in 1852; annexed in 1877 (as a prelude to a projected federal reconstruction of South African states); self-government restored (subject to a notoriously undefined British 'suzerainty') in 1881; annexed again in wartime, 1900; responsible self-government restored again in 1906. Similar patterns of maddening uncertainty can be traced, for example, in relations with the African kingdom of Basutoland, of particular concern to the neighbouring Orange Free State: protection status refused in 1866; granted in 1868, transferred to the Cape government in 1871; resumed in 1884.

British and Boer communities had always sat uneasily together. In 1880 the British blundered into a Transvaal war, and in 1881 the Boers defeated them at the battle of Majuba Hill ('the hill of the doves', beautifully onomatopoeic), and forever thereafter taunted their opponents about it. Relations got worse as the mineral revolution brought in more money-making British immigrants. These thrusting Uitlanders (outsiders, denied the vote), who created Johannesburg and the Witwatersrand mines, gave deep offence to highly conservative, religious Boers, 'whose standards could not be measured by those of Birmingham or Threadneedle Street'.⁴ The Boers were essentially unsophisticated Calvinist farmers, who had few schools and no higher education as yet. President Kruger refused to allow postal pillar-boxes in Pretoria on the grounds that town-dwellers should not have facilities denied to those in rural areas – an attitude the British found incomprehensible. Boer trust in imperial government was irretrievably

³ A. T. Wirgman, *Storm and sunshine in South Africa, with some personal and historical reminiscences* (London, 1922), p. 79.

⁴ C. W. de Kiewiet, *The anatomy of South African misery* (Oxford, 1956), pp. 10–11, 24.

destroyed by the Jameson Raid of 1895 (an ill-considered incursion into the Transvaal meant to spark off an uprising against Kruger's regime), and the cover-up which followed it.

A land with such a complex history of interaction between Black, Coloured, and Indian communities, and two diverse white groups, was never going to be free of controversial historical interpretation, not least in its external relations with the British overlord, six thousand miles away. And so we begin with an analysis of the modern historiography, and the ways in which this can be challenged.

I

Historiographical approaches

Since the 1960s, the dominant revisionist historiography has written an overall economic determinism (and several varieties of Marxism) into South African history. The distinctiveness of twentieth-century South Africa has been attributed by one of its leading historians to the 'imperatives of South Africa's capitalist development', to a history dominated 'to a very large extent' by the history of mining; and we are invited to believe that 'gold linked South Africa to the British empire'.⁵ The fundamental tenet of this type of approach is that British policy towards South Africa was mainly directed to the formation and preservation of a modern industrial infrastructure, in order to maintain vital British economic interests.⁶ Even historians who do not subscribe to this version of neo-Marxist analysis are inclined to ascribe governmental action, whether British or South African, to definite material interests, and underestimate the role of non-economic motives.⁷

⁵ S. Marks, 'Southern Africa' in J. M. Brown and W. R. Louis, eds., *Oxford history of the British empire*, vol. IV (Oxford, 1999), ch. 24, pp. 547 and 550; A. Atmore and S. Marks, 'The imperial factor in South Africa', *JICH* vol. 3 (1974), pp. 105–39. Two articles, S. Marks, 'Scrambling for South Africa: a review article', *JAH* vol. 23 (1982), pp. 97–113, and S. Marks and S. Trapido, 'Lord Milner and the South African state reconsidered' in M. Twaddle, ed., *Imperialism, the state and the Third World* (London, 1992), represent a considerable retreat from the excesses of earlier formulations, as in S. Marks and S. Trapido, 'Lord Milner and the South African state', *History Workshop Journal* vol. 8 (1979), pp. 50–80, but the central contention remains the same: 'focus on the nature of the British economy'.

⁶ H. Wolpe, 'Capitalism and cheap labour power in South Africa, from segregation to apartheid', *Economy and Society* vol. 1 (1972), pp. 425–56, partly repr. in W. Beinart and S. Dubow, eds., *Segregation and apartheid in twentieth-century South Africa* (London and New York, 1995), ch. 3, pp. 60–90; F. Johnstone, *Class, race and gold: a study of class relations and racial discrimination in South Africa* (London, 1976).

⁷ G. R. Berridge, *Economic power in Anglo-South African diplomacy: Simonstown, Sharpeville and after* (London, 1981) and *South Africa, the colonial powers and 'African Defence': the rise and fall of a white entente, 1948–1960* (London, 1992).

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To make a contribution to the challenging of these simplistic propositions is the aim of the present project. It is based on testing them against an intensive exploration of the British archival record. Once this is begun, it becomes immediately obvious that such notions bear little relation to the way governments think, or to the actual preoccupations of British policy-makers. Our alternative approach to the complex and uneasy special relationship between Britain and South Africa provides a place for the economic dimension, whilst widening the perspective to restore political, strategic, geopolitical, diplomatic, ethical, and socio-cultural considerations to their appropriate place. Thus we find ourselves taking issue with two historical approaches: (1) those which are based on economic determinism, but also those which neglect or over-play and thus misinterpret the economic dimension, and (2) those which are based on overly speculative or theory-bound work which neglects essential archive evidence and thus misinterprets the way the British government behaved. We are not attacking methodological diversity, only interpretations which are plainly wrong.

No doubt this stance makes us 'empiricist' historians, a label which is not usually employed in a complimentary sense. But while we are uncommitted to any of the grander theoretical positions, this does not mean that we have any claim to be free of presuppositions or bias. Realistically, no historian can cope simply by hoping high-mindedly to go ideologically unencumbered 'where the evidence leads', since the bits of evidence which get investigated are subjectively selected. It is a complete delusion to suppose 'that any given body of material would suggest all the concepts necessary to interpret it', and it is impossible to expect to ask only such questions as arise *out* of the evidence, since no-one can ever discover what all the evidence is.⁸ For no historians is this more true than those working on twentieth-century imperial history and international relations, where the quantity of surviving British evidence is so massive. Accordingly, all any of us can do is to put questions of our own choosing to a part of the evidence, the portion which, speculatively, seems likely to be interesting or significant. Our own particular interest is in issues of 'high policy' at the ministerial level of government, and our theoretical bias is towards a belief in 'the primacy of geopolitics', the importance of strategy and prestige in policy-making and inter-state relations.⁹

Such a position arises, of course, out of our understanding of the nature of British government – perhaps of all government. State decisions are not taken by trends, or abstract phenomena, but by a few individuals acting in very small groups. Governments – whether village elders, oligarchs, politicians, or

⁸ See the trenchant criticism of G. R. Elton's *The practice of history* by Betty Behrens, *HJ* vol. 12 (1969), pp. 190–3.

⁹ R. Hyam, 'The primacy of geopolitics: the dynamics of British imperial policy, 1763–1963', *JICH* vol. 27 (1999), pp. 27–52, repr. in R. D. King and R. W. Kilson, eds., *The statecraft of British imperialism: essays in honour of Wm. Roger Louis* (London and Portland, OR, 1999).

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fighting-service chiefs, and their various advisers – are by definition elites. All elites – again, almost by definition – have their own particular ‘cosmologies’, ways of looking at the world and interpreting their responsibilities within a bureaucratic tradition. In Britain the relevant training of most government ministers for ruling an empire or playing the world stage has always been minimal. The members of the British elite, drawn in part from the aristocracy and upper classes for a long period of time, and mostly with an Oxbridge education mainly classical in emphasis, were amateurs. Many had some experience of large-scale farming and local administration, and Lord Palmerston was not alone in trusting to the simple homely principle that looking after world-wide British interests was merely a problem of estate-management writ large. Mostly this elite understood the basic principles of survival-politics, but not the economic technicalities of say, monetary policy. They were frequently disdainful of business and industrial interests, highly resistant to the attempts of pressure-groups to persuade them. Some government decisions might coincide with what commercial lobbies or mining magnates or ‘gentlemanly capitalists’ wanted, but this emphatically does not mean that they were genuinely influential, still less instrumental, in bringing those decisions about. (This point has an important bearing on the interpretations of the outbreak of war between Britain and South Africa in 1899, and we shall return to it.)

It is worth reminding ourselves that ministers of the Crown do not think in or talk the language of social science theorists, and are unlikely to know their Foucault from their Weber. It is important not to overestimate the sophistication of their decision-making. J. A. Spender, an astute and well-connected Edwardian journalist, the biographer of two prime ministers, believed that ‘the motives of politicians are few and simple, and the action they will and must take in given circumstances can nearly always be deduced with certainty by those who know the rules of the game’.¹⁰

Unfortunately Spender did not spell out what those ‘rules’ were. However, we may be sure that government is mostly about response to immediate problems rather than the implementation of preconceived or long-term plans, and in the face of crisis ministers must concentrate on the essentials. Apart from holding on to office, these are primarily concerned with protecting ‘the national interest’. This is most obviously interpreted to mean the security of the state against attack or collapse. This is the realm of ‘high politics’, the most serious preoccupation of ministers, concerning especially their relations with other states, also pursuing their own national interests. The dynamics of this rarefied world – the very essence of what constitutes international relations – are frequently driven by something called prestige. What is prestige? Harold Nicolson, a British writer and diplomat, usefully defined it as ‘power based on reputation’, an amalgam of

¹⁰ J. A. Spender, *Life, journalism and politics* (London, 1927), vol. I, p. 113.

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the two, something which has to be acquired by power but can only be retained by reputation; prestige is thus more durable than power alone.¹¹ Estimates formed by rival states of another's power may determine action taken, and so all governments worry about prestige. This calculation had a particular relevance to the way the South African government evaluated whether from the mid-1950s Britain still had what Bismarck called *Bündnisfähigkeit*, the quality which makes for a worthwhile ally. And while it may at first sight seem implausible to ascribe to an Afrikaner nationalist regime any concern with international reputation, in the end they found they had to concede its imperatives in the face of sanctions and the increasing difficulties experienced in performing its desired role as a regional power (see Epilogue).

Almost all decision-making is a contested business. Advisers seldom agree. There can never be in 'the real world' any automatic application of theoretical solutions. People change their mind. Jockeying for position, personality conflicts or loyal allegiances, gut reactions and private moral belief-systems, can all modify expected outcomes. In 'the real world' the complexity of the various factors and factions to be taken into consideration make clear-cut, overwhelmingly supported conclusions difficult. Even prime ministers find themselves constrained, and with surprisingly little freedom of manoeuvre 'at the top'.¹² One of the most striking features of British Cabinet minutes is the rehearsal (seldom, alas, attributed to the individual ministers) of arguments put 'on the one hand', but 'on the other', or 'as against this'. Conclusions were often reached in the form 'the balance of advantage lies . . .'. Sometimes the Cabinet had to decide between different positions taken up by ministers advised by different government departments. Even when officials agreed, the Cabinet might reject, on strictly political grounds, what had been submitted inter-departmentally as objectively desirable. This happened in May 1950, when recommendations were made for dealing with the South-West Africa dispute at the United Nations (see chapter 7, pp. 156–7).

Ministerial understanding of South African personalities and politics relied heavily on reports from the high commissioner on the spot. When we speak of 'the British government' in respect of South African policy, the high commissioner must be understood as playing an essential role as part of that government. This is true whether we are looking at Sir Alfred Milner and the origins of the South African War, or Sir John Maud and the construction of prime minister Macmillan's 'wind of change' speech sixty years later.¹³ The extent to which

¹¹ H. Nicolson, *The meaning of prestige* (Rede Lecture, Cambridge, 1937). Compare an American secretary of state's definition: 'prestige is the shadow cast by power' (Dean Acheson, *Present at the creation: my years in the State Department*, London, 1969, p. 405).

¹² P. Hennessy, *The prime minister: the office and its holders since 1945* (London, 2000), p. 54.

¹³ For a detailed analysis of Maud's contribution to the speech, see R. Hyam and W. R. Louis, eds., *The Conservative government and the end of empire, 1957–1964* (BDEEP, London, 2000) intro., pp. xxxviii–xl.

a high commissioner might effectively influence the metropolitan government, however, depended largely on the degree of trust reposed in him. A high commissioner appointed by a previous government might be regarded with suspicion by his new political masters, and this might circumscribe his ability to carry his ideas into action. This happened with Lord Selborne from 1906 (see chapter 4). Interestingly, not a single high commissioner was ‘captured’ by local political society, in the way that successive governors of Kenya were seduced by the settlers; in South Africa there were no proconsular converts to apartheid. The high commissioner was essentially an intermediary, a proconsular link between metropolis and periphery. Before the Union, the high commissioner ‘worked as a half-way relay station that could charge up, or scale down, the impulses transmitted in either direction’.¹⁴ Thereafter, with South Africa becoming more and more an Afrikaner state, the high commissioner’s role became increasingly restricted to that of an imperial agent.

Any study of government policy must accept the ‘human agency’ of individuals, and not only consider carefully the input from the high commissioner, but also grapple with the detailed work of Whitehall departments. Disparaging scepticism about the value of studying ‘what one clerk said to another’ is to be deplored as the product of an unsound historical sense. Understanding the inwardness of a situation or policy in fact depends upon it. The power of the civil service to formulate or frustrate policy was something the National Party in South Africa after 1948 (or the African National Congress after 1994) was acutely aware of, hence the reconstruction of its senior levels. It is vital to study what policy-makers themselves thought they were trying to achieve. Anything else is but idle speculation, however clever or intellectually elegant in itself. No doubt it is tiresome (and at times boring) month after month, year after year, to make the trek to archives remote from home-base or inconveniently situated,¹⁵ to pore for hours over muddled batches of paper, disentangling rusty paper-clips from musty sheets, deciphering bottom-carbon-copies on flimsy paper, or to endure the miseries of churning the microfilm machine. For some scholars, no doubt, archival research is logistically too difficult or temperamentally uncongenial. Such must survive by their theorising, and hope to invent a concept which catches on. But history is too important to be left to the stay-at-home theorists. Intensive primary research is absolutely essential if history is not to succumb to the dangers of relying on abstract formulations, the prescriptions of theoretical models constructed around purely secondary literature. All too often theoretical analysis assumes that there is a precise set of static ‘givens’, when in ‘the real world’ all is fluid and confusing.¹⁶ On the other hand, the

¹⁴ J. Benyon, *Proconsul and paramountcy in South Africa: the High Commission, British supremacy and the sub-continent, 1806–1910* (Pietermaritzburg, 1980), p. 335.

¹⁵ An observation which applies with some force to the British Public Record Office at Kew.

¹⁶ As powerfully argued by Dan O’Meara, *Forty lost years: the apartheid state and the politics of the National Party, 1948–1994* (Randburg and Athens, OH, 1996), pp. 429–31.

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limitations of the archives have also to be recognised. Empathy with the dilemmas of government must not result in seeing things uncritically only from the government's point of view; nor must it be supposed that the written record will yield all the answers we should like. We have accordingly devoted two chapters (12 and 13) to media opinion and the 'representation' of public attitudes. Nevertheless, in-depth archival research such as we have undertaken is the fundamental, unavoidable, unrivalled, and only safe starting-point for all sustainable historical analysis.

Economic historians have exercised a powerful grip over all branches of history since the Second World War, and nowhere has this been more true than with respect to South Africa. A suspicious and sceptical generation was perhaps bound to look to material self-interest and entrepreneurial conspiracy for explanations in history. Concurrently, too, any alternative approach to empire history through 'geopolitics' – more or less invented by a British historical geographer, Sir Halford Mackinder, in the years before the First World War – had been fatally discredited by its association with Nazi and Fascist expansionist programmes in the 1930s, in which 'geographical imperatives were used to legitimise imperialism'.¹⁷ From the vantage-point of the early twenty-first century, however, it is high time to explore the explanatory potential of 'the primacy of geopolitics'. It is no part of our purpose to replace 'economic determinism' with 'geographical determinism'. Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out that South Africa's history and integration into the wider world has been at least as much shaped by its geographical location as by its Transvaal gold-mines. South Africa stands at the intersection of major global sea-routes, providing a vital link in 'the routes to the east' – which is why the British went there in the first place – and it commands access to two oceans, the Atlantic and the Indian, with an unrivalled surveillance of both, and it was of increasing importance as an air-transport base. These were factors of considerable significance throughout the Cold War, which formed the background to the Afrikaner nationalist regime of 1948 to 1989.¹⁸ Moreover, control of the hinterland, far to the north, has remained a salient geopolitical theme in South African history.

Our approach is both comprehensive and unusual. Most imperial historians since 1945 have not been preoccupied with South Africa, and most historians of South Africa have paid even less attention to the British connection. One notable exception in the latter category has been Shula Marks and her collaborators. We cannot, therefore, avoid commenting upon their interpretation of the relationship between Britain and South Africa. The first thing to say is that they have never succeeded in proving one of Marks's basic original claims: that there was a historically determinant link between the demands of

¹⁷ M. Bell, R. Butlin, and M. Heffernan, eds., *Geography and imperialism, 1820–1940* (Manchester, 1995), and G. Parker, *Western geopolitical thought in the twentieth century* (London, 1985).

¹⁸ O'Meara, *Forty lost years*, p. 476.

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mining magnates and British policy-making. Magnates might indeed support Sir Alfred Milner in the run-up to the South African War, but they did not in fact manipulate him. He used them, not vice versa. Both Chamberlain and Milner were antipathetic to the magnates, whose concerns they recognised were purely self-interested. They were not a monolithic group of British patriots, not a set of 'ideal prefabricated collaborators', but a cosmopolitan and heterogeneous collection, including many European Jews, who found their funds not just in Britain but throughout Western Europe. In 1906, the biggest group of twenty-six companies, known as 'Corner House' and including Wernher-Beit, held only 17 per cent of their share capital in Britain; perhaps 30 per cent was in France, and 9 per cent in Germany. Some were purely financial speculators, more interested in market operations than in gold production. Essentially they functioned as an international group of developers and speculators. The last thing the mining magnates wanted in 1899 was a war, least of all a war instigated and won by Britain. Their desire for political power was strictly limited. Their political stance was wholly unco-ordinated.¹⁹

The truth is that some sort of war might well have broken out in 1899 even if gold had never been discovered in the Transvaal in 1886.²⁰ The historic long-term causes driving the two sides apart pre-dated the discovery of gold. The war was above all a regional geopolitical conflict with international ramifications ('the estimate formed of our power and influence in our Colonies and throughout the world', as Chamberlain expressed it in 1899).²¹ These issues are examined in detail in chapter 2.

¹⁹ R. V. Kubicek, *Economic imperialism in theory and practice: the case of South African gold mining finance, 1886–1914* (Duke, NC, 1979), esp. pp. 177–204; A. A. Mawby, review of A. H. Duminy and W. R. Guest, eds., *Fitzpatrick, South African politician: selected papers, 1888–1906* (Johannesburg, 1976) in *JSAS* vol. 5 (1979), p. 257; M. Fraser and A. Jeeves, eds., *All that glittered: selected correspondence of Lionel Phillips, 1890–1924* (Cape Town, 1977); J. Butler, 'The gold mines and labour supply: a review article', *SAHJ* no. 18 (1986), pp. 93–7; R. V. Turrell, '"Finance . . . the governor of the imperial engine": Hobson and the case of Rothschild and Rhodes', *JSAS* vol. 13 (1987), pp. 417–32.

²⁰ For sound expositions of the 'role of gold' see A. Jeeves, 'Control of migratory labour in the South African gold mines in the era of Kruger and Milner', *JSAS* vol. 2 (1975), pp. 3–29; P. Richardson and J. J. Van-Helten, 'The gold mining industry of the Transvaal, 1886–1899' in P. Warwick, ed., *The South African War, 1899–1902* (London, 1980), ch. 1, pp. 18–36; and J. J. Van-Helten, 'Empire and high finance: South Africa and the international gold standard, 1890–1914', *JAH* vol. 23 (1982), pp. 529–48.

²¹ J. S. Marais, *The fall of Kruger's republic* (Oxford, 1961), p. 318. Essential reading on the origins of the war now also includes G. Cuthbertson and A. Jeeves, 'The many-sided struggle for Southern Africa, 1899–1902', *SAHJ* no. 41 (1999), pp. 2–21 (special issue: centennial perspectives on the South African War, 1899–1902); Iain R. Smith, *The origins of the South African War, 1899–1902* (London, 1996); A. N. Porter, 'The South African War (1899–1902): context and motive reconsidered', *JAH* vol. 31 (1990), pp. 43–57, and 'The South African War and the historians', *African Affairs* vol. 99 (2000), pp. 633–48; J. Butler, 'The German factor in Anglo-Transvaal relations' in P. Gifford and W. R. Louis, eds., *Britain and Germany in Africa: imperial rivalry and colonial rule* (New Haven: Yale University Press and London, 1967), pp. 179–214; N. G. Garson, 'British imperialism and the coming of the Anglo-Boer War', *South African Journal of Economics* vol. 30 (1962), pp. 140–53.

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Post-war, the basic position remained the same: the British government was not mesmerised by gold, and magnates and governments were frequently at cross-purposes. The Randlords were dependent on government rather than able to dictate to it. The London government, and the Botha–Smuts elite which succeeded it in the Transvaal, both disliked the magnates, and neither was manipulated or intimidated by them. Governments might arrive at some conclusions which suited the mine-owners, but they did so by different routes. Some decisions were fundamentally against the wishes of the mining magnates, such as increases in rates and taxes, and, most important of all, the curtailment in 1907 of the importation of Chinese labour, which had come to represent some 27 per cent of the total work-force in the mines. The reasons for its suspension were exclusively ethical: the taint of slavery. The Liberal government also tackled the problem of mining monopsony, that is, the collective recruiting monopoly, the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA), and for no other reason than an ideological objection to monopoly in all its forms. Nevertheless, magnates and politicians had to live together. Any government would be bound to have some working relationship with the leading industry of a country, and no South African government has ever wanted the mining industry to contract. If the British authorities up to 1910 were keen to build up mining, industrial, and commercial development, this was not an end in itself, but rather the means to a larger political objective. Milner needed to increase the revenues of growth industries, especially gold, in order to finance, as he hoped, a massive immigration of British settlers who would numerically swamp the Boers and through demography ensure British supremacy.²²

The ‘Marks-ist’ picture of Briton and Boer conspiring through and after the introduction of responsible government in the Transvaal and Orange Free State in 1906 and 1907, in an alliance of ‘maize and gold’ – enshrined as apparent orthodoxy in the *Cambridge history of Africa* – has to be rejected.²³ Trapido first suggested a commonality of interest between British Rand financiers and Boer farmers now beginning to grow maize for the export market in a big way. He postulated as an essential link in forging this alliance the granting of British government loans. Botha’s new Transvaal government received £5 million, half

²² D. Denoon, ‘The Transvaal labour crisis, 1901–1906’, *JAH* vol. 8 (1967), pp. 481–94, and ‘“Capitalist influence” and the Transvaal government during the Crown Colony period, 1900–1906’, *HJ* vol. 11 (1968), pp. 301–31, and *A grand illusion: the failure of imperial policy in the Transvaal Colony during the period of reconstruction, 1900–1905* (London, 1973); Benyon, *Proconsul and paramountcy in South Africa*, pp. 300–1; A. A. Mawby, ‘The political behaviour of the British population of the Transvaal, 1902–1907’ (PhD thesis, Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1969), and *Gold mining and politics – Johannesburg, 1900–1907: the origins of the old South Africa?* (2 vols., Lampeter, 2000).

²³ S. Trapido, ‘Landlord and tenant in a colonial economy: the Transvaal, 1880–1910’, *JSAS* vol. 5 (1978), pp. 26–58; S. Marks, ‘Southern and Central Africa, 1886–1910’ in R. Oliver and G. N. Sanderson, eds., *Cambridge history of Africa* vol. VI: 1870–1905 (Cambridge, 1985), p. 488.