

**PUPPET ON AN IMPERIAL STRING?
OWEN LANYON IN SOUTH AFRICA, 1875-1881**

by

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SUMMARY

This thesis is a study of British colonial policy in southern Africa in the 19th century. More specifically it looks at how British imperial policy, in the period 1875 to 1881, played itself out in two British colonies in southern Africa, under the direction of a British imperial agent, William Owen Lanyon. It sets Lanyon in the context of the frontiers and attempts to link the histories of the people who lived there, the Africans, Boers and British settlers on the one hand, and the histories of colonial policy on the other. In doing so it also unravels the relationship between Lanyon and his superiors in London and those in southern Africa.

In 1875 Owen Lanyon arrived in Griqualand West, where his brief was to help promote a confederation policy in southern Africa. Because of the discovery of diamonds some years earlier, Lanyon's administration had to take account of the rising mining industry and the aggressive new capitalist economy. He also had to deal with Griqua and Tlhaping resistance to colonialism. Lanyon was transferred to the Transvaal in 1879, where he was confronted by another community that was dissatisfied with British rule: the Transvaal Boers. Indeed, in Pretoria he was faced with an extremely difficult situation, which he handled very poorly. Boer resistance to imperial rule eventually came to a head when war broke out and Lanyon and his officials were among those besieged in Pretoria. In February 1881 imperial troops suffered defeat at the hands of Boer commandos at Majuba and Lanyon was recalled to Britain.

In both colonies Lanyon was caught up in the struggle between the imperial power and the local people and, seen in a larger context, in the conflict for white control over the land and labour of Africans and that between the old pre-mineral South Africa and the new capitalist order. He made a crucial contribution to developments in the sub-continent and it is remarkable that his role in southern Africa has thus far been neglected.

KEY TERMS:

British imperialism; British colonial policy; Imperial agent; Colonial Office control; Carnarvon's confederation scheme; African resistance to colonialism; Diamond mining (early); Land and labour policies (19th century); Griqualand West; British administration of the Transvaal, 1877-1881; Afrikaner nationalism; Anglo-Pedi relations; Pedi subjugation; First Anglo-Boer War.

ABBREVIATIONS

- Add MSS: Additional manuscripts, British Library, London
 ATC: Archives of the Administrator of the Transvaal Colony
 BLPES: British Library of Political & Economic Science, London
 BRIT: British Library, London
 C: numbering of British (imperial) Blue Books
 CA: Cape Archives, Cape Town
 CO: Archives of the British Colonial Office
 CP: Confidential Prints, British (imperial) White Books
 FA: Free State Archives, Bloemfontein
 GH: Government House (archival collections in Cape & Natal Archives)
 GLW: Archives of Griqualand West, Cape Archives
 GRO: Gloucestershire Record Office, Gloucester, England
 GS: Archives of the Government Secretary, Free State Archives
 HOVE: Central Library, Hove, England
 MSS Afr: African manuscript collection, Rhodes House, Oxford
 NA: Natal Archives, Pietermaritzburg
 OXF: Bodleian Library, Oxford University
 PRO: Public Record Office, Kew
 RH: Rhodes House Library, Oxford University
 SAL: South African Library, Cape Town
 TA: Transvaal Archives, National Archives, Pretoria

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Between pages 134 and 135

Sir William Owen Lanyon
Sir Henry Barkly
Sir Theophilus Shepstone
Sir Charles Warren
Sir Bartle Frere & Lanyon in Pretoria, 1879
General Sir Garnet Wolseley
Paramount Chief Sekhukhune
Sir William Bellairs

The use of these photographs from the National Archives, Pretoria, is gratefully acknowledged

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a study of British colonial policy in the melting-pot of the frontiers of the southern African interior in the 1870s and early 1880s. It examines imperial policies of the time through the prism of an individual, a British imperial agent, William Owen Lanyon. His role in two remote colonial possessions is examined from the year 1875, when he arrived in southern Africa to take up his appointment as administrator of Griqualand West, to 1881, when he was obliged to relinquish his position at the head of the administration in the Transvaal. He was then recalled to Britain and returned home in disgrace. The thesis investigates the interaction between Lanyon and the people of these two colonies – Africans, settlers, and Boers¹ – as well as his own complicated relations with the imperial policy-makers in Britain and his superiors in southern Africa. His attitude to those over whom he ruled and theirs to him was one of mutual dislike, often contempt, throughout his more than five years' service. The reasons for this and its implications will also be examined. Paradoxically Lanyon believed implicitly in imperial control but as will be seen, translated it into colonial prerogative in his policy-making in both Kimberley and Pretoria. This had the effect of weakening imperial authority and ultimately led to his failure as imperial relations with the Boers in the Transvaal deteriorated into war.

Put differently, was Owen Lanyon simply a puppet on an imperial string, an official whose actions were controlled by his imperial superiors? He had after all to work within parameters laid down by his superiors. This was particularly the case under Lord Carnarvon, who was the secretary of state for the colonies when Lanyon began his term of office in Griqualand West in 1875. Carnarvon promoted a policy of confederation at the time and appointed 'puppets' to further this specific policy. Lanyon, in this sense, can perhaps be seen as one of these puppets, although Bartle Frere, Theophilus Shepstone and Garnet Wolseley (in 1875), certainly cannot be classified as Carnarvon's puppets. When Sir Michael Hicks Beach took over from Carnarvon in the Colonial Office, Lanyon's role *vis a vis* the secretary of state changed. Hicks Beach upheld

¹ For an explanation of terms see below. In this thesis 'settlers' refers primarily to people of British origin but also includes immigrants from other countries, many of whom flocked to Kimberley when diamonds were discovered. The term Boer is used for people of Dutch origin.

the ideal of confederation in southern Africa but he was by no means as convinced about its merits as Carnarvon. Hicks Beach did not appoint Lanyon as a puppet in the Transvaal, but rather as someone who had the credentials to be a good administrator.

It will become clear that Lanyon was also an innovator, playing a crucial role in pointing the way to a thoroughly colonised southern Africa that was emerging at the time. It will be shown, in other words, that he was not merely carrying out imperial policy but was actively involved in relationships and struggles between imperial power, the settlers, the Africans and the Boers. It will also become clear that he was a key player in the developing conflict between the old pre-mineral southern Africa and the new aggressive capitalist political economy that was beginning to take shape after the discovery of diamonds. The subcontinent was poised for change and Lanyon, it will be argued, made a more significant contribution to developments on southern Africa in the 1870s and 1880s than has thus far been acknowledged.

As a British colonial agent, Lanyon received his directives from the Colonial Office in London, although these filtered down to him through successive high commissioners based in Cape Town and later, in Pietermaritzburg. Moreover, the British possessions in which Lanyon served as administrator were central to the development of Britain's strategies in South Africa during the years he was at their helm. So it is hardly surprising that more often than not the directives he received were fairly explicit. In this sense Lanyon's freedom of action was undoubtedly limited. But this was not the whole picture. He also had to implement these instructions in accordance with changing local conditions. He was in effect buffeted on all sides by pressures and restraints.

In Griqualand West Lanyon was given more freedom to act than in the Transvaal, but his task was a difficult one. The forces of embryonic capitalism and the dynamics of production after the discovery of diamonds in 1867, made considerable demands on his abilities as a local imperial agent. Taking over from Richard Southey, he had to redefine the state's role in the new mining economy. He had to cope with a rebellious digger community, avaricious merchants and a dramatic drop in the price of diamonds which threatened to put his administration even further into the red. After his first year in Kimberley, Lanyon wrote plaintively to his father:

No one who lives at home can form any conception of the difficulties and dangers which surround the driver of a coach like Griqualand. There is as great a difference betwixt an old colony and this, as there

is between driving a tramway car and taking a coach across a country where there are no roads or established routes. And the whole work falls on the driver.²

This thesis will argue that, despite his growing unpopularity, he made good progress in Griqualand West and his years in the colony were perhaps the most significant of his southern African career. It will be shown that he played a definitive role in the making of African policy, regulating the labour force and expediting the growth of monopoly capitalism in the diamond-mining industry. And in a military campaign in 1878 he commanded the imperial troops that quelled the resistance of the Griqua and Tlhaping to British rule.

In March 1879, Lanyon was instructed to relocate to the Transvaal. This was hardly a move to be relished. There was an atmosphere of simmering unrest in virtually all sectors of the population, with Africans chafing under colonial overlordship. Britain's annexation of the South African Republic (ZAR) two years before had also woken a slumbering Afrikaner nationalism among the scattered Boer community. The Boers were resentful of British rule and it was not long before mutual distrust and a thinly veiled hatred developed between them and the new administrator. It will be shown that in the Transvaal, at least until April 1880 when there was a change in government in Britain, Lanyon's freedom of action was indeed restricted. At this time, more than at any other, he can be described as a puppet on an imperial string. He was hamstrung by a lack of money, was subject to crippling legislative restrictions and had to wait for Colonial Office approval for constitutional reform. In addition he was subject for six months to the overbearing authority of Garnet Wolseley. It was only after Wolseley left, and Colley had succeeded him as high commissioner, that Lanyon was released from suffocating control. Thereafter he reported directly to the secretary of state rather than through Colley.

However, the thesis will argue that it was Lanyon's comparative freedom, the loosening of the imperial string under Liberal Party rule, which proved fatal to his southern African career. Indeed it marked the end of his career in any civil capacity. Lanyon was granted far more latitude in the Transvaal from April 1880 and began to exercise it almost immediately. He implemented legislative reform and reaffirmed his presiding presence in the making of African policy by

² Transvaal Archives, National Archives of South Africa, Pretoria (hereafter TA), A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 23 October 1876.

formalising colonial control over the Pedi. With the Boers he was, however, far less successful. Complacency in his own ability and that of the imperial army which backed his autocratic rule proved to be a dangerous combination. This thesis will make an assessment not only of Lanyon's contributions but also of the reasons for his failure and ultimate recall. It was then that imperial control was exerted in the fullest sense and Lanyon was unceremoniously removed from the southern African imperial stage.

It is only necessary to mention in passing that some historians, at their most hegemonic in the 1970s and 1980s were highly critical of purely political and national histories, including studies which made use of an uncontextualised biographical approach. They insisted that as capitalism and early industrialisation gathered momentum it was economic forces, rather than the role of the individual, that dictated the course of South African history. The claim was made that many of the studies of imperial policy in South Africa over-emphasised the importance of the formal imperial framework and the 'personal preoccupations' of individual policy-makers.³ In doing so, these historians have been accused of losing sight of the primacy of economic imperatives which underpinned such policies. But as Colin Webb puts it in an incisive counter-argument, while it is agreed that the values of individuals are shaped by the societies of which they are part, and that the 'underlying system of production' of these societies is undeniably important in defining societal values, its role should not be over-played. He pleads instead for a more personalised type of history in which 'individual will and intelligence' are carefully scrutinised.⁴

Bearing this debate in mind, the importance of the dynamic forces engendered by the mineral revolution is neither denied nor neglected in this thesis. The imperial records are certainly still there, but I try to interrogate them in terms of the experiences of those who were not policy makers. While readily accepting that the political cannot be divorced from the economic and the social, this study of imperial policy focuses primarily on their *interaction*, albeit through the experiences and reflections of an individual imperial agent. As Christopher Saunders has put it in his discussion of the work done by social historians, who in the 1980s began to turn to studies

³ A Atmore & S Marks, 'The imperial factor in South Africa in the nineteenth century: towards a reassessment, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 3(1), 1974, pp 120-129.

⁴ C de B Webb, 'The origins of the war: problems of interpretation' in AH Duminy & CC Ballard, *The Anglo-Zulu War: new perspectives* (Pietermaritzburg, 1981), pp 8, 10-11.

of South Africa's more recent past,

they allowed room for human agency and did not see state policies as only impositions from above – the mere *diktat* of capital – [and] were able to point to how whites had often been divided, and how Africans had helped determine the way they were ruled ... The best of such work always related individual lives to broader social processes, so opening new perspectives on the changing experience of the majority.⁵

A similar social-history approach is adopted in this thesis. It looks at the society and economy of the communities living in Griqualand West and in the Transvaal and studies their interrelationship and interaction during Lanyon's two terms of office. It begins with an examination of the processes of social change within the societies living near the confluence of the Orange and Vaal Rivers in the 1870s – the very place where and time when southern African communities of every class and ethnic identity were plunged into the maelstrom of the mineral revolution. Here the Griqua and Tlhaping people came under Lanyon's sway and he also had to deal with the mining community. When he moved to the Transvaal it was the Pedi polity that he put under colonial control and he struggled, without success, against the resistance of the Transvaal Boers. In each case the reactions to and interactions of communities with British rule will be examined.

Imperial history is coming back into vogue in South Africa. The proliferation of social histories of African societies and studies of the dynamics of proletarianisation which were in fashion in the 1980s, have given way in post-democratic South Africa to Afrocentric forays and theoretical studies on the making of identity. But there is also a perceptible drift back towards our imperial roots and the making of both colonial and modern South Africa in the work of Ross, Keegan, Dubow and Lambert on South Africanism.⁶

It is not the intention of the thesis to offer a 'Life and Times' biography of Owen Lanyon. It is thus unnecessary to justify what might at first glance be seen as a biographical approach in this

⁵ C Saunders, *The making of the South African past: major historians on race and class* (Cape Town & Johannesburg, 1988), pp 184-185. For examples of this type of history and these historians, Saunders points to the works in S Marks & R Rathbone (eds), *Industrialisation and social change in South Africa: African class formation, culture and consciousness 1870-1930* (London, 1988).

⁶ R Ross, *Status and respectability in the Cape Colony, 1750-1870: a tragedy of manners* (Cambridge, 1999); J Lambert, 'South African British? Or dominion South Africans? The evolution of an identity in the 1910s and 1920s', *South African Historical Journal*, 43, 2000.

fresh examination of the ‘imperial factor’ in southern Africa. The last decade has seen historiographical interest swinging back to viewing individuals as important in their own right as agents of change. In South Africa this is reflected in a proliferation of studies on political and military figures who dominated the imperial and colonial stage in South Africa in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These include works by Surridge on Kitchener,⁷ Torrance on Selborne,⁸ Lavin on Curtis⁹ and McCracken on Porter.¹⁰ Social history has also produced a fairly robust ‘biographical’ output in Guy’s Colenso, Mendelsohn’s Marks, Willan’s Plaatje and Van Onselen’s Maine, to mention but a few.¹¹

This thesis therefore tries, hopefully in a refreshing way, to harmonise three discrete historiographies – one on the high politics of colonial policy-making, another on the experiences of African communities under colonial rule, and a third on the rise of Boer nationalism as a response to British imperialism. I try to situate Lanyon within these domains of historical writing to show how important it is to connect colonial administration and African and Boer subjects in a more coherent, encompassing analysis. The study thus moves away from the conventional compartmentalisation of South African historiography which has segregated the past and in many ways under-represented second-tier administrators in their relationship with the whole gamut of colonial societies.

It is also appropriate to explain the terminology used in this study. Because it focuses on the way in which imperial policy was played out in two successive administratorships in British South

⁷ KT Surridge, *Managing the South African War, 1899-1902: politicians v generals* (Wodbridge, 1998).

⁸ DE Torrance, *The strange death of the liberal empire: Lord Selborne in South Africa* (Montreal, 1996). See also D Waley, *A liberal life: Sydney, Earl Buxton, 1853-1934, statesman, governor-general of South Africa* (Hassocks, 1999).

⁹ D Lavin, *From empire to international commonwealth: a biography of Lionel Curtis* (Oxford, 1995).

¹⁰ JL McCracken, *New light at the Cape of Good Hope: William Porter, the father of Cape liberalism* (Belfast, 1993).

¹¹ J Guy, *The heretic: a study of the life of John William Colenso, 1814-1883* (Johannesburg, 1983); R Mendelsohn, *Sammy Marks: ‘the uncrowned king of the Transvaal’* (Cape Town, 1991); B Willan, *Sol Plaatje: a biography* (Johannesburg, 1984); C van Onselen, *The seed is mine: the life of Kas Maine, a South African sharecropper, 1894-1985* (Cape Town, 1996). See also J Guy, *The view across the river: Harriette Colenso and the Zulu struggle against imperialism* (Oxford, 2002).

African states, a narrative and empirical methodology is followed. There is a difference of opinion in the literature about what to call the people of Dutch descent who had settled in the interior of southern Africa by the mid-19th century. Many of the more recently published works use the term *Afrikaner*¹² while others continue to refer to *Boer*.¹³ In my view the former is hardly appropriate until the last decade or so of the 1800s, and may well lead to confusion with Cape Afrikaners, to whom the term was indeed applicable earlier in the century. Accordingly, I have opted to use *Boer*, which is how they referred to themselves.¹⁴ Although it can be argued that the Boers were also settlers, *settlers* refers to British settlers (and those from other parts of the world) while the term *Boers* has been used to refer to those of Dutch origin. Because of the time-frame of this study the term *republicans* has been used more or less interchangeably with Boers. The terms *black* and *white*, which many modern-day historians, including Keegan and Marks and Atmore see as being ‘ideologically determined’¹⁵, are avoided except in isolated cases where they are more appropriate. *African* and *colonist* are used instead, but there are instances where the term *white* is used in the socio-political sense of a specific cultural construction.¹⁶

William Owen Lanyon is referred to throughout by the name he preferred himself: Owen Lanyon. Although his family addressed him in their letters as ‘Willie’ and he signed himself as such in his own letters to his father and sisters, Lanyon clearly disliked his first name. While in South Africa he signed all his other letters, both private and official, with the name W Owen Lanyon. When he was awarded the KCMG in 1880, he chose to be known as Sir Owen Lanyon. In a letter breaking the news of the award to his father, Sir Charles Lanyon, he confessed: ‘I intend to drop the William for I hate the name, so as far as the outside world is concerned I shall

¹² TJ Keegan, *Colonial South Africa and the origins of the racial order* (Cape Town, 1996) p ix, uses ‘Afrikaner’ as does K Shillington, *The colonisation of the southern Tswana 1870-1900* (Johannesburg, 1985), p xvii. Interestingly, Keegan uses ‘Boer’ in an earlier work, even for a chapter which deals with the history of the Transvaal right up to 1908: TJ Keegan, *Rural transformations in industrialising South Africa: the southern highveld to 1914* (Johannesburg, 1986), pp 20-50.

¹³ See for example S Marks & A Atmore (eds), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, ‘A note on orthography’, and LM Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, pp xiii-xiv.

¹⁴ PH Zietsman, *Die taal is gans die volk* (Pretoria, 1992), pp 4-9.

¹⁵ Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, p viii; Marks & Atmore, *Economy and society*, ‘A note on orthography’.

¹⁶ See Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, pp viii-ix.

be known as Sir Owen Lanyon.¹⁷

No study has as yet been made of the role of Lanyon in South Africa, but a great deal of material has been published on British colonial policy in southern Africa. Indeed, the debate on the nature and origins of British imperialism, as is proper in historical discourse, is an ongoing one. This will be reviewed in Chapter I in so far as it reflects the years 1875-1881, while Lanyon was in South Africa. In fact, the early 1870s are often seen as the beginning of 'new British imperialism', a period when there was a renewed urgency in relations between Britain and both her formal and informal empire in the subcontinent.

Apart from the many publications and periodical articles¹⁸ on the nature and origins of imperialism, which deal with what Bernard Porter calls the 'treacherous field' which has now 'been churned into a quagmire',¹⁹ there are three publications which discuss the implementation of British colonial policy in southern Africa in the 1870s, that have proved particularly useful in this study, namely the works by Richard Cope,²⁰ John Benyon²¹ and CF Goodfellow.²² In *Ploughshare of war*, Cope deals with the origins of the Anglo-Zulu war of 1879, providing a lucid and insightful study of imperial policy in South Africa in the 1870s. Of particular significance for the purposes of my own study, Cope focuses on the intricate relationships between the major role players, notably Shepstone, Cetshwayo, Carnarvon, Frere, Wolseley, Hicks Beach and Colley, all of whom were involved in the unfolding drama of British policy in the Transvaal during Lanyon's term of office. In the words of another historian, this book is 'essentially a study in the relationships between people from very different cultures and

¹⁷ TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 10 April 1880.

¹⁸ One of the most important of these, used widely in Chapter I and Chapter II below, is the article by Marks & Atmore, 'The imperial factor', cited above. For those that deal more specifically with imperial policy in the 1870s see for example the works by Cope and Etherington and others, mentioned in the source list.

¹⁹ B Porter, Review article: 'Imperialism and the scramble', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 9, 1980, p 76.

²⁰ RL Cope, *Ploughshare of war: the origins of the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879* (Pietermaritzburg, 1999).

²¹ J Benyon, *Proconsul and paramountcy in South Africa: the high commission, British supremacy and the subcontinent 1806-1910* (Pietermaritzburg, 1980).

²² CF Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African confederation 1870-1881* (Cape Town, 1966).

ideologies'²³ and it is in this field of social history that I have also drawn much that was significant.

Benyon's *Proconsul and paramountcy in South Africa* focuses on the line of control from Downing Street to the high commissioners in southern Africa. Although it gives important insight into the contributions in southern Africa of Barkly, Frere, Wolseley and Colley, it does not look closely at Lanyon's role. *Great Britain and South African confederation* by Goodfellow, although published nearly 40 years ago and now somewhat dated, is perhaps the standard work on Carnarvon's federation policy. However, the author has since been criticised for placing too much emphasis on the personal whims of Lord Carnarvon, the secretary of state, in the formulation of British policy in the 1870s. Goodfellow's emphasis on the strategic value of the Cape in imperial motives, a view also espoused by Robinson and Gallagher,²⁴ has also been questioned by specialists in the field.²⁵ Although Goodfellow sees confederation as being 'pursued by British governments in Southern Africa between 1870-1881',²⁶ my own view, which I shall defend in this study, is that Britain only actively pursued confederation for a shorter period. For all practical purposes the federation scheme and all ideas of annexing Zululand were abandoned in the wake of the overwhelming defeat of the British forces at the hands of the Zulu at Isandlwana in early 1879.²⁷

Another useful study for background information on British involvement in the period is an older work by an historian of the liberal school, CW de Kiewiet.²⁸ First published in 1937, *The*

²³ J Lambert, review of R Cope, *Ploughshare of war: the origins of the Anglo-Zulu War*, in *Kleio*, 32, 2000, p 112.

²⁴ R Robinson & J Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians: the official mind of imperialism* (London, 1969), p 59.

²⁵ See for example RL Cope, 'Local imperatives and imperial policy: the sources of Lord Carnarvon's South African confederation policy', *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 20(4), 1987, pp 601, 607-608.

²⁶ Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African confederation*, p 204.

²⁷ British (imperial) Blue Books were all provided with C reference numbers and are hereafter identified in this way; C2260, p 110, no 16, Hicks Beach – Frere, 20 March 1879.

²⁸ CW de Kiewiet, *The imperial factor in South Africa: a study in politics and economics* (London, 1965).

imperial factor in South Africa does not have the broader vision that this topic has acquired over the following decades. Nor does it take a strong theoretical or ideological position on any particular facet of imperialism. Then too, some of the views De Kiewiet expresses, such as that on the significance of humanitarian motives in Victorian imperial policy, have since been rejected.²⁹ However, some of his insights on imperialism are still relevant and they are written with such inimitable flair for expressing innuendoes and undercurrents, that the work cannot be ignored in any discussion of Britain in South Africa in the 19th century.

More recent articles and works on British imperialism in the 19th century include a number of excellent new publications. Volumes 3 and 5 of the *Oxford history of the British Empire*³⁰, covering the 19th century and the historiography of the empire respectively are basic reading, as are the works by Cain and Hopkins³¹ and Hyam³² and articles by Andrew Porter.³³ There is also a recent publication on the life of Wolseley³⁴ and an edited version of Kimberley's journals for the years 1862-1902 which appeared in 1997.³⁵

As far as Lanyon's role in Griqualand West (November 1875 to January 1879) is concerned, very little indeed has been written. JJ Oberholster's doctoral thesis, *Die anneksasie van Griekwaland-Wes*,³⁶ is more concerned with the way in which Britain contrived to annex the region in the early 1870s than with its subsequent administration as a Crown Colony. Nevertheless it does provide

²⁹ See for example, Atmore & Marks, 'The imperial factor', p 132; Cope, 'Local imperatives and imperial policy', p 601.

³⁰ A Porter (ed), *The Oxford history of the British Empire, vol 3: the nineteenth century* and R Winks & A Low (eds), *The Oxford history of the British Empire, vol 5: Historiography* (Oxford, 1999).

³¹ PJ Cain & AG Hopkins, *British imperialism: innovation and expansion, 1688-1914* (London, 1993).

³² R Hyam, *Britain's imperial century: a study of empire and expansion* (London 1993).

³³ A Porter, 'Religion and empire in the long nineteenth century, 1780-1914', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 1992 and "'Cultural imperialism" and Protestant missionary enterprise, 1780-1914', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 1997.

³⁴ H Kochanski, *Sir Garnet Wolseley: Victorian hero* (London, 1999).

³⁵ A Hawkins & J Powell (eds), *The journal of John Wodehouse, first Earl of Kimberley for 1862-1902* (Cambridge, 1997).

³⁶ JJ Oberholster, *Die anneksasie van Griekwaland-Wes* (Cape Town, Archives Yearbook for South African History [hereafter AYB], 1945).

some insight into Lanyon's role in events prior to the incorporation of Griqualand West into the Cape Colony. A doctoral thesis by IB Sutton³⁷ and an MA dissertation by M Broodryk³⁸ deal with the rebellion in Griqualand West in the period 1876-1879, throwing some light on Lanyon's military campaigns. They do not, however, link Lanyon's role as a militarist to his administrative duties in Kimberley or see his role as part of the imperial plan in southern Africa. There are also a number of excellent studies on the socio-economic history of the diamond mining industry, exploring issues such as labour recruitment, the compound system and the accumulation of diamond-mining capital. These are issues which were of great concern to Lanyon so these works have been gainfully used, but none of them pays more than passing mention to his particular role in Griqualand West.³⁹ A less erudite book by Brian Roberts offers a local history of Kimberley which lives up to the promise in Harry Oppenheimer's foreword to be 'lively and absorbing', and provides interesting detail on day-to-day life in the new mining town.⁴⁰

British involvement in the Transvaal Colony (1877 to 1881) in the years after the annexation of the South African Republic, has received more attention from historians, although no comprehensive study has yet been made which assesses Lanyon's particular role as administrator from March 1879 to April 1881, or which attempts to analyse the reasons why British policy in the colony failed. MC van Zyl's book on the protest movement mounted by the Transvaal republicans against British rule proved useful because it provides information on how the Boers felt about British domination and discusses their grievances with Lanyon's administration and their dislike of the man himself.⁴¹ Far less useful is the MA dissertation completed in 1951 by

³⁷ IB Sutton, *The 1878 rebellion in Griqualand West and the adjacent territories* (PhD, SOAS, London, 1975).

³⁸ M Broodryk, *Die rebellie in Griekwaland-Wes, 1876-1879* (MA, Unisa, 1977). See also the published doctoral thesis by the same author, *Die Kaapse noordgrensoorloë, 1868-1879* (Pretoria, AYB, 1992).

³⁹ See for example C Newbury, *The diamond ring: business, politics and precious stones in South Africa, 1867-1947* (Oxford, 1989); RV Turrell, *Capital and labour on the Kimberley diamond fields 1871-1890* (Cambridge, 1987); WH Worger, *South Africa's city of diamonds: mine workers and monopoly capitalism in Kimberley, 1867-1895* (New Haven, 1987).

⁴⁰ B Roberts, *Kimberley: turbulent city* (Cape Town, 1976).

⁴¹ MC van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners 1877-1880* (Pretoria, 1979).

JA Vorster.⁴² This is a superficial, descriptive account of the administrative process in the Transvaal as carried out first by Theophilus Shepstone and then by Owen Lanyon. Many of the other works on the period concentrate on the war itself, which is not really the issue here, or the annexation years prior to Lanyon's arrival. In this latter category CJ Uys's *In the era of Shepstone* provides very useful insight into Shepstone's role in the Transvaal and the legacy he left Lanyon.⁴³

My debt is, I hope, also apparent to the publications of a succession of social historians such as Keegan, Trapido, Legassick, Ross, Delius and Shillington.⁴⁴ Their works have provided a rich background for this study by providing insight into the social dynamics of particular societies and the transformations in South African society as a whole in the crucial mid 19th century, a period of indistinct transition between pre-industrial and industrialising South Africa. They have been particularly useful because they place Africans within the ambit of the colonial state, Lanyon's domain. They examine the implications of industrialisation for African polities, African reaction to dispossession, their resistance and the changing nature of chiefly power in the face of colonial policy. These have all been important in my attempt to re-insert colonial policy-makers into the African experience of the 1870s and 1880s.

As far as primary sources are concerned, here in South Africa there is a wealth of information on Owen Lanyon. Among the many useful sources in the Transvaal Archives at the National Archives in Pretoria, the most important was the Lanyon Collection (Accession 596). This is extensive, comprising seventeen bound volumes. Lanyon's incoming and outgoing official and

⁴² JA Vorster, *Die Engelse administrasie van Transvaal gedurende die eerste anneksasie-tydperk 1877-1881* (MA, UP, 1951).

⁴³ CJ Uys, *In the era of Shepstone: being a study of British expansion in South Africa 1842-1877* (Lovedale, 1933). For Shepstone's role in the Transvaal until 1879 Cope's *Ploughshare of war* was also very useful.

⁴⁴ For details of works consulted by these historians see list of sources. Among the most useful were Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, and an earlier work by him, namely, TJ Keegan, *Rural transformations in industrializing South Africa: the southern highveld to 1914* (Johannesburg, 1986); M Legassick, 'The frontier tradition in South African historiography' in Marks & Atmore, *Economy and society*, pp 44-79; Shillington, *The colonisation of the southern Tswana*; R Ross, *Adam Kok's Griquas: a study of the development of stratification in South Africa* (Cambridge, 1976); P Delius, *The land belongs to us: the Pedi polity, the Boers and the British in nineteenth century Transvaal* (Johannesburg, 1983) and S Trapido, 'Reflections on land, office and wealth in the South African Republic, 1850-1900' in Marks & Atmore, *Economy and society*, pp 350-368.

private correspondence make up the major part of the collection. There are also three annexures which include publications, maps and several historical objects which were in his possession. Lanyon, very much in keeping with his character, was an avid and punctilious letter writer and mercifully his handwriting is clear and stylish. His letters to his father (volumes 11-16) are particularly useful, and cover the entire period during which he was in South Africa. They were written at fairly regular intervals, often every week, over a period of more than five years. Furthermore it is very clear that Charles Lanyon was his son's confidant. Lanyon wrote openly and frankly to him. Often these letters describe his emotions: his despair, his loneliness and his prejudices. He told his father about most of the major events in which he was involved, how he felt about them and why he reacted as he did. Needless to say these letters proved to be an invaluable source.

Many other primary sources were consulted in various South African archives. Much of the official contact between Lanyon and the succession of British high commissioners was researched in the Government House collections at the Cape and Natal Archives. Lanyon's relations with the Free State government and President Brand's role in the Transvaal in 1880-1881 were studied in the Free State Archives; details of his more than three years in Kimberley while Griqualand West was governed as a British crown colony, were also to be found in the McGregor Museum and the Kimberley Africana Library. Published South African sources that were useful included government gazettes and newspapers printed between 1875 and 1880 in both Kimberley and Pretoria. Copies of British parliamentary Blue Books were also consulted.

Not surprisingly, many of the sources on Lanyon's career in South Africa are located in England. At the Public Record Office in Kew, London, there are vast collections of official Colonial Office correspondence, including the original correspondence with officials in the Cape Colony, Griqualand West, Natal and the Transvaal for the relevant periods. In these 'original correspondence' collections the minutes (compiled by various Colonial Office members of staff) on important issues often provided background insight (and frequently, humour too!) on why certain decisions were taken. The invaluable printed British Confidential Prints (African series), the so-called imperial White Books, were also consulted in London.

Private collections were studied at a number of other British regional and university archives. This period of research proved to be a watershed in the planning of my thesis: it turned away from a biography of Lanyon towards the role of Lanyon as an imperial agent. The catalyst was the research into the substantial private collections of each of the three secretaries of state for the colonies under whom Lanyon served. Those of Carnarvon (1874-1878) are available at the Public Record Office in Kew and the British Library. The Hicks Beach (1878-1880) papers are at the Gloucestershire Record Office in Gloucester, and the papers of Kimberley (1880-1882), perhaps the most exciting 'find', are housed in the Bodleian Library at the University of Oxford. The latter collection has been available to researchers only since 1996. It was purchased from private hands in 1991 and the sorting and cataloguing of the papers was only completed five years later.⁴⁵ The collection proved to be a veritable mine of new, undigested information on British colonial policy, providing some intriguing answers to previously unexplained British moves in 1880-1881 and Lanyon's confrontation with the Transvaal republicans.

Until now the only other historian to pause and reflect on Lanyon's contribution has been AM Davey, who sadly, has since died. In his MA dissertation on the *Siege of Pretoria* he looks briefly at Lanyon's last months in South Africa.⁴⁶ Davey was subsequently, as an archivist, involved in the purchase of the Lanyon collection on behalf of the National Archives and was also responsible for sorting the papers and compiling a very useful inventory to the collection.⁴⁷ He was also the author, in the *Dictionary of South African biography*, of the entry on Owen Lanyon.⁴⁸ When he heard of my research into Lanyon's role as an imperial agent in South Africa, he expressed interest in the project and wrote that in his view the Lanyon collection merited publication as an edited volume. After working with the papers in the 1950s, he wrote that he had formed an opinion of Lanyon as a solitary, unhappy man, full of 'outspoken prejudices'. He had been struck, as in fact I have been, by 'the contrast between Lanyon, the

⁴⁵ BM Theron, 'Searching for gems: the Kimberley papers at Oxford University', *Kleio*, vol 32, 2000, pp 103-111.

⁴⁶ AM Davey, *The siege of Pretoria 1880-1881* (Parow, AYB, 1, 1956).

⁴⁷ AM Davey, 'Inventory of the Lanyon collection (Accession no 596)', *South African Archives Journal*, 2, 1960, pp 50-57.

⁴⁸ WJ de Kock (ed), *Dictionary of South African biography*, vol 1 (Cape Town, 1968), pp 465-466.

public figure, and the private man ... rather like a character in a minor Greek tragedy ... heading for disaster after 1880 and an aftermath of obscurity and early death'.⁴⁹

This thesis sets Lanyon in the context of frontiers with Africans and Boers and attempts to stitch together the copious histories of African societies on the one hand and the histories of colonial policy on the other. It also attempts to unravel some of the intricacies of the relationship between Owen Lanyon, the private and public man and colonial official in South Africa, and the British government.

⁴⁹

Private correspondence, Arthur Davey – Bridget Theron, 8 November 1996.

CHAPTER I

OWEN LANYON AND THE SOUTHERN AFRICA OF 1875

Owen Lanyon arrived in southern Africa at a particularly crucial time. In the 1870s there were vibrant new developments and a changing atmosphere in the interior. Lanyon, as will be seen, was to be caught up in, on one level, the relationships and struggle between the imperial power, the settlers, the Africans and the Boers and, on another level, the struggle for white control over the land and labour resources of the Africans and the new aggressive capitalist political economy. In a word, when Lanyon arrived, the continent was poised for change.

Britain in South Africa: the situation when Lanyon stepped ashore

The historiographical debate on the formative features of the frontier and in particular the racial element in this experience in southern Africa, is an ongoing one. Because an important part of this thesis is to study the implementation of imperial policy in the evolving frontier zones, the debate is outlined briefly to provide an indication of the general approach that has been adopted.

In his *Colonial South Africa and the origins of the racial order*, published in 1996, Timothy Keegan follows the trend of many historians since the 1970s in debunking both the older settler-nationalist and the liberal views on the nature and significance of frontier circumstances.¹ The settler view that racial conflict on the frontier was inevitable as the forces of European 'civilisation' came face to face with African 'barbarism', is no longer seen as a true reflection of the situation in the interior. Under criticism too, is the so-called liberal view, which focused on the role of race on the frontiers, arguing that racism had been intensified there; the contribution of colonial agents, including missionaries and officials, and the interaction between whites and blacks were also closely examined. The earlier liberals claimed that the motives of

¹ For discussion of work by historians who have been categorised into so-called schools in South African historiography see Saunders, *The making of the South African past*, and Smith, *The changing past*. For an incisive summary of the various views on the role of the frontier in the formation of the racial order in South Africa, see Keegan's introduction in *Colonial South Africa*, pp 1-14.

imperial agents on the frontiers reflected a metropolitan benevolence to African societies and that they acted as the heroes in a process designed to break down the negrophobic Boer frontier mentality, transforming the diffuse frontier communities into an enlightened society. The fact that this 'benevolent' process often entailed conquest and suppression on the part of the European colonisers, and that the imperial power – albeit, in the 1840s and 1850s, often exercised informally – was frequently used in the interests of local settler accumulation, was largely ignored.²

This early liberal historical writing was overtaken in the late 1960s and 1970s by works which had a more Africanist perspective. Foremost among these, providing the best synthesis of the liberal view, is M Wilson and LM Thompson's two-volume *Oxford history of South Africa*, which appeared in 1969 and 1971.³ This represented a shift in thinking that occurred in the era of decolonisation in the rest of Africa, and the spotlight no longer falls on the role of white heroes. Instead the African reaction to white domination comes to the fore and African societies are examined in their own right. The Boer in the interior is portrayed as an unenterprising pastoralist, 'innocent of any dynamic economic impulses or influences, isolated from metropolitan culture and metropolitan capitalism'.⁴ The *Oxford history* was criticised by some for its empiricism, its moralism and its lack of emphasis on class.⁵ Historians who argue that racial categories themselves are wrong and that class is the 'prism through which the country's

² For examples of early liberal works see WM Macmillan, *Bantu, Boer and Briton: the making of the South African problem* (London, 1929) and CW de Kiewiet, *A history of South Africa, social and economic* (Oxford, 1941).

³ M Wilson & LM Thompson (eds), *The Oxford history of South Africa*, vol 1, *South Africa to 1870* (Oxford, 1969) and vol 2, *South Africa 1870-1966* (Oxford, 1971).

⁴ T Keegan, 'The making of the Orange Free State, 1846-54: sub-imperialism, primitive accumulation and state formation', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 17(1), 1988, p 27.

⁵ For a brief discussion of the merits and criticisms of the *Oxford history* see C Saunders, 'Leonard Thompson's historical writing on South Africa: an appreciation', *South African Historical Journal*, 30, May 1994, pp 6-9. A later work by Leonard Thompson, adjudged by most reviewers to still fit the 'liberal' rather than 'revisionist' mould is LM Thompson, *A history of South Africa* (New Haven, 1990). See for example reviews by H Bradford, A Davey, TRH Davenport and T Dederer in *South African Historical Journal*, 24, 1991.

past should be viewed',⁶ were the most vociferous.⁷ They felt that liberal writers place too much stress on the importance of the 18th century on the development of the racial order and neglect the dramatic impact of the mineral revolution in transforming the history of southern Africa.

In clear contrast to this liberal interpretation of frontier society, Keegan explores the dynamic processes of racial stratification, primitive settler accumulation and dispossession in pre-industrial Transorangia, a frontier of crucial concern in this thesis. He investigates the relationship between imperial expansionism and settler capitalism and shows that in the mid 19th century, some 20 years before the discovery of diamonds, there were already significant settler elites (both Boer and British), that had emerged in the interior and discusses the extent to which their cumulative activities were supported and legitimised by primitive state structures.⁸

Another pre-industrial frontier issue, one which is also of concern here and will be raised in more detail in the section that follows, is a consideration of the imperatives of British imperialism in the period from the 1840s until 1870. What, for example, underpinned the British response to the Boers in the interior following their emigration from the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony in the movement known as the Great Trek? The early liberals' answer to this question, that humanitarian concern influenced this reaction; that the indigenes needed protection from Boer rapacity,⁹ has been largely laid aside in more recent studies. It is maintained that by the 1870s the missionary influence had lost its impact and that imperial policy makers were more concerned with maintaining the economic and strategic interests of the empire at minimum expense to the British taxpayer. Co-operative treaties signed with the Basotho leader, Moshoeshoe, and the Griqua captains in the 1840s were well and good as long as imperial interests remained the major foci of power and stability north of the colonial boundaries.

⁶ C Saunders, *The making of the South African past*, p 196.

⁷ See for example Marks, S, 'Liberalism, social realities and South African history', *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, 5(3), 1972.

⁸ See for example Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*; Keegan, *Rural transformations*, and Keegan, 'The making of the Orange Free State'.

⁹ For one example see CW de Kiewiet, *British colonial policy and the South African republics 1848-1872* (London, 1929), pp 8-9.

The radical social historians, spearheaded in so far as frontier relations are concerned, by Martin Legassick in his seminal work on the politics of the frontier¹⁰ studied the spread of colonial control in the interior and focused upon the incorporation of frontier societies into the capitalist system. The watershed date was the discovery of diamonds in 1867. The dramatic change in the economy and the beginning of the mineral revolution was the major catalyst; the pre-industrial frontier was less significant. Class, coercion and exploitation replaced the liberal ideas of interaction between races. For these historians, changes in frontier society had to be related specifically and primarily to the changing material base of society in the interior after 1870.

Unlike many of the mainline radical theorists, who tended to promote what he calls 'capitalist triumphalism', Keegan attaches great importance to 19th century developments *before* the mineral age, but he is quick to agree that once minerals were discovered and advancing capitalism began to generate new economic and political imperatives in the frontier situation, the options open to indigenous and pre-capitalist societies began to narrow and the frontiers began to 'close' in the sense that natural and labour resources became progressively more controlled by the dictates of capitalists and by capitalist-inspired imperial expansion.¹¹ It is this social history approach to 19th century southern Africa, one that looks at the socio-economic interrelationship and interaction between the various people of the sub-continent, that is adopted in this thesis. Importance is attached to the formative nature of the frontier and the reactions of societies to colonial penetration both *before* the mineral age and at about the time Lanyon arrived in South Africa, as the mineral revolution began to pick up steam. It is agreed that the racial nature of the industrial order that had developed by the late 19th century in southern Africa did not originate, in the first instance, as some have claimed, entirely as a product of the mineral revolution. In other words, it was not exclusively the result of avaricious mining magnates searching for cheap labour; its roots went further back to the earlier part of the century, when the strength and resolve of the state in the interior was in fact more tenuous than older texts would have us believe.¹²

¹⁰ M Legassick, 'The frontier tradition in South African historiography' in Marks & Atmore, *Economy and society*, pp 44-79.

¹¹ Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, p 14. See also Benyon, *Proconsul and paramountcy*, pp 1-2.

¹² See for example CFJ Muller (ed), *Five hundred years: a history of South Africa* (Pretoria, 1969) which lays the stress on the development of white political states in the interior and virtually ignores the existence of powerful African societies.

Settler and state superiority over indigenous societies in the interior for the greater part of the 19th century was certainly not a uniform reality. In fact the opposite was true, as will be shown. As Keegan puts it:

At this time racial subjugation within the realm of the African farming peoples beyond the old established colony at the Cape was as yet fitful, unsustainable and reluctantly pursued by the wielders of state power. The state was still a weak instrument, resistant to the forward proddings of settler capitalism, which was itself embryonic and without persuasive influence at the centres of power... Nevertheless the forces at work in the first half of the nineteenth century prefigured the transformations that were set in motion by the mineral discoveries in South Africa in the last third of the century.¹³

Expansion by British settlers and Boers from the Cape Colony to the north had been a relatively slow and sporadic process in the region beyond the Orange (Gariiep) River, an area loosely called Transorangia, until the late 1830s and 1840s, when emigrant Boers began to arrive. Far earlier, during the 18th century, white trekboers had begun to move from the Cape into the sparsely populated Cape northern frontier, while others had migrated along the eastern seaboard.¹⁴ Those on the arid northern frontier kept cattle, hunted, traded, raided and generally co-existed with Griqua communities of mixed descent, remnants of Khoisan peoples and indigenous southern Tswana groups, largely Tlhaping.¹⁵ Over the years many of these people moved in an easterly direction along the more fertile regions beside the Orange River, and they will become the focus of this thesis in the discussion of developments that followed the discovery of diamonds at the confluence of the Vaal and the Harts Rivers in the late 1860s. It was here in the region known as Griqualand West, in the new mining town of Kimberley, that Owen Lanyon took up his appointment in 1875.

To return to earlier times. As the 19th century wore on, whites began to move in increasing numbers from the Cape Colony to the southern highveld, the region between the Orange and the

¹³ Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, p 14.

¹⁴ One of the most comprehensive studies of the trekboer movement is PJ van der Merwe, *Die noordwaartse beweging van die Boere voor die Groot Trek, 1770-1842* (Pretoria, State Library reprint, 1988). See also N Penn, 'The Orange River frontier zone' in AB Smith (ed), *Einiqualand: studies of the Orange River frontier* (Cape Town, 1995).

¹⁵ M Legassick, 'The northern frontier to c 1840: the rise and decline of the Griqua people', in R Elphick & H Giliomee (eds), *The shaping of South African society, 1652-1840* (Cape Town, 1989), pp 354-420; R Ross, *Adam Kok's Griquas* (Cambridge, 1976). The work by K Shillington, *The colonisation of the southern Tswana*, has been used extensively in this thesis to assess the reactions of the Tlhaping people to Lanyon's administratorship in Griqualand West from 1875-1879.

Vaal Rivers, and even further north, across the Vaal River, into the area that became known as the Transvaal. By this time most of the indigenous communities in the central interior had regrouped after the turmoil of the *mfecane* which had erupted in the period c 1815-1830, and were part of independent chiefdoms which still retained access to land and had control over their labour.¹⁶ As a result of developments during the *mfecane* period colonial influences were already being felt by Africans in the interior long before the Great Trek. Over time, varying degrees of interaction between indigenous communities and white settlers, including a polyglot of ivory and hide hunters, merchants and missionaries. Some African communities had been more accepting of missionary activities in their midst than others.

The Great Trek, the migration of about 15 000 Boer pastoralists from the eastern Cape frontier to the interior – which, as has been shown, was by no means empty – in the 1830s and 1840s, has lately come under revision by historians. Although most continue to regard it as significant in the formation of colonial South Africa, it is no longer seen, as it was by Afrikaner nationalist historians, as an epic pioneering movement that ‘gave the Afrikaner a unique identity’, and opened up the interior to progress and civilisation.¹⁷ Nor is the liberal view of the Trek as a flight from the British policies of legal equality and other attempts at modernisation and enlightenment of this group of Calvinist eastern Cape frontier farmers,¹⁸ widely accepted. It has been cogently argued that the emigrant Boers, who were led by men of substance in the eastern Cape, men who were very much in touch with the British settler economy and were not bent on extermination or subjugation of Africans in the interior, even had either been possible.¹⁹ More credence is given instead to the notion that they were drawn into the interior to seek opportunities to accumulate

¹⁶ It is open to question whether the *mfecane* can be ascribed to social, ecological and economic crises within Zulu society, or is seen as the result of external colonial pressure. This particular debate is outside the ambit of this thesis, but the main arguments are discussed in C Hamilton (ed), *The mfecane aftermath: reconstructive debates in southern African history* (Johannesburg & Pietermaritzburg, 1995). For a useful outline, see N Worden, *The making of modern South Africa: conquest, segregation and apartheid* (Oxford, 1994), pp 13-14.

¹⁷ MC van Zyl, article in *The Star*, 15 December 1988, p 11.

¹⁸ See for example, E Walker, *The Great Trek* (London, 1934) and CW de Kiewiet, *A history of South Africa, social and economic* (Oxford, 1934).

¹⁹ Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, pp 36, 185-186, 191; Worden, *The making of modern South Africa*, pp 12-13. See also NA Etherington, *The great treks, the transformation of the southern African interior, 1815-1854* (London, Longman, 2001).

resources, notably land, and that by setting up simple state structures they hoped to legitimise their standing as a settler elite.²⁰ The Trek was therefore not a flight from the colonial nexus; on the contrary it was a well-planned attempt to carry it, in its specifically Boer form, into the interior. The march of time, as will be shown, was to prove that the Boers were ill-equipped to fulfil their economic aspirations in the interior without the active assistance of the British.²¹

It is also clear that in the frontier zones that came under formal settler control in the mid 19th century (whether British or Boer), which are of particular relevance to this thesis – the southern highveld north of the Orange River, Griqualand West and the Transvaal – the whites struggled to establish state structures. The settler and Boer societies in these regions, particularly in the Transvaal, were weak, and in all these regions whites were vastly outnumbered by Africans, many of whom were grouped in polities which had considerable military strength and viable economies.²² Among the more prominent societies were the Sotho, Tlhaping, Pedi, Venda, Swazi and – on the Transvaal's disputed southeastern border with Zululand – the powerful Zulu kingdom. Furthermore, in the case of the Pedi and the Venda, it has been conclusively shown that there was an 'African resurgence in the 1860s', a time when the emergent Boer state in the Transvaal was in almost total disarray.²³ The early white settler communities in the interior were also heavily dependent on local trade and alliances with the Africans. One of the best documented is that in the Soutpansberg, in the far northern Transvaal, where trekkers conducted a flourishing ivory trade with the assistance of Venda hunters as early as the beginning of the 1840s.²⁴

²⁰ For interesting new perspectives on frontier relations see N Etherington, *The great treks: the transformation of southern Africa, 1815-1854* (Harlow, 2001).

²¹ N Etherington, 'The Great Trek in relation to the mfecane: a reassessment', *South African Historical Journal*, 25, 1991, pp 3-21; Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, p 191.

²² As Marks & Atmore show, in the introduction to *Economy and society*, pp 28-29, the African societies in the interior had for many years prior to the arrival of the settlers, been involved in trading networks throughout the interior, and from coast to coast with the Portuguese.

²³ Marks & Atmore, *Economy and society*, p 31.

²⁴ R Wagner, 'Zoutspansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848-67', in Marks & Atmore, *Economy and society*, pp 313-349.

The trekkers in Transorangia settled in the plains of what later became the Orange Free State, a region occupied predominantly by the Basotho people under the canny leadership of Moshoeshoe. Opposition from Africans to white settlement was initially intermittent and ineffective, but soon competition for pasture, particularly in the fertile region between the Caledon and the Orange Rivers, became a thorny issue. The trekkers relied heavily on trade with Africans for supplies of grain and vegetables but were not above using their firearms when they met with resistance over land. Further to the west their relationship with the Griqua people was also an uneasy one.

From about the 1840s, capital derived from the burgeoning eastern Cape wool export market and other forms of speculation in the Cape Colony, began to be invested in Transorangia and the internal trade network increased, goods being transported to and fro by oxwagons. Trekkers who remained in the region, rather than moving over the Vaal, soon became integrated into the expanding colonial economy which revolved around traders and speculators (many of them of 1820 British settler origin) who settled on large farms around Bloemfontein. They were reliant on commercial links with the established colonial agents; loan, credit and exchange relations were backed by British capital based in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and at the small coastal settlement of Port Natal.²⁵

In 1848 Britain had established formal control over the region between the Orange and the Vaal by annexing it as the Orange River Sovereignty. The pressure that the local settler elite was able to bring to bear on the British governor, Sir Harry Smith, was the prime motivation behind the annexation. Land speculators and coastal merchants hoped that British administration would boost land values. Smith's move found little favour in London, however, and the Sovereignty was short-lived. British conventions with the Boers in 1852 and 1854 handed the Transvaal and Orange River Sovereignty over to them as independent republics. Two decades later, when Owen Lanyon arrived in southern Africa, Britain had become involved in the interior again and had annexed Basutoland and Griqualand West.²⁶

²⁵ T Keegan, *Rural transformations in industrializing South Africa*, pp 1-2.

²⁶ The annexation of Griqualand West in 1871 and Lanyon's administration of the region as a British Crown Colony from 1875-1878 is discussed in Chapters II and III. For an overview of Britain's involvement in the southern African interior in the period 1850-1880 see C Saunders & IR Smith, 'Southern Africa, 1795-

The stark reality of the situation in the interior was that until the 1870s the pre-industrial Boer states, in particular, were very fragile entities, and as Thompson has pointed out, ‘there were large areas within the boundaries they proclaimed where they had little influence’.²⁷ In the mid fifties, in keeping with the prevailing spirit of free trade, Britain was still keeping her purse strings tight and was loath to take on any untoward military or financial responsibilities. With the advent of Gladstonian finance in the 1850s, ‘the parsimony already characteristic of a property owners’ parliament was reinforced by a powerful new dogma about the need to drive down the costs of government’.²⁸ Local settler capital accumulation appeared to be enough to maintain the profile of British hegemony, and after all, Great Britain, unchallenged by European rivals, dominated the external trade of the region. As Keegan has remarked of the imperial presence in the interior at the time, and the British decision to sign the conventions,

the Boer republic was in the last degree a vehicle of an informal, if often insecure, imperial hegemony in southern Africa, that outlasted the phase of formal imperial expansionism ... The creation of the republican state was made possible by the settler capitalism that was spreading into the further interior from the late 1840s on the back of an advancing imperialism ... British commerce, British investment, British settlement and British imperial rule were advancing hand in hand. By 1854 British imperial rule was no longer necessary to sustain these forces, and could again recede.²⁹

As has been shown, the economy in the Orange Free State was reasonably stable, even before the mid 19th century. In both republics, but less so in the more remote Transvaal, some trading networks had been set up and a Boer elite was beginning to develop, drawn inexorably into the informal British empire. The forms of accumulation practised by these elites included land speculation, looting of livestock and raiding neighbouring African communities for indentured labour. Studies by Trapido have shown the same tendency further north. In the earliest decades of white settlement states were weak and the markets limited, but later Boer society came to be based ‘on a variety of combinations of hunting trading, office holding and land speculation’. As there was very little currency in circulation, officials were paid in land grants instead of cash. Commercial companies based in the British colonies of Natal and the Cape also acquired large

1910’, in A Porter (ed), *The Oxford history of the British empire*, vol 3, *The nineteenth century* (Oxford, 1999), pp 603-604.

²⁷ Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, p 109.

²⁸ J Darwin, ‘Imperialism and the Victorians: the dynamics of territorial expansion’, *English Historical Review*, 1997, p 622.

²⁹ T Keegan, ‘The making of the Orange Free State’, p 43.

tracts of land and a number of land companies were granted hefty concessions.³⁰

But the Boers in both republics lacked political and bureaucratic skills and experience and for years, particularly north of the Vaal River, the governmental process was far from satisfactory. In neither republic could Africans vote; both prohibited Africans from possessing firearms – a law which proved impossible to implement, particularly once minerals were discovered and firearms were freely available in exchange for wages earned by migrant labourers³¹ – and required them to carry passes when moving about. When Lanyon arrived in the Transvaal in 1879, the republican government had been replaced by a British one which proved to be almost as inept as its predecessor.³²

Mid-Victorian colonial policy: metropole and periphery

The hectic academic debate on the determinants and nature of British imperialism continues unabated. Its intricacies are only directly relevant for this study as far as Britain's policies in South Africa from the 1870s until 1881 are concerned. More particularly, the concern here is the role played by Owen Lanyon in the implementation of these policies in South Africa and the possibility that he may, in some measure, have influenced their nature and course. As the imperial agent in South Africa he could provide the 'official minds'³³ back in London with invaluable advice about the situation in the colonies. The terms *metropole* and *periphery* are used here to differentiate between determinants of imperialism of British origin, on the one hand, and those arising in the outlying parts of the empire, on the other. The peripheral regions were either formal British possessions, which had been annexed, or were regarded as falling informally under the British sphere of influence. To use another cliché, Lanyon was one of the colonial

³⁰ S Trapido, 'Reflections on land, office and wealth in the South African Republic, 1850-1900', in Marks & Atmore, *Economy and society*, pp 350-368.

³¹ P Delius, 'Migrant labour and the Pedi, 1840-1880', in Marks & Atmore, *Economy and society*, pp 293-312.

³² The situation in the Transvaal when Shepstone annexed it for Britain in 1877, and that which confronted Lanyon in 1879 are discussed in Chapter IV.

³³ The term refers to the subtitle of the work by R Robinson & J Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians: the official mind of imperialism* (London, 1961). The 'official minds' were the policy makers in London.

agents, a man-on-the-spot; and enough has emerged from the debate on imperialism to establish that the motives behind British colonial policy were many and varied and certainly had origins in London, the metropolis as well as in the periphery.

Seen on a broader canvas, in the mid century until about 1870, 19th-century British imperial motives were not geared specifically towards expansion. They had no need to be. Britain was riding the crest of the international wave and her post-industrial revolution policy of free trade emerged quite naturally from her unquestioned industrial and economic supremacy. Britain did not need an extensive colonial network 'to provide her with trade or emigration fields or security or glory. In free trade she had found a far better method of dominating the world without paying for it.'³⁴ True, the bigger her empire, the more widely spread – and the more profitable – her foreign enterprise could be, but it was unnecessary to take formal control of colonies. Indeed it was just as profitable, less trouble, and far cheaper, to establish an informal British sphere of influence. It was perfectly safe to stop short of annexation because the British were too complacent to realise that their industrial supremacy could be challenged; mid 19th-century imperialism provided the mother country with all the advantages and few of the responsibilities of empire building.

In 1871 Lord Carnarvon, who was not yet in the Colonial Office, warned Britons not to be unrealistic and overconfident about the economy. They should not, he cautioned, 'talk as if Providence had ordained that ... trade must come to us, because we live in a foggy little island set in a boisterous sea'.³⁵ As the economic depression deepened in the mid 1870s and continued well into the next decade, these fears were indeed realised: profits dropped and unemployment rose. Foreign competition increased and the United States began to assume the role, ahead of Britain, of the world's leading industrial nation.

After 1870 British imperialism began to change gear; different imperatives came into play in both the metropole and on the periphery. In Britain, the economy began to slow down and even

³⁴ B Porter, *The lion's share: a short history of British imperialism 1850-1970* (London & New York, 1975), p 27.

³⁵ Lord Carnarvon, 'Army administration and government policy', *The Quarterly Review*, 131, 1871, quoted in Cope, 'Local imperatives and imperial policy', p 611.

to show signs of faltering. The British found themselves challenged economically by the emergence of the new, self-confident, German Empire and by a United States of America, strengthened by the experience of the Civil War of the 1860s. These powers threatened Britain industrially and challenged her position as world leader.³⁶ In response there was a growing realisation of the need to assert British paramountcy in the far-flung empire and to protect the British sphere of influence against the new rivals. By 1870, official minds were beginning to think increasingly of formal territorial expansion or the possibility of consolidating regional possessions. Simultaneously, peripheral crises were gathering. In southern Africa, the particular local circumstances – which will be explored later – meant that in its early stages, in the 1870s until about 1886, and certainly until it became clear that the mineral deposits (particularly the Witwatersrand gold), were hugely significant, imperial policy leaned more towards the consolidation of British paramountcy.

Although Britain's international economic position clearly played a role in her changing attitude to her colonial empire, these imperatives soon became enmeshed with related strategic, political, social and even individual considerations at the metropole. And the significance of local imperatives certainly cannot be overlooked; in this thesis it will be argued that they played a crucial role. The debate on the relative importance of all these formative factors has been a lively one among historians. Isolating one aspect and claiming that this is predominant, can lead, it has been argued, to a static and monocausal interpretation of the complex relations between Britain and southern Africa.³⁷

Alternative interpretations of the determinants of imperialism have since been offered by scholars who have placed the emphasis on the scramble for colonies in Africa and the competition which this aroused among European powers. This predominantly political view can be separated into two somewhat blurred categories: some imperial historians, such as Goodfellow, have focused

³⁶ R Cope, 'Local imperatives and imperial policy: the sources of Lord Carnarvon's South African confederation policy', *International Journal of African Historical studies*, 20(4) 1987, pp 608-609; Porter, *The lion's share*, pp 75-84; Atmore & Marks, 'The imperial factor in South Africa', pp 106, 120-122.

³⁷ Atmore & Marks, 'The imperial factor in South Africa', p 106. Some scholars allege that Atmore and Marks were themselves guilty of placing too much emphasis on the primacy of economic imperatives. See for example Webb, 'The origins of the war' in Duminy & Ballard, *The Anglo-Zulu War*, pp 8-11

on the strategic value of Simonstown and the need to secure the vital sea route to India, arguing that it was this that played a significant role in motivating Britain's new thrust into the interior,³⁸ while others put more emphasis on crises and socio-economic changes that developed on the periphery and the contribution of local collaborating groups and agents.³⁹ Indeed there are scholars who still consider that this latter approach, embodied in the Robinson and Gallagher thesis on the 'imperialism of free trade' that was initially put forward in an article in 1953⁴⁰ and then reiterated and refined in 1961 in their book *Africa and the Victorians*, is still one of the most relevant interpretations.⁴¹ In a recent review article, Dane Kennedy calls the Robinson and Gallagher explanation an 'exceptionally handy and heterogeneous tool kit of ideas ... about the dynamics of imperial expansion'.⁴² This is a view held in this thesis, although obviously economic determinants of imperial policy are crucial, given the fact that the focus of this study is the dawning of the mineral age in southern Africa. Increasingly, in the historiography there is a call to dismiss what has been labelled the 'spurious distinction between power and profit' in the debate about the 'motor' of imperialism.⁴³

Another view, one that is also emphasised in this thesis, is that individual policy makers in the Colonial Office and on the periphery had a significant role to play in the dynamics of imperialism. Benyon has pointed out that the contribution of the man-on-the-spot was often crucial at the point of interface between the metropole and the dependency,⁴⁴ and it is clear that

³⁸ Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African federation*, pp 70-72. See also Robinson & Gallagher, *The official mind of imperialism*, 59-60.

³⁹ Robinson & Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*.

⁴⁰ J Gallagher & R Robinson, 'The imperialism of free trade', *Economic History Review*, 6, 1953.

⁴¹ J Darwin, 'Imperialism and the Victorians: the dynamics of territorial expansion', *English Historical Review*, 1997, pp 614-615. Darwin provides a good 5-point summary of the Robinson & Gallagher model on p 615. This view is not, however, without its critics, see for example Atmore & Marks, 'The imperial factor in South Africa', pp 106-107 and Cain & Hopkins, *British imperialism*, pp 8-10.

⁴² D Kennedy, Review article: 'The boundaries of Oxford's empire', *The International History Review* 23(3), 2001, pp 610-611.

⁴³ See for example J Benyon, 'Overlords of empire? British "proconsular imperialism" in comparative perspective', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 19(2)1991, p 164; R Hyam, *Britain's imperial century 1815-1914* (London, 1976), p 373.

⁴⁴ Benyon, 'Overlords of empire?', pp 164-165. The role of agents of imperial action is also an important element of Robinson & Gallagher's 'excentric metropole'.

there was, as Hyam puts it, 'a small but vital gap between what a really ambitious officer on the spot could do and what his metropolitan master dared to veto'.⁴⁵ An example often cited in the literature is that of Lord Carnarvon, who was secretary of state from 1874 to 1878; another is Bartle Frere, the high commissioner who was charged with the implementation of federation in southern Africa in the 1870s. Carnarvon was imbued with remarkable and very personal passion about pushing through 'his' scheme,⁴⁶ and there are scholars who agree with Goodfellow that the role of 'individual will and intelligence' cannot simply be ignored. Colin Webb, for example, argued cogently that it was a gross oversimplification to suggest that because productive forces shaped societal values (which he agreed that they did), they also invariably impinged upon and overwrote all the decisions and purposes of individual office-bearers.⁴⁷

Many of these pre-1970 theories on the imperatives of imperial policy were challenged – and some, but not all – were discarded by the historians who gave primacy to the material, or economic imperatives of the changing relationship between Britain and South Africa in the 19th century. These ideas were persuasively argued, as has already been indicated, by Atmore and Marks in their important article published in 1974. The authors settle, after extensive debate, for an almost exclusively economic explanation of the origins of British territorial expansionist colonial policy in the period after 1870. While agreeing that any appraisal of imperialism needs to be aware of the changing nature of the British economy at the metropole, the centre of imperial power, they still give pride of economic place to local peripheral imperatives. In their view British imperial policy at this time was geared to the interests of those who were involved in the development of a capitalist economy after the discovery of diamonds. These interests demanded that to promote the new mining economy, government apparatuses should be upgraded to suit modern capitalist needs and white political dominance over the African majority should be entrenched. Furthermore it was absolutely essential that there be a ready supply of cheap labour. If either the African kingdoms or the Boer republics presented any obstacles to the successful attainment of these needs, such obstacles had to be neutralised. Clearly the investment of international capital in the diamond-mining industry immediately blurs the theoretical distinction

⁴⁵ Hyam, *Britain's imperial century*, p 374.

⁴⁶ See Chapter II.

⁴⁷ Webb, 'The origins of the war' in Duminy & Ballard, *The Anglo-Zulu War*, pp 6-11.

between imperatives of the metropole and those of the periphery. In order to formulate and implement imperial policy, a complex relationship soon developed between the Cape and imperial governments and between local and international capital.⁴⁸

This theoretical background, with its emphasis on the developing South African economy, is eminently suited to an analysis of Owen Lanyon's role as an imperial agent in South Africa. Although Lanyon only survived the first decade of this new imperialism before returning to Britain, he was closely involved in two key South African regions in the 1870s: Griqualand West and the Transvaal, both of which had been annexed by Britain.⁴⁹ In the first instance, he was administrator in Griqualand West, and later in the Transvaal Colony. It fell to him to steer Griqualand West towards incorporation with the Cape Colony as part of Carnarvon's confederation scheme. Lanyon was the imperial agent who had to juggle with the new dynamics of production on the diamond fields in accordance with the dictates of London and persistent local capitalist interests.⁵⁰ The crucial local imperatives that Atmore and Marks have identified were all part of his brief in Kimberley and subsequently also in Pretoria. Updating the administrative machinery, expediting the labour supply, quelling African aspirations and unrest and counteracting Boer insurgency, were foremost among his responsibilities.⁵¹ Against what Atmore and Marks call African and Boer obstacles to the realisation of peripheral imperatives, Lanyon acted in his military capacity in 1878 to quell Griqua rebels and Tlhaping insurgents on behalf of Britain. Against the republicans in the Transvaal, he tried – admittedly without success – to secure imperial interests. Furthermore, as will become clear, while he was still in Kimberley, Lanyon acted as an imperial agent passing information to Downing Street. Prior to the

⁴⁸ Atmore & Marks, 'The imperial factor in South Africa', pp 105-139.

⁴⁹ The pivotal role of Griqualand West and the Transvaal Colony in Carnarvon's federation plans is discussed in Chapter II.

⁵⁰ On the mediating role of colonial governors and administrators see P Burroughs, 'Imperial institutions and the government of empire', in A Porter (ed), *The nineteenth century*, pp 176-177.

⁵¹ For details on Lanyon's administration of Griqualand West see Chapters II and III. There is a particularly graphic illustration of Lanyon's preoccupation with the supply of labour in Griqualand West in Confidential Prints, British (imperial) White Books (hereafter CP), African 162, *Affairs; further correspondence*, no 41, Barry – Frere, 19 May 1877, p 85. Barry writes: 'It has long been the object of Major Lanyon's administration to secure a constant supply of cheap labour to satisfy the large wants of the Diamond Field labour market.'

annexation of the Transvaal in April 1877 he received regular, confidential letters from an informer in Pretoria. Lanyon then relayed the news back to Carnarvon on the situation in the South African Republic.⁵² The independent Boer republic was high on the Colonial Office's confederation hit list. Was it ripe for annexation? Lanyon provided some of the answers.

Cain and Hopkins have recently provided a different dimension on what they see as the crucial influence of economic imperatives and have embodied it in their theory on the role of 'gentlemanly capitalism'.⁵³ This view virtually ignores the importance of peripheral crises (which Atmore and Marks place firmly to the forefront) and instead puts great emphasis on the interests of high finance in the *metropolis*, in London.⁵⁴ They claim that imperialism was 'at all times motivated and directed by the needs of British finance (in all its forms) and the *service* industries rather than the needs of *industry* or any non-economic consideration'. According to these authors, the aristocratic British gentleman capitalist was more than likely a banker, a stock broker or an investor ... to be directly connected with the processes of production was to forfeit any claim to gentility'.⁵⁵ Finance and services, then, and not industry – again in contrast to the Atmore and Marks view – were the main engine of British political economy and profoundly influenced all governments, of whatever party, which had to bow to them as the ultimate locus of policy. But there have been some rumbling reservations. DK Fieldhouse is critical that the authors of this theory come dangerously close to claiming monocausality. He is not convinced that the ranks of gentlemanly capitalists were as closely knit as Cain and Hopkins suggest and he also points out that despite their insistence on the primary importance of the metropole, they have not been able to dismiss local circumstances entirely; instead they have merely downplayed

⁵² Public Record Office, London (hereafter PRO), Carnarvon papers, 30/6/36. There are a number of letters written in Pretoria dated July – October 1876, and sent to Kimberley just prior to Shepstone's arrival in the Transvaal to engineer its annexation.

⁵³ PJ Cain & AG Hopkins, *British imperialism: innovation and expansion 1688-1914*, vol 1 (London, 1993).

⁵⁴ See for example the overview of what he calls 'conflicting interpretations' of the imperial experience, including PJ Cain's 'finance-orientated account of economics and empire' that 'ignores the industrial revolution' in Kennedy, 'The boundaries of Oxford's empire', pp 608-609. See also Andrew Thompson, *Imperial Britain: the empire in British politics c 1880-1932* (Harlow, 2000), pp 7-8.

⁵⁵ DK Fieldhouse, 'Gentlemen, capitalists and the British empire', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 22(3), pp 532-533. My italics.

the importance of peripheral determinants of imperial policy.⁵⁶

As influential as their article undoubtedly is, the Atmore and Marks 'reassessment' of the imperial factor has by no means halted the debate on the dynamics of imperial expansion. Although the intention in this thesis is to follow the social history tradition outlined by Tim Keegan, no review of the historiography of imperialism would be complete without some mention of the more recent postcolonial analyses. Works by Catherine Hall and Antionette Burton, for example, draw attention to the systems of colonialism and the relations between coloniser and colonised. They are concerned with the analysis of textual forms in which information about peripheral areas and colonial cultures has been expressed.⁵⁷ New initiatives in understanding colonialism as a culture also include studies of the gender perspective and missionary activity.⁵⁸ These studies add a new and intriguing dimension to the rich texture of imperial history.

Having reviewed some of the imperatives that gave rise to the new drive for territorial expansion in the last quarter of the 19th century, it is appropriate to examine some of its characteristics. What was the *nature* of mid-Victorian imperialism, one might ask, what forms did it take, and what attitudes did imperial agents evince? Atmore and Marks, Darwin and Porter, among others, address this issue and come up with some particularly appropriate comments as far as the actions of the imperial agent Owen Lanyon, and his attitudes towards South Africa and South Africans in the period 1875-1881, are concerned.

Imperialism has been defined as 'the sustained effort to assimilate a country or region to the political, economic or cultural system of another power',⁵⁹ and as the political and economic

⁵⁶ Fieldhouse, 'Gentlemen, capitalists and the British empire', pp 532, 538-539, 541. See also the review of Cain & Hopkins, *British imperialism*, SB Spies, *Kleio*, 27, 1995, 239-240 and criticism expressed by G Ingham, 'British capitalism: empire, merchants and decline', *Social History*, 20, 1995, pp 342, 346.

⁵⁷ Catherine Hall, (ed), *Cultures of empire; colonizers in Britain and the empire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (Manchester, 2000), pp 3, 12, 14. See also chapter 6 in the same work: Antoinette Burton, 'Who needs the nation? Interrogating "British history"', pp 137-153.

⁵⁸ Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, pp 4-6.

⁵⁹ Darwin, *Imperialism and the Victorians*, p 614.

dimensions have already been touched upon, it remains to address the cultural aspects. As imperialism gathered momentum in the 1870s a new attitude towards the empire took root among the British. It was the flowering of a very British variety of public sentiment, a particular type of national pride which favoured the more overt new imperialism. It embodied a new desire to spread the essence of a British way of life, epitomised in the great metropolis, the so-called 'City' which 'dominated all facets of public policy',⁶⁰ to those in the undeveloped and uncivilised parts of the world. It was an attitude often assumed by colonial officials, and in its extreme form it came to be known as jingoism. It was tinged with ill-concealed paternalism and 'imperial high-handedness, ... the tendency to assume an overbearing mien where English rights are judged in competition with other people's rights'.⁶¹ The people living in the less-developed regions of the empire, it was argued, would surely want civilised Britain to remove the blinkers from their eyes. Owen Lanyon, by his own admission, was 'jingoish' and many of his personal letters to his father clearly bear this out.⁶²

Along with the characteristic sense of British superiority described above, came pre-conditioned racial and class attitudes that also found their way into the 19th-century South African situation.⁶³ Atmore and Marks comment on 'the general and at times virulent anti-Afrikaner attitudes displayed by various British visitors, officials and settlers'. According to them 'it was not only the Coloured or African peoples who bore the brunt of British racialism ... many of the nastier remnants of this racialism ... were directed against Afrikaner communities, rather than against non-white peoples'.⁶⁴ Richard Southey was apparently one such official⁶⁵ and Owen Lanyon was another. In fact the description fits him like a glove. Letters to his family are filled with numerous examples of the most rank prejudice. Africans are 'uncivilised savages' who must be

⁶⁰ Fieldhouse, 'Gentlemen, capitalists, and the British empire', p 533.

⁶¹ *Illustrated London News*, editorial, 19 February 1881. On attitude of British paternalism in the colonies see Burroughs, 'Imperial institutions and the government of empire', pp 173-174.

⁶² TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 11 September 1880, p 119. See also vol 11, Lanyon – brother Charles Lanyon, 27 November 1875, p 105.

⁶³ On British attitude of racial superiority see also A Porter, *The nineteenth century*, pp 22-24.

⁶⁴ Atmore & Marks, 'The imperial factor in South Africa', p 114.

⁶⁵ De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, p 20.

dealt with promptly to ‘keep them in their place’,⁶⁶ but his poisoned pen is at its worst when he attacks the Boers of the Transvaal. They are labelled ‘semi-civilised wind bags’, ‘inflated toads’ and ‘pusillanimous cusses who are either abject in their terror or bumptious in their swagger’. Above all, Lanyon berates their alleged cowardice, and remains convinced, mistakenly as proved in 1880, that they ‘did not have it in them to fight’.⁶⁷ Studies which look at the attitudes of rulers and ruled are strong at present, and this study of Lanyon fits well into this mould. But first, closer acquaintance must be made with Owen Lanyon.

Owen Lanyon: ambitious young imperial agent

Frequent reference has already been made to Lanyon and before his role can be assessed it is necessary to know more about who he was, what sort of British background he had, and to gain a broad picture of his career before he arrived in South Africa.

William Owen Lanyon was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, on 21 July 1842.⁶⁸ He was the third son of an eminent Anglo-Irish architect and civil engineer, Sir Charles Lanyon, and his wife Elizabeth Helen.⁶⁹ The family grew to be a large one; Willie, as he was affectionately known, was one of four sons and three daughters. The infant son was given his mother’s maiden name, Owen, as his second name. Although called ‘Willie’ within his family circle, he later chose to be known as Owen Lanyon, a decision which his family readily supported.⁷⁰

It is obvious from Lanyon’s surviving letters to his father, his sisters Flo, Nellie and Minnie and

⁶⁶ TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – brother Charles Lanyon, 27 November 1875, p 105; vol 13, Lanyon – Minnie Lanyon, 11 March 1878, p 29.

⁶⁷ Ibid, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 4 April 1879; vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 12 December 1880; vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 19 December 1879; vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 22 November 1880.

⁶⁸ De Kock (ed), *Dictionary of South African biography* (hereafter DSAB), vol 1, p 465. See also *The Natal Mercury*, obituary, ‘Death of Sir Owen Lanyon’, 8 April 1887.

⁶⁹ TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 27 May 1876. For further biographical details on Owen Lanyon see Davey, ‘Inventory of the Lanyon collection’, pp 50-51, 54.

⁷⁰ See Introduction and TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 10 April 1880; Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 29 May 1880.

his brothers Charles, John and Louis, that the family was a close one.⁷¹ Charles Lanyon, clearly the respected patriarch of the family, was Willie's much-revered confidant and the private letters written to him are by far the most numerous in the Lanyon Collection now housed in the Transvaal Archives. They are caring, frank and full of information about his career as well as his day-to-day activities. Lanyon's letters to the other members of his family include a number to his eldest bother, Charles, whom he addressed as 'dear old boy', and to his three sisters. These other family letters are briefer and less revealing about Lanyon himself and his career in South Africa, but they are also warm and loving. Willie teases his sisters – his 'demons' and 'little devils' – particularly his youngest sister, whom he calls 'Baby', and warns them that they must behave themselves properly or run the risk of having to answer to him.⁷² While in South Africa he often told his family back in Ireland how much he longed to see them again and how he missed not being at home with them all.⁷³

Sir Charles Lanyon was an influential man⁷⁴ of considerable means and the family home, called 'The Abbey', was on an estate near Whiteabbey, county Antrim, in Northern Ireland.⁷⁵ Whiteabbey is a small town about twelve kilometres north of the city centre of Belfast. It is situated on the coast of Belfast Lough, an inlet off the Irish Sea. Willie was sent to receive his education in England, where he attended the Bromsgrove Grammar School in Worcestershire. His mother died in 1858, when he was only sixteen years old and two years later, having completed his basic education, it was decided that he should enter the army. In Victorian Britain a career in the army was considered socially correct for a well brought up, if not brilliant, young

⁷¹ The surviving letters which Lanyon wrote to his family, the Charles Lanyon Collection, form part of Accession A596, the Lanyon Collection, vols 11-16, in the Transvaal Archives. Lanyon does not appear to have kept the letters he received from his family while in South Africa, although he makes frequent reference to letters from home.

⁷² See for example TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Minnie Lanyon, 13 April 1876; vol 12, Lanyon – brother Charles Lanyon, 26 February 1877.

⁷³ Ibid, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 25 December 1875; 25 December 1876; vol 12, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 15 May 1877; vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 22 November 1880.

⁷⁴ In his letters Lanyon makes several requests that his father use his influence to put in a good word on his son's behalf. Could he, for example, 'come across Sir Michael Hicks Beach in a casual sort of way and ascertain from him what is likely to be my fate...?' Ibid, vol 13, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 8 April, 1878.

⁷⁵ *The Natal Mercury*, obituary, 'Death of Sir Owen Lanyon', 8 April 1887.

man such as Owen Lanyon.⁷⁶

Accordingly, with all the right credentials, the 18-year old Lanyon joined the British army in 1860 as an ensign of the 6th Royal Warwickshire regiment, and spent several years serving in Jamaica. In 1866 he purchased a lieutenancy and was transferred to the 2nd West India regiment to which he was attached, on secondment, for the entire period he was in South Africa.⁷⁷ As a member of this regiment he was appointed *aide-de-camp* to the commanding officer of the West Indies in 1866. Apparently already proving himself an able clerical worker, he then served as private secretary and *aide-de-camp* to Sir JP Grant, the Governor of Jamaica from 1868 to mid 1873.⁷⁸ By this time Lanyon must have had aspirations to seek employment as a civil administrator – rather than a military officer – elsewhere in the colonies, because there is reference to a letter that he wrote to the secretary of state for the colonies, the Earl of Kimberley, ‘requesting to be considered a candidate for employment in the colonial service’ when Grant left Jamaica. Grant’s accompanying testimonial was couched in glowing terms. ‘I cannot’, he wrote, ‘speak too highly of Captain Lanyon’s merits, and the great use he has been to me, in every way. His business habits are very good ... I have found his services invaluable and I can say with confidence that any department to which he may be attached will be fortunate.’⁷⁹

Grant’s recommendation did not bear fruit immediately. In late September 1873, Lanyon’s regiment was sent to the British Gold Coast protectorate in West Africa. Some months earlier an Asante force had crossed the Prah River, crushed the resistance of the local Fante people and occupied the capital, Kumasi. The British government decided to remedy the situation by sending Garnet Joseph Wolseley (later Field-Marshal Lord Wolseley) to the Gold Coast as military

⁷⁶ JA Hobson, *Imperialism, a study* (London, 1902), pp 53-55. For a recent perspective on the imperial army see IFW Beckett, ‘The South African War and the late Victorian army’, in P Dennis & J Grey (eds), *The Boer War, army, nation and empire* (Canberra, 2000), pp 31-44.

⁷⁷ CP, African 83, no 36, Colonial Office – War Office, 19 August 1875, pp 202-203; CP, African 42, War Office – Colonial Office, 28 August 1875, p 209; TA, A596, vol 3, War Office – Lanyon, 13 June 1878, p 18.

⁷⁸ De Kock (ed), *DSAB*, vol 1, p 465.

⁷⁹ TA, A596, vol 4a, JP Grant – Kimberley, Jamaica, 22 August 1872, pp 2-5.

commander and civil administrator.⁸⁰ His instructions were to settle the dust, restore Britain's dented pride, reinstate the loyal Fante and negotiate a new treaty with Asante.⁸¹

Lanyon wrote to his father from Cape Coast Castle, where the 2nd West India regiment was awaiting Wolseley's arrival. Conditions there were far from pleasant. It had been pouring with rain for days, many of the men were sick and morale was low. The ambitious young Lanyon decided that hard work was one way to deal with the situation, even if it meant taking on extra responsibilities. In any case, he argued, 'I feel sure that the fact of my having done so will always tell in my favour'. He accepted the offer of an acting colonial secretaryship from the governor, Colonel Harley, 'on condition that it not be allowed to interfere with my military duties' and once Wolseley arrived, Lanyon was also chosen to act as his *aide-de-camp*.⁸²

Despite Prime Minister Gladstone's last minute caution that he was reluctant to sanction an armed attack in the Gold Coast region, Wolseley was never one to take the peaceful option when military glory beckoned. He could not resist adding another 'brisk colonial foray' to his recent successes in North America.⁸³ Without waiting to train additional Fante volunteers, Wolseley launched the campaign on 14 October 1873. The Asante resistance soon crumbled. By January 1874 the expedition was over and the Gold Coast was subsequently proclaimed a British colony. Meanwhile, back in Britain the Liberal Party was defeated at the polls and a new secretary of state for the colonies moved into the Colonial Office in Downing Street. Among Lanyon's papers, copied out in his own handwriting, is an extract from a despatch that Wolseley wrote to the newly-appointed Earl of Carnarvon in February 1874, just before he left the Gold Coast. While not appearing to be overly enthusiastic about Lanyon, Wolseley did commend his ability and his 'knowledge of colonial duties and regulations [that] were of great service to me'.⁸⁴ Once

⁸⁰ TA, A596, annexure 1, *Gold Coast Gazette*, 1 November 1873.

⁸¹ R Oliver & A Atmore, *Africa since 1800* (Cambridge, 1981), pp 35,39; A Preston (ed), *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley 1879-1880* (Cape Town, 1973), p 82.

⁸² TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, Cape Coast Castle, 23 September 1873.

⁸³ Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, pp 24, 83.

⁸⁴ TA, A596, vol 4(a), 'Extract from Sir Garnet Wolseley's despatch to the Earl of Carnarvon dated 7th February 1874', p 6.

both Wolseley and Lanyon were back home in England, Wolseley was promoted to Major-General and invested with the KCMG⁸⁵ while his *aide-de-camp* was rewarded with promotion to the rank of Brigade-Major.⁸⁶ Five years later the two men were destined to meet again while serving in another British colony in Africa: the Transvaal.

On 27 October 1874 Lanyon, who was temporarily in London, was summoned to an interview with RGW Herbert, the permanent under-secretary of state for the colonies. Lanyon wrote to his father the same day: 'It seems that they are anxious to get someone to go out to the Gold Coast on special service for a few months to do some special work ... and also to set the Govt. machine going ... Lord Carnarvon desired that the appointment should be offered to me ... Mr Herbert offered the appointment in such flattering terms ... that I at once said I would go.'⁸⁷ What probably influenced Lanyon's decision even more than the flattery – to which he was certainly not immune – was the juicy bait dangled before the ambitious young officer: Herbert had hinted broadly that on Lanyon's return from the Gold Coast, he need not fear 'obtaining a good billet'. Lanyon immediately made plans to sail to West Africa from Liverpool on 6 November 1874. But first he would spend a few days at 'The Abbey': could Nellie please 'give his linen a good overhauling'?⁸⁸

In the Colonial Office, Herbert lost no time in setting the plans for the Gold Coast Colony in motion. In his letter to the War Office the next day he wrote that it was absolutely essential that Major Lanyon of the 2nd West India regiment and Dr S Rowe of the African Medical Service be given permission to 'proceed at once'. Both officers had 'a good knowledge of the Gold Coast and can be trusted to avoid errors and indiscretions in communicating with the natives'.⁸⁹ With the formalities out of the way, Carnarvon then wrote to the governor of the Gold Coast, Strahan, that help was at hand. Lanyon and Rowe would be sailing shortly. Lanyon was to be appointed

⁸⁵ Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 84.

⁸⁶ *The Natal Mercury*, obituary, 8 April 1887.

⁸⁷ TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 27 October 1874.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, vol 4(a), Herbert – War Office, 28 October 1874, pp 7-9.

acting colonial secretary at a salary of £100 a month. His experience of conducting ‘official business’, wrote Carnarvon, would make him a valuable asset in that department. For the first time in this hurried spell of correspondence, Carnarvon then divulged the nature of the ‘important measures’ for which the new men were so urgently required: their mission would be to help promote the ‘proposed abolition of slave dealing and slavery’ in the new British colony.⁹⁰

Nearly five months later, in March 1875, Lanyon was more than ready to return home. His work in West Africa completed, he was waiting for the steamer to take him back to Britain. The colony was a ‘deadly place’ and he could not wait to leave.⁹¹ His antipathy towards the colonies to which he was posted and the people who lived in them, was to be a recurring one. As Burroughs has written on the attitude of British administrators towards local communities in the colonies, many of these officials ‘consciously pursued separateness and drew distinctions, whether racial, social or educational ... expatriate staff might keep leading inhabitants at arm’s length and sometimes disparage local customs and proclivities’.⁹² This was certainly so in Lanyon’s case. Later it will become apparent that he was to loathe everything about ‘hideous and disgusting’ Kimberley.⁹³ He was also to hate the Transvaal and the Boer people, saying that the Transvaal ‘has ever been the grave of reputations and honesty’.⁹⁴ Indeed, Lanyon seemed unable to form any favourable attachments to, or opinions of, anything immediately unfamiliar and non-British. By February 1880 – more than a year before he finally left South Africa – he couldn’t get away quickly enough, because ‘South Africa stinks in my nostrils’.⁹⁵ And rather like a mirror image reflecting back at him, Owen Lanyon was disliked by almost all those he governed. By his own admission, ‘I may say that I am an Ishmael against whom every man’s hand is turned’.⁹⁶ Even

⁹⁰ Ibid, Carnarvon – Strahan, 30 October 1874.

⁹¹ Ibid, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, Gold Coast, 27 March 1875.

⁹² Burroughs, ‘Imperial institutions and the government of empire’, p 182.

⁹³ TA, A596, vol 12, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 22 January 1877.

⁹⁴ Ibid, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 12 December 1880; vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 15 August 1879.

⁹⁵ Ibid, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 21 February 1880.

⁹⁶ Ibid, vol 12, Lanyon – brother Charles, 20 February, 1877.

as an ambitious, enthusiastic, wet-behind-the-ears 32-year old official, Lanyon began to sour, and be soured, by everyone around him. This was to be in the future, however. As far as the Colonial Office was concerned, Lanyon's brief term of office in the Gold Coast had been successful. In August 1875, back home in Britain, he received the CMG, in recognition of his services.⁹⁷

In 1875 the new opportunity Lanyon had been hoping for materialised. In southern Africa a crisis had developed in the British Crown Colony of Griqualand West. Ever since the discovery of diamonds there in the late 1860s, the area had been something of a thorn in the side of the Colonial Office. It 'neatly (and fearsomely) brought together accumulating problems of labour supply, defence and imperial expenditure'.⁹⁸ Throughout southern Africa, and certainly in the diamondiferous Kimberley area, there was tension between Africans and settlers relating to land. To make the situation even more delicate, at the end of 1873, there was an incident of African unrest, the Langalibalele affair, in the Natal Colony. This was directly connected to the labour supply to the diamond fields. Chief Langalibalele's Hlubi people had acquired firearms as payment for their labour, and their failure to register these guns led to a nasty confrontation which soon echoed through the Colonial Office. In the wake of this somewhat embarrassing incident – as far as British policy makers were concerned – it became clear to Carnarvon, who had taken office as secretary of state for the colonies in February 1874, just as the crisis needed attention, that the issue of procuring a ready supply of the necessary African labour was fraught with difficulty. Not only were there problems associated with recruiting Africans; the independent Boer republic in the Transvaal was reported to be preventing the flow of labour to the mines.⁹⁹

The troubled situation in Griqualand West, Lanyon's legacy from Richard Southey, who had been bundled out of the region in disgrace some months before Lanyon's arrival, will receive

⁹⁷ *The Natal Mercury*, obituary, 8 April 1887.

⁹⁸ NA Etherington, 'Labour supply and the genesis of South African confederation in the 1870s', *Journal of African History*, 20(2), 1979, p 246.

⁹⁹ For a more comprehensive discussion of the circumstances behind Carnarvon's federation policy see Chapter II.

attention below.¹⁰⁰ At this juncture it suffices to note that Southey's failure, and escalating tensions on the diamond fields were the background to Lanyon's appointment. Barely two weeks after Carnarvon had written an exasperated letter to Barkly saying that the situation could not be allowed to continue,¹⁰¹ the War Office was asked to sanction Lanyon's secondment without delay so that he could sail in the first week of September.¹⁰² It was agreed that he could be released on condition that his military pay was stopped and the Colonial Office would take on the responsibility for his salary.¹⁰³ Carnarvon was then able to write to Barkly to inform him of Lanyon's appointment, reiterating that despite his comparative youth, the new administrator was 'an officer of ability and experience'.¹⁰⁴ The details of Lanyon's departure for southern Africa were duly despatched to Barkly on 6 September 1875, the same day that he left England for the Cape of Good Hope.¹⁰⁵

Lanyon wrote to his father six days later, heartily pleased that he was not bound for West Africa again.¹⁰⁶ He was accompanied by William Crossman, who was going to Griqualand West to investigate the financial situation. Crossman was 'a very nice fellow' and a congenial travelling companion. The weather was tranquil, the sea was calm and Lanyon's spirits were high. 'Thus far we have come on our way rejoicing; the sun has beamed upon us and the waves have danced smilingly round us, not with anger, but with joy that so fair a ship and so pleasing a freight should be speeding oe'r the face of the waters.' The letter shows an enthusiasm and *joie de vivre* which is extremely rare in Lanyon's correspondence. Once resident in Kimberley – and later in Pretoria – his letters show that he became disillusioned and morose. But at Madeira, heading towards the Cape of Good Hope, he was indeed filled with good hope and high expectations. It

¹⁰⁰ See Chapter II.

¹⁰¹ CP, African 83, no 28, Carnarvon – Barkly, 4 August, 1875, pp 188-192. See Chapter II.

¹⁰² Ibid, no 36, Colonial Office – War Office, 19 August 1875, pp 202-203.

¹⁰³ Ibid, no 42, War Office – Colonial Office, 28 August 1875, p 209.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, no 39, Carnarvon – Barkly, 25 August 1875, p 207.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, no 58, Carnarvon – Barkly, 6 September 1875, p 216. It appears that Lanyon sailed from England on 6 September 1875, although Lanyon himself records the date as 7 September; CA, GH 12/40, Lanyon – Barkly, 25 December 1875.

¹⁰⁶ TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, Madeira, 12 September 1875.

was his third trip to Africa and he wrote: 'I find myself ... on my way to other lands ... The third time is certainly the charm, let us hope that the charm may not be delusive, and that bright anticipation may not be dimmed hereafter.'¹⁰⁷ There is a prophetic ring about this comment. His bright anticipation was certainly to turn to gloom by the time he returned home in 1881.

Lanyon's next letter, written at sea about two weeks later, is more characteristic of his correspondence from South Africa. He was growing weary of the long voyage. The trip was 'deadly dull' and the passengers were all 'stupid and vulgar'. Ever conscientious, he had whiled away the time reading his Blue Books on the situation in Griqualand West and had formed the opinion that few British colonies 'have had so eventful or so troublesome a career, as this my future charge'. He hoped he would be able to set it straight, because typical of a true-blue British imperial agent, he wanted honour, glory and prestige for Britain. Griqualand West had to be 'stabilised and strengthened into a position of which the old mother country may not be ashamed to own that it is one of the family'.¹⁰⁸

The voyage from England to the Cape Colony appears to have taken two days short of a full month. Lanyon arrived in Cape Town on 4 October 1875.¹⁰⁹ When he reported to Government House, the high commissioner's official residence, Lady Barkly explained that Sir Henry was still in Kimberley, where he was busy winding up the affairs of Southey's now defunct administration. On Carnarvon's orders, Barkly had moved Richard Southey out and appointed JD Barry, the recorder, as provisional acting-administrator pending Lanyon's arrival. He also prorogued the legislative council and made all the necessary announcements concerning the new dispensation.¹¹⁰ Barkly was expected back in Cape Town soon, and Lanyon was welcome to stay on in Government House.

A letter from Barkly arrived within a few days, confirming that he would be back by about 17

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 27 September 1875.

¹⁰⁹ CA, GH 12/40, Lanyon – Barkly, 25 December 1875; TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 5 October 1875.

¹¹⁰ CP, African 83, no 92, Barkly – Carnarvon, 1 October 1875, pp 309-310; enclosure in no 92, pp 310-311.

October. He wanted to spend about a week briefing Lanyon on his duties before the new administrator left for Griqualand West. Lanyon meanwhile complained bitterly that it had been necessary to send all his heavy luggage around the coast to Natal. Off-loading it at Cape Town would have meant paying prohibitive duty on everything. Unlike the Cape, Natal still had representative government and was therefore not 'subject to the illiberal policy of self-made politicians': an irritable reference on Lanyon's part to the responsible government granted to the Cape in 1872. Plans were also laid ahead of time for Crossman and Lanyon to travel up to Kimberley in the wagon which would bring Barkly back to Cape Town. Lanyon obviously had little empathy for or concept of the rigours of the journey that lay ahead. He wrote rather ingenuously to his father: 'I expect we shall be about 15 days on the way [to Kimberley]. Fancy doing 720 miles in an 8-horse waggon something like one of Barley and Perkin's brewery carts with a huge hood over it; a sort of gipsy life.'¹¹¹

Lanyon and Crossman arrived in Kimberley on 14 November.¹¹² In his correspondence Lanyon does not record his very first impressions of Kimberley, but about six weeks later he wrote: 'A more uninteresting country could not well be found. It is dead flat without water or trees and overhead a burning scorching sun ... The only outline against the horizon being huge heaps of soil which has been brought up from the mine.'¹¹³ He was clearly delighted to have been warmly welcomed, and enclosed copies of the addresses he had received on the occasion, for Barkly's interest.¹¹⁴ To his father, Lanyon admitted privately that the Southey government had been so unpopular that 'anyone coming would have been cordially welcomed, so I cannot flatter myself that it is personal. But I trust it may last, for one will have to tread on many corns morally'. His spirits high, Lanyon settled himself in Kimberley and began his administration of Griqualand West.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 14 October 1875.

¹¹² CA, GH 12/40, Lanyon – Barkly, 25 December 1875.

¹¹³ TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 25 December 1875.

¹¹⁴ CA, GH 12/38, Lanyon – Barkly, 18 November 1875; TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 18 November 1875. See also CA, GH 25/1, Barkly – Carnarvon, 26 November 1875.

¹¹⁵ TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 18 November 1875.

CHAPTER II

LANYON AND CROWN COLONY RULE IN GRIQUALAND WEST

When Owen Lanyon arrived in early October 1875, British presence in southern Africa was already well established, but Griqualand West, where Lanyon was to be posted, was a newly developing region. The town of Kimberley had risen, phoenix-like, from the veld with the discovery of diamonds some eight years earlier and there was a cosmopolitan feel to the bustling little corrugated-iron village. People had come to it from all corners of southern Africa and beyond, and everyone was hoping to get rich quickly. It did not have a very stable society and was hardly the kind of place for a well-bred Irish-born British official to feel particularly comfortable; he stuck out like a sore thumb in the dusty mining town. To understand the brief that Lanyon had been given by the Colonial Office, and Lanyon's progress in what must have been a very foreign environment for the young imperial agent, it is necessary to understand how the nature of British colonial policy was evolving in southern Africa in the 1870s, and the attitude and opinions of the high commissioner, Sir Henry Barkly, who was Lanyon's immediate superior. Also of importance in understanding Lanyon's role is an examination of the legacy he had been left by Richard Southey, his predecessor. Southey had been singularly unsuccessful in the diamond fields and Lanyon had to take over from him in the wake of an armed revolt in the region. All these issues impacted upon Owen Lanyon's role in Griqualand West and form a vital background to the study of this, his first administratorship in southern Africa, from 1875 to early 1879.

As will be shown, Lanyon's role in Griqualand West was in many ways the most crucial period in his southern African career. It was while on the diamond fields that he became an important architect of policies that secured the capitalist ownership of land. Furthermore, he devised and implemented measures that were the first of their kind in putting African labour resources under colonial control. These were to pave the way for white control over land and labour, hallmarks of the new aggressive capitalist political economy of the second half of the 19th century in

southern Africa.

In Britain, the Liberal Party, under William Gladstone, whose imperial policy was reputedly dominated by his budget, had been in power since 1868. Gladstone ‘promised and gave, cheap government and a modicum of reform where the body politic seemed to need it’.¹ In South Africa the imperial government was moving towards reducing its commitments, and was beginning to contemplate the withdrawal of imperial troops; it was also trying to pass as much responsibility and expense as possible to the colonies. In July 1870 a Whig secretary of state for the colonies, Lord Kimberley, took over in the Colonial Office and a new high commissioner for South Africa and governor of the Cape Colony, Sir Henry Barkly, arrived in late 1870. Kimberley, in line with the Liberal Party view, advocated political self-help in the colonies and in 1871 the Cape Colony was persuaded to take over the administration of Basutoland, which the imperial government had annexed in 1868.² Another step in the same direction was to encourage the Cape Colony in its aspirations towards responsible government. But Kimberley was soon obliged to change tack. In Britain there were rumblings of economic instability, and signs of growing international competition. At the periphery changes were also afoot. The discovery of diamonds foreshadowed the growth of a far more profitable capitalist economy in South Africa and to meet the demands of the new development, Britain was forced into more active involvement in the South African interior.³

Kimberley had appointed Barkly expressly to further imperial Britain’s policy of reducing her responsibilities in southern Africa, but the new pace of circumstances caught Kimberley off guard and left Barkly to handle a very tricky situation. With the new progress and prosperity of the early 1870s came an awakening of settler political confidence, and a powerful eastern Cape faction evolved in Port Elizabeth, forming a settler elite with considerable financial and political

¹ Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African confederation*, p 31.

² On the role of the Cape Colony in the administration of Basutoland see E Bradlow, *The Cape government rule of Basutoland 1871-1883* (Pretoria, AYB, 1968).

³ For a discussion of the imperatives in the metropolis and at the periphery, see Chapter I.

clout.⁴ These easterners, the so-called separatists, feared domination by the western Cape politicians and merchants and were thus against the move towards responsible government. The political tension between these two factions made Barkly's position very difficult.

One of the foremost easterners, who led the move against responsible government, was John Paterson and another was Richard Southey, the Cape colonial secretary. It suited the interests of Paterson and other members of the growing settler elite in Port Elizabeth, to take early economic advantage of the new diamond discoveries. Indeed, in Southey, who was reputedly Barkly's guiding spirit,⁵ the easterners were able to push their own views. Stressing that the discovery was one of significant proportions, they urged that the fields and should certainly not be allowed to remain in the hands of the Tlhaping or be lost to the republicans.⁶ There was also strong pressure from Port Elizabeth merchants who claimed that republican expansion was hampering their trade routes to and from the diamond fields and endangering the vital supply routes to the mines.⁷

After arbitration on the ownership of the fields and the Keate Award, Barkly, with Southey and the Cape lawyer David Arnot, was able to organise that the claims of the Tlhaping people and Brand's Free Staters to ownership of the diamond fields be superseded by those of Waterboer's Griqua. Waterboer was then prepared to pass control of the diamond fields to Britain, but Barkly was in an awkward position because there was still no resolution of the responsible government feud in the Cape. As an interim measure, until such time as the new Cape ministry was up and running and, he hoped, would take over the diamond fields, Barkly annexed Griqualand West

⁴ For an incisive account of the development of settler elites and their growing influence in the southern African interior in the mid 19th-century see Keegan, 'The making of the Orange Free State', pp 26-54.

⁵ Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African confederation*, p 36; Oberholster, *Die anneksasie van Griekwaland-Wes*, p 243.

⁶ Keegan, in 'The making of the Orange Free State', p 32, makes the point that civil and military officials and 'those closest to the High Commissioner' were often in the best position to profit from an inflation of prices in the developing interior. He shows that Richard Southey's brother, Henry Southey (who was secretary to the high commissioner at the time) had gone so far as to set himself up in the Free State in 1853 as a land agent for his friends.

⁷ RL Cope, 'Local imperatives and imperial policy: the sources of Lord Carnarvon's South African confederation policy', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 20(4), 1987, pp 620-621. Early in 1874 Barkly also sent a number of eastern Cape petitions to the Colonial Office, calling for annexation of 'Batlapinia', an area to the north of Griqualand West, occupied by the Tlhaping people.

for Britain in 1871, to be ruled temporarily as a crown colony. At the same time, the Cape legislative assembly passed a resolution tabled by Southey in favour of annexation of the diamond fields.

The Cape Colony received responsible government in 1872, despite the opposition of the easterners. But then, to Barkly's dismay and embarrassment, the new ministry under John Molteno, the first prime minister, was not prepared to accept responsibility for the diamond fields. Soon thereafter, in 1873, Barkly appointed Richard Southey as lieutenant-governor of Griqualand West. Southey's appointment was significant. Like Barkly, he was a dyed-in-the-wool imperialist and was fiercely anti-Dutch. In his view the republicans in the interior would not be accomplished enough to meet the challenges that were inherent in the development of a profitable diamond mining industry. As an easterner himself Southey was an acceptable choice as far as the eastern Cape settler elite was concerned – merchants and speculators based in Port Elizabeth were hoping that with his help their interests would be well served on the fields, where there were good business prospects in the offing. However, Southey's administration of Griqualand West was to fail. By the time he left the diamond fields in 1875, to be succeeded by Owen Lanyon, British policy in South Africa was undergoing a remarkable change.

Carnarvon and his confederation scheme

In 1874 the Liberal government in Britain was defeated. Benjamin Disraeli's Conservative Party then assumed control of the government in Britain and Carnarvon headed up the Colonial Office as the new secretary of state for the colonies. Like most other members of the cabinet, Disraeli appears to have regarded colonial debates as something of a burden and he allowed Carnarvon considerable latitude in decisions on colonial policy.⁸

The ambitious Carnarvon was the author of the grandiose confederation scheme for southern Africa in the 1870s, although Disraeli obviously had to be consulted before major decisions were

⁸ M Bentley, *Politics without democracy 1815-1914* (Oxford, 1996), p xviii, argues that most senior British politicians viewed the empire as 'boring' and resented imperial intrusion in parliamentary affairs.

taken and as a courtesy Queen Victoria had to be informed of such plans.⁹ The confederation of Canada, undertaken in 1867, which had successfully reconciled both the British and the French to the empire and afforded them self-government, was used as a precedent in Carnarvon's attempt to do the same with the British and Boer-ruled states.

Carnarvon's proposal was that the various colonies and republics in South Africa should unite to form a self-governing confederation under the British flag. He hoped that eventually this British control would stretch as far north as the Zambezi River. It was a plan that evolved slowly, finally taking shape in Carnarvon's famous federation despatch of 4 May 1875, issued just over a year after he took control at the Colonial Office. The dogged pursuance of his plans and the reactions they evinced in South Africa form the backdrop to the role played by Owen Lanyon in Griqualand West. Indeed, it will be shown that Lanyon was an extremely influential person in pointing the way to the South Africa that was beginning to emerge after the discovery of minerals. He arrived in Kimberley at a time when confederation was beginning to be actively promoted in South Africa and the timing of his appointment makes it safe to assume that he was one of the first of Carnarvon's pro-federation civil appointees, arriving in South Africa shortly after Garnet Wolseley's stay in Natal (April – September 1875), and some six months before Theophilus Shepstone began his mission to annex and administer the Transvaal on behalf of Britain.

Confederation, according to Carnarvon, would solve the 'tangled skein' of the diamond fields dispute because existing regional boundaries would no longer be an issue.¹⁰ Furthermore, it would bring political unity to the small, disunited white population, bolstering white supremacy in the face of a large African population which was beginning to chafe against increasing settler pressure for land and labour. Britain's so-called humanitarian desire to protect African people,

⁹ See for example Carnarvon Papers, PRO 30/6/11, Carnarvon – Disraeli, 20 September 1876, asking Disraeli's 'concurrence' on the plan to send Shepstone to the Transvaal with a 'secret despatch empowering him to take over the Transvaal government ... if circumstances on his arrival render this in any way possible' and Carnarvon Papers, PRO 30/6/3, Carnarvon – Ponsonby, 20 September 1876, requesting that Ponsonby 'submit all this immediately to the Queen for HM's approval'.

¹⁰ Ibid, PRO 30/6/11, Carnarvon – Disraeli, 14 December 1875. Referring to the South African situation after the rejection of his confederation proposals Carnarvon wrote: '... the skein is too tangled a one to be untied by mere telegrams'. His agent Froude would have to report back personally.

argued by some early liberal historians, can largely be dismissed; on close examination it becomes clear that the confederation policy was in fact markedly illiberal.¹¹ Then too, Carnarvon argued, the growing demand for labour in the mid 1870s required by the developing economy could best be met by the adoption of a common policy.¹² If the supply of labour was blocked by the republics, as it was reputed to be, or was slow in forthcoming from independent African states, then confederation would serve to remove these obstacles, and republics and African societies could be brought into line. Furthermore, confederation as Carnarvon conceived it, would be instrumental in modernising and upgrading state machinery to meet the level required by the developing capitalist economy. In other words, isolated, inefficient, bankrupt states had to be swept up into the confederal scheme and made part of a more efficient whole.

Carnarvon's views on the benefits of confederation are probably a reflection of those expressed in a memorandum which he asked Edward Fairfield, a member of his staff in the Colonial Office, to compile in order to enlighten the members of the cabinet of the advantages of the scheme and explain why it appeared to be the best policy to follow in southern Africa. Fairfield raised three main issues. The first was the need to establish white supremacy. He pointed to the 'precarious position of civilisation' as far as African relations in both Natal and the Transvaal were concerned, the urgency to disarm the African people and the need to 'break down the power of the chiefs'. Secondly, small, inefficient governments needed upgrading. Their governance should be improved and replaced by sound administrative units which could attract capital and promote a viable capitalist economy. Thirdly, cheap labour had to be found to serve the needs of this emerging new economy. These pronouncements certainly put paid to all claims of humanitarian motives behind the confederal proposals.¹³

In line with Fairfield's thinking, one of Carnarvon's main arguments in favour of confederation was his insistence on the need for a 'common native policy'. In his opening speech at the London

¹¹ The last clause (clause 82) of the Draft Bill for federation, for example, states that for the purposes of the proposed Act 'the word "population" shall be deemed not to include African natives' and Africans were thus not entitled to vote, despite the fact that election to the proposed federal House of Assembly was to be proportionate to the population of each region.

¹² See for example Etherington, 'Labour supply and the genesis of South African confederation', pp 235-253.

¹³ CP, African 84, *Affairs; memorandum by Mr Fairfield*, January 1876, pp 5-9.

conference that he had seen fit to organise on confederation, attended by representatives from some of the southern African states, Carnarvon made a number of points on how confederation would affect Africans. He felt that the 'dangerous' form of wages, namely the firearms that were becoming readily available to wage-earning Africans on the diamond fields, should be controlled by a uniform policy.¹⁴ He also made reference to the all-important African labour question, expressing the view that African workers should be 'fully utilised' and 'made a source of strength and of future prosperity' in the new confederation.¹⁵ Furthermore he stressed that he saw African communities in South Africa as 'a serious and common danger to the whole European population'. Attempts should thus be made to limit chiefly power and foster white supremacy. By 'common native policy' the secretary of state presumably meant cooperation between the various white-controlled states to 'diminish the potential risk' posed by strong African polities.¹⁶ Confederation was, to put it bluntly, to be a white defence organisation. Furthermore, the '*Draft Bill for Union under one government of such of the South African Colonies and States as may agree thereto*' which Carnarvon compiled and sent to Barkly after the 1876 conference, is clearly illiberal as far as the franchise for blacks is concerned.¹⁷ Indeed, soon afterwards, FW Chesson of the Aborigines Protection Society submitted a statement, signed by a number of concerned members, to the Colonial Office, expressing grave misgivings at the apparent lack of concern for the rights of Africans in Carnarvon's confederation proposals of December 1876.¹⁸

The second memorandum, also printed for cabinet use, was compiled by JB Glanville, the editor of a British periodical called *The Empire*. In contrast to Fairfield's document, Glanville's memorandum is an analysis of the difficulties in implementing confederation in southern Africa, and as a contemporary analysis of possible problems, Goodfellow is of the opinion that it was

¹⁴ For details of Owen Lanyon's concurrence on the inadvisability of allowing Africans to buy 'warlike stores' see TA, A596, vol 4(b), Minute (draft) Lanyon – Frere, 19 September 1878.

¹⁵ CP, African 102, *Conference on affairs; Lord Carnarvon's speech and minutes*, Carnarvon's opening address, 3 August 1876.

¹⁶ CP, African 102, *Conference on affairs; Lord Carnarvon's speech and minutes*, 3 August 1876, pp 1-3.

¹⁷ CP, African 11, *Draft despatch to Sir H Barkly on Union Bill*, December 1876, pp 1-17.

¹⁸ CP, African 138, Aborigines Protection Society – Carnarvon, 20 July 1877, pp 20-21.

unsurpassed.¹⁹ Carnarvon was interested enough in Glanville's ideas to ask him to call at the Colonial Office to discuss his opinions. Glanville, himself a South African, felt that the reaction in South Africa to Carnarvon's suggestions of May 1875 had generally been positive. But he pointed out that as a result of the unpalatable diamond field dispute, the 'Dutch-speaking States' felt 'repugnance' towards British rule. They resented British intervention in their domestic affairs and the offensive attitude of British officials in South Africa. Here he probably had in mind both Barkly who was well known to be anti-republican, and Southey who was allegedly vindictive and notoriously discourteous to the Boers.²⁰ This, Glanville felt, put confederation at risk because both republics, and the Orange Free State in particular, were vitally important to federal success. 'As long as Mr. Brand lives', he wrote, 'no proposal for Confederation will be received in the Free State to which he does not give his approval ... Were President Brand gained, all would be gained.' In essence, he was confident that if Brand could be won over, the Transvaal would follow, particularly if the latter was assured of a harbour at Delagoa Bay. Glanville foresaw no complications from Natal and Griqualand West: they would both be anxious to comply, but he was concerned, accurately, as it proved, that the Cape Colony would be reluctant to cooperate. According to Glanville there was no real support for federation in that colony and with their newly acquired responsible government status they would have little to gain from compliance. As he put it, 'to the Cabinet at Cape Town an invitation to promote Confederation is an invitation to provide for its own extinction'.²¹

On the basis of advice from a number of quarters,²² Carnarvon then formulated his blueprint, his

¹⁹ Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African confederation*, p 76. In Cope, 'Strategic and socio-economic explanations', pp 14-20, a convincing argument is put forward, taking Goodfellow to task for ignoring the significance of Fairfield's memorandum.

²⁰ See Chapter I on the generally superior, and often racist attitude of British imperial agents in South Africa and Atmore & Marks, 'The imperial factor in South Africa', p 114. On Southey's unpopularity see the extracts from *The Diamond Field*, 20 June 1874, quoted in Oberholster, *Die anneksasie van Griekwaland-Wes*, p 218; De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor in South Africa*, p 19. See also the discussion below of Southey's legacy to Owen Lanyon in Griqualand West.

²¹ CP, African 81, *Affairs; proposed conference of delegates; correspondence*, enclosure 1 in no 2, TB Glanville, 'Some remarks on the practical difficulties in the way of a Confederation of the South African Colonies and States, undated (received 9 July 1875), pp 2-5.

²² Among these were the recommendations of JA Froude, whom Carnarvon sent out from Britain to conduct an investigative tour of South Africa. Froude's findings are not directly relevant to this thesis.

'broad and dignified ambition for South Africa'.²³ In this chapter it is significant to see how it impacted upon the situation on the diamond fields, where Owen Lanyon was to take over the administration from 1875 to late 1878. The Colonial Office was determined that its responsibility for administering Griqualand West could only be an interim arrangement. Certainly Carnarvon, writing to Barkly in August 1875, saw what he called the Cape government's 'agreement' to the annexation of Griqualand West²⁴ as exerting some binding force on it to accept responsibility for the region in the not too distant future. In mid 1875 the irrepresible Carnarvon foresaw few of the problems that lay ahead, and those he might have anticipated he brushed nonchalantly aside; for the present Griqualand West was his prime concern. He wrote to Barkly:

As you are aware, the annexation [of Griqualand West] was sanctioned upon the passing of the resolutions by the Cape parliament asserting that it was desirable and needful ... for the interest of the Cape that the territory should be annexed; ... I have little doubt that the Members of the present Parliament will ... accept the Resolutions of 1871 as morally binding upon themselves ... No advance whatever has been made towards the fulfilment of the understanding on which Her Majesty's late government appear to have sanctioned the acceptance of Griqua-Land West as British territory ... The Resolutions which were adopted in July and August, 1871, ... constituted an undertaking on the fulfilment of which ... the Imperial Government were entitled to rely... namely that the Cape Government ... should undertake the responsibility of the administration of the territory, even to the extent of making good the cost, if any, which might result from a deficiency of the local revenues.²⁵

'I anticipate no serious results', he had informed Disraeli the previous year. All that was needed was a 'firm tone' and he was confident that everything could be brought into line.²⁶

Such was the situation when Owen Lanyon, later to become notorious for his 'firm tone' in government, arrived in Griqualand West to try to steer the diamond fields back to some measure of solvency and, hopefully, deliver it into the none-too-welcoming hands of the Cape Colony. It is very clear from the timing of Carnarvon's subsequent letters that Owen Lanyon was the man he had in mind to carry out the changes outlined in his despatch to Barkly, and the secretary of state promptly made the necessary arrangements.²⁷ Lanyon's brief was made clear: he was to cut

²³ De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor in South Africa*, p 51.

²⁴ The Cape legislative assembly had done no more than pass the resolution which Southey had tabled in July 1871 in favour of annexation of the diamond fields. The reality of the situation was that this did not constitute a commitment to assume full responsibility for Griqualand West as part of the Cape Colony.

²⁵ CP, African 83, no 28, Carnarvon – Barkly, 4 August 1875, pp 190-191.

²⁶ Carnarvon Papers, PRO 30/6/11, Carnarvon – Disraeli, 12 March 1874.

²⁷ CP, African 83, no 36, Colonial Office – War Office, 19 August 1875, pp 202-203. See Chapter I.

back the English tax-payers' enforced obligation on the diamond fields by encouraging the Cape legislature to take the diamond fields under its wing. With Barkly's assistance, he was to take Griqualand West off the imperial government's hands, and this was to be the first step in the realisation of Carnarvon's confederal scheme.

Richard Southey's legacy to Lanyon

When Owen Lanyon arrived in Kimberley, where he was to be based for more than three years, the situation he inherited from his predecessor was very unsettled. In January 1873 Richard Southey had been appointed lieutenant-governor of Griqualand West.²⁸ His term of office in Kimberley appears to have been characterised by a remarkable lack of finesse. To be fair, he had to cope with an extremely volatile and difficult situation. As has been seen, in the 1870s Griqualand West was a pariah colony – a political mistake – unwanted by the imperial government, hated by the republics and kept at arm's length by the Cape Colony.²⁹ The discovery of diamonds had brought the region relative prosperity but also a host of problems. The population of the diamond fields had increased by leaps and bounds³⁰ and when Southey was appointed there was little formal agriculture to provide even the most basic sustenance for the new community; everything had to be transported to the area. There was a *mêlée* of white diggers and African people who flocked to the diamond fields to search for gems. Other indigenes were in search of wage labour in the hope of earning enough to provide for their families and to purchase guns and ammunition in order to resist widespread and insidious settler land encroachment.

Southey's revenue, given the fact that import dues were largely absorbed by the Cape Colony,³¹ was based almost entirely, either directly or indirectly, on what proved to be an unreliable

²⁸ For an outline of the constitution under which Southey had to administer the crown colony see Turrell, *Capital and labour on the Kimberley diamond fields*, pp 32-33.

²⁹ Oberholster, *Die anneksasie van Griekwaland-Wes*, p 243.

³⁰ For approximate population figures in Griqualand West during Lanyon's administration, see below.

³¹ TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 14 October 1875. On his arrival in Cape Town, Lanyon was scandalised to learn of this 'iniquitous' policy. He informed his father that he intended to 'obviate this in future' but there is no evidence that he was able to do so before leaving Griqualand West.

commodity.³² Soon after Britain's annexation of Griqualand West there were violent fluctuations in the price of diamonds, due largely to the sudden increase in the supply of the gems. To make matters worse an international financial crisis loomed in 1873, forcing diamond prices down. Diamonds also proved difficult to mine, with claims collapsing and extensive flooding causing long, frustrating and costly delays. The early days of carefree individual profiteering soon gave way to debilitating socio-economic problems such as the lack of hygienic living conditions, crime, altercations over claim ownership and the relentless inroads of speculators and mining companies.

Before Southey's arrival there had been angry disputes over who had access to the land and mineral rights. The British-engineered arbitration court – which granted the land to Waterboer's Griqua – and the subsequent annexation of Griqualand West, had overruled the territorial rights of the Tlhaping people and the Boer republics, and had made the area (once Waterboer had been prevailed upon to relinquish Griqua rights), from the British point of view, crown land. Another complication was that certain land claims on the border between Griqualand West and the Orange Free State dated back to the British control of the Orange River Sovereignty in the period from 1848 to 1854 and Barkly had seen fit to ratify those land holdings extant on 27 October 1871.³³ The diggers, for their part, maintained that they were fully entitled to prospect for diamonds if they found a likely looking spot, but since 1867 when the first gems were discovered, colonial speculators from the Cape had not been slow in accumulating as many claims to vast tracts of land as they possibly could. By virtue of their ownership these proprietors said that the ground, and therefore the mineral rights, was theirs. It all made for a chaotic situation by the time the various claims were examined in 1872-1873. Southey, as the senior British official in the colony was the sole authority to issue land titles and he was adamant that the Cape 'land-jobbers' with their grandiose schemes would not call the shots on the diamond fields. In the view of both Shillington and Turrell, Southey, who had strong ties with the wealthy settler agriculturists in the eastern Cape, hoped to capitalise the farming land for the benefit of eastern Cape farmers, thereby 'broadening the economic base of the new colony and reducing

³² WH Worger, *South Africa's city of diamonds: mine workers and monopoly capitalism in Kimberley, 1867-1895* (New Haven, 1987), pp 27-28.

³³ CP, African 215, 'Report on the Land Question in Griqualand West, by Lieut-Colonel Charles Warren, R.E., C.M.G.', June 1880; Shillington, *The colonisation of the southern Tswana*, p 70.

its dependence upon the fortunes of the nascent mining industry'.³⁴

Southey was also hard pressed to address an incipient labour shortage, curb gem thefts and illicit diamond buying and cope with growing dissatisfaction from all quarters. He was by nature a rigid, unapproachable autocrat; and with a highly unpopular staff, a small budget – which he managed very poorly – and an ineffectual and corrupt police force, he made little headway in bringing order to the restless, undisciplined digger community. The situation became so fraught that Southey's mine inspectors, charged with the responsibility of collecting licences from the diggers, could only carry out their duties if they were heavily armed.³⁵

The supercilious lieutenant-governor alienated himself from everyone, but his particular enemies were the white diggers. They were clamouring for class legislation to prevent Africans from buying and working claims. They also argued that official control over all African labourers would regulate and therefore reduce the cost of black labour. But Southey refused to introduce such controls. In keeping with his 'staunchly colour-blind' brand of liberalism – admittedly a remarkable outlook for an easterner and member of the eastern Cape settler elite – he continued to allow African diggers to hold claims.³⁶ This liberalism and his claim, which is open to some debate, to be the protector of 'native interests', did not, however, stretch to recognition of the territorial rights of the Tlhaping people. As Shillington has shown, these rights were largely ignored in favour of a scheme to create 'a community of colonists based upon progressive white farming' in the well-watered regions of Griqualand West adjacent to the diamond fields.³⁷

³⁴ Shillington, *The colonisation of the southern Tswana*, pp 70-71. See also Turrell, *Capital and labour on the Kimberley diamond fields*, p 72.

³⁵ Oberholster, *Die anneksasie van Griekwaland-Wes*, p 245. See also the excerpts from the *Diamond Field*, 20 June 1874, that depict Southey as an unapproachable autocrat, prone to 'hating without reason', and possessed of an extraordinary 'bitterness of spirit' and an 'insatiable thirst for vengeance'. The *Diamond Field* had been bought out by the white diggers, and was their mouthpiece.

³⁶ *Diamond Field*, 28 November 1874. For an analysis of the shortage of labour, master and servant relations and racial tension on the diamond fields under Southey, see Turrell, *Capital and labour on the Kimberley diamond fields*, pp 52-57.

³⁷ CA, GLW 184, Southey – Barkly, 21 January 1875. See also Shillington, *The colonisation of the southern Tswana*, p 71.

Southey failed in several key areas. His attempt to regulate the extraction of exorbitant rentals by merchant proprietors is a case in point.³⁸ Then too, in an effort to defend the rights of individual claim owners against absentee speculators who were threatening to consolidate all the smaller claims, Southey issued an ordinance to limit the number of claims that could be held by one person to 10.³⁹ He also realised that a diamond industry based on small-holding, rather than larger-scale production, was in the interests of the local Kimberley merchants in particular – with whom he had great sympathy – because they depended for their profits on a large, economically active population rather than efficiency of production.⁴⁰ But a regulation to prevent company production could not survive for long on the Kimberley diamond fields. Even in its infancy the diamond mining industry was showing clear signs of moving towards company production and eventual monopoly capitalism. Turrell maintains that Southey's inability to regulate monopoly rents and to place effective restrictions on claim combination in fact placed a serious brake on the development of productive forces on the diamond fields.⁴¹ As will be shown, when Lanyon took over the reins from Southey, with due instructions from the Colonial Office, there was to be a gradual change from small to larger-scale company production.

If Southey was poor at interpersonal relations he was simply abysmal at financial management and Griqualand West was pushed to the brink of collapse by early 1875. As mentioned above, Colonel William Crossman, a member of the Colonial Office staff, was sent out to Griqualand West on the same vessel as Lanyon.⁴² He was instructed 'to inquire into and report upon the financial condition ... of the Province of Griqualand West ... with a view to great retrenchment in expenditure'. Furthermore he had special powers to investigate how 'the Crown Lands and all revenue arising therefrom have been administered and the probable extent and value of the lands

³⁸ The richest diamond-bearing site was the farm Vooruitzigt, previously owned by a Port Elizabeth syndicate and bought by the state shortly before Lanyon arrived. In many of the official documents, including all those written by Lanyon, this name is (incorrectly) spelt Voorintzigt. See for example CP, African 89, enclosure 10a, Lanyon – Crossman, 5 February 1876.

³⁹ CA, GLW 183, Southey – Barkly, 30 July 1874; *Diamond Field*, 20 August 1874.

⁴⁰ Worger, *South Africa's city of diamonds*, pp 26-27.

⁴¹ Turrell, *Capital and labour on the Kimberley diamond fields*, pp 71-72.

⁴² TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 12 September 1875.

not already disposed of'.⁴³ It seems that Carnarvon envisaged a complete re-organisation of the allocation of claims to diggers, one of the main sources of unrest on the diamond fields. In his provisional report written to Carnarvon from Kimberley in the first week of February 1876, some three months after his arrival at the diamond fields, Crossman wrote that he was shocked at Southey's 'disgraceful' incompetence and his 'reckless way in dealing with everything'. Land disputes had gobbled up funds for surveys, policing – despite being ineffective – had cost a great deal and the management of works and public buildings had been grossly extravagant. Personal tax which had stood at £3 per head in 1872 had soared to £10 by 1875.⁴⁴ Annual estimates of income and expenditure had only been prepared long after the stipulated deadlines and had arrived in London far too late to be useful.⁴⁵ Furthermore, Crossman alleged that the 1873 accounts had been falsified and some of the entries had only been made in the books as late as 1875. In his lengthy provisional report he provided masses of detailed evidence of the scandalous state of affairs, and added 15 enclosures to drive home his point. It was damning evidence indeed, as far as both Richard Southey and his unscrupulous colonial secretary, John Blades Currey, were concerned, although in the full report Crossman compiled three months later he was careful to exonerate Southey from any shady dealings.⁴⁶ The only light at the end of the gloomy financial tunnel, said Crossman, was that at the time of writing 'Major Lanyon has already done away with several superfluous offices ... [in order to] reduce to some extent the expense of administration.' Among the enclosures Crossman included a minute compiled by the ever-punctilious Lanyon, headed: 'Reductions in expenditure already effected'.⁴⁷

⁴³ Ibid, vol 4(a), Meade – Crossman, 31 August 1875, pp 16-24. RH Meade was the financial expert on Carnarvon's Colonial Office staff.

⁴⁴ CP, African 89, 'Preliminary report by Lieut.-Col. Crossman, R.E., on the financial condition of Griqualand West', no 5, Crossman – Carnarvon, 5 February, 1876.

⁴⁵ See for example Carnarvon's irate comments in CP, African 76, no 2, Carnarvon – Barkly, 9 September 1874 on the 'highly unsatisfactory' return of estimates for 1874 and the accounts of the colony for 1873.

⁴⁶ Crossman noted that there were not the 'slightest grounds' to implicate Southey in any scurrilous dealings, but doubt was cast upon Currey's allegedly corrupt land deals. Matters reached such a pitch in Kimberley, wrote Crossman, that 'if a man woke up in the morning with a headache he would turn round in his bed and curse John Blades Currey'; CP, African 96, Crossman – Carnarvon, 1 May 1876.

⁴⁷ CP, African 89, Crossman – Carnarvon, 5 February, 1876, and enclosure 10a, Lanyon – Crossman, 5 February 1876. For details of Lanyon's financial administration 1875-1879, see below.

Barely six months after Southey's arrival the white diggers had begun to hold public meetings where they expressed their relentless hatred for the lieutenant-governor and his hapless administration and aired their mounting grievances.⁴⁸ This antagonism reached such proportions by March 1875 that the diggers staged an uprising, the Black Flag Revolt. At the core of the outbreak was the conflict which was to become almost synonymous with the late 19th-century mineral revolution in South Africa – that between capital and labour. In Kimberley the dispute began with individual claim owners trying to survive the pressure from company promoters who wanted to take control of the entire diamond mining enterprise. Southey's ambivalent stance and ineffectual action satisfied no one. None of the interest groups was united – except against Richard Southey and his administration.⁴⁹ In flagrant contravention of a proclamation Southey had issued, the diggers formed a Committee of Public Safety and armed themselves and introduced military drill.⁵⁰ Southey took fright and requested that troops be sent to assist his puny police force.⁵¹ By the time a British force arrived in May 1875 the Black Flag Revolt had blown over and the costly relocation of troops was chalked up against the lieutenant-governor's steadily declining reputation.

Southey's legacy to Lanyon also had important implications for the new appointee's furtherance of Carnarvon's federal scheme. Britain's annexation of Griqualand West in 1871 had alienated the two independent Boer republics, the Orange Free State and the South African Republic, both of which had made claims to ownership of parts of the diamondiferous land. The Orange Free State, unlike its northerly neighbour, had lodged a very convincing claim to some of the richest regions. At about the same time as Owen Lanyon was being considered as a candidate to be sent to Kimberley to pull Griqualand West out of the parlous situation into which it had slumped, the able Free State leader, JH Brand, was fighting a bulldog-like rearguard action against Carnarvon. Brand insisted that all he wanted was simple justice for the Free State. Some of the

⁴⁸ *Diamond Field*, 'Public Meeting of Diggers', 11 June 1873.

⁴⁹ See for example, TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon,, 18 November 1875.

⁵⁰ CP, African 76, enclosure 4 in no 15, Proclamation by Southey, 19 March 1875, p 52; Turrell, *Capital and labour on the Kimberley diamond fields*, p 36.

⁵¹ CP, African 76, enclosure 1 in no 15, Southey – Barkly, 20 March 1875, pp 39-42. See also CA, GH 27/1, Barkly – Carnarvon, 14 June 1875, in which Barkly reports that he was 'compelled very reluctantly to send up the troops applied for by the Lt Gov'.

diamondiferous land undeniably belonged to the republic and Brand wanted justice.⁵²

Southey, aided and abetted by Barkly, had exacerbated these troubled Boer-British relations by his superior bullying attitude towards the republics and arrogant references to their status as ‘petty republics’ bent on expansion.⁵³ On assumption of office in Griqualand West, Southey had been given the go-ahead to deal personally with Brand rather than conducting affairs through Barkly,⁵⁴ and he had lost no time in exercising this prerogative. Before long he was complaining bitterly to both Barkly and Carnarvon that farmers in the Free State were hampering the flow of labour to the diamond mines⁵⁵ and that the Transvaal was causing unrest by encroaching on the Keate Award territory on its western boundary.⁵⁶ While there is evidence that both these complaints, particularly the latter, were certainly justified, an improvement in relations with the Boers was high on Carnarvon’s list of priorities. Indeed, one of Lanyon’s more important instructions, heavily underscored in his brief from Carnarvon in 1875, was to try to repair the well-nigh irreparable damage done by Southey in this regard.⁵⁷ Rapprochement with the Boer republics, had become an important pillar – recommended to Carnarvon, as has been seen, by Glanville⁵⁸ – of Carnarvon’s confederation scheme.⁵⁹ Indeed, Carnarvon’s rank expansionism is clear in a letter to Ponsonby, Queen Victoria’s private secretary, in which he admitted that improved relations with the Boers was the preamble ‘to that which has been for a long time my

⁵² Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African confederation*, pp 97-102.

⁵³ Oberholster, *Die anneksasie van Griekwaland-Wes*, pp 218-221; Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African federation*, pp 46-47.

⁵⁴ CA, GLW 3, Barkly – Commissioners, 1 January 1873.

⁵⁵ De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, pp 19-21.

⁵⁶ Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African federation*, p 55.

⁵⁷ For a discussion of cooperation and collaboration with Brand of the Free State while Lanyon was administrator of Griqualand West, see Chapter III.

⁵⁸ CP, African 81, enclosure 1 in no 2, TB Glanville, ‘Some remarks on the practical difficulties in the way of a Confederation of the South African Colonies and States, undated (received 9 July 1875), pp 2-5.

⁵⁹ By mid 1876 Carnarvon was boasting to Northcote, the chancellor of the Exchequer that ‘we have smoothed relations between the Cape and the OFS and now have a better understanding of the Dutch’; Carnarvon Papers, PRO 30/6/7, Carnarvon – Northcote, 18 August 1876.

object, the acquisition, in some form or another, of the Dutch republics'.⁶⁰

Apart from his failure to keep the peace and his inept administration, Southey's dismissal and his replacement by Lanyon was prompted by his attitude to the republics. Certainly, Carnarvon openly admitted to having little or no regard for Southey.⁶¹ There is some support for the opinion that the Black Flag Revolt was the crucial catalyst,⁶² but the Colonial Office records appear to indicate that Carnarvon was more concerned about the financial crisis in Griqualand West. Obviously the two issues are closely linked, as providing troops – unnecessarily as it turned out – to put down the digger unrest had certainly been an untoward expense which had to be met by the imperial government. Carnarvon's correspondence shows that he was certainly very mindful of the 'disgraceful' mismanagement of funds,⁶³ and even the 'cold-blooded', stoical Barkly, not usually given to overreaction, admitted that the financial state of the region 'exceeds my worst expectations'.⁶⁴

By mid 1875 it was clear that the situation was spiralling out of control.⁶⁵ Richard Southey had in fact fallen so far from grace that Carnarvon felt that all these 'recent occurrences' had rendered him a 'less desirable representative of Griqualand West than he would otherwise have been'. His presence would no longer be required as a delegate at the London conference Carnarvon was busy planning.⁶⁶ Finally, in August 1875, the secretary of state snapped. He wrote a long letter to Barkly saying that enough was enough. The situation could not go on unchecked:

... the present unsatisfactory and even dangerous state of affairs demands that immediate steps should be taken to meet the great and increasing difficulties of the moment, and I see nothing left but to cut down

⁶⁰ Ibid, PRO 30/6/3, Carnarvon – Ponsonby, 20 September 1876.

⁶¹ See for example CP, African 83, no 28, Carnarvon – Barkly, 4 August 1875, pp 188-192; Cope, 'Local imperatives and imperial policy', p 607.

⁶² See for example Turrell, *Capital and labour on the Kimberley diamond fields*, p 73.

⁶³ See for example, CA, GLW 3, no 110, Carnarvon – Barkly, 9 September 1874; PRO, Carnarvon Papers, 30/6/23, Crossman – Ommaney, 26 November 187.

⁶⁴ De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, p 76.

⁶⁵ PRO, Carnarvon Papers, 30/6/32, Barkly – Carnarvon, 15 July 1875.

⁶⁶ CP, African 78, no 9, (Secret) Carnarvon – Barkly, Downing Street, 15 June 1875, p 78. The conference was being planned in an attempt to promote confederation.

at once, with an unsparing hand, every unnecessary expense and to place the administration on a far more economical and, at the same time, as I hope, on a more effective footing ... The first step ... will be the substitution of a less highly paid officer for the present Lieutenant-Governor ... I should on many grounds think it desirable for him now to make way for another officer ... Mr Currey ... has assumed an attitude ... which I am compelled strongly to disapprove of, and I am of the opinion that he also should retire from the service of the Province.⁶⁷

Although it was decided that Owen Lanyon should be Southey's replacement, in order to save money, his status and duties were to be different. He was appointed as administrator and was also expected to take on the duties of colonial secretary. His annual salary was to be £1 700 with no additional allowance,⁶⁸ which was considerably less than Southey had earned as lieutenant-governor. The administrator's staff would include a treasurer, a recorder, an attorney general, a head of police and several magistrates. In Carnarvon's view Lanyon's 'very considerable experience of colonial affairs' and his 'zeal and ability' made him 'exceptionally well qualified for the important and responsible duties of this post'.⁶⁹

Southey departed for the Cape Colony, where rather surprisingly, in the light of his lacklustre performance in Griqualand West, he was elected to the Cape legislature as the member for Grahamstown. Be that as it may, he had left a legacy upon which, from mid November 1875 onwards, Owen Lanyon had either to build or to tear down and start afresh.

New brooms sweep clean

Lanyon arrived in Cape Town on 4 October 1875 and stayed there for a few weeks rather than heading straight off to Griqualand West.⁷⁰ While in the mother city he learned whatever information he could about the diamond fields, including the fact that the cost of living there was extremely high and that his annual salary of £1 700 would not go very far at all.⁷¹ After

⁶⁷ CP, African 83, no 28, Carnarvon – Barkly, 4 August 1875, pp 188-192.

⁶⁸ Ibid, no 39, Carnarvon – Barkly, 25 August 1875, pp 207-208; enclosure in no 92, Proceedings of Legislative Council, Kimberley, 29 September 1875, pp 310-3 11; TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 5 October 1875.

⁶⁹ CP, African 83, no 28, Carnarvon – Barkly, 4 August 1875, p 192.

⁷⁰ See Chapter I.

⁷¹ TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 14 October 1875.

discussions with Barkly, Lanyon and William Crossman set off for Kimberley, arriving there on 14 November 1875.⁷² Three days later, on 17 November, he was officially inaugurated as administrator and took the necessary oaths of office,⁷³ and the following day he wrote to his father that he was at his desk, full of zeal, ready to begin.⁷⁴ Lanyon was under no illusions that his task would be easy, but at the same time he was reasonably 'hopeful for the future', being under the optimistic impression that the region had 'many sources of wealth independent of the diamonds'.⁷⁵

The new administrator was clearly an ardent imperialist, which is probably one of the more important reasons why Carnarvon selected him for the post. Characteristically, Lanyon saw his mission as one of civilising the undeveloped region and 'backward' local society, and educating the settlers in the loftier, more enlightened, ways of the home country. 'I pray that its [Griqualand West's] infantile troubles may be all over', he wrote to his father, 'so that the work of education may be set in motion, whereby it may be stabilised and strengthened into a position of which the old mother country may not be ashamed to own that it is one of the family'.⁷⁶ There was another reason why Lanyon was so anxious to succeed: he felt a deep sense of personal gratitude to Carnarvon for having faith in his ability to pull things together in Griqualand West. 'Every endeavour', wrote Lanyon when a daunting amount of paperwork was piling up on his desk, 'has been, is and ever will be, to show that I am not ungrateful for his kindness'.⁷⁷ Carnarvon, for his part, sent Lanyon a number of congratulatory messages, usually via Barkly or Frere, to encourage his young protégé in his endeavours and to thank him for comments and suggestions about local

⁷² Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 5 October 1875; CA, GH 12/40, Lanyon – Barkly, 25 December 1875.

⁷³ CA, GH, 12/38, Lanyon – Barkly, 18 November 1875.

⁷⁴ TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 18 November 1875.

⁷⁵ Ibid, Lanyon – his brother, Charles Lanyon, 27 November 1875. Lanyon does not specify what he thought these 'other sources of income' were.

⁷⁶ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 27 September 1875. See also Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 25 December 1875, where Lanyon writes proudly that 'this place has done more to spread our power and a quasi civilisation through the far interior, than any amount of soldiers, missionaries or traders'.

⁷⁷ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 18 March 1876.

conditions.⁷⁸

By all accounts, the Kimberley of the mid 1870s was not a very comfortable or congenial posting. When Lanyon arrived in the second week of November 1875 it was approaching mid summer and the town was dry, hot, dusty and treeless.⁷⁹ By May, the weather had turned and it was bitterly cold.⁸⁰ Even William Crossman, who also had pressing matters on his mind to divert his attention from his surroundings, admitted that the place had little to recommend it.⁸¹ The cost of living was sky-high compared to the other colonies, with a small loaf costing 1/6 and a fresh egg a full 7 ½d, while to hire a cook to prepare his food was going to cost Lanyon £9 a month in wages. 'I am almost a pauper', he complained.⁸²

Lanyon had been told that Southey's house in Kimberley was to be made available to him and he assumed that as Mrs Southey had resided there with her husband, it would be reasonably livable for a bachelor.⁸³ But when he arrived he found that there were some bothersome details to be ironed out in connection with the use of the house, because Southey had apparently borne some of the construction costs and wanted to be recompensed if the imperial government was to make the house available to Lanyon. Nearly five months later the matter had still not been resolved because the Colonial Office felt that Southey was asking too much.⁸⁴ Lanyon meanwhile

⁷⁸ See for example GH 2/1, Carnarvon – Barkly, 7 April 1876; TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 27 May 1876, where Lanyon refers to 'a very flattering dispatch from Lord C by this mail, with regard to the alterations made here'; Ibid, vol 4(a), Carnarvon – Barkly, 6 July 1876; Ibid, Carnarvon – Frere, 21 May 1877; Ibid, Carnarvon – Frere, 21 September 1877. See also Chapter III, *Carnarvon's agent in the diamond fields*.

⁷⁹ See for example TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 27 November 1875, where Lanyon writes: 'The weather here is very hot, yesterday it was 98 degrees ... and very dry. The dust is awful.' On 25 December 1875 he described the countryside as 'dead flat without water or trees'.

⁸⁰ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 18 May 1876.

⁸¹ CP, African 96, Crossman – Carnarvon, 1 May 1876. Crossman described the region as 'a pastoral country of most indifferent character'.

⁸² TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 18 November 1875.

⁸³ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 12 September 1875.

⁸⁴ CA, GLW 9, Correspondence re Mr Southey's house, 12 April 1876. CA, GH 12/39 is virtually taken up with correspondence on the same matter, including mention of legal proceedings.

had been obliged to provide his own residence.⁸⁵ He moved into a small rented home, a corrugated-iron cottage, for the use of which he had to pay £25 a month. It comprised a few cramped rooms with few of the comforts that an Irishman of respectable birth might expect.⁸⁶

For the first few weeks in his new office Lanyon had to make up the backlog of work and was simply 'overwhelmed with deputations, visitors and enquiring officials'. The piles of paperwork, on which he could scarcely make an impression, were 'dreadfully disheartening'⁸⁷ and he had to knuckle down to draft a number of urgent new bills.⁸⁸ Nor were the public offices very comfortable, comprising three wooden-walled rooms with an iron roof, two other moderate-sized ones and 'four or five small corrugated iron cabins'.⁸⁹ His first Christmas, some six weeks after arrival was lonely under a 'burning, scorching sun' and he wrote longingly of having 'electric wings' to join his family back home in Ireland.⁹⁰

Although the 1871 census figures put the white digger population at 20 000, Crossman estimated that in 1875 when he and Lanyon arrived in Griqualand West there were about 6 000 whites and 15 000 to 18 000 Africans in the vicinity of the diamond fields.⁹¹ In mid June 1877 Lanyon reported to Frere that he had just completed a census and the total population stood at 45 277, of whom 12 374 were of European descent.⁹²

The local settlers, it would seem, were not very friendly and Lanyon had little in common with them. Despite the fact that they had given him a warm welcome on arrival, Lanyon soon

⁸⁵ CA, GH 12/39, Lanyon – Barkly, 18 December 1875.

⁸⁶ TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 18 November 1875.

⁸⁷ Ibid, Lanyon – brother Charles Lanyon, 27 November, 1875.

⁸⁸ Ibid, Lanyon – brother Charles Lanyon, 4 December 1875.

⁸⁹ CP, African 89, Crossman – Carnarvon, 5 February 1876.

⁹⁰ TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 25 December 1875.

⁹¹ CP, African 96, Crossman – Carnarvon, 1 May 1876, p 8.

⁹² TA, A596, vol 4(a), Lanyon – Frere, 30 June 1877. See also Brian Roberts, *Kimberley: turbulent city* (Cape Town, 1976), p 166, which provides somewhat higher totals, but does not indicate the source.

complained in his letters home that many of the residents were unscrupulous money-grabbers, rough miners out for easy money; in short, men who were going to be difficult to keep under firm control.⁹³ And firm control was the hallmark of Lanyon's administrative style; Cecil Rhodes accused him of conducting his administration 'on the lines of a second-rate regiment'.⁹⁴ Lanyon also made clear his attitude towards the local Africans: as a group he saw them as 'uncivilised savages' whose purpose was to work on the mines rather than as independent diggers. In a letter home he explained:

Everyone here is such a Bohemian, staying only as long as it pays him to stay, that of course the less he has to pay towards the civil establishment the better he is pleased, so it is always a difficult matter to say which is the best way of getting at his pocket without the danger of his resenting it and in this place where there are about 15 000 whites and any amount of uncivilised savages from the interior who work on the mines, it is only by moral suasion that one can rule. A force of 34 unreliable police is not of much use for anything else but municipal purposes.⁹⁵

Later he conceded that among the diggers, who were 'rough' and 'a heterogenous lot', there were also 'some good fellows', but he found that he could only really associate with the more prominent men and those who were in government service.⁹⁶ This approach to his subjects was hardly likely to endear him to the population of Kimberley at large, particularly as it had just seen the back of the intractable Southey. As was to be the pattern of his interpersonal relations with the people over whom he held sway in both his South African posts, feelings between them soon grew to mutual dislike, disrespect and even distrust.

The constitution of Griqualand West made provision for an eight member legislative council of whom four were elected, while the other four were appointed officials. A nominal franchise qualification was in place (£20 per annum in wages) and strictly speaking Africans, if they made

⁹³ Ibid, vol 11, Lanyon – brother Charles Lanyon, 27 November 1875; CP, African 96, Crossman – Carnarvon, 1 May 1876. Crossman also attested to the 'rough nature' of the diggers and agreed that 'such a class of population must always be difficult to govern'.

⁹⁴ Quoted in Roberts, *Kimberley: turbulent city*, p 153.

⁹⁵ TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – brother Charles Lanyon, 27 November 1875.

⁹⁶ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 27 November 1875. See also Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 29 April 1876. Cecil John Rhodes, one of the most prominent 'men of substance' in the history of the diamond fields, was in Kimberley for periods while Lanyon was administrator, but there is no reference to him in Lanyon's correspondence. From 1872 Rhodes was making a good living at the fields on his brother's claims and in 1873 he became involved in contracts for pumping excess water from the mines. He bought his first claim in October 1875 for £8.

claim to be British subjects, could register to vote. In practice very few did and Crossman probably spoke for the majority of the settlers in the region when he wrote in his report to the secretary of state, that he considered it

absurd to give all these black men the right of voting for members of the Legislative Council. ...The great mass of the labouring coloured population ... come from the interior with every element of barbarism and no touch of civilisation amongst them, in fact they must be treated as children incapable of governing themselves.⁹⁷

Of the elected members of the legislative council, only two were representatives of Kimberley's large digger community (the other two members represented the districts of Hay and Klipdrift, where the number of electors was comparatively far lower), a situation which in itself was highly unsatisfactory as far as the Kimberley diggers were concerned. Added to this, the four elected members were frequently outvoted because the administrator had a casting vote and the power of the veto over any proposed legislation. The whole system, with its built-in executive majority, was highly unworkable, and clashes between the appointed and elected members were the order of the day. Roberts alleges that the constitutional government in Griqualand West under Lanyon frequently broke down.⁹⁸ Indeed, under the circumstances on the diamond fields, a system which could be manipulated by an autocratic ruler like Lanyon was probably the worst possible dispensation and was almost guaranteed to make the administrator highly unpopular.

Southey had been gone for several months when Lanyon arrived, so Lanyon assumed his post after what he called an 'inter-regnum'. While Lanyon had been on the high seas Barkly had been up to Kimberley to appoint the recorder, JD Barry, to manage matters in a temporary capacity and generally keep an eye on things until Lanyon arrived.⁹⁹ Barkly admitted to Carnarvon that while he was in Kimberley he had also been tempted to dissolve the existing legislative council but had decided against it, leaving the matter instead to Lanyon's discretion. Carnarvon had given Lanyon 'as free a hand as possible in the administration of the internal affairs of the Province' and Barkly, in accordance with Carnarvon's wishes, undertook to give Lanyon every

⁹⁷ CP, African 96, Crossman – Carnarvon, 1 May 1876, p 18.

⁹⁸ Roberts, *Kimberley: turbulent city*, p 153; Turrell, *Capital and labour on the Kimberley diamond fields*, p 32; Oberholster, *Die anneksasie van Griekwaland-Wes*, pp 246-247.

⁹⁹ On the competent performance of Barry until Lanyon arrived, see CA, GH 2/1, Carnarvon – Barkly, 16 January 1876.

assistance but not to intervene unduly in any changes the administrator might wish to make.¹⁰⁰

At the beginning of December, a few weeks after assuming office, Lanyon decided that in light of recent troubles in the region it would be wise to dissolve the legislative council. Apparently his step was a popular one, because the following night when he attended the theatre, Lanyon, to his great satisfaction, was 'greeted with cheers'.¹⁰¹ He then proceeded to make arrangements for a re-registration of voters and to plan a new election.

Despite his military background and his expansionist tendencies that slotted so well into Carnarvon's imperialist plans for southern Africa,¹⁰² Lanyon saw himself first and foremost as a punctilious and conscientious administrator who managed to come out on his annual budget and was sometimes even able to show a surplus, despite all odds. He endeavoured to keep a very tight, personal rein on all aspects of the work that was entrusted to him and was loathe to delegate any of his duties. And yet he complained frequently to his family back home of the huge pressure of work and the vast correspondence he had to handle. To be sure, it appears that he was extremely short-staffed in Griqualand West¹⁰³ and he did make several appeals for 'more help from home' because he was working, according to him, in excess of 12 hours a day.¹⁰⁴ Once he had relocated to the Transvaal, where the staff position was slightly better and he had a private secretary to do some of the more laborious correspondence, he was relieved of some of the routine work.¹⁰⁵ But then too, in the Transvaal Colony, the tension and the stakes were heightened and Lanyon, as will be shown, did not respond well to tension. Rather than forcing

¹⁰⁰ CP, African 83, no 92, Barkly – Carnarvon, 1 October 1875, pp 309- 310.

¹⁰¹ TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – brother Charles Lanyon, 4 December 1875.

¹⁰² Ibid, vol 4(a), Frere – Lanyon, 20 September 1877, pp 175-188. See also vol 12, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 6 February 1877, where Lanyon discusses the merits of the impending 'take over' of the Transvaal and expresses the opinion – as Carnarvon was wont to do – that it would then 'only be a matter of time for the OFS to come in [to a confederation] also'.

¹⁰³ See for example, TA, A596, vol 4(a), Lanyon – Frere, 11 December 1877, p 224, where Lanyon explains that annexation of the region to the Cape should be speeded up because 'the official staff is quite unable to cope with the work'. If there was delay, 'I fear a large increase to the staff will be necessary'.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 18 March 1876.

¹⁰⁵ Godfrey Lagden was Lanyon's private secretary in the Transvaal.

him into cautious mode, it was inclined to goad him into wanton irresponsibility and aggression.¹⁰⁶ He would have regarded it as a great compliment that most of his critics saw him as an autocratic and unbending official who was reluctant to accept advice from others.¹⁰⁷

Above all Lanyon kept a beady eye on financial matters. Perhaps because improving the financial status of Griqualand West and showing a surplus was a means of quantifying his success, he placed great store on keeping very tight control of expenditure. Furthermore, Carnarvon had made it perfectly clear to Lanyon that the Cape Colony – and more particularly the Cape premier, Molteno – was stalling about accepting Griqualand West under Cape rule. Unless its financial status improved, Molteno was unlikely to agree to take on the additional responsibility. Added to this, one of the main reasons for Southey's dismissal had been his ineffective, indeed chaotic, financial management, and Lanyon was acutely aware of this because his travelling companion, William Crossman, had been sent out to report on the financial shambles in Griqualand West and provide possible solutions.¹⁰⁸ No doubt, on the long journey the two men had exchanged some thoughts on the matter. Whatever his motivation, Lanyon's starting point in Griqualand West was to address the issue of finances.

His initial assessment of the economy of the region was that with diamond mining as the main source of revenue, Griqualand West was on a 'good footing' and he felt that with careful supervision he would be able to 'restore the finances to a sound state'¹⁰⁹ and keep annual expenses within Griqualand West's budget of £70 000.¹¹⁰ He could not have foreseen, of course,

¹⁰⁶ For a discussion of Lanyon's administration of the Transvaal Colony see Chapters V and VI.

¹⁰⁷ Among those who were critical of Lanyon's performance in his two terms of office, particularly that in the Transvaal, were Lord Kimberley, Wolseley, and Bellairs, who was the officer who took over from Lanyon when he was recalled from Pretoria in 1881. See for example Lady Bellairs (ed), *The Transvaal War 1880-1881* (Facsimile reprint, Cape Town, 1972), pp 12-15 and A Preston (ed), *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley 1879-1880* (Cape Town, 1973), p 250, where Wolseley criticises Lanyon for 'making everyone his enemy and every class and occupation hostile to his government'.

¹⁰⁸ Within weeks of his arrival, Lanyon was predicting that Crossman's report would be 'painful to many'; TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – brother Charles Lanyon, 27 November 1875. Lanyon also had a copy of Crossman's instructions among his papers; *Ibid*, vol 4(a), Meade – Crossman, 31 August 1875.

¹⁰⁹ TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 27 November 1875.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, Lanyon – brother Charles Lanyon, 4 December 1875.

that the fluctuating price of diamonds was to play a major role in the prosperity or otherwise of the colony, or that in March 1876, just four months after he took over, there was to be a major collapse of the diamond price by as much as 40 per cent.¹¹¹ Blissfully unaware of what awaited him, he indicated that he was impressed with the information that in the previous two years no less than fifty pounds weight of diamonds had been sent out via the postal service, adding that no doubt countless more had left by other less conventional and even illicit means.¹¹² He embarked on a strenuous programme to make a number of significant savings.

One of the first instructions Lanyon had received from Carnarvon was that he should immediately see to it that the local police force be increased in size and effectiveness and that police expenditure be trimmed where possible. These measures were, in Carnarvon's view, 'absolutely essential' in the light of recent digger disturbances in Griqualand West and the expensive despatch of imperial troops to help Southey quell the trouble.¹¹³ Crossman agreed that 'rowdies of every class, whether British or foreigners must be kept down by a strong police'¹¹⁴, and Lanyon, who did not need coaxing to take strong action, made the necessary arrangements without delay.¹¹⁵

The police force was initially enlarged from 44 to 85 members, including 70 constables and a mounted force of 15.¹¹⁶ Lanyon was almost apologetic that this would involve an additional expense to the state of between £6 000 and £7 000 per annum, but pointed out that not only would the police now be used to enforce the new control measures he was anticipating, but would ensure 'a more efficient collection of the revenue', and thereby go a long way to paying

¹¹¹ On the problems of mining in Kimberley and the fluctuating price of diamonds, see Worger, *South Africa's city of diamonds*, pp 21-25; Turrell, *Capital and labour on the Kimberley diamond fields*, p 79.

¹¹² TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 18 November 1875.

¹¹³ CP, African 83, no 95, Carnarvon – Barkly, 15 November 1875, p 312.

¹¹⁴ CP, African 96, Crossman – Carnarvon, 1 May 1876, p 2.

¹¹⁵ See below under *Labour: control and recruitment*, for the measures Lanyon employed to enforce labour controls.

¹¹⁶ By September 1876 the police force numbered 112. See below under *Labour: control and recruitment*.

their own way.¹¹⁷ A special 'native' police force was also established to detect crime among African workers on the mines and to serve as prison guards.¹¹⁸ Gaols, which according to Crossman's provisional report, were in a 'disgraceful' state,¹¹⁹ were upgraded and a new prison was planned in Kimberley when funds became available.¹²⁰ A saving was made, on the advice of a Dr Dyer, by cutting down the diet of prisoners,¹²¹ and it was anticipated that convict labour would also bring in additional state revenue. Furthermore, the High Court and other public offices, which had previously been in Barkly in the Cape, were moved to Kimberley for reasons of greater efficiency and further savings,¹²² and the number of civil service staff was reduced. Lanyon proudly pointed out to Crossman: 'The fact that so great a saving has already been effected – about one-eighth of the revenue – in the space of eleven weeks, speaks for itself.' And to emphasise his point he appended a detailed 'Summary of Alterations and Changes' with the savings that would accrue for each item. Lanyon was not lacking in self-confidence; he even indicated that the savings made had been conservatively estimated and that given time, he was sure he could do even better. 'But only time will prove this.'¹²³

By early May 1876, after six months of hard work, in addition to the improvements discussed above, Lanyon also had reforms in the sanitary regulations, the hospital administration and the postal service to his credit.¹²⁴ More importantly – certainly in his own mind – he could look back with satisfaction on the progress he had made as far as the financial affairs of the colony were concerned. Crossman had in the meanwhile returned to Britain and wrote to say that Lanyon's

¹¹⁷ CP, African 89, Crossman – Carnarvon, 5 February 1876, enclosure no 10a, Lanyon – Crossman, 5 February 1876; CA, GH 2/1, Carnarvon – Barkly, 11 March 1876.

¹¹⁸ CA, GH 12/45, Lanyon – Barkly, 23 March 1876.

¹¹⁹ CP, African 89, Crossman – Carnarvon, 5 February 1876, p 6.

¹²⁰ CA, GLW 10, Lanyon – Barkly, 1 January 1876, and Barkly – Lanyon, 26 January 1876; GH 12/41, Lanyon – Barkly, 12 February 1876; CA, GH 25/1, Barkly – Carnarvon, 10 April 1876.

¹²¹ CA, GLW 10, Lanyon – Barkly, 17 February 1876.

¹²² CA, GH 12/41, Lanyon – Barkly, 7 February 1876.

¹²³ CP, African 89, Crossman – Carnarvon, 5 February 1876, enclosure no 10a, Lanyon – Crossman, 5 February 1876.

¹²⁴ CA, GH 12/41, Lanyon – Barkly, 15 January 1876; GLW 10, 17 February 1876; GH 12/41, Lanyon – Barkly, 9 February 1876.

reputation at the Colonial Office was good and there were ‘no further fears’ expressed about the situation in Griqualand West. Feeling well pleased, he wrote home to say that

Last month’s returns have made some show of what has been done and what I am doing. It was the best month’s revenue we have ever had since this has been a colony. And at the same time the expenditure has been reduced, so ends must meet before long. And our debt is being steadily reduced. When I arrived it was £26 000; last month it was only £14 000 ... Though of course much of this is due to cutting down expenditure and proper checks on the collection of revenue.¹²⁵

Then too, as the months went by, not only did the more efficient law enforcement measures mean that the labour supply was stabilised and the incidence of crime lowered,¹²⁶ it also meant, to Lanyon’s glee, that there was good government income from compulsory registration fees and fines imposed by the courts. Worger makes the point that within a year of taking office Lanyon had, by virtue of his new energetic enforcement of black labour regulations, ‘doubled the state income from labour registration fees’.¹²⁷

At the beginning of 1877, Lanyon heard that Sir Henry Barkly, whom he had found friendly and helpful, was to be replaced as high commissioner in South Africa and governor of the Cape Colony by Sir Bartle Frere. In a letter to his father Lanyon wondered whether this heralded Griqualand West’s immediate annexation by the Cape, which by implication would leave him without a job.¹²⁸ A hint of pique had by this time crept into his correspondence, probably prompted by his growing unpopularity in Kimberley and the fact that he had become involved in an embarrassing libel case.¹²⁹ He wrote rather petulantly that if this were the case, then he would be only too happy to leave the diamond fields, ‘for I am most anxious to render up my

¹²⁵ TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 6 May 1876. See also Carnarvon’s appreciation of Lanyon’s efforts ‘with a view of bringing the expenditure of the Province within the revenue’, CA 2/1, Carnarvon – Barkly, 7 April 1876.

¹²⁶ See below under *Labour: control and recruitment*.

¹²⁷ CA, GH 21/2, ‘Table of Actual Revenue and Expenditure in the Province of Griqualand West 1870-1879’; Worger, *South Africa’s city of diamonds*, pp 120-121.

¹²⁸ This was not to be. Griqualand West was only placed under Cape rule in 1880 and Lanyon was to remain in his post until early 1879, a full two years from the date of this letter, before being sent to the Transvaal. On Lanyon’s mounting disillusionment and unpopularity in the face of an economic crisis, and an embarrassing clash with the local press, leading to legal action, see Chapter III.

¹²⁹ See Chapter III on Lanyon’s increasing unpopularity and his involvement in a libel case with the editor of a local newspaper.

charge'.¹³⁰ He comforted himself by telling his father that he was preparing the revenue and expenditure returns for 1876, his first full year of office, and he felt well satisfied:

The a/cs for the past year have been somewhat roughly made up, but tolerably accurately to be gauged from, and my heart is rejoiced to find that my labour has not been in vain, for I can show a surplus of revenue over expenditure of about £3 000... This is the first time there has been a surplus and I may egotistically say that it is the result of economy and vigilance. But I do not think I could again go through such another 14 months of toil and anxiety. Months in which I hardly knew where to turn for money.¹³¹

The 1876 returns were duly completed and transmitted to the Colonial Office, where they were favourably received. Herbert and Malcolm both minuted that the results reflected good work by Lanyon in Griqualand West,¹³² and Carnarvon himself sent a letter of congratulation.¹³³ A year later, at the beginning of 1878, Lanyon's first letter of the year was to tell his father that 'to my delight the balance is well on the right side'. Satisfactory financial progress was still being made, and there was a surplus of revenue over expenditure of £12 456 for the year ending December 1877.¹³⁴ Lanyon did not see out another complete financial year in Griqualand West, so these records were the last from Kimberley that he had the satisfaction of laying before his superiors. Hicks Beach was duly impressed with Lanyon's progress and sent him a congratulatory letter.¹³⁵

Lanyon's success in general administrative matters and in balancing Griqualand West's books are, however, overshadowed by his important innovations in policy making for the developing mining industry. His handling of the land issue, the implementation of a new location policy and the enforcement of strict control over African labour, are all evidence of his significant contribution, not only on a local level, but also in a wider context, to southern Africa's economic transformation in and after the 1870s, and will be evaluated in turn, below.

¹³⁰ TA, A596, vol 12, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 8 January 1877.

¹³¹ Ibid. Lanyon refers in the same letter to the economic slump in the diamond industry in mid 1876.

¹³² CO 107/4, no 28, 30 August 1877, minutes by Herbert, 2 October 1877, and Malcolm, 4 October 1877.

¹³³ TA, A596, vol 4(b), Carnarvon – Lanyon, 21 September 1877.

¹³⁴ Ibid, vol 13, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 1 January 1878. See also CA, GH 21/2, 'Table of Actual Revenue and Expenditure in the Province of Griqualand West 1870-1879.'

¹³⁵ TA, A596, vol 4(b), Hicks Beach – Lanyon, 6 March 1879. In 1878 Sir Michael Hicks Beach had succeeded Carnarvon as secretary of state in February 1878.

The land issue and the rise of mining capitalism

On Lanyon's arrival in Griqualand West the burgeoning diamond mining industry meant that he had to make a number of local policy decisions that were of major importance. Entrepreneurs were calling for a resolution of the land issue, the suspension of the limit on claim holding and decisions on the recruitment, accommodation, control and residential settlement of African labour for the mines. Competing titles to land in Griqualand West had of course been a very complicated and controversial issue from the earliest days of diamond mining. No one knew where they stood; and several land commissions and a land court in 1876 had merely served to cloud the issue even more.¹³⁶ Despite the fact that he saw himself as the protector of African rights, Southey had ignored Tlhaping claims to the land near the diamond fields. Instead, he had lofty ideas of his own – which were never realised – of building an irrigation scheme in the regions adjacent to the mines and of selling off smaller lots and capitalising the agricultural land.¹³⁷ To prevent the intrusion of foreign capital he devised his specific policy on management of the mines. His legislation to limit holdings to ten claims was laid down in the 1874 Mining Ordinance,¹³⁸ and this virtually clamped down on the development of mining capitalism. It meant that local companies could grow, being on the spot to engineer partnerships, but foreign-based companies, which were not interested in investing in such small entities, were kept out. It also meant that merchant capital thrived in Kimberley and profits were safe in the pockets of local settler elites rather than overseas share-holders.¹³⁹

It was clear that a new approach to both the land issue and the management of the mines was an urgent priority. When Lanyon arrived, the land court of November 1875 to March 1876 that had been set up to test the Bloemhof arbitration was still sitting, and its findings, when released, showed that contrary to the decisions reached at Bloemhof in 1871, the Tlhaping did indeed have

¹³⁶ Worger, *South Africa's city of diamonds*, p 94, alleges that the 1876 land court virtually overturned the legal basis of Britain's annexation of Griqualand West by rejecting most Griqua and Kora claims. A few Tlhaping claims and most of those by Free State farmers were recognised, making Carnarvon's position towards Brand's entreaties somewhat difficult. See also Chapter III.

¹³⁷ Shillington, *The colonisation of the southern Tswana*, p 71.

¹³⁸ Griqualand West: Ordinance 5, 11 March 1874.

¹³⁹ Turrell, *Capital and labour on the Kimberley diamond fields*, p 64.

territorial rights north of the Vaal River.¹⁴⁰ In October 1876 Charles Warren was appointed by the Colonial Office to sort out the troublesome Orange Free State-Griqualand West border question, which Brand was pursuing so conscientiously, so that in the future, in Warren's words, 'disagreement or controversy' could be laid to rest.¹⁴¹ The correspondence between the Colonial Office, Barkly and Brand on this matter had been ongoing for years and Carnarvon felt that some finality had to be reached.¹⁴² Brand was clearly not going to be fobbed off with an apology from the Colonial Office, even if Carnarvon had been prepared to apologise for Britain's blunder, which he was not.¹⁴³

In the knowledge that much of Griqualand West's farming land would probably be allocated to Free State Boers, Lanyon took stock of the situation and then had his surveyor general, FHS Orpen,¹⁴⁴ work on a new land initiative he had hatched – a system both to make farms available for whites and to develop locations for African residential settlement on the agricultural land that was still available.¹⁴⁵ He hoped that this would satisfy the settlers' demands for land and at the same time the policy of 'localising the natives' would help to solve the shortage of labour and draw the local Africans into the developing economy. He proposed that small rural locations be established in the surrounding countryside for African settlement. These carefully scattered residential areas had ideally to be too small for subsistence and would, he hoped, serve as labour reserves for the surrounding farmers and if need be, for the developing mines.¹⁴⁶ With his

¹⁴⁰ Shillington, *The colonisation of the southern Tswana*, p 72.

¹⁴¹ CP, African 105, Malcolm – Warren, 13 October 1876 and Warren – Colonial Office, 14 October 1876. Warren's full report, finally issued in 1880, gives a comprehensive overview of the land issue in Griqualand West. See 'Report on the Land Question in Griqualand West by Lieut-Colonel Charles Warren, R.E., C.M.G.', Colonial Office, June 1880.

¹⁴² CA, 2/1, Carnarvon – Barkly, 14 March 1876.

¹⁴³ CA, GH 2/3, Carnarvon – Barkly, 5 August 1876. For Lanyon's role in the settlement between Brand and Carnarvon on the diamond fields dispute see Chapter III.

¹⁴⁴ It was alleged that Orpen himself had close ties with land speculators and was not disinterested in the outcome of a new land dispensation; Shillington, *The colonisation of the southern Tswana*, p 71.

¹⁴⁵ CO, 107/2, no 15277, Lanyon – Barkly, 22 November 1876.

¹⁴⁶ CO, 107/4, no 4452, Lanyon's instructions to Orpen, 15 February 1877; CA, GLW 13, Lanyon – Barkly, 22 November 1876. Lanyon told Barkly that he was of the firm opinion that 'much may be accomplished' by setting up 'native locations'.

instructions clearly outlined, Orpen's survey duly allocated about one tenth of the available land for 'native locations' while the rest became available for sale to white farmers.¹⁴⁷ Each location was to be under the supervision of a local magistrate, a measure which also served to curtail the power of the southern Tswana chiefs.¹⁴⁸

Shillington makes the point that similar to the original concept of locations in the eastern Cape, Lanyon's policy was based upon the belief that Africans would acquiesce in colonial control if allowed to remain on the land where they had lived¹⁴⁹ – even if they did not 'own' it in formal Western terms – or were given alternative territory. Once they had been settled in designated areas they would be far more malleable. With the erstwhile power of the chiefs safely in the hands of colonial officials, the inhabitants of the locations could be conveniently 'watched, controlled and taxed', and indeed be held in check in case they decided to move to other farming land which had, in the interim, been sold off to white farmers.¹⁵⁰

Despite Britain's official humanitarian scruples about special laws for Africans, the measure was approved by the Colonial Office. Indeed, when the relevant correspondence on 'Locations allotted to the Natives in the neighbourhood of the Hart[s] River' was passed around for comment in the halls of Downing Street¹⁵¹ before being sanctioned by the secretary of state, WR Malcolm minuted that 'care must be taken to keep the natives constantly under the direct control

¹⁴⁷ CA, GLW 7, Report by FH Orpen, 12 December 1876. See also Worger, *South Africa's city of diamonds*, p 94.

¹⁴⁸ There was, however, some trepidation in London. Hicks Beach, who had replaced Carnarvon in early 1878, suggested that Lanyon proceed 'with caution' as the matter was one of some delicacy. Lanyon assured him that his wishes 'as regards tribal matters' and the 'evils anticipated' had been fully met. See C 2220, Lanyon – Frere, 22 April 1878, p 119; CA, GH 2/7, Hicks Beach – Frere, 16 September 1878.

¹⁴⁹ Lanyon made this specific point. See CA, GH 12/51, Lanyon – Frere, 25 October 1877: '... the natives have been left in undisturbed possession of those lands where they were principally living.'

¹⁵⁰ Shillington, *The colonisation of the southern Tswana*, pp 72-73.

¹⁵¹ In the period under discussion here the Colonial Office was situated in Downing Street. By the 1870s the building was in such a bad state of repair that it was condemned and re-built on the same site. The staff moved into the new Colonial Office in 1876. BL Blakeley, *The Colonial Office 1868-1892*, pp 18, 92, 162-163.

of white magistrates'.¹⁵²

This raises the question of why Lanyon's location policy appears to have received such easy acceptance in Downing Street, while his suggestions on strengthening state control over contracted African labour on the diamond mines were turned down.¹⁵³ The Colonial Office records do not provide much in the way of explanation of this inconsistency, but there is an enclosure in the despatch, written by Lanyon, that probably tipped the balance and produced the official nod for his location policy.¹⁵⁴ Lanyon first made the point that Barkly had seen fit to sanction the policy,¹⁵⁵ which he felt should predispose Frere, Barkly's successor, to concur. He then went on to emphasise that the system would be to the advantage of the 'natives', give them all the advantages of colonial administration and protection against land-hungry Boers. Perhaps he had even persuaded himself, as a paternalistic imperialist, that this was so, but it seems more than likely that 'the people of substance' in Kimberley, the leaders of the settler elite and the overseas magnates¹⁵⁶ who were set to take over the management of the mining industry once Southey's ten-claim restriction on claim holding was lifted, were behind his actions.¹⁵⁷

In the same letter of December 1877 to Frere, Lanyon pointed out that in the Barkly district alone no less than a very generous 355.46 square miles had been set aside for Africans and Warren, who was busy with an extensive land survey at the specific behest of the Colonial Office, also

¹⁵² CO 107/5, no 1760, 'Locations allotted to Natives in the neighbourhood of the Hart (sic) River', 4 January 1878, minute by WR Malcolm, 4 February 1878.

¹⁵³ See below under *Labour: control and recruitment*. Lanyon's proposed labour ordinance of 1876 was rejected by the Colonial Office.

¹⁵⁴ CO 107/5, no 1760, 'Locations allotted to Natives in the neighbourhood of the Hart (sic) River', 4 January 1878, enclosure: Lanyon – Frere, 27 December, 1877.

¹⁵⁵ This is not surprising. Southey's involvement in the promotion of the interests of settler elites in Griqualand West and Port Elizabeth has been well documented, as has Barkly's close association with Southey's ideas. Although he had left the diamond fields, Southey was still in Cape Town and still in contact with Barkly. See for example Cope, 'Local imperatives and imperial policy', pp 605-608.

¹⁵⁶ On the conflicting interests of what Worger calls the 'proprietors' and the diggers on the diamond mines and the gradual decline of small holding see Worger, *South Africa's city of diamonds*, pp 13-30. On the first phase of company production, and the introduction of foreign capital, which Worger dates as 1877-1879, the period during which Lanyon was administrator, see *Ibid*, pp 30-44. See also below.

¹⁵⁷ Shillington, *The colonisation of the southern Tswana*, pp 72-73; Cope, 'Local imperatives and imperial policy', pp 603-608.

agreed that it was an excellent idea. In fact he was of the opinion that the Africans in the district of Hay should be provided with similar locations.¹⁵⁸ Lanyon closed with a point that he obviously saw as particularly significant, namely that ‘the missionaries’ and ‘others’, notably the Aborigines Protection Society, ‘who have interested themselves in the native question’, had expressed their ‘great satisfaction’ with the arrangements. Sir Michael Hicks Beach, who had by now replaced Carnarvon as secretary of state, and the members of his Colonial Office staff – four of whom minuted the proposal – do not appear to have had any reservations, with the exception of Malcolm, who wanted more control, to the proposal being approved. The issue of untoward colonial intervention in the livelihood of the communities concerned, or the erosion of their traditional chiefly power structures, seemed unimportant to them.¹⁵⁹

In an earlier letter on the topic Lanyon had provided some details on this alleged sanction by British-based humanitarian agencies, including the Aborigines Protection Society’s FW Chesson, although these details were not enclosed for the information of the Colonial Office when approval had been sought for his scheme. Using a particular Tlhaping community as an example, he claimed that:

Locations have been provided for them [Jantjie Mothibi’s Tlhaping] along the Hart (sic) River on land which is the richest for agricultural purposes in that district ... I have ... [shown these details] to Mr Ashton [of the London Missionary Society] ...and he considers that Jantjie and his people have been as well provided for as they could reasonably expect. In fact they ... have been left in undisturbed possession of those lands in which they were principally living. ... I have appointed Mr Edwards, who was born and brought up amongst these people, to be agent and protector amongst them and the result has been satisfactory. Canteens will not be allowed in the locations and no effort will be spared on my part to mitigate as far as I can the evils referred to by Mr Ashton. I am glad to find that Mr Ashton recognises the fact that a change for the better has lately been made to promote the welfare and comity of the natives.¹⁶⁰

Needless to say Lanyon’s new land policy and his attempts to bring the Africans into line with the colonial will, eventually met with resistance from both the Griqua (who, it is worth

¹⁵⁸ Worger, *South Africa’s city of diamonds*, implies that Warren was critical that so much land had been allocated to blacks; p 94, footnote 74.

¹⁵⁹ CO 107/5, no 1760, ‘Locations allotted to Natives in the neighbourhood of the Hart (sic) River’, 4 January 1878, minute by WR Malcolm, 4 February 1878.

¹⁶⁰ CA, GH 12/51, Lanyon – Frere, 25 October 1877. It would seem that Ashton, in the same idiom as Malcolm, wanted control by the magistrate, an appointed colonial official, of canteens and the evils they would of necessity bring. In typical imperialist and paternalist fashion, they called for colonial interference into matters of a patently internal nature and thus sanctioned the breakdown of chiefly power. British norms and practices thus took precedence over the traditional lifestyle of indigenous people.

remembering, had been adjudged the rightful owners of the land at the beginning of the decade) and the Tlhaping, who were the most numerous of the southern Tswana people in the region. The major Tlhaping communities had established their principal centres of residence on the land between the confluence of the Vaal and the Harts Rivers long before the precious gems had been discovered; many of them had been settled in the area since the early 1800s.¹⁶¹ It was not long before several of these African communities and the Griqua people, both of whom had been so summarily dispossessed of their land, showed resistance to this extension of colonial rule and the erosion of the power of their chiefs. Indeed Lanyon was still at the helm in Kimberley when trouble from groups of Tlhaping had to be quelled, and with Warren, who like Lanyon was a military man, he was heavily involved in military action against the Griqua rebels in the Griqualand West Rebellion of 1878.¹⁶²

As has been shown, Richard Southey, with his eastern Cape colonial background, was committed to economic development in Griqualand West which favoured colonial accumulation in both agriculture and the mines, but was determined to prevent foreign, non-colonial, monopoly of diamond mining. Lanyon, influenced by Crossman, was to take a different view. Southey had protected small-scale mining against takeover by large companies because he saw this policy as the best way to support colonial merchants and expand the commodity market on the diamond fields. Kimberley soon became a very busy market town, 'the richest community in the world for its size', boasted Cecil Rhodes,¹⁶³ and the Kimberley merchants, most of whom had strong commercial links with Port Elizabeth, grew in wealth and influence. Large Port Elizabeth-based companies such as Adolph Mosenthal and Lilienfeld Brothers dominated the trade in the region and soon branched out into banking and property ownership. This was all well and good, but Lanyon had the would-be mining capitalists baying at his heels.

Lanyon's policy on the management of the mines was closely modelled on the outcome of Crossman's enquiry and his report that followed. Crossman had begun his investigations into the

¹⁶¹ Shillington, *The colonisation of the southern Tswana*, pp 14-15, map showing the principal Tlhaping centres of residence: 1800-1870.

¹⁶² See Chapter III.

¹⁶³ Quoted in Turrell, *Capital and labour on the Kimberley diamond fields*, p 104.

state of affairs in Griqualand West almost immediately after he had arrived in Kimberley with Lanyon in November 1875. His first, preliminary, report dealing mainly with financial affairs, was later published as Confidential Print African 89. This report was dated 5 February 1876 and was received by the Colonial Office on 13 March. Crossman then returned to Britain and completed his full report, which subsequently appeared as African 96, dated 1 May 1876. This provided a detailed discussion of the causes of the digger unrest in the region, followed by Crossman's suggestions for the 'management and arrangement' of the mines, based, by his own admission, on the recommendations of a committee appointed at a public meeting held on 26 November 1875 in Kimberley, and presided over by Lanyon. Crossman felt that the committee's report had been drawn up 'with much moderation and fairness' and that it reflected by and large what he had gleaned from his investigations. He had thus used it as the basis of his recommendations on the management of the mines.¹⁶⁴

The most significant recommendation, the one that opened the door to foreign (specifically British metropolitan) investment, was the clause which 'strongly recommended' that Southey's ten-claim restriction, the Mining Ordinance of 1874, be repealed.¹⁶⁵ Lanyon clearly set great store by Crossman's suggestions, and the two men had obviously been closely associated while Crossman had been conducting his investigations in and around Kimberley. The crown purchase, in 1875 for the sum of £100 000, of the Vooruitzicht estate, the farm on which the rich Kimberley mine and the town itself were situated, virtually made the crown the town's 'proprietor'¹⁶⁶ and also facilitated changes in the management of the mining industry such as those that Crossman had suggested and Lanyon was now seriously contemplating.

Lanyon did not act immediately, but his hand was forced in mid 1876 by a serious depression in Kimberley. There was a massive fall in the diamond price, and at the same time labour costs rose, capital was in short supply and a commercial crisis loomed. Lanyon wrote home to tell his father that things were looking very dark in Kimberley,

The price of diamonds here is as low as it has ever been before ... merchants are tottering, bank managers'

¹⁶⁴ CP, African 96, Crossman – Carnarvon, 1 May 1876, p 8.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, pp 1, 14-15. See also Worger, *South Africa's city of diamonds*, p 30.

¹⁶⁶ CA, GH 12/8, Lanyon – Barkly, 25 January 1877.

hearts failing them ... many will be burnt, but the growth and elasticity of the Province will pull it through the ordeal, ... meanwhile the time is an anxious one.¹⁶⁷

In November 1876, Lanyon finally abolished the ten-claim limitation and reconstituted the Mining Boards.¹⁶⁸ The floodgates of foreign capital and company production were thus opened and the diamond mining industry was set on a new course. As Worger puts it, 'With the repeal of the claim-limitation law the era of small holding ended and that of capital began.'¹⁶⁹ The development of monopoly capitalism in the diamond industry was now inevitable, and in early 1877 Jules Porges, one of London's largest diamond buyers, spent more than £70 000 on claim purchases.¹⁷⁰ As more capital was pumped into the industry the scale of production was stepped up by the introduction of machines, the depth of mining was increased and, as Lanyon had predicted in his letter to his father, Griqualand West appeared to have weathered the mid 1870s slump in the diamond industry.

Although by 1880, when the full implications of company production were beginning to be felt in Kimberley, Lanyon had already been relocated to the Transvaal, he was unquestionably the key player in the revival and re-organisation of the diamond industry. His role in creating locations as labour reservoirs and securing the success of capitalist ownership of the diamond mines was of crucial importance. But his innovations in Kimberley do not end here. He was also the architect of a comprehensive system of control and recruitment of African labour.

Labour: control and recruitment

Almost immediately after arriving on the diamond fields, Lanyon was expected to address the labour crisis: the diamond mines needed labour and this labour had to be regularised. In accordance with the dictates of the new economic order, African men had to be recruited and then subjected, as far as was feasible, to strict controls. As company mining developed, so the

¹⁶⁷ TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 27 July 1876.

¹⁶⁸ Ordinance 12 of 1876 and *Griqualand West Government Gazette*, Government notice 332, 1876.

¹⁶⁹ Worger, *South Africa's city of diamonds*, pp 36-37. See also the *Diamond News*, 23 November 1876.

¹⁷⁰ Worger, *South Africa's city of diamonds*, pp 37-38.

need for a cheap and ready supply of contract labourers grew.

While Southey had claimed to be protecting the interests of Africans, Lanyon, as has been shown, had a general view of Africans as ‘savages’ who undertook the unskilled labour on the mines. However, he made no immediate move, in reaction to the pleas of the white diggers, to introduce discriminatory legislation. Such measures, he knew, were officially ‘repugnant to British law and custom’ and would be vetoed in London.¹⁷¹ But Lanyon was very aware that the provision of labour was crucial on the diamond fields. In an early letter to his father he commented on the necessity of having a labour force of ‘about 6 000 natives’,¹⁷² and wrote of the growing concern in mining circles about the rising cost of African labour. He gave a vivid description of the migrant workers, some of whom had walked overland ‘from as far as 1 400 miles’¹⁷³ to work on the mines, and how they could be seen at any time of the day swarming around in the Kimberley big hole, with its ‘huge cobweb of steel on which the buckets run up and down like gigantic spiders’.¹⁷⁴

The labour issue that faced Lanyon was a thorny one, with many ramifications. There is little doubt that the conditions of employment for African workers on the mines were extremely harsh. The usual wage for a migrant labourer in the late 1870s was about 10s to 20s a week paid in cash,¹⁷⁵ and an additional 10s was sometimes paid in the form of sustenance. Poor wages and a shockingly bad food supply were among the main causes of one of the most keenly felt problems, that of labour desertion. A pass system, one of the first pieces of labour legislation on the diamond fields, was in force, and without a valid pass, renewable every month, an African could

¹⁷¹ Quoted in Turrell, *Capital and labour on the Kimberley diamond fields*, p 94

¹⁷² Lanyon was way off the mark here, although admittedly he was referring only to the Kimberley mine. Worger puts the number of contracted men on the fields in 1874 at 43 000; Worger, *South Africa's city of diamonds*, p 117.

¹⁷³ Most of the African workers on the diamond mines were Pedi, while the next in numbers were Tsonga who came through Natal to Kimberley; and then the Basotho. The Zulu workers, although comparatively few in number, gained the reputation of being the best workers on the mines; Turrell, *Capital and labour on the Kimberley diamond fields*, pp 19-21.

¹⁷⁴ TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 25 December 1875.

¹⁷⁵ Worger, *South Africa's city of diamonds*, p 50.

be summarily arrested.¹⁷⁶ Workers had to report at the registry office where the employer paid a fee to register each worker, who was then strictly speaking allowed to remain only in his employ and was not allowed to seek alternative employment unless he re-registered under a new contract. Labourers were also subject to a long list of stringent, repressive rules prescribing worker behaviour, and these were enforced by the police and the courts; but under Southey the police force had been too small, inefficient and corrupt to cope. Moreover, there were not enough gaols and the courts were hopelessly overburdened.¹⁷⁷

Lanyon decided that this state of affairs would have to change; firm and efficient control was needed. The claim-holders were complaining that the existing system did little to put any check on the increasing number of workers who either left the fields or frequently moved from one employer to another seeking better pay or conditions.¹⁷⁸ The theft of diamonds was also escalating, with white diggers accusing African diggers (claim owners) of undermining the control of labourers, and calling, as they had persistently done over the years, for a ban on African claim-holding.¹⁷⁹ When Lanyon arrived in November 1875, with the Black Flag Revolt barely over, most of the diggers were complaining that the old registration system was no longer workable. They wanted the state to step in and exercise more control over worker behaviour before the diamond mining industry collapsed into further chaos.¹⁸⁰

Lanyon lost little time. On 26 November 1875, little more than a week after he had moved into his office, he organised a public meeting to discuss 'general questions affecting the public interest'.¹⁸¹ Following this, in early 1876, with a good idea of the issues that needed urgent

¹⁷⁶ See also CP, African 96, Crossman – Carnarvon, 1 May 1876, p 16. Crossman advocated the use of a badge in a specified colour to indicate whether the worker was looking for work or was already employed.

¹⁷⁷ See under *Richard Southey's legacy to Lanyon*, above.

¹⁷⁸ Turrell, *Capital and labour on the Kimberley diamond fields*, pp 25-31; Worger, *South Africa's city of diamonds*, pp116-117.

¹⁷⁹ *The Diamond Field*, 28 November 1874.

¹⁸⁰ *The Diamond Field*, 13 January 1875 described the system of worker registration system as a 'farce'.

¹⁸¹ CP, African 96, Crossman – Carnarvon, 1 May 1876, enclosure 3, 'A report on general questions affecting the public interest by a Committee appointed at a public meeting held in the Academy of Music on Friday, the 26th day of November 1875.'

attention, he set up a labour commission to enquire how best to organise a more reliable and stable African workforce. The commission's report, which made extensive use of Crossman's recently released suggestions on the labour issue,¹⁸² was published in the local *Government Gazette*.¹⁸³ It embodied a number of important recommendations.¹⁸⁴ The first was that no legislative limit should be placed on wages, as it was felt that high wages were the best way to entice labour to the mines. Secondly, it was seen as important to ensure, by means of a network of labour depots along the main migrant labour routes, that Africans were protected as they walked to the mines and that they be given food along the way. It was also suggested that a central labour depot be set up in Kimberley under the control of a white superintendent and that it be made compulsory that all hiring and firing be done at this depot. It was envisaged that this would cut out competition between prospective employers. Longer service contracts were also mooted. Above all, the commission's report emphasised the necessity of enforcing very strict control over Africans by means of vagrancy laws,¹⁸⁵ the closure of many of the existing African eating houses and 'sly grog shops' and that great caution be exercised about issuing licences to open canteens.¹⁸⁶ Lanyon was then instrumental in embodying the commission's report in a Native Labour Ordinance¹⁸⁷ which was duly forwarded to the Colonial Office via Barkly, for consideration. Here it was summarily disallowed, mainly on the basis that laws in the colonial

¹⁸² Ibid, pp 15-16. On p 15 Crossman mentions that before he departed from Kimberley in January 1876 he was aware that Lanyon had already set up a commission for this purpose. See also CA, GH 12/7, Lanyon – Barkly, 1 June 1876 and enclosed 'Report on the Commission upon the Griqualand Labour Question'.

¹⁸³ *Griqualand West Government Gazette*, 23 May 1876, 'Report on the Commission upon the Griqualand Labour Question.'

¹⁸⁴ Because the early labour laws were supposedly colour blind the terms 'master' and 'servant' were used when labour relations were discussed. However, in both Crossman's report and that of the Labour Commission, frequent reference was made to 'natives'. See for example CP, African 96, Crossman – Carnarvon, 1 May 1876, pp 15-16.

¹⁸⁵ Crossman felt that 'in the case of natives found roaming about without employment they should be arrested and placed in a depot until they are hired or can be returned to their own tribes'; CP, African 96, Crossman – Carnarvon 1 May 1876, p 18.

¹⁸⁶ CP, African 162, Frere – Hicks Beach, 2 August, 1878 and enclosed 'Report on the Commission upon the Griqualand Labour Question'.

¹⁸⁷ Ordinance no 10 of 1876: 'Ordinance to Provide for the Better Protection of Native Labourers and to Amend the Laws Regulating the Rights and Duties of Masters and Servants in the Province of Griqualand West and for other Purposes.' In the ordinance Lanyon consistently adopted the term 'native' rather than 'servant' when referring to African workers.

empire that had been specifically drafted for ‘natives’ were unacceptable.¹⁸⁸

This raises an interesting point. It will be argued in the conclusion to this thesis that while in Griqualand West Lanyon was by no means a puppet on an imperial string. He was given a great deal of freedom to act and his ground-breaking measures in formulating African colonial policy for the diamond mines are clear evidence of this. And yet here is a contradiction: his local policy, in this particular instance, fell victim to the imperial plan. It would seem that he was not, at any stage, even in Griqualand West, a completely free agent.

However, as Worger points out, Whitehall and the Colonial Office were far removed from the practicalities of the situation and ‘the niceties of the language of the law had little impact on legal practice in Kimberley’. Furthermore, Owen Lanyon was more than ready to take aggressive action in ‘using the agencies of the state to help regulate the labour market’.¹⁸⁹ Making judicious use of Carnarvon’s instructions – issued in the aftermath of the digger unrest – that the police force be increased in size and effectiveness,¹⁹⁰ he pushed the force up from 44 in January to 112 in September 1876.¹⁹¹ He also took the decision to move the High Court from Barkly to Kimberley, where the majority of the cases had to be tried, which meant that the whole process of law enforcement was expedited.¹⁹² Through a contact in Natal, Zulu gaol guards were appointed, and this helped to streamline the penal system. Lanyon also created a civil-service position, to be filled by a Mr Maxwell, as head of prisons and of the African police force. This new force was to assist in the detection of crime among African workers, and Maxwell had to

¹⁸⁸ Turrell, *Capital and labour on the Kimberley diamond fields*, p 90; Worger, *South Africa’s city of diamonds*, p 121. In the light of the fact that Lanyon’s proposed labour regulations were turned down on humanitarian grounds, see above under *The land issue and the rise of mining capitalism* for a discussion on the official approval of his location policy. For a discussion of the humanitarian influence in Carnarvon’s grand scheme, see above under *Carnarvon and his confederation scheme*.

¹⁸⁹ Worger, *South Africa’s city of diamonds*, pp 121-123.

¹⁹⁰ CP, African 83, no 95, Carnarvon – Barkly, 15 November 1875, p 312. Lanyon chose to ignore Carnarvon’s remark that ‘it may not be necessary that the force be raised to the number of 100’ which was the number that Crossman had recommended.

¹⁹¹ Worger, *South Africa’s city of diamonds*, p 122.

¹⁹² CA, GH 12/40, Lanyon – Barkly, 7 February 1876.

step up the management of the gaols to cope with the increasing number of inmates.¹⁹³ Gaols were also upgraded and new ones built to cope with the influx of offenders.¹⁹⁴ Lanyon apparently managed to effect all these changes without ruffling any humanitarian feathers in Frere's Cape Town office or in the Colonial Office. Carnarvon, his eyes and his mind firmly fixed on his 'grand scheme' acquiesced in the changes, praising Lanyon's 'commendable activity re removal of abuses' in the police and gaol services on the diamond fields.¹⁹⁵

Police action against African workers was stepped up considerably and the worker registration and pass system were stringently enforced; unemployed 'loafers' were arrested in droves. Both Inspector Percy, who was head of the local police force, and the administrator himself were reported in the press as saying that the increase in arrests did not point to a higher crime rate, but rather to the increased efficiency and zeal of the police force.¹⁹⁶ The courts struggled to keep up with the new activity in law enforcement and were overwhelmed with new cases. Sentences were increased and because of time restraints, it was alleged that magistrates tended to expedite the process wherever they could, sometimes even at the expense of hearing all the evidence.¹⁹⁷

Although the number of worker registrations did go up, Lanyon's control measures were not an unqualified success. The magnitude of the task and the sheer number of workers involved, meant that at the end of the day, despite the increased endeavours and the large numbers of arrests, employers were still dissatisfied with the results. The bottom line was that there was still a shortage of labour, and the measures taken had hardly addressed one of the most troublesome problems, that of desertion.¹⁹⁸ In an attempt to curb this ongoing problem by affording the

¹⁹³ CA, GH 12/42, Lanyon – Barkly, 23 March 1876.

¹⁹⁴ CA, GH 25/1, Barkly – Carnarvon, 10 April 1876; and report on conditions at Kimberley gaol, Barkly – Carnarvon, 3 November 1876.

¹⁹⁵ CA, GH 2/3, Carnarvon – Barkly, 23 December 1876. See also GH 2/2, Carnarvon – Barkly, 28 July 1876 in which the secretary of state approves Lanyon's measures in bringing about the 'increased efficiency of the Constabulary'.

¹⁹⁶ *Diamond News*, 21 September 1876.

¹⁹⁷ Worger, *South Africa's city of diamonds*, pp 123-124.

¹⁹⁸ *Diamond News*, editorial, 3 November 1877.

African workers some safeguards and thus, Lanyon hoped, creating the impression in the wider labour market that migrant workers on the diamond mines were not ruthlessly treated, Lanyon appointed a protector of African workers. The first incumbent, W Coleman, who was also the registrar of African labour, had to be present at the court to ‘investigate and settle all cases in dispute between master and servant, to enforce payment of wages and to look after the interests of the natives in every way’.¹⁹⁹ Although he was able to defend the workers successfully in some cases, the system in practice did not really address the rate of desertion or get to the root cause, which was the shortage of labour.

Although Lanyon had refused to be drawn into an earlier suggestion, backed by Joào Albasini, and using the intercession of JW Crowley, a Kimberley merchant, to recruit African labour from the Soutpansberg region, he was more open to a similar scheme once the 1876 labour commission had highlighted the urgency of finding additional sources of labour.²⁰⁰ In 1876 a number of Lobengula’s Ndebele headmen visited Kimberley. Lanyon took the gap and met with the headmen to ask whether or not it would be feasible to obtain workers from their country. At the interview Alexander Bailie, who was an official in the land surveying department, acted as interpreter. The Africans indicated their readiness to help, but asked that someone accompany them back home to do the negotiations. Although Bailie offered his services, Lanyon was somewhat cautious as this would virtually make Bailie (about whom, it would appear, Lanyon had some reservations, although he did not elaborate upon what these were) an official ‘Government agent’, which clearly he was not. However, Lanyon’s caution appeared to be outweighed by the ‘great advantage to the inhabitants here [the employers on the diamond mines] to obtain labour from that place’.²⁰¹ Bailie duly set off on 24 June 1876 and his mission apparently bore some fruit, with the chiefs agreeing to cooperate.²⁰² Early the following year

¹⁹⁹ CA, GLW 9, Lanyon – Frere, 14 September 1877.

²⁰⁰ *Griqualand West Government Gazette*, 23 May 1876, ‘Report on the Commission upon the Griqualand Labour Question’, paragraph 3.

²⁰¹ CA, GH 12/44, Lanyon – Barkly, 1 June 1876 and enclosure Bailie – Lanyon, 31 May 1876. See also GH 25/1, Barkly – Carnarvon, 11 July 1876. The measure was duly approved in London; CO 107/2, 11 July 1876, and this approval was relayed to Lanyon; GLW 12, Barkly – Lanyon, 24 August 1876.

²⁰² CA, GH 12/45, Lanyon – Barkly, 24 June 1876. For full details of Bailie’s mission see CP, African 162, Frere – Hicks Beach, 2 August 1877, and enclosure JD Barry – Frere, 19 May 1877.

Lanyon was able to use the fact that Lobengula was ‘now sending labourers to work here’, in a letter to Frere reporting on the excellent relationship between the Griqualand West administration and the African chief.²⁰³ For his part, Lobengula must have been pleased with the new labour arrangements, because he sent Lanyon an ivory tusk as a gift. The scrupulous administrator promptly sold the ivory for £20-3s-5d and forwarded the cheque to the acting treasurer.²⁰⁴

By way of conclusion, Lanyon’s considerable success in pulling the finances of Griqualand West out of the doldrums in the mid 1870s and putting the emerging diamond mining industry on its feet should not be underestimated. As Worger points out, the success of the diamond industry had become of considerable financial significance to the state²⁰⁵ and by 1876 diamonds had replaced wool at the top of the list of the Cape Colony’s exports. Nor was Lanyon slow to remind the Colonial Office that the discovery of diamonds had rescued the Cape from the depression of the 1860s:

... the prosperity which has been brought about to the Cape Colony ... [is due to] the energy, perseverance and toil of the inhabitants of Griqualand West. I need hardly point out that the Cape was well nigh bankrupt before these diamond mines were discovered ... the revenues of the previous ten years of its history showed annual and increasing deficits ... [and] the yearly blue-book reports show from whence this prosperity is to be attributed.²⁰⁶

It appears that the Colonial Office was indeed appreciative of Lanyon’s efforts. Clearly Meade, the financial expert in the Colonial Office, Crossman, who had made a hands-on investigation of the situation, and Carnarvon himself, judged by his frequent letters of commendation, were well aware of the importance of Lanyon’s contribution.²⁰⁷ When he had successfully weathered

²⁰³ CP, African 151, Lanyon – Frere, 4 February 1878, p 27. It appears that with mineral discoveries in the offing, Bailie’s mission was also to be used as ground work if it was ‘found necessary, sooner or later, to extend the British dominion or protectorate, in some form or another, over all the tribes between the Orange River and Lake N’gami...’; C 2220, enclosure 1, no 17, Frere – Hicks Beach, 13 May 1878, p 35.

²⁰⁴ CA, GH 12/46, Acknowledgment of cheque received, 31 August 1876.

²⁰⁵ Worger, *South Africa’s city of diamonds*, p 120.

²⁰⁶ CA, GH 12/52, Lanyon – Frere, 18 August 1877; TA, A596, vol 4(a), Lanyon – Frere, (draft) August 1877.

²⁰⁷ See for example TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 27 May 1876, for Lanyon’s reference to Crossman’s commendation of his work and Crossman’s assurances that the Colonial Office ‘have no further fears about the governance of the Province’. Also CP, African 89, Crossman – Carnarvon, 5 February 1876. RH Meade liaised directly with Crossman on Carnarvon’s behalf. Interestingly, Crossman was told not to ‘communicate [his report] through any other person’, an obvious reference to by-passing Barkly, for whom Carnarvon had little regard: TA, A596, vol 4(a), Meade – Crossman, 31 August 1875.

the devastating mid 1876 depression in the diamond industry and had submitted his return of the revenue and expenditure for the year, Carnarvon asked Frere to relay his congratulations, praising the 'ability and exertions of the Administrator to whose public services in this as in many other branches of the Griqualand Administration I desire to render full credit'.²⁰⁸

Both De Kiewiet and Roberts discuss the new, rather more law-abiding social face of Kimberley and the more efficient management of the mining industry after Southey had left; and Crossman is given much of the credit for his thorough enquiry and the recommendations he made.²⁰⁹ Both historians neglect the role that Lanyon played in giving effect, under very difficult conditions, to the wide-ranging changes that Crossman had proposed. Crossman was only in Kimberley for a few short months. Lanyon laboured on, growing increasingly unpopular, for more than three years. His endeavours as an imperial agent, who was at pains to promote the imperial policies of his superiors by collaboration and cooperation with other southern African leaders, will be discussed in the next chapter. So too will his important military role in the Griqualand West Rebellion of 1878.

To be sure, the measures Lanyon introduced, those discussed thus far, are by no means above criticism on moral grounds. And undeniably, his supercilious and autocratic demeanour meant that he wrecked many of the endeavours that a more congenial administrator might have accomplished, but nevertheless, his contribution as an innovator in Griqualand West was a crucial one. His role in the development of monopoly capitalism in Kimberley, his ruthless logic and dedicated work as the architect of a labour policy and his social engineering of locations, were all highly significant. He was one of the first colonial officials to recognise – and to act on his convictions – that if rigidly controlled and settled into locations, African communities could be converted into labour reservoirs to serve the needs of the burgeoning mining industry. In his career in Griqualand West thus far his actions show that despite the fact that he was carrying out imperial policies and never forgot that he was an imperial servant, he was not afraid of using his own discretion and was certainly no imperial puppet.

²⁰⁸ Ibid, vol 4(b), Carnarvon – Frere, 21 September 1877, pp 211-212.

²⁰⁹ Roberts, *Kimberley*, p 142; De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, pp 58-59

CHAPTER III

THE IMPERIAL AGENT AND MILITARIST

In a very specific sense this chapter looks at the ‘real’ Owen Lanyon, because at heart the punctilious administrator was a military man, and his militarism was the focus of the last stage of his career in Griqualand West. The Griqualand West Rebellion of 1878, which Lanyon put down with great aplomb, was the first of two armed rebellions against colonialism that Lanyon had to deal with while in South Africa. Lanyon was extremely proud that the troops under his command were not imperial troops. Instead they were volunteers from the diamond fields, men he had recruited, trained and equipped and who he personally – with the able assistance of Charles Warren – led in the successful campaign against the rebels in the rebellion of 1878. While he was involved in this military drive, his letters home reflect an enthusiasm and buoyancy that is otherwise uncharacteristic of Lanyon. In late 1879, by which time he had taken over the administration in the Transvaal, he was once again involved in a clash of arms against Africans, but this time it was not quite the same; he did not have the personal satisfaction he experienced in Griqualand West. Instead of leading the campaign, Lanyon was under Garnet Wolseley’s command, and being Wolseley, the general monopolised all the glory of his imperial victory over Sekhukhune’s Pedi, leaving few scraps of recognition for men like Lanyon who played a supporting role. His military achievements in Griqualand West thus became, certainly for him personally, the high point of his career in South Africa, and the CB that followed in recognition of his services in the Griqualand West Rebellion, was a source of pride because it proved, in his own words, ‘that as a soldier I have got it’.¹

Lanyon’s important contribution as an imperial agent on the South African periphery is an aspect of his civil office – as distinct from his military one – that will also be given some attention here, and his role as an informer is scrutinised. While Carnarvon was scheming in the Colonial Office, deciding how best to engineer the takeover of the Transvaal, Lanyon corresponded with contacts

¹ TA, A596, vol 13, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 24 December 1878. The CB, or Companion of the Order of the Bath, was the lowest award granted within the Order, and specifically recognised military service.

in Pretoria, passing on information to the secretary of state. And being posted at Kimberley, with its telegraphic link to Cape Town, meant that Lanyon was needed as the middleman, the quickest means of getting news to and from Theophilus Shepstone, who had by this time moved into the Transvaal to annex it to the crown.

On a more personal level, Lanyon's term of office in Kimberley did not endear him to many of the people over whom he ruled, and he was apparently an unhappy, melancholic man. It will be seen that he proved to be unapproachable and dictatorial, and ran his administration on military lines, preferring to take decisions on his own rather than seeking the counsel of others. He did not win the confidence or goodwill of the people of Griqualand West; indeed it seems he was not particularly interested in doing so, and sadly, most people were pleased to see him go. And yet his reputation in the Colonial Office remained a positive one until the very end of his southern African career.

While in Griqualand West he quarrelled with the press,² fell foul of the merchants because of strict control measures and high taxes, and was hated by the mining community. His administration relied on the rigid application of strict rules and regulations and he appears to have been unprepared to 'talk things over', even in the legislative council.³ No doubt the antagonism directed towards him made him feel very isolated in the flat, treeless land so far from the rolling green hills of home. In his correspondence there was also occasional mention of his being under doctor's orders, so it is possible that ill health also played a role in his bitterness of spirit.⁴ Whatever the reasons behind his lack of popularity, within a year of his arrival in Griqualand West Lanyon was writing to say that he would 'be glad to get rid of a thankless office

² See below for details of his involvement in a messy libel case in early 1877. He was proved innocent, but his popularity and his self-confidence were shaken by the incident.

³ *The Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 13 January 1879, 'Notes in Council': '... the fact is that this Colonel Lanyon of ours thinks that no ordinary man has a right to ask a question about anything concerning a matter connected with *his* administration.'

⁴ See for example TA, A596, vol 12, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 26 February and 19 March 1877. Lanyon admits to being under doctor's orders and that 'I have been so knocked up by over work that the doctors have positively ordered me to go [on leave]'. Lanyon died of cancer when only 44 years old, barely six years after he left South Africa.

which was attended with enormous anxiety'.⁵ Certainly he was afraid of failure, and this may have made him edgy and irritable. 'One may fail at some point', he wrote, 'though I try hard to keep that word out of my vocabulary.'⁶ He began to complain and winge in virtually every letter that he wrote to his family; he was weary of the place and the thankless people. Early in 1877, with another two full years ahead of him before his transfer to the Transvaal, he was already anticipating his departure:

Some day, not far off, I may say goodbye for good and all to the most hideous and disgusting place it has ever been my misfortune to enter. Nature has done its best to make it hideous, and man to make it vile. It is truly dreadful living in a place where one is so utterly out of the world.⁷

Significantly, the civilians in Kimberley made no attempt to thank Lanyon when he left for the Transvaal. When he finally departed from the diamond fields in the first week of 1879, only the members of his volunteer corps, the Diamond Field Horse, who had fought under his command on military expeditions, expressed their appreciation of his contribution for more than three years of hard work in Griqualand West.⁸ In stark contrast, Hicks Beach expressed his appreciation of Lanyon's efforts in Griqualand West: 'I note with pleasure', he wrote, 'the records ... of much good administrative work.'⁹

Carnarvon's agent on the diamond fields

The Colonial Office's positive attitude towards Lanyon and his willingness to do its bidding, is well illustrated in Lanyon's role as an imperial agent in Griqualand West. At the age of 33 years Lanyon was young and impressionable and while ambitious for self-advancement, had enormous regard for both Carnarvon and Frere as well as the confederation scheme they were promoting in southern Africa. Frere, who was closer at hand, manipulated Lanyon with great finesse; the young administrator was a willing puppet on an imperial string, working to further confederation

⁵ Ibid, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 14 November 1876.

⁶ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 23 October 1876.

⁷ Ibid, vol 12, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 22 January 1877.

⁸ *The Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 13 January 1879.

⁹ TA, A496, vol 4(b), Hicks Beach – Lanyon, 6 March 1879. Although he had left Kimberley in January 1879, Lanyon only arrived in Pretoria from Pietermaritzburg, where he had been briefed on his new post, on 4 March 1879.

under men whom he admired. The more experienced Lanyon in the Transvaal had less regard for Hicks Beach, but while Frere was still there, he had a mentor with whom he could relate. Once he was gone, as will be seen, Lanyon became far less inclined to be manipulated by his superiors.

In addition to his routine administrative functions in Griqualand West, then, Lanyon was very aware of his role as Carnarvon's man-on-the-spot on the diamond fields and was highly motivated to do well. Certainly Griqualand West and Lanyon were central to Carnarvon's plans. If Molteno could be pressured into taking over Griqualand West, Carnarvon hoped that this would be the preamble to hustling the Cape parliament into agreement to federate with Natal and the Transvaal.¹⁰ Furthermore, Griqualand West bordered on the Free State, which also had to be wooed after the fiasco of the boundary issue and then won over to the idea of confederation. Boer incursions from the Transvaal into the Keate Award territory, a region which had to remain British if confederation were to succeed, also, by virtue of its proximity, fell within Lanyon's jurisdiction. And – most importantly perhaps – the diamond fields were the fount of the rising new industrial economy and had to be aligned with the Cape, which would put British pre-eminence in the sub-continent beyond question. Whereas Froude had been Carnarvon's local eyes and ears in the *planning* of confederation, Frere and Wolseley, and some of the more junior officials such as Lanyon and Shepstone, were the agents who were to *implement* it.

Among the most interesting aspects of the collaboration between Carnarvon and Lanyon is one that has not yet been explored in the literature that deals with Carnarvon's involvement in South African affairs. The evidence seems to suggest that in the latter part of 1876, Carnarvon used Lanyon as a go-between to probe the situation in the South African Republic, a region which had come to occupy centre stage in the confederation scheme. Carnarvon was confident that if the Transvaal were annexed by Britain and groomed for self-government in the British confederal scheme, the other Boer republic would soon follow suit. Carnarvon was unequivocal: 'the

¹⁰ This was clearly Carnarvon's plan. He admitted as much to Barkly, see CA, GH1/24, Carnarvon – Barkly, 14 December 1876.

Transvaal ... *must* be ours.’¹¹ In what was presumably a highly covert arrangement,¹² Lanyon, in Kimberley, was to correspond with a man, or men,¹³ in Pretoria, and ask some leading questions about conditions in the Boer republic. In order to plan the annexation of the Transvaal it was necessary for Carnarvon to be informed about the effectiveness of existing state institutions, the popularity of Burgers, the feelings of the Transvalers regarding a possible British takeover, and the progress of the Boers in their ongoing war with Sekhukhune, the powerful leader of the Pedi to the north-east of Pretoria. In short, it was crucial for Carnarvon to have a reliable source of *inside* information. Without this he would not be able to time his takeover of the Transvaal correctly, nor would he be able to brief his chosen imperial agent, Theophilus Shepstone, on how to proceed.

The information was obviously collated for Carnarvon’s use, although his name does not appear on any of the letters. They are neatly collected as an entity, and are filed away in his personal correspondence, now part of the Carnarvon Papers at the Public Record Office in London. The letters make up part of volume 36: *Correspondence, Colonial Governors, Griqualand, July 1876 – September 1877* and have been placed under the sub-heading ‘Letters received’, together with Lanyon’s private correspondence to Carnarvon from Griqualand West during his term as administrator. It is significant that the dates span a period from ten months *prior* to the annexation of the Transvaal by Britain in April 1877, to about five months *after* Shepstone declared the Transvaal a British colony. As Lanyon was the only colonial official to head up the Griqualand West government during this time, it appears almost certain that he must have been the imperial agent who forwarded the letters to Carnarvon.

The information gleaned through Lanyon’s intercession is interesting. There are references to a British takeover of the Transvaal in most of the letters, and the ramshackle state of affairs in the Boer republic is emphasised *ad nauseam*:

¹¹ PRO, Carnarvon Papers, 30/6/4, Carnarvon – Frere, 12 December 1876.

¹² There is no official record of this exchange of correspondence in the Colonial Office records, and the letters are written privately to and from Pretoria to Carnarvon just before annexation. The fact that false names have been used, and the letters contain references to keeping the matter secret, make it clear that this was an unofficial, covert arrangement.

¹³ See below for uncertainty about the true identity of the correspondents.

'I assure you ...the state of affairs here is bad.'¹⁴ 'As far as the monetary position of the Govt is concerned, cheques are dishonoured and the amount that the Govt is overdrawn in the Bank must be considerable ... Burgers is very unpopular.'¹⁵ 'The time is approaching ... the country is in such a bad mess ... Mr Burgers is very unpopular particularly in the Laager.'¹⁶ 'It is ... freely hinted at by our people that the time is fast approaching to appeal to the British Govt ... all admit that he [Burgers] has failed ... the way the Govt has been carried on here for the last 4 years we look upon as a perfect farce.'¹⁷ 'No person here is aware of what I am writing to you ... I promised you that I would communicate with you and I have performed it, ... I give you leave to make any use of this you may think proper, always bearing in mind what you promised me.'¹⁸ 'The feeling generally amongst the enlightened people here is in favour of federation ... the war has done a good deal towards it.'¹⁹ 'I have not much to tell except that affairs just now seem to be in a very critical state and I am certain that they must go from bad to worse. The Govt is simply a mockery ... there are many Boers in favour of British rule ... we want a good British rule to establish law and order in the country ... the Treasury is empty ... Sekhukhune will grow too strong.'²⁰ 'I have correspondents in every town now ... I am keeping my eyes and ears open. You may rely on me.'²¹

Seven of these eight letters were sent from Pretoria to Kimberley to a certain HJ Owen (presumably a fictitious name based on Lanyon's second name – his full name was William Owen Lanyon) of Du Toitspan, so as keep Lanyon's true identity hidden. The greeting in these letters is to 'Dear Sir'. The letters, written regularly – in some cases as frequently as one per week – were presumably readdressed by Lanyon to the secretary of state, who then had access to first-hand information on the situation in the Boer republic.

The identity of the informer (or informers) in Pretoria is unclear, although from the tone of the letters he was on cordial, almost friendly, terms with Lanyon. The letters of 28 July, 4 August, 10 August, 17 August, 25 August 1876 and then, after a gap of nearly six weeks, of 5 October

¹⁴ PRO, Carnarvon Papers, 30/6/36, Becker – Owen, 28 July 1876.

¹⁵ Ibid, Becker – Owen, 4 August 1876.

¹⁶ Ibid, Becker – Owen, 10 August 1876.

¹⁷ Ibid, Becker – Owen, 17 August 1876.

¹⁸ Ibid, Becker – Owen, 25 August 1876. This letter gives the impression that some sort of payment had been offered for the information supplied. Perhaps Becker and Herman were not simply different pseudonyms for the same man. Weatherley, the only identifiable person, may simply have been providing additional information for Lanyon. Perhaps Lanyon forwarded the letter along with the others because he felt that Weatherley's additional input would be of use to Carnarvon. Weatherley was clearly not concerned about hiding his identity. He thought it safe enough to use Lanyon's correct name in his letters.

¹⁹ Ibid, Herman – Owen, 6 September 1876.

²⁰ Ibid, Weatherley – Lanyon, 27 September 1876.

²¹ Ibid, Becker – Owen, 5 October 1876.

1876, are signed by Charles J Becker. In the gap in Becker's letters is one dated 6 September 1876 which is signed by Charles J Herman, but is also written to HJ Owen.²² On 27 September, also bridging the interval in Becker's correspondence to Owen, is a letter signed by Fred Weatherley. This letter addresses Lanyon directly as 'My Dear Lanyon' and is also written from Pretoria. Written (or copied?) in the same handwriting as the other seven letters, it provides similar information on the crumbling state of the Transvaal and makes an urgent plea for British intervention.²³

Colonel Fred Weatherley is the only identifiable correspondent, and even then, information about him is sparse. He was apparently an ex-officer of the British army who lived in Pretoria in the 1870s. He became well known in English-speaking circles in Pretoria because of his outspoken pro-British stance. On the eve of the annexation when Shepstone was in the town, waiting to act, and feelings were running high in the Transvaal capital, Weatherley was prominent in the formation of a so-called Defence Committee, a kind of neighbourhood watch that patrolled the streets of Pretoria at night to keep law and order.²⁴ A year later, in mid 1878, when dissatisfaction was mounting against Shepstone's particularly inept administration,²⁵ two petitions were submitted to Frere, one of which suggested that Shepstone be replaced as administrator by Colonel Fred Weatherley.²⁶ Nothing came of the petition and the Colonial Office was more than happy to go along with Shepstone's assurances that the 'great majority' of signatures on the petitions were fictitious.²⁷

In the last of the letters on prevailing conditions in the Transvaal, the one from Becker to Owen

²² It may be significant that the signatory's initials, CJ, have been retained, although the surname was changed from Becker to Herman. All seven letters were addressed to HG Owen.

²³ PRO, Carnarvon Papers, 30/6/36, Weatherley – Lanyon, 27 September 1876.

²⁴ MC van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners, 1877-1880* (Pretoria & Cape Town, 1979), p 14.

²⁵ See Chapter IV.

²⁶ C 2144, 'Petition of 500 Transvalers', undated, p 176.

²⁷ C 2220, Hicks Beach – Frere, 31 August 1878, p 119. Shepstone alleged that of the 3 883 signatures on the first petition (C 2144, enclosure 1 in no 79, pp 143-145) that only 16 were legitimate and a further five were of doubtful veracity; Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, p 69.

dated 5 October 1876, the writer not only asks Owen to ‘let me have an outline of the confederation scheme as early as it can possibly be obtained’, but also suggests that instead of addressing the mail to CJ Becker, as previously, it should be sent to Mrs HJ Oldham c/o CJ Becker, Pretoria.²⁸ This is because, the writer adds conspiratorially, that there was a distinct suspicion that ‘your previous letter to me was read, but luckily there was not much in it’. Perhaps the secret correspondence was intercepted by the Boers in early October 1876, because this appears to be the last letter in the series. On the other hand, with Shepstone already on the high seas with authorisation for his special commission safely in his luggage,²⁹ there was little need to prolong the clandestine correspondence between Pretoria, Lanyon in Kimberley and the secretary of state for the colonies in London.

The timing of these eight letters is significant. Given that the post from Cape Town to London took about a month³⁰ the letters would have arrived at the Colonial Office at about the same time that Carnarvon was giving serious thought to the idea of sending Shepstone, who was currently the secretary of native affairs in Natal, to Pretoria on a mission to annex the Transvaal to the crown. Indeed, in mid September Shepstone, who was in London at the time, was summoned urgently to meet Carnarvon on 21 September 1876. At this meeting,³¹ Shepstone was informed of Carnarvon’s secret plans and the nature of his brief in the Transvaal as special commissioner ‘with powers to act under Sir H Barkly if near enough to consult, or without him if not, [and then] under my own responsibility’.³² Moreover, Shepstone was informed, to his surprise and consternation, that he had to leave for Cape Town the very next day. There was no time to waste, as Carnarvon had it on good authority – in the person of Owen Lanyon – that the time was ripe

²⁸ Presumably another pseudonym to throw the suspicious person or persons who had tampered with the 5 October letter, off the scent.

²⁹ CJ Uys, *In the era of Shepstone* (Lovedale, undated), p 177. Shepstone left England on 22 September 1876.

³⁰ The mail between Cape Town and Southampton took about four weeks; BL Blakeley, *The Colonial Office 1868-1892* (Durham, 1972), p 64.

³¹ Uys, *In the era of Shepstone*, p 177, claims that this was their first meeting but Etherington has shown conclusively that Carnarvon and Shepstone met several times for significant discussions on South African affairs in September 1874; NA Etherington, ‘Labour supply and the genesis of South African confederation in the 1870s’, *Journal of African History*, 20, 1979, pp 246-247.

³² Quoted in Uys, *In the era of Shepstone*, p 177.

to act.

On a far more formal basis, through Sir Bartle Frere, the high commissioner, Lanyon was approached, along with the lieutenant-governor of Natal, Henry Bulwer, and Shepstone, who was by then in the Transvaal, to make comments on the Draft South Africa Bill, the embodiment of Carnarvon's grand scheme for South Africa.³³ Lanyon's typically thorough 22-page reply makes interesting reading because in effect it outlines his personal reflections on Carnarvon's federation plans.³⁴ Lanyon rejected the Cape Colony's plea for a unitary government in South Africa with the Cape at the helm. He agreed with Carnarvon that confederation was 'imperative' and would answer South Africa's needs far better. In Lanyon's view a number of states under different forms of government were 'unconnected in sympathy' and this, he claimed, had led to the problem of localisation. He went on to suggest that the 'general government' should settle disputes between the member states, provide mutual protection, set up central courts of appeal, deal with the imposition of general forms of taxation, and the regulation of public lands. He also made special mention – as Carnarvon almost invariably did – of the desirability of a 'common native policy'. Lanyon was categorical about this – using his own version of the puppet on the string analogy – when he wrote: 'a vast number of natives cannot be held in a silken leash, but the power of Great Britain cannot for ever be exercised to control them.' It was unreasonable for the separate colonies to call on the help of the imperial government as Southey had done when trouble erupted in Griqualand West. The leash had to be made of local, more durable material, than was the case at present, and 'control' was the operative word.³⁵ Here Lanyon suggested a local alternative to cut the Gordian knot.

Lanyon's attitude towards the Boers in the OFS and the Transvaal, and their role in a possible confederation is no less interesting, particularly in light of his subsequent career in the Transvaal. Although he was later to become far more antagonistic and outspoken in his hatred of the Boers, in 1878 he saw them as stunted and backward as far as material, cultural and personal growth

³³ TA, A596, vol 4(a), Frere – Lanyon, 20 September 1877, pp 175-188.

³⁴ Ibid, Lanyon – Frere, 27 February 1878.

³⁵ This assertion makes a mockery of the claim that imperial policy in the 1870s was motivated by humanitarian concern for the indigenous people. See also Chapter II.

were concerned. They ‘are little changed’ since the early part of the century, he said, ‘except that time has softened the animosity of the vanquished [the Boers] to their conquerors [the British]’. What they needed was an injection of ‘an English element ... which could not fail to be productive of good’. He felt that while the Boers would assuredly not be prepared to sacrifice their values in order to join a union under the Cape, he had observed that ‘their antipathies are becoming less every day’ (on this issue he was soon to be disillusioned), and was hopeful that they would be prepared to join a confederation.³⁶

Finally, Lanyon’s outline of his attitude towards confederation shows him to be remarkably astute in one area at least, and is evidence again of his choice of a local option instead of an imperial design. He expressed the opinion that the Cape Colony was beginning to look with rather more than passing interest at the regions to the north. He foresaw a change in approach, prompted largely by opportunities for material gain and exploitation. The mother colony was not necessarily going to retain her mother hen and family of chicks preeminence:

If we look forward – nay even look keenly into the present – we may discern that the balance is already quivering ere it turn in the favour of the Northern States. The more rapid this advancement, the more certain the tide of commerce and immigration will set in. In the Northern States were find a fertile soil and mineral wealth, which, sooner or later, cannot fail to attract colonies of labourers. Doubtless they are depressed now. The three great causes of that depression are: cheapness of land, dearness of labour, and want of capital. In the ordinary course of things these will diminish together.³⁷

Barely ten years were to pass before his words became stark reality. Lanyon died in the United States of America in April 1887, and after all the criticism he had had to endure in the early 1880s it is to be hoped that he lived long enough to enjoy, if only briefly, the realisation that in this respect at least, he had hit the nail squarely on the proverbial head.

Early in 1877 Lanyon was again consulted in his capacity as Carnarvon’s agent. He was requested to provide comment on the Draft Bill that had been drawn up for the annexation of Griqualand West to the Cape Colony,³⁸ in other words to see if it was a ‘workable measure acceptable to the people of Griqualand West’. He replied promptly with a comprehensive minute,

³⁶ TA, A596, vol 4(a), Lanyon – Frere, 27 February 1878.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid, Frere – Lanyon (Confidential), 13 March 1877.

making it clear that the settlers on the diamond fields were ‘to a man’ against being absorbed into the Cape Colony – they wished to ‘retain their individuality’ as Griqualand West when crown colony status was exchanged for Cape rule. By March 1877 Lanyon had become convinced that Griqualand West would fare better under Cape rule. It was too remote, too dependent on the Cape harbours, and the fluctuating price of diamonds militated against retention of independent status. He added that the expense of limiting ‘Boer aggrandisement’ in the Keate Award territory was also costing more than the crown colony could afford.³⁹ Furthermore, Lanyon knew that in Carnarvon’s wider view, the annexation of the Transvaal in April 1877 made Cape rule in Griqualand West even more essential. But persuading the people on the diamond fields that this course of action was for the best was another matter.

He also provided answers for the Colonial Office on the tricky question of representation for Griqualand West in the Cape legislative council and assembly after the planned takeover.⁴⁰ Carnarvon could not have failed to be impressed by Lanyon’s conscientious response to this particular aspect.⁴¹ The administrator went to endless trouble, providing copious notes and calculations to back up his recommendation that two members of the legislative council and six members of the House of Assembly should represent Griqualand West.⁴²

When the Bill, duly passed in Britain, was made known in Griqualand West there were angry rumblings, because although in principle the people were in agreement about annexation, the paltry number of representatives (one member to the legislative council and two to the assembly) and general lack of recognition for the region, bordered on insulting.⁴³ Thus, although once the Bill was finally passed in the Cape legislature it should have been a mere formality to refer it for

³⁹ CA, GLW 16, Lanyon – Barkly (Confidential), 20 March 1877.

⁴⁰ See for example, *Ibid*, Lanyon – Frere, 19 April 1877, pp 55-68; TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 27 May 1876.

⁴¹ Carnarvon was liberal in his praise for Lanyon’s hard work, and felt that ‘no better plan could have been adopted for arriving at a conclusion’. He was confident that ‘full justice would be done to the claims of the Province’; TA, A596, vol 4(b), Carnarvon – Frere, 21 May 1877.

⁴² *Ibid*, vol 4(a), Memorandum by Lanyon on representation of Griqualand West in Cape Legislative Council and House of Assembly, undated.

⁴³ CA, GLW 8, Barry – Frere, 17 May 1877; *Diamond News*, 2 June 1877.

acceptance in Griqualand West, this was not the case.

When he thought the time was ripe to do so, on 7 December 1877, Lanyon introduced a resolution in the Griqualand West legislative council in favour of annexation to the Cape. He was well aware that there would be opposition from ‘certain members’, when two of the council’s elected members, Halkett and Murray, walked out to show their opposition.⁴⁴ Lanyon claimed that the conduct of these two did not represent the general feeling of the public in Griqualand West or the Cape. Indeed, political and financial concerns were closely linked. Many aspirant politicians had ‘interests at stake’, based in Port Elizabeth and Cape Town.⁴⁵ To get around this obstruction to the passing of the Bill, Lanyon dissolved the council on 8 December and organised a fresh registration of voters and a new election, fully confident that ‘members favourable to annexation will be returned for the next council’. The problem was that this newly elected council would only be in place by February of the following year and to expedite the matter Lanyon urged Frere to resort to section 58 of the Imperial South Africa Act, in other words, to use his authority to proclaim Griqualand West a part of the Cape Colony.⁴⁶

Lanyon must surely have realised that such an untoward step would produce a furore in Cape political circles. He was apparently blind to the larger picture and, as it proved, not for the last time, he showed a curious lack of insight into the broad implications of decisions he took. Undaunted, he pushed the idea home in his letter to Frere, giving a number of cogent, if long-winded, reasons why Frere should resort to this particularly foolhardy line of action. Typically, Lanyon was disinclined to brook any resistance; if a strong line of action could bypass the niceties of the situation, he was inclined to override objections and take the most direct (and not necessarily the most conciliatory) route. In this, it could be argued, he was like his mentor,

⁴⁴ On the reasons why some residents opposed the annexation, see Roberts, *Kimberley, turbulent city*, p 155.

⁴⁵ Lanyon was certainly aware of the significance of the settler elite in the Cape Colony. Writing of the ‘nearly balanced ... Dutch and English parties in the Cape Parliament’, he told his father, ‘but the former are now in power’ and fear that the Griqualand West representatives might tip the balance the other way’. It was not ‘the Dutch party which is so strong in itself, but there are a number of others who having vested interests in Cape Town and the Western Province, are fearful that the set of government will be changed to a more central position should the English party become too strong’; TA, A 596, vol 12, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 8 May 1877.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, vol 4(a), Lanyon – Frere, 11 December 1877.

Carnarvon. Frere was guided by Lanyon's advice and put the wheels in motion. In March 1878 he was empowered by the imperial government to announce that Griqualand West would come under Cape rule. But it was only in 1880 that this actually happened, by which time all hope of confederation was in shreds and JG Sprigg, the new Cape premier, could be pressurised into obeying the Colonial Office to agree. Lanyon, meanwhile, was in the Transvaal Colony, and Carnarvon had left the Colonial Office.⁴⁷

Cooperation and collaboration

While in Kimberley at the head of the Griqualand West administration Lanyon had another imperial role to fill. In the implementation of British imperial policy in South Africa – as opposed to official (and unofficial) contact with the metropole – he cooperated and collaborated closely with two neighbouring states in the interior and their current leaders, Johannes Brand of the Orange Free State, and Theophilus Shepstone, who annexed the Transvaal as a British colony in April 1877.⁴⁸ Lanyon's relations with Thomas Burgers of the Transvaal prior to the British takeover – in other words, from November 1875 to April 1877 – were far from cordial⁴⁹ and centred mainly on the thorny issue of Boer encroachment to the west of the Transvaal, on the Keate Award territory, and on the land occupied by the Tswana people.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Lanyon arrived to take over from Shepstone in March 1879. It will be argued below that Carnarvon's federation plan was a dead-letter after January 1879. In early 1878 Carnarvon resigned from the Colonial Office in protest over Disraeli's eastern policy. He was succeeded by Sir Michael Hicks Beach.

⁴⁸ Obviously Lanyon had close contact with the Cape Colony on two counts: the high commissioner in Cape Town was also the governor of the Cape and was his intermediary to the Colonial Office. And furthermore, Griqualand West was being groomed to be placed under Cape rule. In this section, however, the focus is on Lanyon's relations with his two neighbours in the interior.

⁴⁹ In reply to Lanyon's official notification of his appointment, PJ Joubert, who was acting president of the Transvaal at the time, refused to acknowledge the Griqualand West government 'in view of the circumstances of the South Westerly Frontier of the Republic' that 'interfered with the rights and independence of the South African Republic'. See TA, SS/198 (R 2651/75), Lanyon – Burgers, 17 November 1875; TA, SS/201 (R 3082/75), Lanyon – Barkly, 3 December 1875 and enclosure Joubert – Lanyon, 27 November 1875.

⁵⁰ It is worth noting in passing that British imperial interest in the Keate Award territory, and dismay at Boer encroachment in this region was not motivated by humanitarian concern for the Tswana people, but rather by Britain's determination to keep open the missionary road to the north (for trade) and to control the Transvaal's 'malicious' interference with African labourers who were bound for the diamond mines. See for example Etherington, 'Labour supply and the genesis of South African confederation', p 244.

On Christmas Day 1875, barely a month after Lanyon's arrival in Griqualand West, the scene was set for good relations between Griqualand West and the Free State, when a cricket team from the diamond fields travelled to Bloemfontein, was welcomed in a friendly spirit by the Free Staters, and went home victorious.⁵¹ Lanyon and Brand, in similar vein, cooperated well from Lanyon's earliest days in Kimberley.⁵² Of course Lanyon had been instructed that after Southey and Barkly's poor, indeed acrimonious, relationship with the Boers, he should take a much more conciliatory approach, particularly towards the strategically positioned Free State and to Brand.⁵³

In April 1876 Brand sailed for England to appeal that the Free State's claim to some of the diamondiferous land be recognised. He contacted Lanyon before he left to say cheerily that he was on his way and that 'there is every prospect that the unfortunate differences between our respective Governments will soon be settled'.⁵⁴ Arriving in London in May, he was almost immediately drawn into negotiations with Carnarvon,⁵⁵ and these dragged on, in fits and starts, with Brand making no concessions on federation, which is what Carnarvon had hoped he would be able to gain from the discussions. It was not until 13 July 1876, on the advice of Donald Currie, 'whose firm are well known as owners of a very important line of steamers' on an appropriate sum to be paid to Brand, that a compromise was reached.⁵⁶ The Free State was to be granted compensation of £90 000, with an additional £15 000 for the development, within five years, of rail links to the British colonies.⁵⁷ An approximate boundary line was also agreed upon,

⁵¹ Roberts, *Kimberley: turbulent city*, p 140.

⁵² See for example Brand's letter of congratulation and good wishes on Lanyon's appointment, CA, GLW 27, Brand – Lanyon, 19 November 1875 and Lanyon's effusive reply, 24 November 1875. See also TA, A596, vol 1, Brand – Lanyon, 3 January 1876; Brand – Lanyon, 11 March 1876. For the Transvaal reaction to Lanyon's official notification that he had taken office, see above.

⁵³ When Frere took over from Barkly this new attitude towards Brand became even more pronounced. See for example Free State Archives, Government Secretary (hereafter FS, GS), 1316, Frere – Brand, 29 March 1877, in which Frere writes 'to say how much pleasure it gives me to find that I shall be in official communication with Your Honour, on so many subjects which will be of the greatest interest to us both'.

⁵⁴ TA, A596, vol 1, Brand – Lanyon, 11 March 1876.

⁵⁵ FS, GS 1388, Carnarvon – Brand, 8 May 1876.

⁵⁶ CA, GH 2/3, Carnarvon – Barkly, 5 August 1876; CP, African 105, no 86, WR Malcolm – Foreign Office, 29 July 1876.

⁵⁷ CA, GH 2/2, Carnarvon – Barkly 19 July 1876.

to be carefully demarcated in due course by two special commissioners, one of whom would be appointed by Britain and one from the Free State.⁵⁸

Writing from his hotel room in London on 19 July, Brand, his mission accomplished, informed Carnarvon that he was leaving for home on 20 August 1876. Although he undertook to have general talks with Carnarvon in the intervening month, he was suitably vague about the matters he was prepared to discuss and was clearly not going to make any concessions on Carnarvon's grand scheme.⁵⁹ As far as confederation was concerned the Boer president had got the better of the bustling, forceful Carnarvon, and it was Lanyon who was left to pick up the pieces and salvage whatever he could in the way of imperial pride. As Carnarvon was quick to point out to General Ponsonby, the Queen's private secretary, all the diamondiferous land was now secured for Britain and in the longer term this was worth immeasurably more than Brand had received. 'It is said that the Crown Lands alone are worth £1 000 000', wrote Carnarvon, and with this in mind, he had been happy to have Brand sign 'there and then'.⁶⁰

Lanyon, of course, knew very little about the agreement that had been reached until much later. When Carnarvon's letter finally reached him he was in for a shock. Carnarvon felt that it would be 'most convenient that the Province should provide the sum which is to be paid'.⁶¹ After all, wrote Carnarvon, trying to coat the bitter pill,

In enacting the necessary Ordinance for raising the loan required to carry out the agreement, the Administrator and the Legislature of the Province will bear in mind that the Interest and Sinking Fund will press very lightly now that the territory of the Province is secured to it and can be fully utilised; and that the requisite amount may indeed be covered by further retrenchments if that course should be thought expedient, or specially charged against the Land Fund.⁶²

⁵⁸ CA, GLW 7, no 185, Agreement between Brand and Carnarvon, 13 July 1876.

⁵⁹ CP, African 105, no 75, Brand – Carnarvon, 19 July 1876.

⁶⁰ PRO, Carnarvon Papers, 30/6/3, Carnarvon – Ponsonby, 14 July, 1876.

⁶¹ CA, GH 2/2, Carnarvon – Barkly, 19 and 31 July 1876.

⁶² CA, GH 2/3, Carnarvon – Barkly, 5 August 1876. On the administrative arrangements to raise a loan and transmit the money to Brand see GH 25/1, Barkly – Carnarvon, 3 October 1876; GH 2/3, Carnarvon – Barkly, 5 October 1876; GH 2/4, Carnarvon – Barkly, 4 January 1877; GH 2/5, Colonial Office – Crown Agents 15 May 1877. The Bank of England agreed to 'advance on the a/c of the Government of Griqualand West, £90 000 upon the Crown Agents promissory note, for a period of 6 months at the rate of 4% p.a.'; GLW 16, Carnarvon – Frere, 28 August 1877.

In a word, Lanyon and Griqualand West had to make the best of it. Brand's £90 000 payout had to be added to its debt and Lanyon was given the responsibility of raising the loan, handling the financial minutiae and seeing the money safely into his neighbour's coffers. All these dealings had to be done with sensitivity because the whole incident was something of an embarrassment to Carnarvon. And like Lanyon, he was not one easily to back down. Carnarvon bluffly explained that sorting out the 'unusually difficult and perplexed case' had proved to be an absolute minefield and that the only feasible way to settle it had been a compromise. He assured Frere and Lanyon that the monetary grant was by no means a 'recompense for any admitted wrong'.⁶³ But as the local Kimberley press was quick to point out, hush-money is seldom paid when there is nothing to hush.⁶⁴ To be sure, it was not the place of the administrator of a small, remote colony to criticise the secretary of state, although Lanyon had proved himself generally quick to criticise others in his private letters, and was not above grumbling to his father about the Colonial Office giving him a raw deal.⁶⁵ And yet it is significant that nowhere in his private correspondence is there any indication that he was critical of Carnarvon's somewhat poor showing with Brand in mid 1876. The closest Lanyon came to questioning the secretary of state's decision to 'give a sprat to catch a salmon' was to comment wryly that 'it was hard on one small province to have to pay for the bait'.⁶⁶

The follow-up arrangements then had to take their course; the agreed new boundary had to be laid down between the Free State and Griqualand West. Charles Warren was approached to take on the six-month assignment for the Colonial Office and he duly accepted the special commission.⁶⁷ The Free State appointed Josias de Villiers.⁶⁸ Lanyon and Brand were to monitor the demarcation and it appears that their cordial cooperation was a major contributing factor in

⁶³ CA, GH 2/3, Carnarvon – Barkly, 5 August 1876.

⁶⁴ *Diamond News*, 23 September 1876.

⁶⁵ See for example TA, A596, vol 12, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 19 March and 22 May 1877.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 18 June 1877. In the same letter Lanyon refers to Carnarvon thanking him 'very gushingly' and giving his 'fullest approval' for Lanyon's efforts in seeing the matter through.

⁶⁷ CP, African 105, WR Malcolm – Warren, 13 October 1876 and Warren – Colonial Office, 14 October 1876; CO 522/1, Carnarvon – Barkly, 19 October 1876.

⁶⁸ CA, GLW 7, Brand – Colonial Office, 8 August 1876.

the speedy and efficient completion of the task.⁶⁹ By May 1877 Warren had tied up his survey and submitted his report,⁷⁰ and Frere was able to send Brand a copy of the report and convey the Colonial Office's sincere thanks for his friendly cooperation.⁷¹

Other matters of a routine nature, such as postal arrangements and extradition rights between the two states, were handled in the same spirit between Brand and Lanyon, and it seems that these issues were generally agreed upon without a hitch.⁷² Brand also gave permission for members of the Diamond Field Horse, a volunteer corps raised by Lanyon in Kimberley, to pass through the Boer republic on their way to the eastern frontier to assist the colonial troops in the uprising of the Ngqika Xhosa and the last war of resistance by the Gcaleka Xhosa in late 1877 and early 1878. Brand was duly thanked for this 'fresh proof of amity and good feeling'.⁷³

It would seem that Lanyon undertook to do the travelling from Kimberley to Bloemfontein if circumstances required any consultation between the two leaders. In Lanyon's private correspondence to his father there is reference to 'running over to see Mr Brand', and discussion of these meetings is couched in terms which give the impression that Lanyon enjoyed the trips to the Free State and was grateful for the friendly hospitality he received from the president.⁷⁴ Indeed, on his way to Natal and then to the Transvaal to take up his new appointment, Lanyon spent 'three days very pleasantly with the Brands' in Bloemfontein.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ CA, GH 25/1, Barkly – Carnarvon, 2 February 1876. The problem of farms that were intersected by the new boundary line was also amicably settled, see FS, GS 1517, Brand – Lanyon, 21 September 1878.

⁷⁰ CA, GH 25/1, Warren – Carnarvon, 1 May 1877.

⁷¹ FS, GS 1282, Frere – Brand, 23 July 1877 and 11 April 1878; CO, 522/1 Carnarvon – Frere, 28 May 1877.

⁷² See for example CA, GH 12/47, Lanyon – Barkly, 9 December 1876 and Lanyon – Barkly, 30 December 1876; GLW 14, Barkly – Lanyon, 29 December 1876; GLW 27, Brand – Lanyon, 18 December 1876. Also FS, GS 1282, Lanyon – Höhne, 3 February 1877.

⁷³ FS, GS 1282, Frere – Brand, 9 February 1878; CA, GH 2/6, Hicks Beach – Frere, 12 February 1878.

⁷⁴ See for example TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 22 September, 10 October and 23 October 1876; Ibid, vol 12, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 5 June 1877. Lanyon also expressed the opinion that since returning from Britain Brand was 'much more friendly to the English, and I think he would now be disposed to adopt this [federation] policy'; Ibid, vol 12, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 6 February 1877.

⁷⁵ Ibid, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 26 January 1879.

Brand was one of the first to send his hearty congratulations to Lanyon when news came through that he was to be sent to the Transvaal. He expressed his appreciation that he and Lanyon had ‘always worked so well together’ in such ‘friendly cooperation’ and would, he said, ‘always look back with kindly feelings to the time you were Administrator of Griqualand’. But the canny Boer statesman added a cautious note too; he knew the Transvalers far better than Lanyon ever would. In the Transvaal, he wrote, ‘... you will have a very arduous and difficult task to perform’.⁷⁶ His words proved prophetic. When Lanyon completely misread the gravity of the situation and matters boiled over into war in the latter part of 1880 and early 1881, the Free State president took an active role in trying to halt the war and was subsequently asked to serve, in a neutral capacity, in the peace negotiations.

Brand was not the only South African leader with whom Lanyon was involved. Although his contact with President Burgers was limited to appeals on behalf of Africans living in the Keate Award territory who complained that Transvaal Boers were encroaching onto their land,⁷⁷ Lanyon had significant interaction with Theophilus Shepstone. This began when Shepstone arrived in South Africa in early 1877 on his special mission, engineered by Carnarvon, to annex the Transvaal. Lanyon must have been well aware of Carnarvon’s plans because it was he who had forwarded information to the secretary of state on the situation there in mid 1876.⁷⁸ It was also through Lanyon that Shepstone was sent a monetary advance of £500 from the Griqualand West treasury, to be refunded later through the Crown Agents, to cover his expenses before he was officially instated in Pretoria.⁷⁹

Lanyon and Shepstone also corresponded regularly on an unofficial basis. Making use of the

⁷⁶ FS, GS 1517, Brand – Lanyon, 3 October 1878.

⁷⁷ See Chapter II.

⁷⁸ See above under *Carnarvon’s agent in the diamond fields*.

⁷⁹ CA, GH 27/2, Barkly – Carnarvon, 12 February 1877. Carnarvon told Frere, who had taken over from Barkly in the interim, that this had been officially endorsed; GH 2/4, Carnarvon – Frere, 17 March 1877. See also Natal Archives (hereafter NA), Theophilus Shepstone Papers, A96, Lanyon – Shepstone, 2 February 1877.

telegraphic link from Cape Town,⁸⁰ Lanyon became the middleman in speeding up communications between the Colonial Office, Cape Town and trouble-torn Pretoria.⁸¹ He fell into the habit of writing a short, chatty note to Shepstone usually prefaced by 'I enclose this week's papers and telegrams' and making passing remarks about the state of affairs in Griqualand West, or showing interest in Shepstone's progress in the Transvaal.⁸² For this 'able and effective support and assistance ... constantly and cheerfully rendered me from the commencement of my mission to the Transvaal', Shepstone was clearly very grateful.⁸³

In the months prior to annexation Lanyon broached a number of important issues with Shepstone, including the ongoing unrest in the Keate Award Territory on the Transvaal's western boundary where the Transvaal Boers were encroaching on African land and hampering the free flow of labour to the diamond fields.⁸⁴ He also warned Shepstone, based on his own experience with the diggers in Griqualand West, that to allow the Boers any form of representative government once the British flag had been hoisted in Pretoria would be courting disaster. Anyone taking up the Govt', he wrote, 'would be seriously hampered were he to be handicapped by the elective element. ... Even here [Griqualand West] with only four electives, and a Govt majority, the electives can be obstructive.'⁸⁵

To his father, Lanyon made frequent reference to the Transvaal, to its poorly run republican government, and the notion of 'us' taking it over. In early 1877 he noted that 'affairs in the

⁸⁰ A telegraphic link between Cape Town and Kimberley had been established in 1876; Roberts, *Kimberley: turbulent city*, pp 144-145.

⁸¹ NA, A96/16, Lanyon – Shepstone, 26 January 1877.

⁸² These letters are to be found in the Theophilus Shepstone Papers (A96) and are housed in the Natal Archives, Pietermaritzburg.

⁸³ TA, A596, vol 3, Shepstone – Carnarvon, 11 November 1877. This letter was not altogether spontaneous. When Shepstone thanked Lanyon for his help, Lanyon suggested that Shepstone could repay the favours by 'telling Lord Carnarvon, ... for as I shall shortly be giving up this govt. and an expression of opinion from you would be of service to me'; NA, A96/24, Lanyon – Shepstone, 4 September 1877.

⁸⁴ NA, A96/16, Lanyon – Shepstone, 29 December 1876, 26 January 1877; A96/17, Lanyon – Shepstone, 5 March 1877.

⁸⁵ NA, A96/16, Lanyon – Shepstone, 2 February 1877; *Ibid*, A96/17, Lanyon – Shepstone, 16 February 1877 and 23 February 1878. In his letter of 23 February Lanyon criticises Froude for making what Lanyon considered an irresponsible statement 'praising the way in which the Boers manage their own affairs'.

Transvaal seem to be coming to a head' and 'I think before long we shall have the Transvaal coming under our rule.'⁸⁶ Barkly, until his replacement by Frere in March 1877, also kept Lanyon closely informed, because in Lanyon's private collection of official documents there are copies of two letters, one from Carnarvon to Barkly and another from Barkly to Shepstone, which contains detailed information that would be useful to Shepstone as he approached the Boer capital to pursue his 'special mission'.⁸⁷ Lanyon was in Cape Town on leave when the actual annexation took place, and was then delayed in the Cape until the middle of July 1877 ironing out problems about Griqualand West's absorption under Cape rule. While he was in Cape Town he also took the opportunity of making the acquaintance of Sir Bartle Frere, the new high commissioner.

Lanyon was suitably delighted at the news that Shepstone had raised the British flag in Pretoria, and once back in Kimberley he wrote to congratulate him on a job well done, adding that 'I feel almost as pleased as you will be'.⁸⁸ He also told his father '... [The Transvaal] will add greatly to our possessions in South Africa ... I have from the first advocated this step.'⁸⁹ Throughout his time in Kimberley, Lanyon continued his cordial interchange with Shepstone, who was struggling with almost insurmountable problems. 'The rehabilitation [of the Transvaal government] will be about as difficult a job as was ever given to any administrator', wrote Lanyon soon after the takeover, but then he could not resist making the comparison: 'they have however given him [Shepstone] troops and not left him to make bricks without straw as they did me ...'.⁹⁰ In the event, the troops Shepstone had been given, straw or no straw, proved unequal to curbing the Transvaal's struggle with the well-armed Pedi under their canny leader

⁸⁶ See for example TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 16 October 1876; *Ibid*, vol 12, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 6 and 12 February 1877.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, vol 4(a), Carnarvon – Barkly, 25 January 1877, pp 29-32; Barkly – Shepstone, 20 February 1877, pp 27-28.

⁸⁸ NA, A96/22, Lanyon – Shepstone, 17 July 1877.

⁸⁹ TA, A596, vol 12, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 16 April 1877.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 30 April 1877.

Sekhukhune.⁹¹ Shepstone's new government was floundering almost as helplessly as the Boer government under Burgers had done.⁹² Lanyon, in his usual conscientious manner, did what he could to help. When a financial expert in the person of Sargeaunt, one of the crown agents, was sent to investigate the deteriorating financial situation in the Transvaal and provide Carnarvon with answers for 'ill wishers to the new system' who were peppering him with questions in parliament,⁹³ Lanyon offered advice on his experiences of a similar enquiry in Kimberley under the direction of William Crossman.⁹⁴

Lanyon also provided material assistance to Shepstone in the form of troops from Griqualand West. In March 1878 he sent Shepstone an offer to provide some volunteers from the diamond fields,⁹⁵ but when his offer arrived in the Transvaal there was a temporary – very temporary, as it proved – lull in the hostilities and Shepstone's confidence revived. He turned down Lanyon's offer, writing a particularly verbose (even for Shepstone) private explanation to Lanyon on why he had taken this decision. In essence, he did not want to give Sekhukhune the impression that the government could not cope, nor he did not want the 'British Govt and people' to believe that he was involved in a 'serious native war'.⁹⁶ Barely two weeks later the Transvaal administrator realised that he had been too hasty in refusing Lanyon's help and wrote to ask Lanyon to see if he could, after all, raise '200 men or more, preferably mounted' to send to the Transvaal.⁹⁷ Lanyon meanwhile had trouble brewing among the Griqua people within his own borders and

⁹¹ See Delius, *The land belongs to us*, pp 225-240. For a discussion of Lanyon's role in the imperial subjugation of the Pedi polity, see Chapter V.

⁹² See Chapter IV.

⁹³ NA, A96/23, Carnarvon – Shepstone, 23 August 1877.

⁹⁴ Interestingly, Lanyon's derogatory remarks to Shepstone about Crossman's enquiry, is the only criticism there seems to be of Crossman's efforts. Lanyon wrote: 'I hope his [Sargeaunt's] report will be less costly and more useful to the colony than was Col. Crossman's report of this place. The result of his mission was throwing away £2 500'. Presumably Lanyon considered that he would have been able to turn around Griqualand West's financial crisis without Crossman's help; NA, A96/24, Lanyon – Shepstone, 16 October 1877.

⁹⁵ TA, A596, vol 4(b), Shepstone – Frere, 26 March 1878; Ibid, vol 13, Lanyon – Minnie Lanyon, 19 March 1878.

⁹⁶ Ibid, vol 1, Shepstone – Lanyon, 26 March 1878; Ibid, vol 4(b), Shepstone – Frere, 26 March 1878. Shepstone's 13-page letter to Lanyon is both verbose and repetitive.

⁹⁷ CA, GLW 26, Shepstone – Lanyon, 9 April 1878.

needed all the soldiers he could raise, but he did manage to send a small 100-man volunteer force which arrived in the Transvaal at the end of May 1878.

Shepstone duly thanked Lanyon, but slipped in a comment (which probably rankled with the hypersensitive Lanyon) that it was a pity that there were not as many men as he had asked for.⁹⁸ These volunteers apparently served with great distinction and when they returned to Kimberley, Shepstone – still under great pressure from Sekhukhune – promptly sent a further request to Lanyon in December 1878. Shepstone was having scant success in recruiting men in the Transvaal and he had heard that Lanyon had ceased hostilities and signed an amnesty with the insurgents in Griqualand West,⁹⁹ so he was hoping that the services of Lanyon's doughty diggers were no longer required nearer home. He also wondered whether 'a number of horses and equipments' might now be available, and if so whether these could be put to use to mount and equip the volunteer force. With Lanyon's permission arrangements were made for a Lieutenant P Raaff, one of Shepstone's military staff, to go to the diamond fields, where he managed to recruit more than 200 volunteers for service in the Transvaal.¹⁰⁰ Lanyon's prompt reaction to go to the assistance of the Transvaal also drew favourable comment from the Colonial Office and might well have counted in his favour when the decision was taken to name him as Shepstone's successor in Pretoria.¹⁰¹

Military action and the Griqualand West Rebellion

Lanyon's involvement in military action during his term as administrator of Griqualand West was a great source of pride and even enjoyment to him. He went as far as to admit: 'I look

⁹⁸ Ibid, Shepstone – Lanyon, 7 May 1878; TA, A596, vol 4(b), Hicks Beach – Frere, 6 June and 10 August 1878. On the efficiency of the Diamond Field Horse see CA, GH 27/2, Frere – Carnarvon 29 April 1878.

⁹⁹ See for example TA, A596, vol 13, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 11 November 1878, in which Lanyon tells his father: 'Tomorrow I am able to proclaim an amnesty to all rebels save those principally engaged.'

¹⁰⁰ CA, GH 11/17, Shepstone – Frere, 7 December 1878; TA, A596, vol 4(b), Shepstone – Lanyon, 3 December 1878. See also NA, A96/69, Shepstone – Lanyon, 3 December 1878 and Shepstone – Chlemsford, 6 December 1878.

¹⁰¹ TA, A596, vol 4(b), Hicks Beach – Lanyon, 27 February 1879. See also CA, GH 27/2, Frere – Hicks Beach, (Confidential) 29 April 1878, where Frere reports that he has 'great confidence in Lanyon's judgement and professional knowledge' and refers specifically to his role in the 'excellent equipment and discipline of the Diamond Fields Horse'.

forward to the time when I get clear of civil duties, and return to soldiering.¹⁰² His letters to his father provide many details of his military forays in 1878. He revelled in roughing it in the veld, sleeping under the stars on bitterly cold nights, with his saddle as his pillow, and riding hard all day under the South African sun.¹⁰³ And he obviously gloried in his success. He made frequent reference to his military accomplishments, and retained in his possession an extraordinary number of congratulatory messages¹⁰⁴ to the effect that he had been successful despite being almost unaided, apart from the valued assistance of Charles Warren, in ‘putting a little proper fear’ into insurgents and ‘having a fling’ at the Africans.¹⁰⁵ He was also very proud that he had not resorted to asking for imperial troops, and once again, was showing a preference to using his own initiative rather than merely functioning in reaction to imperial directives. He had succeeded with a band of hardy local volunteers who had served him devotedly.¹⁰⁶ His carping about the local people being ungrateful, sullen and difficult to control, had magically disappeared, only to reappear when, on his return from the battlefield, he was obliged to settle down to more mundane matters.

The wide availability of firearms in Griqualand West to people of all population groups after the discovery of diamonds had a close bearing on Lanyon’s military exploits while he was administrator, because it meant that most of the combatants he encountered were relatively well armed. The fact that many of the African migrant workers on the mines spent their wages on arms and ammunition – which were not made available to Africans in either of the two republics – had been a contentious issue since the opening of the fields, and Lanyon also saw it as being linked to his energetic policy of labour control. Southey had deliberately promoted arms traffic

¹⁰² TA, A596, vol 13, Lanyon – Jack (brother-in law), 17 November 1878.

¹⁰³ See for example Ibid, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 25 December 1876; Ibid, vol 13, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 16 May and 8 July 1878.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, vol 4(b), Frere – Lanyon, 28 May 1878; Ibid, vol 3, Frere – Hicks Beach, 3 September 1878; Ibid, vol 4(b), Chelmsford – Lanyon, 7 December 1878; Ibid, vol 3, Hicks Beach – Frere, 4 January 1879.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 25 December 1876; Ibid, vol 13, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 8 January 1878.

¹⁰⁶ For a particularly glowing account of Lanyon’s military achievements, written by Lanyon himself, see Ibid, vol 3, Lanyon – Hawley, 29 August 1878. To his father Lanyon wrote that ‘the diggers would not care to go except under my command’; Ibid, vol 13, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 8 April 1878.

in the knowledge that it would encourage African labour, of which there was a perennial shortage. During the last nine months of 1873, Southey's first year in Griqualand West, more than 18 000 guns were made available and 10 000 permits of sale were issued by his government.¹⁰⁷ The Kimberley merchants were of course more than happy with the lieutenant-governor's colour-blind policy towards unrestricted arms sales. It was the imperial policy makers who were feeling less comfortable about the growing firepower of Africans.

Lanyon, for one, was highly critical of Southey's policy, because he claimed that Africans purchased firearms for 'purposes of war', rather than for hunting, and that armed Africans were far more difficult to handle.¹⁰⁸ He was probably also reacting to settler pressure to disarm Africans in the aftermath of the Langalibalele incident in 1873. Lanyon argued that firearms sold on the diamond fields soon found their way to other regions as the African contract workers returned to their homes throughout southern Africa, and being a military man and an imperialist to boot, he felt that there should be 'united action' taken against the arms trade on the diamond fields. He foresaw that there might be problems in keeping control of African insurgence if 'every native ... was armed and well supplied with ammunition'. Guns, in a word, made Africans 'formidable enemies'.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, when it became clear that border unrest might necessitate military action in early 1878, Lanyon had decided to put a hold on all trade in arms and ammunition. Some time later, once the Griqualand West Rebellion had been put down, he admitted that his action in this regard had been too little, too late. 'The moral effect of giving a native a gun', he maintained,

is to make him think he is on a par with the European, and he is more prone to rush into a war than he would be were he only possessed of native weapons. I would advance the native in every way possible in learning, and in the arts of peace and agriculture, but further than that he should be treated as a child, and as such, dangerous weapons should be kept out of his reach.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ For a discussion of the firearms trade among the southern Tswana in the vicinity of the diamond fields see Shillington, *The colonisation of the southern Tswana*, pp 21-25. In the four months January to April 1875, 3 166 new licences for the sale of firearms were issued in Kimberley alone; Oberholster, *Die anneksasie van Griekwaland-Wes*, p 262. See also De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, p 18.

¹⁰⁸ TA, A596, vol 4(b), Minute (draft), Lanyon – Frere, 19 September 1878, p 299. Lanyon maintained that the 'unrestricted issue' of guns and powder had put his troops at a disadvantage in the 1878 rebellion.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, pp 298-305.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, p 300.

Unlike Southey, Lanyon was wary of letting traders – who had submitted a petition to object to the suspension – have their heads in the sale of firearms. He argued that given any loophole, their greed would mean that they would sell guns ‘indiscriminately’ even in the knowledge that the weapons would later be turned against their fellow countrymen. Crossman had also expressed very similar views after conducting his enquiry in Griqualand West.¹¹¹ In sum, Lanyon’s stance was unequivocal, he wanted to see the imperial government put a stop to this trade, ‘as they did the slavery question – so that any British subject in any part of the world would be criminally liable if he supplied arms or ammunition to any native’.¹¹²

Lanyon was not alone in these views. The sale of firearms to Africans had always been banned in the two Boer republics, and after the British annexation of the Transvaal, MW Pretorius complained bitterly on behalf of the Boer population that Africans ‘who are our sworn foes’ were bringing large numbers of firearms into the Transvaal from the diamond fields.¹¹³ Newly established in the Colonial Office, Hicks Beach reacted positively to Pretorius’s letter and agreed substantially with his point of view. Indeed, he felt that ‘all possible restrictions should be put upon the trade’ both in the Cape and in Griqualand West, primarily because both regions were embroiled in putting down African resistance. Like Lanyon, Hicks Beach felt that a common policy should be adopted to ‘control’ the trade in firearms, but it is significant that he was careful not to express an opinion, as Lanyon had done, on a blanket ban. He called instead for comment on the matter from the four British territories in South Africa, and Lanyon’s minute quoted above, was Griqualand West’s contribution.¹¹⁴ It appears that the issue was still unresolved, although there were some restrictions in place on the sale of firearms when Lanyon left South

¹¹¹ CP, African 96, Crossman – Carnarvon, 1 May 1876. Crossman wrote: ‘For my own part I would not allow guns to be sold to the natives at all. They do not purchase them for hunting but for purposes of war.’ It seems to have escaped both Lanyon and Crossman that the British also used them for purposes of war.

¹¹² TA, A596, vol 4(b), Minute (draft), Lanyon – Frere, 19 September 1878, pp 301-302.

¹¹³ C 2100, Shepstone – Carnarvon, 6 February 1878, and enclosure 3, Pretorius – Shepstone, 14 January 1878, p 4. The Pedi people, who were the most numerous contract workers on the diamond mines, were indeed at loggerheads with the Transvalers in the 1870s.

¹¹⁴ CP, African 151, no 96, Hicks Beach – Frere, 26 April 1878, pp 115-116.

Africa in early 1881.¹¹⁵ Despite voluminous correspondence in the years 1878-1880 and several detailed memoranda on the arms trade,¹¹⁶ Hicks Beach decided to refer the matter to a 'conference of delegates from the various Colonies' which idea he then (yet again) referred back to his imperial agents in southern Africa.¹¹⁷

The 19th-century history of the early inhabitants of the region that later became Griqualand West after the discovery of diamonds, has received some attention from historians and Martin Legassick's seminal work on interaction among the Griqua, the Sotho-Tswana and the missionaries on this frontier zone until 1840 – some 35 years before Lanyon arrived to administer Griqualand West – throws some interesting light on the dynamics of the Griqua and African communities living there.¹¹⁸ As for the 1878 rebellion itself, despite Shillington's assertion that it 'seldom receives more than passing reference in general histories of South Africa',¹¹⁹ it is the subject of a dissertation which gives great attention to the military campaigns, and a doctoral thesis which studies the social dynamics of the people involved, with very little mention of the unrest itself or how it was quelled.¹²⁰ Shillington himself, whose research concentrates on the impact of colonialism on the predominant southern Tswana group in the region, the Tlhaping, discusses the resistance of this community to Lanyon's rule in a series of battles across Griqualand West's northern border in the southern Tswana's territory in 1878.¹²¹ A useful African interpretation on the reaction to colonialism in the region and the circumstances of the Rolong people under their leader Montshiwa, who was loyal to the British authorities, is that by

¹¹⁵ In 1877 and 1878 the Cape passed legislation restricting the issue of licences to Africans for possessing firearms. Similar curbs were enacted in Natal, where the lieutenant-governor had to give his written permission for an African to possess a licence. CP, African 200: 'The South African Arms Question', Memorandum by Mr Pearson, February 1880, pp 1-2.

¹¹⁶ See CP, African 161: 'Memorandum by Mr Fairfield on Trade in Arms'; African 200: 'The South African Arms Question' by Mr Pearson, February 1880.

¹¹⁷ CP, African 208, no 9, Hicks Beach – Frere, 26 February 1880, pp 9-11.

¹¹⁸ MC Legassick, *The Griqua, the Sotho-Tswana, and the missionaries, 1780-1840: the politics of a frontier zone* (Ph D, UCLA, 1969).

¹¹⁹ Shillington, *The colonisation of the southern Tswana*, p 82.

¹²⁰ M Broodryk, *Die rebellie in Griekwaland-wes* (MA, Unisa, 1977); IB Sutton, *The 1878 rebellion in Griqualand West and adjacent territories* (Ph D, SOAS, London, 1975).

¹²¹ Shillington, *The colonisation of the southern Tswana*, pp 74-83.

SM Molema.¹²² All these sources have been used in conjunction with Lanyon's own lengthy report, compiled once the rebellion was over,¹²³ to assess the broad reasons why the insurgents resorted to force, and to trace an outline of the campaign.

In the early 19th century the Griqua communities living in the territory that was subsequently annexed by Britain in 1871, were loosely structured and their leaders had no real legitimacy. This made them extremely susceptible to the missionaries, who schooled them over the years in western-European ways. Weakened by the veneer of a new lifestyle, traditions and political organisation, they showed little resistance to the gradual settler incursions into what had previously been their domain. The families of Kok and Berends were early Griqua leaders, but due to rivalries and the formation of factions there were four main Griqua communities in the interior by mid century.¹²⁴ Legassick claims that like the Griqua, legitimisation of political authority among the Tlhaping in the territory was equally uncertain, thus also making them very susceptible to colonialism.

As far as indigenous land claims were concerned, by the 1850s 'Griqua, Kora, Rolong and Tlhaping groups could all claim "rights" of one form or another to territory between the Harts and the Vaal; occupation there was, and continued to be, mixed.'¹²⁵ In flagrant disregard of this scattered distribution of diverse groups, the Griqua community based at Griquatown, under Andries Waterboer, was, as mentioned above, adjudged the rightful owner of the diamond fields in the arbitration process organised by Britain; a grant Waterboer saw fit to pass to the British crown in 1871. This was a recipe for disaster. Many of the other Griqua, Sotho-Tswana and the remaining Kora in the region lost both their autonomy and their land. Widespread dissatisfaction at this injustice ultimately led to the 1878 rebellion, a rebellion put down by colonial troops under Lanyon, and one which did not restore the land or their autonomy to the insurgents. Legassick sums it up neatly: 'The frontier zone situation ... facilitated a vicious circle of land

¹²² SM Molema, *Montshiwa, Barolong chief and patriot, 1815-1896* (Cape Town, 1966).

¹²³ C 2222, enclosure in no 36, Lanyon – Frere, 19 November 1878, with sub-enclosures by Warren, Orpen (the surveyor general) and AJ Wookey, a missionary at Kuruman.

¹²⁴ Legassick, *The politics of a frontier zone*, pp 635-637.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, pp 641-643, 657.

alienation and erosion of political power which permitted further land alienation.’¹²⁶

At the core of the 1878 rebellion of the Griqua, Tswana and Kora people in Griqualand West, then, was the tension arising from their former position of power and ownership of land in what had been Griqualand, and the subsequent takeover by the British crown. The alienation of land and the abrogation of chiefly power were symptoms of the expansion of white settlement in the interior at the time, a tendency which became more marked as the mineral revolution gathered pace and more settlers arrived in the southern African interior. And insidiously at first, and then at an increasing pace, African societies which resisted settler encroachment were defeated by force of arms and put under white control.¹²⁷

In the 1870s the most popular colonial explanation for the widespread unrest in southern Africa¹²⁸ was the so-called ‘conspiracy theory’. It was claimed that the 1878 war in Griqualand West was yet another incident in the country-wide African conspiracy against whites. After he had become administrator of the Transvaal Shepstone had popularised the notion – because it suited imperial plans for the Boers and Zulu – that the powerful Zulu nation was instigator of the trouble and was behind much of the unrest throughout southern Africa.¹²⁹ Frere was highly receptive to the idea and readily accepted it, convinced as he was that Shepstone knew the Zulu better than anyone. The claim was that current unrest on the eastern frontier, the Pedi conflicts in the Transvaal, the troubles in the disputed territory between the Transvaal and Zululand, and the 1878 rebellion in Griqualand West were all part of the same pattern.¹³⁰ Hicks Beach, it must be said, was less convinced of the merits of his predecessor’s views on confederation and how best to implement them, but having only just taken over in the Colonial Office from Carnarvon,

¹²⁶ Ibid, p 659.

¹²⁷ Sutton, *The 1878 rebellion*, pp 5-6.

¹²⁸ Refer, for example, to Lanyon’s raising of volunteer troops to help put down disturbances in the eastern Cape against the Xhosa and in the eastern Transvaal, against the Pedi and in the Keate Award territory.

¹²⁹ See for example CA, GH 8/12, Shepstone – Thesiger, 5 August 1878, in which Shepstone writes: ‘...the condition of the native tribes ... appears to be more or less under the influence of the overwhelming impulse to take up arms against the white man, that is now so general in South Africa’.

¹³⁰ Shillington, *The colonisation of the southern Tswana*, pp 82-83; Turrell, *Capital and labour on the Kimberley diamond fields*, p 99; Sutton, *The 1878 rebellion*, p 228.

made the mistake of letting Frere have his head.¹³¹ Imperial policy in southern Africa was thus dominated by Frere until early 1879 and he argued that what was needed to put a stop to African unrest was a federation and a 'common native policy'. All incidents of African resistance to white rule had to be firmly suppressed.

From his earliest days at Kimberley Lanyon had to deal with complaints from dispossessed Africans in the Keate Award territory on the northern boundary of Griqualand West.¹³² The Colonial Office was bombarded with complaints of trouble in the area and there were acrimonious exchanges with Burgers about Boer encroachment on the land occupied by Tswana people.¹³³ According to Molema, the relations between at least one of the prominent chiefs, the Rolong leader Montshiwa, and the representatives of the British government at Kimberley, were particularly cordial,¹³⁴ and there are many examples of friendly correspondence expressing the administrator's concern about the 'daily encroachments' by the Boers onto territory granted to the Rolong in defiance of the Keate Award.¹³⁵

But there were clearly other communities within Griqualand West and on the northern border that were dissatisfied with colonial control and felt that Lanyon's administration should exercise its authority to keep the peace between settlers, Boers and Africans. In October 1876 Lanyon wrote that local Africans were getting 'bumptious' and added that trouble might develop unless something be done in the way of putting some restraint on the 'aggressiveness of the Boers' in the north and the tendency of some of the Africans to resist the authority of the police.¹³⁶ No

¹³¹ On Hicks Beach, his views on confederation and his inability to control Frere when the high commissioner instigated the Anglo-Zulu War, see Chapter IV.

¹³² Shillington, *The colonisation of the southern Tswana*, pp 74-76.

¹³³ See for example CO 107/2, no 9556, 14 July 1876, and Fairfield's minute of 11 August which refers to the 'impudent conduct' of the Transvaal and asks 'whether this sort of thing can long be tolerated'; CO 107/4, no 1757, 8 February 1877. Also minute by Malcolm, 13 February 1877: '... no alternative but at once to annex it'.

¹³⁴ Molema, *Montshiwa*, p 81.

¹³⁵ See for example, Lanyon – Montshiwa, 6 March 1876, 6 February 1877, and Montshiwa – Lanyon, 6 and 24 June and 14 August 1876, quoted in Molema, *Montshiwa*, pp 82-86.

¹³⁶ TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 16 October and 17 December 1876.

doubt by this time he was fully aware that trouble in the Keate Award territory was going to be used as one of the reasons for Britain's takeover of the Transvaal in April 1877.

By the beginning of 1878 Lanyon was busy organising and training his Diamond Field Horse volunteers to serve in the Cape. Soon after their departure, he felt it necessary to undertake an expedition to put down trouble allegedly caused by Botlasitse, a Tlhaping chief at Phokwani, some 70 miles to the north of Kimberley. Phokwani was just beyond the border, but Botlasitse also had territorial claims at Boetsap which lay within Griqualand West, and he wanted to assert his authority in the colony.¹³⁷ There was a great deal of cattle theft going on between all the farming communities in the area, and Botlasitse and several of his Tlhaping allies ignored Orpen's beacons and demanded tribute from white farmers who had settled on the Griqualand West side of the border.¹³⁸ These were proceedings which Lanyon felt 'I cannot allow'. He had a simple philosophy on dealing with 'the natives': they had to be put down promptly and very firmly before the spark of disaffection became an unmanageable fire.¹³⁹ Botlasitse would either have to pay a fine or, if he preferred, Lanyon was more than ready to fight and then to confiscate the chief's herds. In fact, he admitted to his father, 'As a governor I should prefer his adopting the former course, as a soldier the latter would be the more pleasant.' In the event, Botlasitse departed hurriedly before Lanyon arrived. On his return to Kimberley, Lanyon professed himself to be 'very satisfied with what was done', which was to fine the chief 445 head of cattle that had been found at Phokwani in the deserted kraal.¹⁴⁰ According to Shillington, Lanyon's expedition did little to check the trouble on the border, and the incidents of unrest increased in subsequent months,¹⁴¹ but the Colonial Office was more than happy, with Herbert minuting: 'He [Lanyon]

¹³⁷ Shillington, *The colonisation of the southern Tswana*, pp 74-75.

¹³⁸ University of the Witwatersrand (hereafter Wits), Mackenzie Papers, A75/2, Mackenzie – Lanyon, 1 February 1878; Shillington, *The colonisation of the southern Tswana*, pp 15, 74, 75.

¹³⁹ See for example TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 10 October 1876. To Shepstone Lanyon wrote 'It is not a time to show any weakness in dealing with inroads'; NA, A96/26, Lanyon – Shepstone, 14 January 1878.

¹⁴⁰ TA, A596, vol 13, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 20 January 1878. For details by Lanyon on the unrest in the region and the military expedition against Botlasitse see C 2100, enclosures in no 7, Frere – Carnarvon, 12 February 1878, pp 5-13.

¹⁴¹ Shillington, *The colonisation of the southern Tswana*, p 75.

is doing excellent work',¹⁴² and Hicks Beach writing in appreciation of Lanyon's efforts.¹⁴³

As far as Lanyon was concerned the only sour note was correspondence which subsequently arrived, via Frere, from FW Chesson of the Aborigines' Protection Society. Chesson pointed out that Phokwani was on land that had, after all, been granted to the Tlhaping in terms of the Keate Award. He wanted an enquiry into allegations that Botlasitse was 'absolutely innocent of wrong doing' and that Lanyon's removal of his herds had led to great privation among the chief's community because their main source of nourishment had been confiscated and taken off to Kimberley.¹⁴⁴ Lanyon blustered that it was 'a parson's lie and a dodge to get money', that Botlasitse had instigated trouble on the Griqualand West side of the border and thus needed disciplining. Furthermore, Lanyon claimed that Botlasitse still had plenty of cattle to feed his people and that claims of starving Tlhaping were untrue. Lanyon had his attorney general make a formal enquiry – which was clearly not an independent inquiry – which the administrator promptly published, absolving Lanyon of all blame.¹⁴⁵

In April 1878 a more serious case of unrest broke out and this time it was on Griqualand West's southern border and took both the Cape and the Griqualand West governments by surprise. The initial outbreak, among Xhosa and Kora who were vying for land along the Orange River, was put down by the Cape government with some help from Lanyon and his volunteers in the Diamond Field Horse. Lanyon left Kimberley with his troops on 23 April to cover the 160 miles towards the Orange River. He was expecting a long hard campaign of at least a month or more.¹⁴⁶ While the administrator and his volunteers were on the Orange, the dispossessed Griqua rose, and by early May the unrest had become more widespread, with a number of Tlhaping groups

¹⁴² CO 107/5, no 5442, 4 February 1878, minute by Herbert, 4 May 1878.

¹⁴³ C 2100, no 64, Hicks Beach – Frere, 26 April 1878, p 87; TA, A596, vol 4(b), Frere – Lanyon, 28 May 1878.

¹⁴⁴ C 2100, no 28, Chesson – Hicks Beach, 6 April 1878, pp 41-42.

¹⁴⁵ TA, A596, vol 13, Lanyon – Minnie Lanyon, 11 March 1878; C 2100, no 58, Colonial Office – Aborigines' Protection Society, 20 April 1878, p 85.

¹⁴⁶ TA, A596, vol 13, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 22 April 1878. The Diamond Field Horse was in fact in the field for 16 weeks; C 2220, no 82, Lanyon – Frere, 30 August 1878, p 245.

also becoming involved.¹⁴⁷

Sutton maintains that underlying the participation of the Griqua people in these incidents of resistance was their loss of land, real or potential, and the loss of independence, or the threat that this was at risk. The claim is made that the single most important cause of the rebellion was the findings of Stockenström's land court of 1875 which had dispossessed many Griqua of their traditionally-held land.¹⁴⁸ Only 36 claims on Griqua titles were allowed while 224 others were turned down. The judgement virtually made the Griqua squatters on white land, nomads with no place to call home.¹⁴⁹ Then too, the Griqua probably reasoned that it was fully seven years since Barkly had annexed Griqualand West and had made his promise to provide an immediate settlement of the land question; by 1878 this had not materialised.¹⁵⁰

Lanyon's attempts to negotiate with Donker Malgas, the Griqua leader in the region, apparently proved fruitless and by mid June he reported that all the Griqua were in 'open revolt' and that unrest was spreading rapidly to the communities on both sides of the Orange River. Lanyon, the Diamond Field Horse and Warren, when he arrived in early June, had a number of major encounters with the rebels over the months that followed.¹⁵¹

Meanwhile, as early as May 1878, while Lanyon and Warren were campaigning near the Orange, the Tlhaping communities in the Boetsap and Danielskuil regions seized the opportunity to begin quarrelling with white settlers over land rights and disregarded the surveyor's beacons. Shillington maintains that contrary to general belief, and certainly contrary to the impression that Lanyon's reports give, the Tlhaping and other Africans in the region did not commit many acts of violence within the colony's borders, and were not fully drawn into the rebellion of 1878 in

¹⁴⁷ Sutton, *The 1878 rebellion*, p 228. See also *The Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 20 April 1878.

¹⁴⁸ Sutton, *The 1878 rebellion*, p 176.

¹⁴⁹ Broodryk, *Die rebellie in Griekwaland-wes*, p 30; Sutton, *The 1878 rebellion*, p 229.

¹⁵⁰ Sutton, *The 1878 rebellion*, pp 229-230.

¹⁵¹ For details of military operations in the Griqualand West Rebellion, see correspondence in C 2144, pp 76, 77, 107-109, 135, 244 and 260. For Colonial Office comment see CO 107/5, no 9435, 2 July 1878. See also Broodryk, *Die rebellie in Griekwaland-wes*, pp 91-162.

large numbers.¹⁵² This is borne out by Molema, who claims that Montshiwa and his Rolong remained loyal to the Griqualand West government and even took an active role in ‘ferreting’ out some of the rebels and sending them under escort to Kimberley in August 1878.¹⁵³

There were, however, a number of high profile attacks involving southern Tswana people. The first, in late May 1878 was the murder of three members of the Burness family, settlers who lived near Danielskuil. It is significant that Burness had been involved in enforcing adherence to the surveyors’ beacons on Griqualand West’s northern border. The Tlhaping fled north over the boundary towards the town of Kuruman and because Warren and Lanyon were not at hand, JH Ford, the government surveyor, a bad choice under the circumstances, was designated to collect a small force to ‘relieve’ Kuruman, where many of the settlers had taken refuge in Robert Moffat’s mission station.¹⁵⁴ On 7 July Lanyon, having just arrived back in Kimberley after a hectic 10 weeks in the south against the Griqua, heard that Ford had crossed the border – according to Lanyon he had been given strict instructions not to do so under any circumstances – and had ‘got the worst of it’. Lanyon was worried that the incident had ‘done damage to our prestige’ and quickly raised some troops to go to Ford’s rescue.¹⁵⁵ In a campaign that lasted two weeks he dealt severely with the Tlhaping, the encounter at Dithakong on 24 July 1878 being the decisive blow. He also had to handle the aftermath of two other skirmishes that had involved the Tlhaping leaders Jantjie and Botlasitse. One incident was at Boetsap on 7 July, when a trading store was looted, and about 10 days later a man called Thompson was murdered at nearby Cornforth Hill.¹⁵⁶ It was Warren who subsequently mopped up the last murmurings of Tlhaping dissent when he undertook a final round trip of all the southern Tswana strongholds in November

¹⁵² Shillington, *The colonisation of the southern Tswana*, p 76.

¹⁵³ Molema, *Montshiwa*, p 100.

¹⁵⁴ On the Burness incident see C 2220, no 6, Frere – Hicks Beach, 16 July 1878, pp 17-18; Shillington, *The colonisation of the southern Tswana*, pp 76-78. On Ford’s reverse see C 2220, Lanyon – Frere (Telegram), 7 July 1878, p 1.

¹⁵⁵ TA, A596, vol 13, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 8 July 1878.

¹⁵⁶ On Lanyon’s ‘promptitude, judgement and vigour’ in this operation, see *Ibid*, vol 3, Frere – Hicks Beach, 3 September 1878.

1878 to secure the submission of all the chiefs.¹⁵⁷

While Lanyon was away, JD Barry, the recorder, managed affairs in Kimberley¹⁵⁸ and Francis Villiers, Lanyon's acting colonial secretary, kept Lanyon's father informed that the rebels were slowly but surely being checked. Villiers reported to Charles Lanyon that his son was apparently in good health and that his letters to his staff in Kimberley were 'cheerful'.¹⁵⁹ Lanyon returned to Kimberley in the first week of July, leaving Warren to 'finish the work of following up the enemy, who are well nigh played out'.¹⁶⁰ The volunteers returned to Kimberley on 19 August 1878 to a rousing welcome,¹⁶¹ but a final expedition, in which Lanyon was not involved, was necessary to quell the rebels in the Langeberg region to the west in October 1878.¹⁶²

The administrator looked back with a sense of great achievement on the entire campaign. What he had first thought was merely an isolated attack by Botlasitse, followed by a 'local border disturbance' in the south in April 1878, had certainly taken on far more serious proportions:

Then came the outbreak of the Griquas, assisted by Korannas, Bushmen, and Basutos, followed shortly afterwards by the invasion of the province by the Batlapins and Batlaros. ... This was indeed almost a crushing combination for our resources, and as news of aggression, of cruel murders, and of wholesale plunder came pouring in from all sides, I at times almost despaired of being able to cope with our difficulties without Imperial aid. ... But the Province proved itself to be equal to the occasion. In a few days 700 men were in the field and in a little over three months from the day of my leaving Kimberley the enemy were met and completely defeated in 10 engagements. ... From 24th April till the 12th June, I had not a single trained officer of any department to assist me. Few of the men had ever been drilled before, and hardly any had been under fire before the action at Koegas. On the latter date Lieutenant-Colonel Warren arrived. ... Colonel Warren took up the duties of chief of the staff from the date of his arrival and much of the success of the campaign is due to the hearty manner in which he assisted me, courageous in action, and incessant in his work; I could not have desired a better officer. ... [In the light of the fact that] in ten engagements so formidable an enemy has been met and defeated in so short a period, and over so large an area, ... I do not think I am wrong in asserting that what has been done by the volunteers of Griqualand

¹⁵⁷ For military operations on Griqualand West's northern border in 1878 see C 2220, pp 1, 17018, 25, 119-120, 159-160.

¹⁵⁸ See for example Lanyon's correspondence from Griquatown and Paardekloof in the Langeberg Mountains re military matters, supplies etc; TA, A596, vol 10, Lanyon – Barry, 20 June 1878.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, vol 13, Villiers – Charles Lanyon, 24 June 1878.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 8 July 1878.

¹⁶¹ Broodryk, *Die rebellie in Griekwaland-wes*, pp 161-162; TA, A596, vol 13, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 20 August 1878.

¹⁶² Broodryk, *Die rebellie in Griekwaland-wes*, pp 164-180.

West has no parallel in the history of her Majesty's Colonial possessions.¹⁶³

Lanyon was rejuvenated. 'I am now alright again and fit for any amount of work'.¹⁶⁴ He indicated that while Warren might well have to return to 'dislodge the rebels from the Langeberg Mountains where they have fled to and from where they are making raids on our farmers', he himself had finished his campaigning.¹⁶⁵ Once Warren had done the necessary, farmers in the border areas started ploughing again and peace was on the face of it at least, all but restored. Lanyon was eventually able to issue a proclamation of amnesty to the rebels on 13 November 1878.¹⁶⁶

Lanyon made full use of the currently popular 'conspiracy theory' in his assessment of the causes of the rebellion in Griqualand West to explain the necessity of his action against the rebels.¹⁶⁷ And Frere backed him to the hilt.¹⁶⁸ Interestingly, Sutton argues that the preoccupation of contemporary whites with the idea of an African plot against colonists might well have been a defence mechanism to absolve themselves of blame for causing the unrest in the first place.¹⁶⁹ If this was a factor in Lanyon's rebuttal of the post-rebellion criticism, it was probably unconscious because in none of Lanyon's papers is there any indication of personal guilt or introspection about his motives for his broader 'native policy', his land and location policy, or his harsh action against insurgents. As has been shown, as early as September 1877, Lanyon was comfortably justifying the necessity of providing locations, the 'generous' land grants of 355.46 square miles, and the fact that the 'missionaries and others' had expressed their satisfaction

¹⁶³ C 2220, no 82, Lanyon – Frere, 30 August 1878, pp 245-247.

¹⁶⁴ TA, A596, vol 13, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 20 July 1878.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 20 August 1878.

¹⁶⁶ C 2222, sub-enclosure in enclosure no 37, Proclamation no 11 of 1878, 13 November 1878, pp 126-127.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, enclosure in no 36, Lanyon – Frere, 19 November 1878, pp 116-119.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, no 36, Frere – Hicks Beach, 29 November 1878, p 116, in which Frere gives his opinion that Lanyon and Warren were not 'answerable for any act or omission which might cause either disaffection or rebellion in the Province or its neighbourhood'.

¹⁶⁹ Sutton, *The 1878 rebellion*, pp 288-290.

on 'the provision made by the Government for these people'.¹⁷⁰ Enclosed by Frere for the scrutiny of the Colonial Office was also a copy of the minutes taken at an interview that Lanyon had arranged at Griquatown before the uprising with Waterboer, ex-chief of the Griqua people, in which Waterboer had apparently expressed himself as being 'quite satisfied at the arrangements which had been made by the Government with reference to his land'. Whether 'quite satisfied' indicated complete agreement on Waterboer's part, and whether indeed the ex-chief could speak as representative of all the Griqua people may be open to question, but Lanyon was clearly happy to accept that the evidence complied on both counts.¹⁷¹

In November 1878, with the rebellion quashed and the amnesty proclaimed, Frere forwarded to Lanyon three matters for his attention, all of which had arisen in connection with the unrest. Frere made it clear in his covering letter to Hicks Beach that he personally absolved Lanyon of all blame in either causing the unrest or handling it harshly, but the responsibility of compiling the rebuttal fell to Lanyon. The first query had arisen from a debate in the Cape legislative assembly and was then outlined in an article in the Cape Town newspaper, *The Argus*, in June 1878. The Griqualand West land policy, it was posited, and the dissatisfaction this had engendered, was behind the unrest. The other two complaints alleged that there had been 'cruelties on the part of our volunteers' during the campaign and had arisen from comments made in the House of Commons in London by a Mr James, and a letter from the Aborigines Protection Society.¹⁷²

Lanyon dismissed the two latter allegations out of hand. He had addressed the matter of cruelty in an earlier despatch to Frere and had apparently satisfied himself, and everyone else he considered important, that there was no truth at all in the allegations.¹⁷³ He was clearly not planning to revisit a debate he felt he had already won. He then proceeded to point out what he

¹⁷⁰ CO 107/5, no 1760, 4 January 1878, (received 11 February 1878) enclosure, Lanyon – Frere, 27 December 1877.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, enclosure in no 1760, Lanyon – Frere, 12 January 1878.

¹⁷² C 2222, no 36, Frere – Hicks Beach, 29 November 1878, p 116 and enclosure, Lanyon – Frere, 19 November 1878, pp 116-119.

¹⁷³ C 2220, enclosure in no 127, Lanyon – Frere, 24 September 1878, pp 325-326. Lanyon rejected the allegations as having 'no foundation'. His volunteers were brave men, and 'Brave men are not cruel.'

considered to be the major reason for the outbreak: the conspiracy theory. To go into the causes of the rebellion, he wrote,

would necessitate my beginning with the causes of the war in the Cape Colony, and also the disastrous action taken by President Burgers against Sikukuni in the Transvaal. I have no doubt in my own mind that most of the recent native troubles in South Africa had their origin in the aggressive native policy of the late South African Republic, which, when resisted by Sikukuni, it was unable to enforce. The policy in the Cape Colony of ignoring native dangers, ... [meant that] a local disturbance swelled into a general outbreak. ... There is much evidence of concert between distant and apparently unconnected outbreaks here and elsewhere, and if there is anything like a combination among the evil-disposed in different Kafir tribes, there is no surer means of encouraging its spread than by delaying the complete reassertion of the authority of Government. ... the want of check[ing] armed disaffection ... threatened to sweep away white supremacy everywhere in South Africa.¹⁷⁴

As for the land-question theory as a cause of the rebellion, Lanyon felt that this argument had little credibility. To add weight to his opinion, he had consulted both Warren and Orpen, who had both been closely involved in the process of surveying the agricultural land in Griqualand West. He had also approached the Revd AJ Wookey, who was a missionary at Kuruman, and who, according to Lanyon, was well acquainted with the Tlhaping people. He appended all these reports in his letter to Frere. Lanyon then pointed out that the first of the 'natives' to rise had been those over the border under Cape rule, and that the men who began the war, and many of those who fought against Lanyon's volunteers, were after all 'Cape Colonial Kafirs' who had not been subjected to Griqualand West's land policy. Furthermore, he asserted that the government had not received a single complaint against Major Warren's settlement of the land question¹⁷⁵ and claimed that Warren's report gave full evidence of 'able and impartial' handling of all controversy about the allocation of land claims. Minor indiscretions by certain officials were excusable and had been satisfactorily handled.¹⁷⁶ It was thus 'manifestly unjust', Lanyon concluded, to blame the government for the outbreak, which was simply part of 'a general one in all parts of South Africa'. Indeed, the fact that Griqualand West had handled the uprising so efficiently was to its enduring credit.¹⁷⁷ And there the matter ended, presumably with the full concurrence of Frere, the Colonial Office and the imperial government. The fact that the campaign meant the end of chiefly power and the subjection of the indigenous population to

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, enclosure in no 36, Lanyon – Frere, 19 November 1878, pp 116-119.

¹⁷⁵ Presumably he meant that no formal written complaint had been received.

¹⁷⁶ Lanyon gives no indication of what these 'indiscretions' were.

¹⁷⁷ C 2222, enclosure in no 36, Lanyon – Frere, 19 November 1878, pp 116-119.

colonial authority was certainly welcomed by Frere. From the African perspective, however, colonial supremacy as exercised by imperial agents like Lanyon amounted to dispossession and the dislocation of their traditional lifestyle.

White landowners in Griqualand West were no doubt relieved that their claims to the land had been recognised, the rebellion quelled, and order restored to the rural areas, although there is no record of their appreciation to Lanyon for role in putting down the rebel, or any upswing in his popularity. The Africans, according to Lanyon's reports to Frere, were returning to their farming pursuits, which he took to mean they were satisfied with the new *status quo*. Lanyon's imperial superiors were clearly impressed with his sterling efforts and there were several official letters of congratulation.¹⁷⁸

There was also exciting news for Lanyon. A telegram arrived from Hicks Beach to say that he was to be sent to the Transvaal to take over the administratorship from Shepstone while he was on 'leave of absence' in Britain.¹⁷⁹ In a letter to Disraeli, Hicks Beach gave his motivation for his decision, telling the prime minister that he had 'settled that Lanyon, who has administered Griqualand with energy and ability' should succeed Shepstone.¹⁸⁰ In the light of Lanyon's sound performance on the diamond fields, Hicks Beach presumably had enough confidence in him to believe he could put Shepstone's mistakes right. Lanyon's himself saw his new appointment as a 'high compliment' and he was clearly pleased, but at the same time he realised that he was in for an extremely testing time in the Transvaal Colony. 'On the whole it is an unenviable position', he wrote, 'and one which may easily result in a failure.'¹⁸¹ Failure was indeed lurking around the corner in Pretoria, but for the meanwhile Lanyon was basking in his glory. On Christmas eve he received a telegram from the War Office that he had been awarded the CB and

¹⁷⁸ See for example C 2220, no 110, Frere – Hicks Beach, 6 October 1878, pp 296-297; Ibid, no 112, Hicks Beach – Frere, 13 November 1878, p 308; TA, A596, vol 3, Hicks Beach – Frere, 30 December 1878, 4 and 15 January 1879.

¹⁷⁹ This was a euphemistic, Colonial Office way, of putting it. Shepstone had in effect been called back to Britain because he had failed in the Transvaal. See Chapter IV for his legacy to Lanyon.

¹⁸⁰ Hicks Beach – Disraeli, 24 September 1878, quoted in Hicks Beach, *Life of Sir Michael Hicks Beach*, p 96.

¹⁸¹ TA, A596, vol 13, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 27 August 1878.

had been promoted to a full Brevet-Colonel. This in effect meant, as he told his father, that he had been given a 'jump of over four years, as in the ordinary course of events I could not have got it before 1883, ie after having been a Lieut-Colonel five years'.¹⁸² Lanyon was thus able, to some extent at least, to seek refuge from his unpopularity in military success.

Growing unpopularity and a sour send-off

Despite his military achievements in Griqualand West, Lanyon had never been popular in Kimberley. He was a reserved, ungregarious man who by his own admission did not care for the company of ordinary citizens and was not well liked by the diggers.¹⁸³ He was clearly very conscientious and worked long hours pushing his pen.¹⁸⁴ While the legislative council was in session he also arranged to meet every evening for discussions with them,¹⁸⁵ and the combined effect of all this must have left little time for socialising. He did mention to his father that he enjoyed attending the opera and Kimberley's Lanyon Theatre was named after him.¹⁸⁶ Apart from the three-month spell that he spent in Cape Town in mid 1877, ordered there by his doctor when he became ill from overwork, and part of which break was spent on official discussions,¹⁸⁷ he appears to have had very few diversions from his daily routine. He thoroughly enjoyed a hunting trip of about five days in a group of six men over Easter of 1876, but makes no mention of the friends who accompanied him.¹⁸⁸ It appears that he was lonely and introspective.

¹⁸² Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 24 December 1878.

¹⁸³ Roberts, *Kimberley: turbulent city*, pp 153, 156. As has been shown, Cecil Rhodes had nothing but contempt for Lanyon and his military-type regime in Griqualand West. See Chapter 11.

¹⁸⁴ TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 8 March 1876.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 2 September 1876.

¹⁸⁶ See for example advertisement in the *Diamond News*, 12 October 1876, p 4. In May 1877 the theatre was 'completely metamorphosed' with 'new bars, a new main entrance, new sitting rooms for ladies and for gentlemen, ... the stage [was] tastefully decorated ... and new scenery provided'; *Diamond Field*, 16 May 1877.

¹⁸⁷ TA, A596, vol 12, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 26 February, 19 March, 8 May, 18 June 1877; NA, A96/17, Lanyon – Shepstone, 13 March 1877.

¹⁸⁸ TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 13 April and 29 April, 1876.

The fact that Lanyon was involved in a libel case in November 1876, when he had only been in the diamond fields for a year, goes far towards explaining the souring of relations between Lanyon and the mining community as well as his growing disenchantment with Kimberley.¹⁸⁹ From this time onwards, his letters home show very clearly that he was embittered and disgruntled with life. He was all the more sickened by the whole affair because although he was proved innocent, word of the scandal reached the Colonial Office and Lanyon was a very ambitious man who was clearly anxious to keep on good terms with the people who mattered in imperial circles.¹⁹⁰ The whole incident was riven with personal animosities and was closely linked to the fact that Lanyon had fallen foul of the local press. 'They threatened me once,' he wrote, 'and I showed my teeth – nasty steel ones – so they have barked from a distance.'¹⁹¹ He became the butt of criticism in the newspapers on several occasions,¹⁹² the most embarrassing and most public being an allegation that he had purchased a diamond illegally.

One of the local Kimberley newspapers, the *Independent*, was owned by JB Robinson, who used it to promote his political career as mayor of Kimberley. His editor, Mortimer Siddall, picked up on the story of Henry Tucker who had been convicted of buying diamonds without a licence, and published an editorial accusing Lanyon of the same offence. Lanyon, who had indeed bought a diamond but had been in possession of all the necessary documentation, flew into a rage about this 'lying charge', protested his innocence and laid a civil charge against the proprietor and a criminal one against Siddall.¹⁹³ The Kimberley people made no bones about the fact that they sided with Robinson. Through the intervention of a sympathetic jury the criminal case was thrown out of court, but Robinson, the proprietor, then faced civil action, was found guilty and

¹⁸⁹ For Lanyon's version of the incident see *Ibid*, vol 11, Lanyon – brother Charles Lanyon, 20 November 1876.

¹⁹⁰ CA, GH 25/1, Barkly – Carnarvon, 27 November 1876. Barkly reassured Carnarvon of the 'falsity of the charge' against Lanyon. See also CA, GH 2/3, Carnarvon – Barkly, 4 January 1877: Carnarvon felt that the charge had 'obviously proceeded from motives of personal hostility', and was patently untrue. See also CO 107/4, no 167, 2 January 1877.

¹⁹¹ TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 27 November 1876.

¹⁹² According to the *Diamond News*, 21 March 1877, 'it has become the fashion to carp at the man and pick him to pieces ... we expect too much from governors and governments ever to be satisfied with either'.

¹⁹³ TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – brother Charles Lanyon, 20 November 1876; vol 12, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 6 February 1877.

fined £10 000 damages.¹⁹⁴ Lanyon, having proved his point, deemed it best to graciously allow the proprietor to publish an unconditional apology and Robinson, later worth a great deal of money as a mining magnate, was let off the hook.¹⁹⁵ The whole debacle made Lanyon even more bitter, and he became increasingly impatient to shake Kimberley's dust off his feet.¹⁹⁶

On an official level, at least while in Kimberley,¹⁹⁷ he wrote of cordial personal relationships with Barkly, Frere, Shepstone and Brand, and it is claimed that Warren and Lanyon were very friendly,¹⁹⁸ probably because one of Lanyon's few passions in life was his soldiering, and Warren was also a military man. But it appears that he was very demanding and short-tempered towards those who worked under him, and his letters home are full of complaints about lazy, incompetent officials, to whom he could delegate few responsibilities.¹⁹⁹ He claimed that it was less nerve-racking for him to do the tasks himself, and he then complained bitterly to his father about the never-ending toil of his thankless position.²⁰⁰ That he was a relentless autocrat there is no doubt. In one particularly revealing statement he writes: 'It is very hard and anxious work being an autocrat and having everything to do, and getting the abuse of everyone into the bargain.'²⁰¹

As has been shown, Lanyon soon grew disgruntled living in dry, treeless Kimberley with its 'bohemian' people, and he longed to leave the place; it was only his lengthy military campaign from early 1878 to July that seemed to breathe new life into him. He certainly saw himself as a

¹⁹⁴ *Diamond Field*, 2 March 1877, 'High Court', p 36.

¹⁹⁵ Roberts, *Kimberley: turbulent city*, p 173. See also TA, A596, vol 12, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 5, 12 and 26 February, 5 March 1877.

¹⁹⁶ TA, A596, vol 12, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 2, 22 and 30 January and 20 February 1877.

¹⁹⁷ In the Transvaal Lanyon was less popular with the senior officials with whom he had to work. Wolseley, for example, was very critical indeed of Lanyon; Preston, (ed), *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 206.

¹⁹⁸ Roberts, *Kimberley: turbulent city*, p 156.

¹⁹⁹ See for example TA, A596, vol 11, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 14 November 1876; *Ibid*, vol 12, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 19 November 1877.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid*, vol 12, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 14 August and 4 December 1877.

²⁰¹ *Ibid*, vol 13, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 11 November 1878. A correspondent in the *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 28 October 1878, wrote 'the people are sick of this one-horse Government'.

soldier rather than a civil administrator,²⁰² which is probably why he enjoyed the respect he earned from his volunteers of the Diamond Field Horse²⁰³ and the praise for his military exploits, to the full. So much so, that he frequently boosted his flagging morale by writing to his family in Britain about his daring exploits amidst the heat of the battle.

Lanyon's long spell in Cape Town did him good and when he returned in mid July 1877 he was welcomed officially, which cheered him. 'It was very gratifying', he wrote, 'I think absence makes the heart grow fonder and the good folks found out that there are worse gubernatorial personages than your son.'²⁰⁴ A month later he was complaining again that the community was always 'ready to abuse and villify' his efforts and that he hated the place heartily.²⁰⁵ But with unrest spreading throughout South Africa his spirits lifted as he prepared to become involved in raising volunteer troops, sending contingents to neighbouring territories and contemplating the necessity of quelling trouble within his own borders. There was no more talk of leaving Griqualand West; on the contrary Lanyon wrote

Of course it is very much my wish to remain here now for I don't think a single soldier could be well spared at present. The time is a very critical one for South Africa and my being able to raise a force here makes one's services useful ... our volunteers are pronounced to be the best they have, which is not a little pleasing ...²⁰⁶

Lanyon's military exploits were no sooner over than he heard about his move to the Transvaal, and he was pleased and honoured. Warren was sent off to clear the last dissidents out of the Langeberg Mountains while Lanyon tried to catch up on his administrative tasks and prepare himself for his new responsibilities.²⁰⁷ In Lanyon's words, 'the mills of red tape grind slowly', and having been informed at the end of August 1878 about his move to the Transvaal, almost four months went by before Frere contacted him again to provide him with further details about

²⁰² TA, A 596, vol 13, Lanyon – Jack (brother-in-law), 17 November 1878.

²⁰³ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 8 April 1878.

²⁰⁴ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 17 July 1877.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 14 August and 1 October 1877.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, vol 13, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 8 April 1878.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 27 August 1878.

making his way to Pretoria via Pietermaritzburg.²⁰⁸ In mid September Frere had left the Cape Colony for Natal, where he was going to address the Zulu ‘problem’,²⁰⁹ after which he was due to visit the Transvaal. Lanyon was told that he should go to Pietermaritzburg where he would be briefed by Frere before making his way to Pretoria. Shepstone meanwhile had been requested by Hicks Beach to return ‘as soon as convenient’ to Britain to ‘complete his leave of absence’,²¹⁰ but he had delayed his departure to help Frere with advice on how to handle negotiations with the Zulu and to meet Lanyon so as to hand over the reins of the Transvaal Colony.²¹¹

But first Lanyon had to take his leave of Griqualand West. ‘I have had most kind addresses from the good folks here on leaving them’, he wrote.²¹² The One Star Contingent, one of the volunteer corps he had led with such success during the rebellion, presented him with a handsome silver goblet that was suitably inscribed and was accompanied by a flattering address referring in glowing terms to the manner in which he had ‘unflinchingly shared the hardships and dangers in the late struggle between advancing civilisation and barbarism in this Province and neighbouring territories’.²¹³ But if the newspapers are to be believed, it was only the volunteers who regretted his departure. From the rest of the inhabitants he received a sour, almost ludicrous send-off, which shows just how unpopular Lanyon had become on the diamond fields. His final adjournment of the legislative council had been ‘sad and silent ... with no “Goodbye, Colonel, and hope to see you again some day”, because nobody there did wish to see him again some day’. Looking back on his departure two days after he had left, *The Diamond Fields Advertiser* reported:

The departure of His Excellency Colonel Lanyon was fixed for 3 o’clock on Saturday afternoon and the big guns and volunteers were ordered out that there might be some military display on the occasion ... At about 4 o’clock the Great Man came out and mounted his horse ... he was joined by Field Marshal

²⁰⁸ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 25 November and 24 December 1878.

²⁰⁹ Cope has shown that by this time, Frere was ‘bent on war’ despite the Colonial Office’s urgings to ‘redouble his exertions’ to avoid hostilities; Cope, *Ploughshare of war*, pp 229-230.

²¹⁰ TA, A596, vol 4(b), Hicks Beach – Shepstone, 25 July 1878.

²¹¹ NA, A96/68, Shepstone – Frere, 2 September 1878, and Shepstone – Hicks Beach, 3 September 1878.

²¹² TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 10 January 1879.

²¹³ See unidentified newspaper clippings in Ibid, vol 7, and Lanyon’s undated draft, vol 4(b), p 316, in which he expresses his ‘warmest thanks’ for the goblet and the ‘kind address which accompanied it’.

Maxwell ... guns fired ... but not another flag was hoisted, not a cheer was heard, as the procession went out of the market square. So, dinnerless and cheerless the Colonel went – and joy go with him, say we. This was loyalty made to order, but as some loyalty was essential to the departure of the Magnificent Presence this was better than none, and without it there would have been none.²¹⁴

Making his way towards Natal, Lanyon spent a few pleasant days with Brand in Bloemfontein. If indeed the president tried to give the younger man any pearls of wisdom on how to deal with the Transvaal Boers, his words obviously fell on deaf ears. He arrived in Pietermaritzburg on 25 January 1879, only days after the ‘awful disaster’ of Isandlwana, so he must have found the usually urbane, cool and composed Frere in a state of high shock and dismay at the British defeat at the hands of Cetshwayo’s Zulu.²¹⁵ With British pride in tatters in the sub-continent and mounting Boer discontent in the Transvaal, the British presence in South Africa was in deep crisis. Owen Lanyon could hardly have arrived to take over his new responsibilities at a more hazardous time.

Lanyon’s first posting in South Africa came to an end when he left Griqualand West for the Transvaal. The climax of his career thus far was – certainly as far as he was concerned – his successful military campaign as a firm and uncompromising commander of the colonial troops against the rebels in the Griqualand West Rebellion of 1878. He had also earned the respect of Sir Michael Hicks Beach and Sir Bartle Frere, both of whom had praised him for his purposeful and conscientious administration on the diamond fields, and particularly for his financial management. He had steered Griqualand West through a troublesome period in its history, and the fact that the Cape finally agreed to take the region under its wing in 1880 was due in no small measure to Lanyon, who had rescued the administration from the doldrums and placed it on a firmer financial footing.

Furthermore, what must rank as Lanyon’s most significant contributions as far as industrialisation and social engineering in South Africa are concerned, were achieved while he was in Griqualand West. He had done ground-breaking work in regulating the African labour force for the mines, creating a labour reservoir through the establishment of locations. He was also responsible for innovative changes in the existing mining regulations which had expedited

²¹⁴ *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 13 January 1879.

²¹⁵ TA, A596 vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 26 January 1879.

the development of monopoly capitalism in Kimberley. It will be argued in the conclusion of this thesis, but also bears mention here, as Lanyon left Griqualand West for the Transvaal, that while Lanyon's role on the diamond fields was important at the micro-level, in that he was caught up in the struggle between the imperial power, the settlers and the Africans, it can also be seen in larger context. Lanyon undoubtedly played an important role in the developing struggle for white control over the land and labour resources of Africans, and in the transition of pre-mineral South Africa into the new aggressive capitalist era of the 1870s and 1880s.

In the sense that he used his own initiative and made a significant contribution to a number of important developments Lanyon, was no puppet while in Griqualand West. It may perhaps be argued that Carnarvon appointed him as a puppet in 1875 to further a particular policy – that of federation – but there is no question that Hicks Beach selected Lanyon as the new Transvaal administrator in 1878 not as a puppet but because he had proved himself to be an able administrator.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Between pages 134 and 135

Sir William Owen Lanyon

Sir Henry Barkly

Sir Charles Warren

Sir Theophilus Shepstone

Sir Bartle Frere & Lanyon in Pretoria, April 1879

General Sir Garnet Wolseley

Paramount Chief Sekhukhune

Sir William Bellairs

















CHAPTER IV

IN THE TRANSVAAL

Fresh from Griqualand West where he had earned the praise of his imperial superiors both for his administrative efforts and his successful military campaign, Owen Lanyon embarked on a term of office of two years as administrator of the Transvaal Colony from 4 March 1879 to 8 April 1881,¹ an appointment that saw the end of his southern African career and culminated in disaster and humiliation. In order to trace the vicissitudes of his career in the Transvaal it is necessary first to look back at the situation he inherited from Theophilus Shepstone, the man who had been his predecessor in Pretoria since 1877 when Shepstone annexed the region for Britain, using tactics which the Transvaal Boers later described as 'craft, deceit and threats'.²

Lanyon's legacy from Shepstone was even less enviable than the one he had inherited from Southey in Griqualand West. Shepstone had run a very inefficient and despotic proclamation regime and had neither understood the Boers nor earned their goodwill. As a result they were understandably wary of Lanyon, yet another British official whom they had every reason to believe would be as high-handed and unsympathetic as his predecessor. They would almost certainly have also been well aware of his reputation in Griqualand West. Furthermore, by the time Lanyon arrived in early 1879, the Boer agitation against the Transvaal's colonial status was becoming more vociferous. A spirited nationalism was rising in their ranks, and after the final defeat of the Zulu removed the threat on their south-eastern borders this was to become more pronounced; they wanted their independence restored. In looking back to see how difficult the situation was that Lanyon inherited, light will be cast on his efforts to grope his way forward.

¹ Lanyon was appointed in a temporary capacity on 4 March 1879. It was only on 4 June 1880 that he was appointed as permanent administrator of the Transvaal; TA, ZAR/55, *Transvaal Government Gazette*, 4 March 1879; *ibid*, ZAR/56, *Transvaal Government Gazette*, 4 June 1880. See also footnote 160.

² African 182, 'Reporting a meeting with the Boers at Erasmus farm, and enclosing a memorial to the Queen', enclosure 2 in no 1, Boer memorial to Queen Victoria, signed by MW Pretorius, MJ Viljoen, & W Eduard Bok, 16 April 1879, p 18.

Another issue that will be explored briefly before embarking on an assessment of Lanyon's role in the Transvaal is the significance of Lord Carnarvon's resignation as secretary of state for the colonies in January 1878, following a split in the cabinet over Disraeli's eastern policy. He was replaced by Sir Michael Hicks Beach,³ nicknamed Black Michael. Hicks Beach was by no means as convinced as Carnarvon had been that a federation policy was the best one to pursue in southern Africa and the imperial urgency behind the confederation policy began to wane.⁴ But to offset this, Carnarvon's chosen proconsul, Sir Bartle Frere, was still in southern Africa. Hicks Beach did not feel confident enough to countermand what Frere was doing in South Africa and until Frere's influence over Transvaal affairs was removed, he had a direct bearing on the policies that were handed down to Owen Lanyon.

Events in southern Africa in the closing years of the 1870s had, from imperial Britain's point of view, deteriorated into an alarming morass of regional difficulties. And Whitehall's woes were compounded by an event that brought with it the worst possible embarrassment and loss of prestige. It was a confrontation that caused what Lanyon described as 'the severest panic that South Africa has ever had'⁵, the humiliating defeat of imperial troops at an unfortified British camp at Isandlwana in Zululand on 22 January 1879 at the hands of Cetshwayo's Zulu. Hicks Beach wrote to inform the Queen when the shocking news came through to the Colonial Office:

It has been a very agitating day with this terrible news from South Africa. ... This sad news has come when by indefatigable efforts everything was beginning to look bright. It will change everything: reduce our continental influence and embarrass our finances ...⁶

The situation in early 1879: Theophilus Shepstone's legacy to Lanyon

Even before he had summoned Shepstone to the Colonial Office to receive instructions for his special mission in southern Africa, Lord Carnarvon had written to inform Queen Victoria that there was 'a very real prospect of bringing back the Transvaal under Your Majesty's rule', and

³ V Hicks Beach, *Life of Sir Michael Hicks Beach*, vol 1 (London, 1932), p 62.

⁴ Cope, 'Local imperatives and imperial policy', p 624.

⁵ TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 26 January 1879.

⁶ Gloucestershire Record Office (hereafter GRO), Hicks Beach Papers, D2455, Pcc/11, Hicks Beach – Victoria, 11 February 1879.

thus, he argued, of taking a positive step towards implementing his confederation plans, 'for when the Transvaal republic becomes British, the Orange Free State cannot long retain its independence'.⁷ He was also fully confident that Shepstone, with his imposing demeanour and dominating character, was the right person for the job,⁸ the best choice to wield what he called 'these secret powers', because, as the Colonial Office had come to believe, the secretary for native affairs in Natal had all the necessary 'experience, capacity and judgement'.⁹ Carnarvon also had it on good authority, from reliable sources in southern Africa, including Owen Lanyon, that the Transvaal was in a state of chaos and that a 'large majority' of the people, notably those of British origin, were anxious to come under British sovereignty.¹⁰ 'Of the disposition of the Dutch', he admitted, 'it is more difficult to speak', but he was confident that given time and Theophilus Shepstone's knowledge and expertise, this obstacle could be satisfactorily overcome.¹¹ The Boers had to be won over despite the disaffection (one of Carnarvon's favourite words) of Boer hardliners. To justify annexation Carnarvon harped incessantly on the state of panic caused by the Pedi attacks, the exhausted republican treasury, and the 'cruelty and baseness of this wretched little govt.' who were bringing misery to local Africans¹² and causing havoc among frontier communities on the western and south eastern boundaries of the republic.¹³ Force was positively to be the last resort, to be used only when all else failed, because, as Carnarvon

⁷ PRO, Carnarvon Papers, 30/6/3, Carnarvon – Victoria, 15 September 1876.

⁸ Carnarvon went so far as to say: 'I think that Shepstone is as capable of doing this as any one that I know'; Ibid, Carnarvon – Ponsonby, 3 October 1876.

⁹ Ibid, Carnarvon – Ponsonby, 20 September 1876.

¹⁰ See Chapter III for Lanyon's role in this regard, and Chapter II for Carnarvon's plans to win over the Boers to the idea of confederation.

¹¹ PRO, Carnarvon Papers, 30/6/3, Carnarvon – Victoria, 25 September 1876. See also Cope, *Ploughshare of war*, p 53.

¹² The allegation that slavery was practised in the republic was unfounded but the Boer *inboekseling* system of indentured labour, came perilously close to slavery. Etherington has shown that humanitarian concern for Africans played little or no role in Britain's confederation plans, but that Boer interference with the free flow of labour to the diamond fields and the sugar estates of Natal were indeed significant. See Etherington, 'Labour supply and the genesis of South African confederation', pp 240-245.

¹³ PRO, Carnarvon Papers, 30/6/3, Carnarvon – Ponsonby, 16 October, 12 November, 1876 and 10 March 1877.

put it, 'the game we are playing is a delicate one'.¹⁴

When Shepstone arrived in southern Africa in October 1876, circumstances were not as grave in the Transvaal as he had expected. Carnarvon had, however, left Shepstone's instructions vague precisely because he anticipated that 'circumstances may have considerably changed' when the time eventually came to act. The annexation would have to be carefully engineered if it was to be made to be seen, 'as far as possible the act of the Dutch part of the population' and done with their cooperation.¹⁵ Although many whites in the Transvaal were dissatisfied with the parlous circumstances in the republic it was significant that it was only those in mercantile circles, which were almost exclusively dominated by people of British origin, and the miners of the eastern Transvaal,¹⁶ who were actually calling for British intervention.¹⁷ The Boers were largely self-sufficient and in any case valued their independence too much to actively seek a British takeover of their government.

If the immediate Pedi danger in the Transvaal had been temporarily averted when Shepstone arrived, he was well aware that there was always the Zulu threat in the 'disputed territory' on the republic's border with Zululand, to fall back on.¹⁸ Perhaps this could be used to scare the Boers into accepting British overlordship.¹⁹ This was an avenue of thought that had gathered some support in the Colonial Office as a means of dislodging the Boer government.²⁰ Interestingly

¹⁴ Ibid, Carnarvon – Ponsonby, 3 October 1876.

¹⁵ Ibid, 30/6/23, Carnarvon – Shepstone, 4 October 1876.

¹⁶ Small deposits of alluvial gold had been discovered near Lydenburg in 1872.

¹⁷ Shepstone's first reports from Pretoria confirmed this; PRO, Carnarvon Papers, 30/6/38, Shepstone – Bulwer, 31 January 1877.

¹⁸ This piece of land lay between the Buffalo and Pongola Rivers beyond (on the Zululand side) of the town of Utrecht. The Boers claimed that Cetshwayo had ceded it to them in 1861 and they tried to settle there, but they met with fierce resistance from the Zulus. On the effects of the protracted struggle in this region, see J Laband, 'An assessment of the consequences of the Zulu-Boer conflict over the control of the land in the "Disputed Territory", 1852-1888', Paper presented at the 16th biennial conference of the South African Historical Society, University of Pretoria, 6-9 July 1997.

¹⁹ On the allegation that Shepstone made use of the Zulu threat to expedite the annexation of the Transvaal see RL Cope, 'Shepstone, the Zulus, and the annexation of the Transvaal', *South African Historical Journal*, 4, 1972, pp 45-63.

²⁰ PRO, Carnarvon Papers, 30/6/3, Carnarvon – Victoria, 25 September 1876.

enough, in a letter written to Shepstone just before the annexation, Lanyon also made mention of using the Zulu to frighten the Boers into federation. He expressed surprise that the Boers 'are so blind to their own interests and neglect to take the proffered hand of assistance which has been held out to them to their own interest', and suggested that they would have only themselves to blame if 'Cetchwayo [sic] and other sable potentates ... step in with the "baptism of blood"'.²¹ But using the Zulu as a means of pressurising the Boers had its risks. 'What was needed was sufficient pressure to topple Boer hegemony, but not so much to threaten British hegemony as well.'²²

By 20 December 1876 Shepstone felt that it was time to act. He wrote to inform Burgers that he was on his way to the Transvaal and without waiting for a reply from the president²³ he set off, arriving in a tense Pretoria on 22 January 1877.²⁴ In the more than three weeks that his journey took, trouble in the disputed territory was escalating, with both the Zulu and the Transvalers claiming full rights to the same land and neither being prepared to step back. As a correspondent in *The Natal Mercury* expressed it, 'The pressure put on by Cetshwayo is driving many to their wits end ... The prospects of federation look blooming on this side of the Vaal River.'²⁵ But the border unrest had really persuaded only the directly-threatened Boers in the Utrecht and Wakkerstroom areas that federation under Britain was the answer, and elsewhere the 'disaffected' Boers in the rural districts were far from welcoming to the imperial agent. Writing to Bulwer a few weeks after his arrival in Pretoria, Shepstone reported that '500 formidable Boers' had arrived at his door to announce that they did not want 'federation or confederation or any other "ation" that will bring them into closer contact with Her Majesty', and he went on to admit that 'there is a class, and a large one, that must see the strong arm before they will yield'.²⁶ Although the Pedi had concluded a peace settlement with the Boer government in

²¹ NA, A96/17, Lanyon – Shepstone, 13 March 1877.

²² Cope, *Ploughshare of war*, p 115.

²³ C 1776, Shepstone – Burgers, 20 December 1876, p 83.

²⁴ PRO, Carnarvon Papers, 30/6/38, Bulwer – Carnarvon, 10 January 1877; Appelgryn, *Thomas Francois Burgers*, pp 177-179.

²⁵ *The Natal Mercury*, 16 and 21 January 1877, quoted in Cope, *Ploughshare of war*, p 123.

²⁶ PRO, Carnarvon Papers, 30/6/38, Shepstone – Bulwer, 7 February 1877.

February 1877²⁷, the Zulu remained an important part of Shepstone's annexation plot; he was still hoping that they could be used to frighten the Boers into accepting British rule.

In a private letter written from Pretoria to Lanyon, Shepstone related his obvious delight that he had been received by so many people with extraordinary enthusiasm.²⁸ He did not make much of the fact that it was largely the commercial sector of Pretoria, which was predominantly English-speaking, that turned out to cheer, nor did he make more than passing mention of the sullen 'immovability of the Dutch population'.²⁹ Burgers did not attend the rousing Pretoria welcome afforded by some of the British residents. Nor did he organise a state welcome although Shepstone tried to create the impression that he had.

Less than three months later, on 12 April 1877, Shepstone annexed the Transvaal for Britain. Carnarvon was delighted and sent '...hearty congratulations on the patience, tact, courage and judgement with which you have executed your difficult and responsible task', although he did add that he would have been even better pleased 'had the President and the Raad themselves proposed the annexation'.³⁰ The details of the steps that Shepstone followed are irrelevant here, but the reaction of the Transvalers, and the manner in which they were subsequently ruled by Shepstone, are indeed significant, because less than two years later Lanyon was to be confronted by the legacy of hostility he had inherited from Shepstone.

The act of annexation did not immediately produce resistance. The Boers were aware that there were imperial troops on the border, although Shepstone was hardly secure with his 25 mounted policemen to protect him. Burgers did no more than make a formal protest before bowing out of the picture. The Boer executive council also delivered a protest and promptly named two of its members, SJP Kruger and EJP Jorissen, to go to Britain to plead for a reversal of the annexation;

²⁷ Smith, *The campaigns against the Bapedi of Sekhukhune*, pp 8-9.

²⁸ NA, Shepstone Papers, A96/71, Shepstone – Lanyon, 25 January 1877. See Appelgryn, *Thomas Francois Burgers*, pp 178-179 for details of the festivities.

²⁹ PRO, Carnarvon Papers, 30/6/38, Shepstone – Bulwer, 31 January 1877; 30/6/3, Carnarvon – Ponsonby, 10 March 1877. Shepstone did tell Bulwer: 'Pretoria itself is for annexation but the community is mercantile and not Boer, while the surrounding district is the stronghold of the malcontents.'

³⁰ NA, Shepstone Papers, A96/20, Carnarvon – Shepstone, 30 May 1877, pp 106-107.

indeed, less than a month later they were already on their way.³¹ This overt resistance from the Boers effectively scotched Carnarvon's hope, reiterated to Shepstone by Bulwer, that there would be some declaration of cooperation or assent on the part of the Boer leaders, a declaration that might well have proved useful later to justify Shepstone's actions in the Transvaal in April 1877 and 'silence all future questions'.³²

Furthermore, having initially used the Zulu threat to frighten the Boer authorities into consenting to annexation, Shepstone then proceeded to use his black peril tactics to justify his inability to gain official Boer consent or co-operation. He dismissed the Pedi, who were at the time not a threat, as 'unwarlike' compared to the Zulu.³³ The British takeover was used to promote the Zulu image as one of a 'fierce and aggressive menace', hordes of marauders who were part of the countrywide black conspiracy against the settlers. If Britain – in the person of Theophilus Shepstone, the Zulu expert – had not stepped in to help the floundering republic and to 'restrain' the Zulu, the Boer government would have been powerless to resist the imminent Zulu inroads and would thus have put all the whites in South Africa at grave risk.³⁴

Now at the head of the new government, Shepstone issued a proclamation which made confident assurances to the Transvalers that Britain had their interests at heart.³⁵ He pointed out that the Boer government had 'fallen into helpless paralysis' and made much of the fact that the 'native tribes' were growing in strength and confidence. He assured the people that the Transvaal Colony would be governed as a separate state, 'with its own laws and legislature',³⁶ that civil servants could retain their posts, and that both the Dutch and English languages would have official status.

³¹ Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, p 20.

³² NA, Shepstone papers, A96/18, Bulwer – Shepstone, 4 April, 1877.

³³ Cope, *Ploughshare of war*, p 129.

³⁴ On the anti-white conspiracy theory and its alleged relationship to the widespread African unrest in South Africa in the late 1870s see Chapter III. There was some basis to Shepstone's view on the precarious position of settlers in the interior. On the comparative superiority of African societies in relation to white-ruled states in the early 19th century in southern Africa, see Chapter I.

³⁵ C 1776, Proclamation by Shepstone, 12 April 1877, pp 157-159.

³⁶ Shepstone's failure to meet this requirement to the satisfaction of the Boers was one of their main grievances. See also Chapters IV and V.

All the inhabitants, including the Africans, were to be 'made to contribute their fair share towards the support of the state', which presumably meant that taxation was to be levied and collected on a far more efficient basis than had previously been the case.³⁷ Shepstone, and Lanyon after him, was to find that paying taxes was one area of civil duty in which the Transvaal Boers were notoriously tardy. This particular clause was presumably included in reaction to Carnarvon's growing concern about the necessity of increasing revenue and cutting expenditure in the Transvaal Colony,³⁸ an issue that was to be a recurring problem in the British governance of the region for the entire period until the Boers regained their independence in 1881.

It was all very well for Shepstone to outline his plans in his annexation proclamation, but it was quite another to put them into effect. On 30 May 1877, reacting to Shepstone's first reports about conditions in Pretoria, the secretary of state sent his instructions by return of post:

I trust that it is now certain that the risk of native disturbances is virtually at an end. Your firm and steady administration of the country must do the rest. My only immediate cause of anxiety lies in the financial position, and I fear that it will be some time before you will get any local payments made to replenish your absolutely exhausted Treasury. ... I need not remind you how very desirable it is not to count upon imperial assistance in point of money ... Parlt. does not like to be made to pay even for what it approves ... Your object therefore must be to bear in mind these two opposite considerations – effective government and economy – and as far as circumstances permit, to reconcile them.³⁹

Shepstone was unable to reconcile them. Carnarvon had not foreseen the stubborn Boer resistance to the new British regime in the Transvaal, the resurgence of Pedi discontent or the escalation of border disputes, all of which Shepstone appeared to be ill equipped to handle. The more critical the situation grew, the worse the financial condition of the colony became. Shepstone was a schemer, 'a master at the art of vagueness',⁴⁰ not a hard-headed, down-to-earth administrator able to get things done. His rambling correspondence that elaborates and goes off at impossible tangents is perhaps the best indication of his inability to apply himself to the issues at hand. By 1878 Carnarvon, who had been impressed by Shepstone's credentials, had left the

³⁷ In July 1877 Shepstone told Carnarvon 'there is a large income to be derived from a judicious taxation of the native population' but this would depend on the 'appointment of officers for the management and control of the natives', PRO, Carnarvon Papers, 30/6/23, Shepstone – Carnarvon, 23 July 1877.

³⁸ See for example Ibid, 30/6/3, Carnarvon – Ponsonby, 11 September 1877.

³⁹ Ibid, 30/6/23, Carnarvon – Shepstone, 30 May 1877, also NA, A96/20, pp 106-112.

⁴⁰ Cope, *Ploughshare of war*, p 128.

Colonial Office and it is clear that Frere was at his wits end with Shepstone's inability to govern the Transvaal. His terse comment in June 1878 that Shepstone 'does not seem to have conciliated the Boers', took on a decidedly irritable edge about affairs in the Transvaal by August, when he agreed heartily with Hicks Beach's suggestion that Shepstone should perhaps be replaced by Lanyon.⁴¹ To the argument that Shepstone was a man of administrative stature and ability, who had been an influential imperial official for years in Natal, Frere was positively dismissive:

The Shepstonian policy, as it is called, on which Natal prided itself, is played out... it did nothing to improve or raise them [the Zulus] or to make us known to them, or to make them known to us. Everything in the Native Department was an official secret and mystery, carefully veiled from non-official eyes and indeed from everyone but the Head of that Dept.

He went on to say that he seriously doubted whether Sir Theophilus could ever be 'useful in his present position' in the Transvaal Colony, where in Frere's opinion, nothing constructive in the administrative sphere had been done for more than 18 months.⁴²

In the opening months of 1879, until Lanyon took over in March, criticism of Shepstone continued to flow freely from Frere's pen. It was not, he wrote, going to be at all easy 'to dispose of him unless you can let him retire ... he has been ... totally devoid of constructive and administrative faculty – unless I had seen it I could not have believed that in two years things could have drifted into such a mess.'⁴³ Frere's was not the only criticism of Shepstone's slack administration. Hicks Beach's biographer alleges that the new secretary of state was also dissatisfied with Shepstone's 'single-handed autocracy' and untoward secrecy about what, if anything, he was doing in the Transvaal.⁴⁴ The most heated objections and allegations of unfulfilled promises and poor governance came from the people who were most closely involved – the white Transvalers, the Pedi people within the republican borders and the Tswana communities in the Keate Award territory to the west. And in the disputed territory on the Zululand border the Zulu felt betrayed that their so-called 'father' had summarily changed sides in the border dispute with the Boers. It remains to examine whether the criticism of Shepstone's

⁴¹ GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, D2455, Pcc/1/8, Frere – Hicks Beach, 3 June 1878; *Ibid*, Pcc/1/12, Frere – Hicks Beach, 10 August 1878.

⁴² *Ibid*, Pcc/1/27, Frere – Hicks Beach, 27 October 1878.

⁴³ *Ibid*, Pcc/2/18, Frere – Hicks Beach, 2 May 1879.

⁴⁴ Hicks Beach, *Life of Sir Michael Hicks Beach*, pp 86-87.

alleged 'drifting, do-nothing policy' in the Transvaal Colony was justified. Because they were among the key issues that had to be addressed during his term of office, Shepstone's handling of the Transvaal finances, his relations with the Boers and his policy towards the Africans in and around the Transvaal, will be examined. All these issues were an integral part of the legacy that Shepstone left for Lanyon.

Appropriately enough, the financial state of the Transvaal was one of the first matters that the Colonial Office tried to address. Shepstone appeared reasonably confident that he could succeed, despite the heavy debt he had inherited from the Boer government.⁴⁵ In an attempt to conciliate the Boers he had immediately abolished Burgers' unpopular war tax,⁴⁶ and within weeks of the annexation he also appointed a commission to look into the finances of the colony.⁴⁷ The commission's report was such that Shepstone was obliged to cast about – Bulwer in Natal was one source that proved unproductive⁴⁸ – to boost his funds. Frere was eventually able to arrange for an advance grant from the military chest of £20 000 but things were looking decidedly bleak.⁴⁹ It is also significant that while this financial crisis was being experienced, Shepstone was off on a month-long tour of the western Transvaal.⁵⁰ His administration in general terms, and thus the money being spent, was being hampered, he said, because he had to work with an unbroken team who had only 'the most hazy ideas of the manner in which their respective duties should be discharged'.⁵¹ He left Pretoria again in August 1877, this time for a protracted tour of the eastern Transvaal and the disputed territory, where border disturbances kept him away for

⁴⁵ On Shepstone's handling of the Transvaal finances and collection of taxes see P Delius, *The land belongs to us: the Pedi polity, the Boers and the British in the nineteenth century Transvaal* (Johannesburg, 1983), pp 221-223.

⁴⁶ TA, ZAR/53, *Transvaal Government Gazette*, 12 April, 1877.

⁴⁷ C 1815, 'Report of the Finance Commission' signed by J Henderson, 6 June 1877. The report states that Shepstone appointed the commission on 16 April 1877.

⁴⁸ NA, Shepstone Papers, A96/5, Bulwer – Shepstone, 13 June 1877; NA, GH 789, Shepstone – Bulwer, 6 June 1877.

⁴⁹ On the advances to the Transvaal from the military chest see CP, African 142, enclosure no1 in no 193, Shepstone – Frere, 7 August 1877; *Ibid*, Shepstone – Cunynghame, 5 August 1877 and Cunynghame – Shepstone, 5 August 1877.

⁵⁰ Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, p 56.

⁵¹ PRO, Carnarvon Papers, 30/6/23, Shepstone – Carnarvon, 23 July 1877.

months.

Frere was unimpressed by vague promises, excuses and delays and had meanwhile started his barrage of criticism. He rapped Shepstone over the knuckles for paying out several large amounts to creditors who should have been made to wait.⁵² Having identified the severity of the problem, Shepstone did little to remedy it and criticism had also begun to mount against his frequent absence from his desk in Pretoria. As one correspondent expressed it, 'While Sir Theophilus remains on the border, attending exclusively to one matter, and all others are allowed to "slide" for the present, people can scarcely be blamed for grumbling.'⁵³

All was obviously not well. Shepstone was unable to turn the finances around despite the long-winded optimism displayed in his correspondence. Writing in August 1877, some four months after annexation, Carnarvon was very concerned about the still-empty treasury. So much so that he organised for one of the crown agents, WC Sargeant, a 'good financier and accustomed to that particular line of work' to make a brief visit to the Transvaal to look into the situation, to give Shepstone the benefit of his expertise, and then to draw up the necessary reports which Carnarvon could then present when enquiries were directed to him about the issue in parliamentary debates. In the meantime, Shepstone was warned, '...keep expenditure down'.⁵⁴

But the signs were unmistakable and Carnarvon was clearly edgy that the 'success and merit' of his Transvaal plans looked as if they might be 'jeopardised by this financial folly'.⁵⁵ When the matter came up for discussion in the Colonial Office in August 1877, Carnarvon's cousin, Robert Herbert, who was the permanent under-secretary, minuted: 'I very much fear that we shall find ... Shepstone to have been negligent or imprudent to an extent which will seriously counterbalance the great merits of his political achievements ... It is truly disappointing to see

⁵² NA, Shepstone Papers, A96/5, Frere – Shepstone, 29 August 1877.

⁵³ Quoted in Van Zyl, *Die protes beweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, p 68, from *The Natal Witness*, 2 March 1878. See also Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African confederation*, p 147.

⁵⁴ NA, Shepstone Papers, A96/23, Carnarvon – Shepstone, 23 August 1877, pp 139-145.

⁵⁵ PRO, Carnarvon Papers, 30/6/34, Carnarvon – Frere, 1 October 1877.

a very able stroke of policy drawn down into the mire by financial muddling.⁵⁶ When he read the minute Carnarvon must have been alarmed because he promptly took the precaution of dropping a note to Herbert to tell him: 'I think that we should hold very guarded language as regards the Transvaal. ... I see no chance of carrying the latter on without further assistance. The Treasury should be prepared for a considerable call on them ...'.⁵⁷

Sargeaunt's bulky report only appeared in September 1878. In a word, the economy was found to be so bad and so little had been done to rescue it, that an autocracy, with the tax collector and the British soldier to bolster its authority, seemed the only way to go.⁵⁸ But Hicks Beach, who had in the meanwhile taken over from Carnarvon, and more particularly Frere, realised that this route was impossible given the plans they had for the Transvaal. The Boers hankered for a return to self-rule and Shepstone had given them assurances that this wish would be fulfilled. A Boer deputation to plead for re-instatement of their independence had knocked on Carnarvon's door in 1877 and another arrived to see Hicks Beach in mid 1878. The delegates had been told that under no circumstances could they be given back their independence.⁵⁹ As far as the Colonial Office was concerned, even with Carnarvon gone, the Transvaal was still to become part of a confederation. Now in a very tight spot, both Hicks Beach and Frere agreed that Lanyon, who had shown considerable ability in steering Griqualand West through troubled financial waters with such 'admirable vigour' and firmness – 'firmness' had by now become Lanyon's trademark – should be asked to pull things straight in the Transvaal.⁶⁰ With the benefit of hindsight this was hardly fair on Lanyon; but more of that later.

⁵⁶ PRO, CO 48/483, no 10293, minute by Herbert, 25 August 1877.

⁵⁷ PRO, CO 431/38, Carnarvon – Herbert, 28 November 1877. The underlining is Carnarvon's. It appears that an advance of £25 000 was made to the Transvaal in June 1877; *Ibid*, CO 694/3, 9 June 1877, p 135.

⁵⁸ CP, African 156, 'Report on the Province of the Transvaal', WC Sargeaunt, September 1878; De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, pp 146, 180-181.

⁵⁹ C 2128, 'Letter from Messrs. Krüger and Joubert, Delegates from the Transvaal, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies; with the reply.' See also below. On the lack of success of the Boer delegation see Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, pp 75-85.

⁶⁰ GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, D2455, Pcc/1/12, Frere – Hicks Beach, 22 August 1878; *Ibid*, Pcc/1/21, Frere – Hicks Beach, 3 September 1878; *Ibid*, Pcc/1/23, Frere – Hicks Beach, 15 September 1878.

Shepstone had never seen eye to eye with the Boers. He had ‘no sort of sympathy with them’ and enjoyed neither their confidence nor goodwill,⁶¹ nor it seems, did he really try to find out how they felt.⁶² This was one of the recurring criticisms of his rule in the Transvaal. After the failure of their first deputation to Britain,⁶³ the Boers’ sullen acceptance of British annexation soon turned to rumbling discontent, but Shepstone continued to insist that he had the support of the majority of Transvalers.⁶⁴ In a private letter to Hicks Beach at the end of May 1878, by which time Shepstone had been at the helm for a full year, Frere outlined what he saw as the main reasons for Boer dissatisfaction, in other words, the issues that had to be addressed with all urgency.⁶⁵ These included the lack of a visible, effective administration, the fact that no attempt had been made to set up a representative legislature, and the disturbed state of the Transvaal – Zululand border. There were also complaints that the promise to accord the Dutch language equal recognition had not been met, and that the railway tax was still being levied despite there being no sign of a railway line. Furthermore, ill-feeling had arisen because too many Natal officials – rather than Transvalers – had been appointed to the civil service.⁶⁶ Most of these were issues that Frere felt could be remedied fairly easily but one of the most important grievances, the lack of representative institutions, was going to be the most difficult to solve.⁶⁷ Frere’s predictions proved to be unduly optimistic; as far as the Boers were concerned Lanyon remedied none of

⁶¹ Ibid, Pcc/2/11, Frere – Hicks Beach, 3 February 1879. See also PRO, 30/6/33, Robinson – Frere, 8 June 1877.

⁶² Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, p 48.

⁶³ The first Boer deputation to Britain held five interviews with Carnarvon between 5 July and 30 October 1877, but achieved very little; Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, pp 24-34. They did however extract a promise from Carnarvon that he would grant them self government within a federation ‘as soon as it is practicable’; PRO, Carnarvon Papers, 30/6/48, Interview with Transvaal Delegates and Carnarvon, 13 July 1877. Two months later Carnarvon turned down Shepstone’s proposals for the introduction of representative institutions.

⁶⁴ Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, p 48.

⁶⁵ GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, Pcc/1/7, Frere – Hicks Beach, 29 May 1878.

⁶⁶ Shepstone’s son, Henrique, as secretary of ‘native’ affairs and Melmoth Osborn as colonial secretary, both from Natal, are a case in point; PRO, Carnarvon Papers, 30/6/23, Shepstone – Carnarvon, 23 July 1877. The appointment of his son drew acid criticism because he was both young and inexperienced; *De Volksstem*, 10 September 1878.

⁶⁷ GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, Pcc/1/7, Frere – Hicks Beach, 29 May 1878. See also Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, p 46.

their grievances.

Shepstone was thus under great pressure to introduce representative governmental bodies almost as soon as he had taken over in the Transvaal, despite the fact that personally he did not favour the idea. Lanyon's experience in Griqualand West may well have influenced his thinking on this, although Shepstone's style in Natal had also been decidedly autocratic. Being of a military, obey-me-or-else frame of mind, Lanyon had struggled in Kimberley with an obstructive legislative body that included an elective element.⁶⁸ Just prior to the annexation of the Transvaal he gave Shepstone the benefit of his advice, warning him to avoid elective bodies if at all possible. 'Even here', he wrote, 'with only four electives, and a Govt. majority, the Council can be obstructive, by the electives walking out and leaving us without a quorum.'⁶⁹

Despite Lanyon's input, it was not Shepstone's decision that the Transvaal Boers be denied an early opportunity to gain some representation in the governance of the colony, but Carnarvon's. Under pressure from the Boers, and in deference to the assurances he had made in his annexation proclamation, Shepstone in fact drew up a memorandum at the end of July 1877. He proposed that there be two councils in the Transvaal, one an elective body of 42 members on the lines of the old *volksraad*, and another with 12 nominated members to serve as an upper house and an executive organ.⁷⁰ His suggestions were subsequently endorsed by Frere,⁷¹ but Carnarvon, fearing that giving the Transvalers a political say might jeopardise his federation ambitions – as had certainly proved to be the case with responsible government in the Cape Colony – turned down Shepstone's proposals, indicating that the matter could perhaps be addressed later. He felt it would be 'ill advised' to grant any 'representative institutions, and the simpler the form of govt. the better'.⁷²

⁶⁸ See Chapters II and III.

⁶⁹ NA, A96/16, Lanyon – Shepstone, 2 February 1877.

⁷⁰ CP, African 142, Memo by Shepstone, 29 July 1877, p 98, enclosure in Shepstone – Carnarvon, 31 July 1877; Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, pp 51-52.

⁷¹ PRO, Carnarvon Papers, 30/6/33, Frere – Carnarvon, 14 August 1877.

⁷² PRO, CO 291/1, Shepstone – Carnarvon, 31 July 1877, minute by Carnarvon, 12 September 1877. Carnarvon felt that it would be safer to wait until federation had been accomplished and the 'Transvaal was embraced in it' before considering the matter of representation.

This decision had an extremely negative effect in the Transvaal. The levels of anger and unease increased. Complaints started to appear in the local press that the people had been promised the 'rights and privileges which all enjoy in every country under the British Flag'; instead, they claimed, 'there is nothing but rank despotism and high-handed official authority'.⁷³ The lack of representative institutions became one of the major, festering reasons for Boer discontent, and when the Boers moved to organise a 'monster meeting' to discuss their plan of action, Shepstone tried to put the lid on the trouble by issuing a proclamation in March 1878 to quell what he saw as dangerous 'agitation and alarm ... threats of violence and seditious utterances'.⁷⁴ Although Van Zyl claims that the Boers did not at this juncture have plans to take up arms, Shepstone was clearly worried that they might well do so.⁷⁵ Despite attempts by local magistrates to prevent gatherings of a political nature, these went ahead in the first week of April 1878. A petition proving that the overwhelming majority of Boers⁷⁶ rejected British overlordship and wanted their independence reinstated, was collected and a second deputation comprising PJ Joubert and SJP Kruger was elected to approach the Colonial Office again. After consultations with Frere in Cape Town, where the high commissioner reiterated that Britain would never be prepared to relinquish the Transvaal, the deputation arrived in London on 29 June 1878 only to receive much the same answer from Hicks Beach.⁷⁷

Nor, during his term of office, had Shepstone done much to resolve issues relating to Africans within the Transvaal or on the borders of the colony. In his annexation proclamation he had made his attitude clear: 'The native tribes living within the jurisdiction and under the protection of the

⁷³ *De Volksstem* 13 November 1877, quoted in Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, p 52.

⁷⁴ C 2100, Proclamation by Shepstone, 11 March 1878.

⁷⁵ Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, p 43.

⁷⁶ Shepstone had estimated the total number of adult white men in the Transvaal at 8 000. There were 6 591 signatories against the British annexation in April 1878; C 2128, 'Letter from Messrs. Krüger and Joubert, Delegates from the Transvaal, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies; with the reply', no 1, p 3. However, on the basis of a communication from Shepstone, Hicks Beach disputed this argument and the number of signatories; *Ibid*, no 2, Hicks Beach – Krüger & Joubert, 6 August 1878, pp 16-17.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, no 2, Hicks Beach – Krüger & Joubert, 6 August 1878, pp 15-19.

Government must be taught due obedience to the paramount authority.⁷⁸ His plan was to decentralise control of outlying areas by appointing groups of magistrates who would work under a commissioner in about three to five designated rural districts.⁷⁹ The commissioners were to attend to any regional matters that cropped up, but their prime task was to liaise with the African headmen. The headmen were to be informed of their choice: to accept British overlordship, in which case they were liable for taxes, or to move out of the Transvaal and settle elsewhere. Those who chose to remain were not permitted to fight among themselves and had to agree to pay an annual hut tax that had been set at 10s per annum.⁸⁰

Despite Shepstone's optimism and that of his son Henrique, who had been appointed as secretary for native affairs, this system did not bring the desired results.⁸¹ Tax collection proved well-nigh impossible within the colony and during Shepstone's term of office there were many incidents of unrest on the western border, in the eastern Transvaal where the Pedi people were growing restless and in the southeast where clashes between Boer frontier farmers and Zulu were more or less endemic.⁸² All these regions were still trouble spots when Lanyon took over in March 1879.

Reference has already been made to Lanyon's role, while stationed in Kimberley, in the conflict in the Keate Award territory, where Boer frontier farmers in the Bloemhof and Christiana regions encroached on land that had been granted to the Tlhaping people.⁸³ Lanyon was also implicated to a more limited extent in the Shepstone government's quarrel with the Pedi under Sekhukhune, when he arranged to send a volunteer force, the Diamond Field Horse, to assist Shepstone in the

⁷⁸ C 1776, Proclamation by Shepstone, 12 April 1877.

⁷⁹ Delius, *The land belongs to us*, pp 222-223.

⁸⁰ CP, African 142, Swart – Barlow, 21 June 1877. Barlow was the commissioner stationed in the Waterberg and Soutpansberg districts.

⁸¹ TA, SS 237 (R 2038/77), HC Shepstone – Colonial Secretary, 30 May 1877.

⁸² Delius, *The land belongs to us*, pp 222-225.

⁸³ See Chapter III.

renewed unrest in the eastern Transvaal in April 1878.⁸⁴ The situation in neither of these two regions changed for the better under Shepstone's rule, and both remained vexing issues to be addressed by the new administrator.⁸⁵

Prior to his arrival in the Transvaal, Lanyon had not been drawn into the equation in boundary dispute with the Zulu in the Utrecht and Wakkerstroom districts,⁸⁶ but Shepstone in contrast had a long, 20-year history of contact with the Zulu before moving to the Transvaal.⁸⁷ Here too, despite protracted tours through the area, and leaving his administrative duties to accumulate alarmingly in Pretoria, he had made little real progress towards resolving the impasse before Lanyon took over.⁸⁸ The most closely contested area, with neither Boers nor Zulu, or their respective governments being prepared to step down to grant land-ownership rights, was the land to the east of the Ncome (Blood) River. When the republican authorities had tried to collect taxes in the area in 1876, tension had reached such a pitch that the following year Shepstone, as has been seen, was able to use the fracas to put 'black peril' pressure on Burgers and the republican government to try and make them agree to British rule. Although it has been conclusively argued that Cetshwayo had no such plans to attack the Transvaal,⁸⁹ disputes continued to plague the border area and white frontier farmers demanded, with justification, that the new British authorities take steps to protect them and establish some sort of order in the region.⁹⁰

⁸⁴ On Shepstone's efforts against the Pedi see Delius, *The land belongs to us*, pp 225-240; Smith, *The campaigns against the Bapedi of Sekhukhune*, pp 10-37.

⁸⁵ Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, pp 61-64; Shillington, *The colonisation of the southern Tswana*, pp 74-83; Smith, *The campaigns against the Bapedi of Sekhukhune*, pp 21-30.

⁸⁶ Lanyon had, however, been well aware of the unrest on the Zululand border. He made mention of it in many of his letters to his father. See for example TA, A596, vol 13, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 27 August and 17 September 1878. See also his reference to the border dispute and Cetshwayo's 'unfilial manner' towards Shepstone; NA, A96/26, Lanyon – Shepstone, 23 December 1877.

⁸⁷ For details on Shepstone's relations with the Zulu after the annexation of the Transvaal see RL Cope, *Shepstone and Cetshwayo, 1873-1879* (MA, Natal, 1967).

⁸⁸ On Shepstone's land policy in the Transvaal, his enforcement of claims to land established under republican rule, and the effect of this on African land rights in general, see Delius, *The land belongs to us*, pp 223-225.

⁸⁹ See for example Cope, *Ploughshare of war*, pp 120-122, 131-134.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, pp 148-149 and p 174; Cope, *Shepstone and Cetshwayo*, p 180.

In October 1877 Shepstone was in the disputed area meeting a Zulu delegation, but his proposals for a settlement were unacceptable to the Zulu, who accused him of being a turncoat who was now, despite his former reputation for sympathy with their cause, clearly a loyal Transvaal Boer.⁹¹ With matters growing progressively more heated, Carnarvon, just weeks before he resigned, ordered Shepstone not to provoke a war under any circumstances. ‘A native war is just now impossible you must avoid it ...,’ he warned.⁹² By this time too, Henry Bulwer, the lieutenant-governor of Natal had suggested that perhaps the time had come for negotiation, and after sounding out some of the parties involved he sent an enquiry to Cetshwayo.⁹³ Bulwer then began making arrangements to set up a commission of enquiry, much to Shepstone’s irritation that the ball was no longer in his court.⁹⁴

The border commission completed its month-long investigations in April 1878 and the report was duly presented to Frere for arbitration in July. Its findings favoured the Zulu rather than the Transvaal claims and Frere realised that politically speaking, if confederation was the end goal, its implementation would be disastrous. He then proceeded to accept it in form and to nullify it in practice, on the grounds that the Zulu had not complied with the technical requirements of the agreement. This amounted to Frere’s conciliation of the Boers at the expense of justice to the Zulu, although Frere was careful not to admit to any such thing.

In Frere’s view the ‘Zulu obstacle’ had to be removed. This was the key to federation. When this was effected everything else would fall into place. He modified the recommendations of the commission and sent them to Cetshwayo on 11 December 1878 with what amounted to an ultimatum. This sealed the inevitability of war because it made what amounted to impossible demands. Hicks Beach could do no more than resign himself to the fact that ‘Frere had made up his mind not to be stopped’, but he was bargaining on an easy, quick disposal of the Zulu by the

⁹¹ Cope, *Shepstone and Cetshwayo*, pp 226, 230-234.

⁹² PRO, Carnarvon Papers, 30/6/23, Carnarvon – Shepstone, 3 January 1878.

⁹³ C 2000, Bulwer – Cetshwayo, 8 December 1877, pp 67-68.

⁹⁴ NA, Shepstone Papers, A96/68, Shepstone – Bulwer, 14 January 1878, p 321.

troops he had sent in reply to Frere's request.⁹⁵ He could not have been more wrong.

To Hicks Beach, Frere had written privately to explain his difficult position. He had to 'deal' with Zulu and waylay Boer 'explosions'; in his mind the two issues were inextricably linked, and he had thus he said, no other alternative than to take the line he had followed.⁹⁶ Within weeks of writing this letter, matters between imperial Britain and the Zulu kingdom were precipitated on the battlefield, and Britain had suffered ignominious defeat. That the eventual outcome of the Anglo-Zulu War was in Britain's favour never quite extinguished the embarrassment of that opening encounter at Isandlwana.

Back in Pretoria, and prior to the British defeat by the Zulu, Shepstone's administration had clearly not been effective on any grounds and he was rapidly losing the confidence of virtually everyone. Newspapers were full of letters of criticism⁹⁷ and even English-speakers in Pretoria drew up a petition to complain about the poor administration, although Shepstone was later to claim that all but 16 of the signatures were of questionable origin.⁹⁸ Certainly his lacklustre administrative performance left Lanyon with an unenviable legacy, particularly in so far as it led to an increase in Boer discontent. If some of the promises Shepstone had made in April 1877 had been fulfilled, the levels of agitation after the return of the first deputation with their disappointing report-back, would perhaps have been less marked. This was certainly the impression of one outsider who visited Pretoria in 1878.⁹⁹ On the other hand it has been argued that not even a good administration would have dissuaded the Boers from taking up the cudgels to regain their independence. The die-hard republicans, who constituted the large majority of the Boer population, had been against the annexation from the start and had only accepted it under

⁹⁵ Quoted in Benyon, *Proconsul and paramountcy*, p 164.

⁹⁶ GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, Pcc/2/1, Frere – Hicks Beach, 5 January 1879.

⁹⁷ For a number of significantly critical comments in newspapers see Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, pp 68-69.

⁹⁸ C 2144, Petition to Frere by 500 Transvalers, undated, p 176.

⁹⁹ See for example Sheffield Archives (hereafter SHA) Spencer Stanhope Papers, Sp St 60628, FW Spencer Stanhope – Philip Spencer Stanhope, 12 May 1878.

protest. They cared little about administrative matters, either good or bad.¹⁰⁰

Predictably, having been told in August 1878 that he was to be replaced by Lanyon, and that he should go to London to discuss ‘several important questions connected with the Transvaal’,¹⁰¹ Shepstone dallied. And as a result Lanyon heard nothing more about when he was to go to the Transvaal or the circumstances surrounding his new position for three months. Shepstone meanwhile remained in Pretoria writing long, rambling letters offering to help everyone before he left. He really felt that it would be wise to wait long enough to give Frere valuable assistance when the high commissioner made his proposed trip to the Transvaal. He also felt sure that Lanyon needed time to wind up his affairs in Kimberley.¹⁰² Then too, it was also necessary that he delay long enough to hold important discussions with Chelmsford to give him advice on how to approach the Zulu.¹⁰³ In a long letter to Lanyon he explained that he certainly would not dream of going until he had seen him in Pretoria ‘to enable me to explain such matters to you as may require to be explained, and of such there are probably not a few’. He was ‘in no great hurry, a month or two is a matter of indifference to me; indeed I would rather avoid spending the whole of the winter in England’.¹⁰⁴ In a word, Shepstone must have realised that he was being recalled, and was not particularly inclined to go. He agreed that he needed a rest after all the tension and hard work, and admitted that perhaps the administration needed a new hand, someone ‘with a little more sternness than I can well exhibit’,¹⁰⁵ but he apparently saw through Hicks Beach’s rather transparent explanation that there were ‘important questions’ to discuss with him in the Colonial Office.¹⁰⁶ After all, important questions that needed discussion would normally have been relayed to him through the high commissioner.

¹⁰⁰ For a debate on the impact of poor administration on the protest movement see Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, pp 70-71.

¹⁰¹ TA, A596, vol 4(b), Hicks Beach – Shepstone, 25 July 1878.

¹⁰² NA, Shepstone Papers, A96/68, Shepstone – Frere, 2 September 1878.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, Shepstone – Hicks Beach, 3 September 1878.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, Shepstone – Lanyon, 10 September 1878.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, Shepstone – Frere, 2 September 1878.

¹⁰⁶ TA, A596, vol 4(b), Hicks Beach – Shepstone, 25 July 1878.

Ultimately, as has been shown, Hicks Beach felt he could not let matters drift any longer. With all the formalities for Shepstone's recall taken care of, he wrote to Disraeli

... Things look bad in the Transvaal, though I do not at present think we shall have to send more troops out. Shepstone has contrived to offend Dutch, English *and* Zulus. I have recalled him – by asking him to come home on leave and consult with me – and settled that Lanyon, who has administered Griqualand with energy and ability, should succeed him temporarily in the Transvaal.¹⁰⁷

In any assessment of Lanyon's subsequent failure in the Transvaal between 1879 and 1881 it should at least be admitted that he was thrown into very deep, very hot, Transvaal water. Shepstone bequeathed to Lanyon an angry, rebellious Boer population, and a percolating African policy that steamed with confrontation and contestation. Lanyon also inherited severely depleted financial resources and a fiercely autocratic political style. This legacy weighed on Lanyon's ambitions and intentions, weakening any prospect of righting the wrongs of failed federation and Shepstone's botched administration. It seems therefore that policy had been pre-ordained and that Lanyon's own particular brand of imperial hubris simply compounded the Transvaal's problems and his own.

Hicks Beach in the Colonial Office

In January 1878 Disraeli finally accepted one of several letters of resignation that Carnarvon had submitted in the previous months and Sir Michael Hicks Beach was named almost immediately as his successor. A new secretary of state in the Colonial Office, a new puppeteer to pull the imperial strings in London, was bound to make a difference to the imperial agents, the puppets, in the colonies. Carnarvon, who was enthusiastic about getting closely involved in colonial policy gave way to Hicks Beach, who was less passionate about confederation in South Africa and was content, both literally and figuratively, to keep his distance and let Frere dictate matters from Cape Town. Whereas Carnarvon can be seen as a puppeteer using agents to further his confederation policy, the same can hardly be said of Hicks Beach. He was not trying to manipulate events; he appointed Lanyon in the Transvaal on the strength of his credentials as an administrator.

¹⁰⁷

Quoted in Hicks Beach, *Life of Sir Michael Hicks Beach*, Hicks Beach – Beaconsfield, 24 September 1878, p 96.

Hicks Beach met with Carnarvon on 31 January 1878 to be briefed on colonial matters, including South African affairs.¹⁰⁸ The information he gleaned could hardly have been good news even if the new secretary of state had been aware that there was unrest in the subcontinent. There was a war going on in the eastern Cape Colony, to which, as has been shown, Lanyon had sent volunteer troops from the diamond fields to assist the redcoats. Shepstone, also with some assistance from Lanyon, was struggling against Sekhukhune in the Transvaal and trying, unsuccessfully, to contain trouble between the Boers and Cetshwayo's Zulu on their common border. Lanyon himself was busily putting down boundary unrest in the Keate Award territory, and within Griqualand West the Griqua rebellion was threatening to mushroom into serious trouble – which indeed occurred less than three months later. As Carnarvon was bound to admit to Frere, and no doubt to Hicks Beach in their discussions, there were 'clouds gathering all round the horizon'.¹⁰⁹

Nor had Carnarvon's political ambitions for a South African confederation under the British flag borne much fruit. The acceptance of Griqualand West under Cape Colony rule had been obstructed at every turn by a suspicious Molteno and his parliament, and in February 1878, just as Hicks Beach assumed office, Frere had taken the controversial step of dismissing Molteno and placing John Gordon Sprigg at the head of the ministry, in the hope that the new prime minister would be more malleable. Natal settlers had been suspicious of federation until Garnet Wolseley, with his 'champagne and sherry' tactics, manoeuvred them into the constitutional position of having to conform with imperial policy. The Transvaal Boers, after nine months of British rule, were growing ever more insistent that they wanted their independence reinstated, and the Free Staters showed no sign whatsoever of being prepared to lose theirs. Not only did Hicks Beach inherit a parlous South African situation in 1878, he also inherited Carnarvon's federation policy – at the time somewhat becalmed – and Sir Bartle Frere, the high commissioner, the man who had been specifically appointed by Carnarvon a year earlier to implement his grand design. Frere was absolutely determined to see it through.

Carnarvon's disappearance from the Colonial Office caused a hiccup in Britain's pursuance of

¹⁰⁸ PRO, Carnarvon Papers, 30/6/11, Disraeli – Carnarvon, 31 January 1878.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 30/6/34, Carnarvon – Frere, 2 January 1878.

a federal policy in South Africa, and, by implication, was reflected in Lanyon's role as an imperial agent in Griqualand West and the Transvaal. Carnarvon had been the motor of the scheme; he had initiated and pursued it with great vigour and passion, aided and abetted by his imperial agents at the periphery, one of whom was Lanyon.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, Carnarvon was genuinely and personally interested in affairs in South Africa and was anxious to enhance his standing as an eminent statesman.¹¹¹ This same passionate level of involvement was not apparent in Hicks Beach, who had a reputation for being as brusque, sombre and reticent as Carnarvon was outgoing, arrogant and publicity seeking.¹¹² Black Michael 'habitually thinks angrily' wrote a contemporary observer,¹¹³ while a more recent researcher describes him as 'difficult' and 'probably the most demanding colonial secretary' of the mid-Victorian era.¹¹⁴ But he had the advantage of being on close and friendly terms with Disraeli, something that Carnarvon had not enjoyed.

When Carnarvon left the Colonial Office, Hicks Beach realised that he would not be able to stop the confederation roller-coaster in South Africa – even if it was slowing down in 1878 – particularly while Frere was orchestrating developments from Cape Town. But territorial expansion would henceforth be discouraged until such time as the new federal legislature was set up to take on the responsibilities involved. The whole point of confederation was not to govern from Britain, but to use local collaborators to do so.¹¹⁵ Hicks Beach had no special knowledge or interest in South African affairs, although his daughter maintains that 'he looked to the gradual advancement of the policy of confederation' and had an earnest 'desire to press forward with the policy of confederation as a solution of many South African difficulties'.¹¹⁶ This

¹¹⁰ Both Carnarvon and Hicks Beach after him, expressed their satisfaction with Lanyon's ability and performance in South Africa, certainly in the period from 1875 until the outbreak of war in 1880.

¹¹¹ Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African federation*, p 209.

¹¹² See for example Ibid, pp 151, 210; Blakeley, *The Colonial Office*, pp 69-70.

¹¹³ Quoted in Goodfellow, *Britain and South African confederation*, p 151.

¹¹⁴ Blakeley, *The Colonial Office*, p 36.

¹¹⁵ Cope, 'Local imperatives and imperial policy', p 624.

¹¹⁶ Hicks Beach, *Life of Sir Michael Hicks Beach*, pp 92, 148.

was, however, a new, cost-cutting version of Carnarvon's expansive 'grand scheme'. Benyon maintains that Hicks Beach was 'cautious' about federation – which certainly neither Carnarvon nor Frere were – and that with Carnarvon gone the new secretary of state for the colonies left the initiative to Frere.¹¹⁷ The Colonial Office was 'growing weary of the mounting problems in South Africa and becoming increasingly inclined to avoid trouble rather than strive for federation'.¹¹⁸ The expensive and debilitating wars had to be stopped. And new wars were certainly not to be wantonly provoked. Carnarvon's complicated plans had clearly run out of a great deal of their steam.

In March 1878 Hicks Beach wrote his first letter to Frere and it appears that some of his thoughts on several key South African issues of the time were beginning to crystallise.

I ... have been doing my best to make myself acquainted with my new work, and more especially with South African affairs ... I cannot however let another mail pass, without sending you a few lines to assure you of my earnest desire to give you all that support and co-operation in your difficult position which you have a right to expect ... and, as it may be of use to you to know the drift of my own thoughts ... I do so, really *not* to express a definite opinion, but to invite your criticism and get information ... The negotiations, through Bulwer, with Cetewayo, should be pushed on ... to obtain a peaceful solution. As to the disputed boundary itself, I mistrust the fairness of the Boer treaties; and one can hardly feel surprised that Cetewayo declines to accept Shepstone's settlement of the question, now that the latter hold his present position ... But we must take care not to increase Boer disaffection by appearing not to assert their just rights ...¹¹⁹

Several important points come to the fore here. Hicks Beach expresses his 'support and cooperation' for Frere, showing no sign of wanting to redirect Frere's policy from the outset. Realistically he could not but have had this attitude. Being new in his post and Frere being Carnarvon's appointee, the federation expert on the imperial periphery, he chose – temporarily at least – to let Frere have his head. Hicks Beach wanted comment and criticism of his views so that he would be able to formulate his own opinions, but Frere virtually ignored the request. He had clearly decided his own opinions were what he planned to follow and wanted to avoid any possible interference from Hicks Beach. When he eventually replied to the secretary of state's call for comment, some six weeks later, he made only brief and passing comment to the trouble in the disputed territory.

¹¹⁷ Benyon, *Proconsul and paramountcy*, p 152-153.

¹¹⁸ Cope, *Ploughshare of war*, p 208.

¹¹⁹ GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, Pcc/22, Hicks Beach – Frere, 7 March 1878.

Hicks Beach had also been careful, again understandably, not to be too categorical. But his opinion on the continuance of the border negotiations through Bulwer – whose views on precipitating a war with Cetshwayo were diametrically opposed to Frere's¹²⁰ – and that of discouraging a war with the Zulu, were opinions that Frere blatantly chose, once again, to ignore. Hicks Beach's 'peaceful solution' was not one that Frere was seeking. Given the delays of about a month each way for correspondence to go back and forth, between London and South Africa, and the cabinet's indifference to South African affairs,¹²¹ Hicks Beach's invitation for comment upon his first impressions was relatively simple for the high commissioner to sidestep.¹²² Even a telegram took no less than 16 days (via Madeira) and Frere could also use the excuse that he was heavily involved with other matters.

In 1878, his first year of office, Hicks Beach also showed concern – more, it would seem than Frere – about the deteriorating situation in the Transvaal. Indeed by June he 'judged that in all the tangle of South African affairs, the most pressing need was for prompt attention to the practical requirements of the Transvaal'.¹²³ Receiving the second deputation in July he explained to Frere that he had been firm in pointing out the 'impossibility' of the Transvaal regaining its independence,¹²⁴ but expressed the belief that Carnarvon had been too wary in refusing to grant the Boers any representative institutions at all.¹²⁵

I should like generally to give the people as much self-government as possible, consistently with such checks as would prevent their Parliament from passing a resolution declaring its independence,¹²⁶

he wrote, and when Wolseley was sent to the Transvaal he had Hicks Beach's instructions, not

¹²⁰ See for example Wolseley's comment: He [Bulwer] declared that Bartle Frere had forced on this [Zulu] war which was quite unnecessary'; Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 48.

¹²¹ Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African federation*, p 211.

¹²² Hicks Beach was aware of this problem and in effect gave Frere the leeway he needed: 'Your special knowledge ... and the disadvantage under which I must lie in giving any directions owing to the length of time which letters take and the consequent possibility of changed circumstances, make me disposed to prefer your opinion to my own'; GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, Pcc/22, Hicks Beach – Frere, 25 July 1878.

¹²³ Hicks Beach, *The life of Sir Michael Hicks Beach*, p 86.

¹²⁴ GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, Pcc/22, Hicks Beach – Frere, 18 July 1878.

¹²⁵ Ibid, Hicks Beach – Frere, 11 July 1878.

¹²⁶ Ibid, Hicks Beach – Frere, 25 July 1878.

Frere's, to address this problem as one of his priorities.¹²⁷ It was also on Hicks Beach's suggestion, not Frere's, although he agreed to it, that Lanyon was appointed to try to rescue the Transvaal from the chaos into which it had sunk.¹²⁸

Frere, Carnarvon's chosen statesman, was not easy for Hicks Beach to control. And directing colonial policy from London, as has been shown, had its built-in difficulties, which Frere exploited to the full. The imperial string, in this case, was extremely slender. Carnarvon and Frere were personal friends¹²⁹ and had similar temperaments. Frere became personally involved in promoting Carnarvon's grand scheme; it became a mission to be pursued with every ploy possible. When Hicks Beach took over he was only 41 years old, by far Frere's junior. Furthermore the 63 year-old Frere had an impeccable reputation as an elder statesman and was blessed with a quick, independent mind. But on the other hand it is doubtful that the secretary of state allowed himself to be dominated. Hicks Beach was apparently 'an overbearing and forcibly-spoken man,' which does not suggest that he would have deferred to the urbane Frere's credentials for long, despite the fact that they were impressive.

Hicks Beach's appointment clearly had important implications for Lanyon, who had a good working relationship with Frere. But Frere was clearly out of step with imperial injunctions, and this gave a colonial twist to Lanyon's policy making in the Transvaal. As will be seen, Lanyon had barely settled in Pretoria when several weeks later, in April 1879, Frere visited the Transvaal to hold discussions with the aggrieved Boers and to help Lanyon devise measures to improve the administration of the Transvaal.¹³⁰ But Frere's control over Lanyon and the Transvaal ended in mid 1879, and Wolseley, Lanyon's newly appointed superior, changed Lanyon's role – temporarily at least – from that of an innovator to that of a civil official who kept the Transvaal

¹²⁷ See Chapter V for Wolseley's failure to meet the Boer demands for self-rule and the scorn they poured on the so-called 'dummy legislature' that was introduced.

¹²⁸ See for example GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, Pcc/22, Hicks Beach – Frere, 18 July 1878; Pcc/1/19, Frere – Hicks Beach, 22 August 1878.

¹²⁹ Hicks Beach, *The life of Sir Michael Hicks Beach*, p 80.

¹³⁰ See below under *Owen Lanyon and Bartle Frere in the Transvaal*.

administrative machine running smoothly in Wolseley's slipstream.¹³¹

Isandlwana: the death knell for confederation

If Carnarvon's resignation and his replacement by Hicks Beach represented a hiccup in the confederation policy, Isandlwana was its death knell. Indeed, the surprise British defeat by the Zulu 'utterly transformed every feature of Confederation policy',¹³² and more to the point for this thesis, it changed the Colonial Office's thinking about the Transvaal. Indeed, when he received the news of Isandlwana, Hicks Beach reacted almost immediately by having Robert Herbert draw up a memorandum on the question of whether or not there was a connection between the British annexation of the Transvaal in 1877 and the war with the Zulu.¹³³ Because of his relationship with Carnarvon, Herbert was the one man in the Colonial Office most likely to support the 1877 takeover. Hicks Beach promptly took Herbert's vindication of the annexation to Disraeli in an attempt to dispel the general feeling of concern in government circles.¹³⁴ Hicks Beach must surely have been resentful of having to make excuses to Disraeli for Carnarvon's errors of judgement. Herbert's argument, which raked up all the time-worn excuses for the annexation, is singularly unconvincing, mainly because it included many half truths:

The Transvaal Republic ... was on the point of being invaded by Cetewayo when (in 1877) Sir Theophilus Shepstone annexed the country. If that step had not been taken at that moment, the Transvaal must certainly have been overrun by the Zulus, and in all probability the white population ... would have been destroyed. It may be taken as incontrovertible that there was ... no possibility of keeping the Dutch republic on its legs at all ... the annexation was necessary and could not be at all postponed.¹³⁵

Edward Fairfield, another influential, long-serving member of the Colonial Office staff, added his memorandum on the same issue the following month, and took a diametrically opposite view. He openly admitted that the annexation had been a mistake and advocated abandonment of the

¹³¹ See Chapter V.

¹³² Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African confederation*, p 211. See also De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, p 234-235.

¹³³ CP, African 171, 'The annexation of the Transvaal', undated, RGW Herbert, pp 1-3.

¹³⁴ Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African confederation*, p 172, states on sound evidence that Hicks Beach presented the memorandum to Disraeli on 12 February 1879, and thus gives the same date to Herbert's undated memorandum.

¹³⁵ CP, African 171, 'The annexation of the Transvaal', undated, RGW Herbert, pp 1-2.

Transvaal.¹³⁶ Herbert, who had valiantly tried to keep the federation flag flying, was ultimately forced to concede that ‘it is a fairly open question whether the Trans Vaal should not after all be “retroceded”’.¹³⁷

It is clear that in the months that followed – until Kimberley took over his portfolio in April 1880 – that Hicks Beach kept the possibility of withdrawal from the Transvaal in the forefront of his mind, although this was not publicly made known.¹³⁸ In fact his view was in marked contrast to the puffing words of imperial agents in the Transvaal, such as Wolseley who in December 1879 maintained that the annexation ‘cannot and never will be undone’. He was supremely confident – as Wolseley appeared to be about everything – that ‘as long as the sun shines in the heavens’ the Transvaal would ‘for ever’ be an ‘integral part of HM dominions’.¹³⁹

It is also significant that *before* January 1879, southern African policy had been formulated by the secretaries of state or their proconsuls in South Africa. Personal involvement and intentions thus played an important role and the prime minister and cabinet showed little interest in southern African affairs. In contrast, *after* Isandlwana, with Frere discredited, the British prime minister, and the cabinet took over a shared responsibility of policy making with the secretary of state. In other words, circumstances at the periphery, rather than the personal convictions of office bearers were the key to how the South African colonies should be ruled from 1879 onwards.¹⁴⁰

On 12 June 1879, about five months after Isandlwana, Hicks Beach made a last concession to his predecessor’s confederation scheme. He went through the formalities of sending Frere a despatch on federation. If the Cape was ready to shoulder its responsibilities of ‘cooperation and leadership’ it was to be given the chance to do so. The federation that Britain now sought was

¹³⁶ CP, African 164, ‘Memorandum by Mr Fairfield’, 19, 20 March 1879.

¹³⁷ Quoted in Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African federation*, p 172, CO 48/489, Frere – Hicks Beach, 20 February 1879, minute by Herbert, 2 April 1879.

¹³⁸ See for example GRO, Hicks Beach Papers Pcc/23, Hicks Beach – Frere, 29 May 1879.

¹³⁹ Hove Library, East Sussex, (hereafter Hove), Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Frere, 9 December 1879.

¹⁴⁰ Goodfellow, *Britain and South African federation*, pp 212-213, 215-216.

not of the expansive type that Carnarvon had envisaged, but one designed to cut the cost to Britain of her colonies in South Africa. But the Cape turned down the offer; understandably it did not want the responsibility for the current chaos. 'The great question of the union of the South African communities has been postponed for a time', said Frere, one of its last surviving proponents. He was the last one, however, not to realise that 'confederation was not postponed; it was dead'.¹⁴¹ It was officially ended when Sprigg withdrew a resolution to discuss the matter in the Cape parliament in June 1880, and the newly formed Liberal government finally recalled Bartle Frere.

From the moment of his arrival in the Transvaal, then, Lanyon found himself having to deal with a situation where, as a result of Isandlwana, imperial policy in the Transvaal became rudderless.¹⁴² The enormous expense of the Anglo-Zulu War, in soldiers, money and prestige, was a bitter pill for Britain to swallow, and to make matters worse, events in other parts of the world were causing concern. It was seen as too risky to focus on South African issues. In sum, confederation was no longer a viable imperial policy. And the watershed year for confederation was 1879, not 1881.

Hicks Beach wasted no time in adapting his policies away from the federal ideal and this will become evident in the chapters that follow. The appointment of Garnet Wolseley as high commissioner for South-East Africa was one such move. Frere was mortified that he was to be 'reduced to simply Governor of the Cape Colony'... 'The only explanation that suggests itself', he stormed, 'is that you wished to express either disapproval of what I have done in the past or distrust of what I may do in the future'.¹⁴³ Unwittingly, or perhaps blinded by sheer bravado, he was probably correct on both counts. Even a querulous letter to Hicks Beach from Queen Victoria expressing her whole-hearted support for the wounded Frere,¹⁴⁴ made Black Michael more determined to press on with his plans. He assured the queen that with the war not yet over

¹⁴¹ De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, p 240. See also Hicks Beach, *The life of Sir Michael Hicks Beach*, pp 148-150. 80.

¹⁴² On the aftermath of the Anglo-Zulu War see Cope, *Ploughshare of war*, pp 250-264.

¹⁴³ GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, Pcc/2/22, Frere – Hicks Beach, 21 June 1879.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, Pcc/11, Victoria to Hicks Beach, 28 May 1879.

it was inappropriate that Frere be 'placed in command of an army'; Wolseley was the man for the job. Nevertheless he 'very much regretted that in making this appointment, it was necessary to deprive Sir B. Frere of his powers as High Commissioner'.¹⁴⁵ And that was that.

Shortly after his arrival in the Transvaal, therefore, Lanyon found himself in a position where he was the man who would have to implement an un-clear post-Isandlwana British colonial policy in the Transvaal. He himself remained an avid Carnarvon and federation supporter, yet would have to make significant adaptations to his Griqualand West mind-set. If post-1879 confederation was to be a financially driven rather than an expansive policy as Carnarvon had envisaged it, then perhaps Lanyon, with his proven administrative and financial expertise, might prove to be the right choice in the Transvaal. But many challenges lay ahead, not the least of which were the 'disaffected Boers' were now very aware of British vulnerability. Lanyon was also destined – although he did not learn of this until some months later – to work closely with the new high commissioner for South-East Africa. Wolseley, as Lanyon was to discover, was not the easiest person to work with. And once again, as had happened in Griqualand West, Lanyon soon grew to hate everyone and was to be heartily disliked in return.

Lanyon takes over in Pretoria

Having arrived in Pietermaritzburg from Griqualand West on 25 January 1879, Owen Lanyon spent just over two weeks there before leaving for the Transvaal on 11 February to take up his new appointment. In Natal, in the immediate aftermath of Isandlwana, there was general panic that the Zulu might follow up their victory and overrun the colony, thus living up to the dangerous and ferocious image which Frere and Shepstone had been at pains to construct of them. 'Everything is pretty well chaos here and elsewhere', Lanyon reported to his father, 'they [the Natal colonists] alternate between abject panic and a fools paradise, I have little patience with them ... I suppose the Colonists will find what they are pleased to call their heads, someday.'¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, Hicks Beach – Victoria, 30 August 1879.

¹⁴⁶ TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 26 January, 3 and 10 February 1879.

Lanyon was also acutely aware of the damaging blow that the defeat had inflicted on British pride and on the future formulation of British policy in the sub-continent: 'The disaster will have a sad effect, I fear, all over South Africa, and where it will end, I know not; we certainly will have hard work to retrieve our prestige.' He anticipated that the recalcitrant attitude of the Boers in the Transvaal, about which he had been kept informed by means of regular correspondence with Shepstone,¹⁴⁷ might also have hardened. In this he was correct. In the weeks after Isandlwana, Shepstone had gone to Standerton in a vain attempt to persuade some of the local Boers to join a force to defend the eastern border. While away his secretary, Melmoth Osborn, had been under considerable stress in Pretoria. Rumours were rife that the Boers were planning to attack the capital and Osborn, who had neither the authority nor sufficient firearms to organise the defence of Pretoria, was told to talk his way out of the situation by assuring the British residents in the town that the rumours had no basis at all.¹⁴⁸ Lanyon, as yet in Pietermaritzburg, but making preparations to leave for the Transvaal, must have been concerned about the situation there, and wrote to sketch the scene for his father:

Matters are in a critical state there for the Boers, taking advantage of the troubles on the Zulu border are making demands for their independence being restored to them, and threaten to take it by force. I don't anticipate that they will do much more than talk but there are many troubles and much anxiety before one in that country.¹⁴⁹

It is significant that even before he arrived in the Transvaal, Lanyon was underestimating their determination to regain their independence. The only member of the Boer protest movement that he had met thus far was PJ (Piet) Joubert, one of their leaders, who had held discussions – at which Lanyon had been present – with Frere in Pietermaritzburg early in February.¹⁵⁰ In his correspondence while he was still in Kimberley, Lanyon was already referring disparagingly to 'that unwashed party [who] have things pretty much their own way' [at present] but the English element will before long stamp them out then we will have things pretty much our own way'. He was confident that he would be the one to bring them to heel. Apart from his reflections on the Boers' personal hygiene, which may or may not have been correct, time was to prove that he

¹⁴⁷ See Chapter III. Because Kimberley had a postal and telegraphic link with Cape Town, Lanyon had acted as the intermediary when Shepstone was in Pretoria in 1877.

¹⁴⁸ Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, pp 100-101.

¹⁴⁹ TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 10 February 1879.

¹⁵⁰ African 176, Frere – Hicks Beach, 10 February 1879, p 43.

could hardly have been more wrong in his other predictions.¹⁵¹

In order that his growing reputation as a military strategist could be put to good use immediately, Lanyon decided to travel to Pretoria via Utrecht – the town in the disputed region near the Zululand border – where he was planning to organise a defensive force against Zulu invasion.¹⁵² He then headed for Standerton, which he found to be ‘an English little place’, the best possible compliment in his eyes, yet where he was startled by the crowds of glowering Boers. In what was to become a typical attitude of bravado he shrugged off any danger they might present:

... all round is the hotbed of Boers, and I believe they breathe out threats against me. If they wish to be nasty they have a fine opportunity, for I am travelling without any escort, but I have no fear of their gas, as I know the Boer character too well. Besides there is only a portion of the people antagonistic to our rule and they are led on by a blatant lot who have little or no real interest in the Province.¹⁵³

On what basis Lanyon thought he ‘knew’ the Transvaal Boers is not clear, because he had only just entered the Transvaal Colony. Perhaps Brand had discussed the Boer character with him, but Brand, an Afrikaner himself despite his British outlook and preparedness to cooperate with imperial officials,¹⁵⁴ would hardly have been as negative about them to Lanyon, or given him a blatantly wrong picture of their determination and courage. What is more likely is that Shepstone, whom Lanyon met for the first time in Standerton in mid February 1879, had begun his well-meant but misguided information sessions with his successor. As has been shown, Shepstone had very little sympathy with the Boers, and had not earned their confidence or goodwill, so he was hardly the best adviser Lanyon could have had in winning over the disgruntled Boers or even understanding why they were dissatisfied under British rule. Nonetheless, Lanyon found the 66 year-old Shepstone a ‘charming old gentleman’, and after consulting with him on the rigours awaiting him in Pretoria, seemed confident enough of success. ‘I have no doubt all will come right’, he told his father, ‘but the Transvaal will be an anxious

¹⁵¹ TA, A596, vol 13, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 20 July 1878.

¹⁵² Ibid, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 3 February 1879.

¹⁵³ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 24 February 1879.

¹⁵⁴ As a result of a stay in London following his initial studies for a legal profession, and his participation in a Cape social and cultural life, Brand had a more British outlook than many of the Boer leaders of his time. He was also less avidly republican in his views, although he guarded Free State independence with great passion. He lost some of his popularity with hardliner Boer republicans in his latter years, precisely because of his policy of conciliation with imperial officials in southern Africa.

work for some time to come.¹⁵⁵

As far as the Boers were concerned, Lanyon arrived in Pretoria with a dubious reputation as an autocrat, although *De Volksstem* suggested that the new administrator should perhaps be given a fair chance to take the *volk* into his confidence and prove that he could govern without stringent controls. If he chose to take this path, it warned, he would surely alienate the people even further. A small crowd went out to give the new administrator a somewhat subdued welcome and JR Lys, the *landdrost* of Pretoria,¹⁵⁶ delivered a welcoming address that made mention of the ‘loss’ of Lanyon’s predecessor, a loss, *De Volksstem* was at pains to point out, that had not caused much grief in local circles.¹⁵⁷ But if the Boer population was looking for a less draconian administrator, it was to be sorely disappointed. To his father Lanyon had been particularly blunt on his arrival in the Transvaal, expressing his satisfaction that in Pretoria he would be the head of a ‘simple dictatorship’. He refused to be dragged down by politically illiterate Boers, people who, like children, should not be placed in a position they were unequipped to handle; they could not be expected to take informed decisions.¹⁵⁸ Although the Boers were probably not yet aware of Lanyon’s attitude about granting limited constitutional freedom to colonists, he had already made it clear in Griqualand West that as far as he was concerned governance of a British colony should be entrusted to unfettered colonial authority.¹⁵⁹ Here Lanyon clearly meant that he planned to interpret Colonial Office policy as stringent colonial authority – a convenient guise for his own authoritarianism.

Lanyon was duly sworn in as administrator of the Transvaal Colony in Pretoria on 4 March

¹⁵⁵ TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 24 February 1879.

¹⁵⁶ The administration of the Transvaal, in accordance with Shepstone’s undertaking in April 1877, still had a distinctly Dutch character. Many of the pre-annexation appointments such as those of the *landdrosts* were still in place and the magistrates’ courts were still known as the *landdrost* courts.

¹⁵⁷ *De Volksstem*, ‘Aankomst van Kolonel Lanyon’, 4 March 1879.

¹⁵⁸ TA, A596, vol 13, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 27 August 1878.

¹⁵⁹ NAD, Shepstone Collection, A96/33, Lanyon – Shepstone, 16 September 1878. See also Chapters II and III.

1879.¹⁶⁰ His first letter home was a hasty note written a month later, explaining that he had been frantically busy dealing with all the necessary formalities. He found time only to comment on the Boer population about whom he made his customary unflattering comments. He told his father that they were ‘semi-civilised wind-bags and require sorely to be pricked’, and he sensed that they were in a ‘goodly funk’ about his arrival.¹⁶¹ He was also busy making arrangements for Frere’s impending visit – about which he had been informed while in Natal – and settling into Government House on the northwestern corner of Andries and Schoeman Streets.¹⁶² Lanyon does not comment on what he thought of his new home or of Pretoria, but Wolseley did some months later in his diary:

Govt. House here is a nice little place with a garden and an orchard around it. The rooms are very good & it has a comfortable air around it. Every house here has its garden & as the hedges are almost all of rose bushes, now in blossom the effect is very pleasant.¹⁶³

In 1879 Pretoria was to all accounts a pleasing little town covering barely three square kilometres. It was home to about 4 000 people, of whom an estimated 2 250 were white, and was the capital of a sparsely populated Transvaal of some 814 930 inhabitants. The overwhelming majority, about 760 000 in total, were Africans. The local Pretoria press comprised *De Volksstem*, which appeared in both Dutch and English editions and had a circulation of about 700, and an English language newspaper, *The Transvaal Argus and Commercial Gazette*. *The Argus* had a small circulation of about 300 in 1878, but its readership increased over the next few years as a steady trickle of people of British descent settled in the town and began to dominate the commercial sector of the district.¹⁶⁴

Lanyon, who initially was military head of the Transvaal forces as well as administrator, lost no

¹⁶⁰ TA, ZAR/55, *Transvaal Government Gazette*, 4 March 1879; C 2367, no 9, Lanyon – Hicks Beach, 27 March 1879. Lanyon’s appointment was officially that of acting administrator until 4 June 1880 when he received the documentation for his permanent appointment. He then took the oath of office as administrator on 15 June 1880; Ibid, ZAR/56, *Transvaal Government Gazette*, 4 June and 15 June 1880.

¹⁶¹ TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 4 April 1879.

¹⁶² L Dunston, *Young Pretoria, 1889-1913* (Pretoria, 1975), p 308. After the British victory at Ulundi on 4 July 1879, some months subsequent to Lanyon’s arrival in Pretoria, it became known as Ulundi House.

¹⁶³ Preston, *The South African diary of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 124.

¹⁶⁴ PRO, CO 476, Blue Book of Statistics, Transvaal Colony, 1878; F Jeppe, *Transvaal book almanac and directory for 1881* (Pietermaritzburg, 1881), p 39; AM Davey, *The siege of Pretoria 1880-1881*, AYB, I (Pretoria, 1956), pp 271-272.

time in improving the defence capability of Pretoria, prompted by the news, widely reported in *De Volksstem*, that the Boers were organising a meeting of the *volk* for 18 March 1879. Lanyon claimed that there were indications of the Boers' aggressive intent because they were gathering fully armed and were refusing entry to their camp to anyone who was 'not of their way of thinking'. Furthermore Lanyon made the allegation – one that he made repeatedly in the following months¹⁶⁵ – that some of the Boers had tried to 'incite the natives, both friendly and neutral, to join them in this agitation against Her Majesty's rule'. He also claimed to have reliable information that the Boers were talking of the possibility of entering Pretoria in small parties during the night with the purpose of hoisting the republican flag.¹⁶⁶ With the help of JR Lys and the commander of the British forces in the Transvaal, Colonel Hugh Rowlands, Lanyon therefore organised that the government buildings on Church Square, the government stables and the gaol were equipped to fend off such an attack. He also appointed a number of spies and arranged for the formation of a local citizen force of 500 men for Pretoria's defence.¹⁶⁷

The Boers were meanwhile making plans to hold a meeting to discuss the form their protest against the British annexation would take, particularly in the light of the fact that Frere was due to arrive in the Transvaal shortly to hold discussions with their leaders. The elected *volkskomitee*, the people's committee, under the chairmanship of MW Pretorius, had the initial task of reporting back to the people on the outcome of Joubert's meeting with Frere the previous month. The high commissioner had made it abundantly clear that at the coming discussions he would be prepared to discuss the granting of representative institutions and the issue of British help against the Zulu in the border area, but the question of the reinstatement of Boer independence was specifically excluded from the agenda. Britain was not, under any circumstances, going to return the Transvaal to the Boers and the sooner they accepted this, he said, the better for all

¹⁶⁵ See for example TA, Administrator of the Transvaal Colony, (hereafter ATC)/5, Lanyon – Kimberley, 1 February 1881.

¹⁶⁶ C 2367, enclosure 2, no 24, Lanyon – Frere, 13 April 1879, pp 58-59.

¹⁶⁷ PRO, CO291/2, Lanyon – Hicks Beach, 2 April 1879, and minute by Lanyon, 18 March 1879. Colonel William Bellairs subsequently took over from Lanyon as military leader of the Transvaal.

concerned.¹⁶⁸

By 18 March 1879, despite heavy rains over the previous two days, a large crowd of Boers had arrived at Kleinfontein, a farm about 36 miles from Pretoria on the Heidelberg road. Estimates of the number of people who attended vary from 2 000 to as many as 5 000.¹⁶⁹ In his subsequent report to Frere, Lanyon claimed that this latter estimate was grossly exaggerated, and that in any case, intimidation had been used to force people to join the throng.¹⁷⁰ The question of regaining independence from Britain dominated the proceedings. With two failed deputations to Britain already behind them, the Boers had not budged one iota from their stance that the restoration of their independence had been, and still was, their priority.¹⁷¹

Frere, who was still making his way from Natal into the Transvaal, did not arrive in time for the Kleinfontein meeting, but Lanyon agreed to attend. However, he refused to join the throng of rank and file Boers, indicating instead that he was prepared to meet with some of their chosen delegates.¹⁷² This meeting was held just off the Heidelberg Road, some 22 km from Pretoria, on 24 March 1879. Lanyon was accompanied by his private secretary, CE Steele, and two interpreters who helped him with the intricacies of the Dutch language. The Boer pleas centred on the possibility of regaining independence and Lanyon, in the same vein as other British officials, was immovable on this issue. He pointed out that the Boers should surely no longer be in any doubt that Britain was there to stay. He then launched into the arguments which he repeated with monotonous regularity throughout his term of office in the Transvaal. The Boers had, according to him, proved hopelessly unequal to the challenges of self rule and it had

¹⁶⁸ See for example FS, GS 1283, Frere – Brand, 9 January 1879, in which Frere writes that the Boers should ‘feel assured that any revocation of the annexation by Her Majesty’s Government is now impossible’. See also PRO, CO291/2, Frere – Hicks Beach, 19 May 1879. Carnarvon had given the same reply to the first delegation to Britain, and Hicks Beach had said the same to the second delegation.

¹⁶⁹ *The Transvaal Argus and Commercial Gazette*, 22 March 1877; Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, p 104.

¹⁷⁰ C 2367, enclosure 2, no 24, Lanyon – Frere, 13 April 1879, pp 58-59.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, Sub-enclosure 1 in enclosure no 2, no 24, Frere – Hicks Beach, 14 April 1879, pp 59-61.

¹⁷² *De Volksstem*, 25 March, 1879. MW Pretorius, SJP Kruger, PJ Joubert and 19 committee members conferred with Lanyon.

therefore been necessary for Britain to rescue them in 1877, to rescue them, indeed, from themselves and the Zulu. He then went on to outline the great advantages of British rule. Transvalers should, in a word, be grateful for what they had gained, rather than carping about what they had irretrievably lost through their own ineptitude. Kruger's attempts to fill Lanyon in on what the Boers felt were the true circumstances about the annexation fell on deaf ears.¹⁷³

Lanyon's assurances that Frere would be prepared to discuss the matter of introducing a liberal constitution when he met the Boers a few days later, did little to mollify the Boers. Joubert pointed out that this would not give them back their independence, nor would it address the fact that British annexation had been in flagrant violation of the terms of the Sand River Convention, a binding document granting the Boers independence, to which Britain had affixed her signature in 1852. The meeting ended with both sides claiming that the other had been misinformed, and Lanyon refusing to be drawn on whether Frere would be prepared to reopen the debate on independence in the impending discussion. He could merely confirm that the high commissioner was already on his way to the Transvaal from Natal and would be meeting them as soon as it could be arranged.¹⁷⁴

This was hardly an auspicious start – less than three weeks into his term of office – to Lanyon's relations with the 'disaffected Boers', but on the other hand, the minutes taken during the meeting indicate that between the two parties there had been a frank and open discussion which had cleared the air. This was something which Shepstone, who had always held his cards notoriously close to his chest, had never deigned to do. Instead he had stubbornly insisted, despite all evidence to the contrary, that the Boer leaders did not represent the majority opinion among the settlers in the Transvaal, and that the 'people' were solidly behind British rule.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ PRO, CO 291/2, Interview between Lanyon and 'People's Committee', 24 March 1879, enclosure in Frere – Hicks Beach, 14 May 1879. Minutes were taken during the meeting and were subsequently published in both Dutch and English in the *Transvaal Government Gazette*, 27 March 1879. See also Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, pp 105-106.

¹⁷⁴ TA, T/55, *Transvaal Government Gazette*, 27 March 1879; *De Volksstem*, 25 March and 1 April 1879.

¹⁷⁵ See for example PRO, Carnarvon Papers, 30/6/23, Shepstone – Carnarvon, 23 July 1877; *Ibid*, 30/6/38, Shepstone – Bulwer, 7 February 1877; NAD, A96/79, Shepstone – Frere, 23 November 1877.

It could be argued that although Lanyon had barely had time to settle into Government House, he had seen the Boers for what they were: stubborn, uncomplicated people who nevertheless had passionately strong convictions and who could be mobilised by highly motivated, intelligent leaders. That he chose to close his eyes to the danger they presented in commitment to their ideals, was due to his own obduracy rather than the cunning or concealment of their true colours by the Boer delegates. For their part, the Transvalers also had a reasonably accurate picture of what they were up against in the person of the new administrator. They probably recognised immediately that he was likely to be an unbending official in the mould of what De Kiewiet calls the 'military tradition of government', one who was likely to be both aggressive and peremptory.¹⁷⁶ All these fears were to be realised as the months passed and Lanyon's administrative system took on a distinctively regimented appearance. The Boers were also well aware that he was a military man, fresh from Griqualand West, where he had successfully quashed the rebellious Griqua, who, like the Boers were well armed and accurate shots. The Boers were canny even if, as Lanyon was wont to point out, they were 'backward and uncouth'.¹⁷⁷ And in the course of time Lanyon was to be proved mistaken in his belief that they were full of brag, but lacked the courage to act.¹⁷⁸ Moreover, the Boer leaders knew only too well that with the power of the imperial army to back up his opinionated words, Lanyon would be an extremely hard nut to crack. But they also knew that imperial troops moved very slowly, that British reinforcements took a long time to arrive, and that while an overwhelming number of imperial troops were virtually unstoppable in open terrain, if they could be lured between rocky outcrops, a comparatively small force of hidden sharpshooters could cause havoc in their ranks.

Owen Lanyon and Bartle Frere in the Transvaal

Owen Lanyon and the people of the Pretoria district awaited Frere's visit with great anticipation.

¹⁷⁶ De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, p 57.

¹⁷⁷ TA, ATC/5, Lanyon – Kimberley, 1 February 1881. In this lengthy, very detailed and poorly argued vindication of his unpreparedness for the Boer outbreak in 1880-1881, Lanyon describes the Boers in a most unfavourable light, using adjectives such as 'backward', 'uneducated', 'gullible', 'ignorant', 'barbaric' and 'uncivilised'. The memorandum was written while he was trapped in Pretoria during the Boer siege of the capital, and judging by its length, Lanyon obviously had plenty of time to while away.

¹⁷⁸ See for example TA, A596, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, vol 14, 10 February, 4 April, 26 September, 14 November 1879; *Ibid*, vol 15, 22 November 1880.

For months Frere had been indicating to Hicks Beach and to various Transvalers¹⁷⁹ that he felt it was imperative that he go to the Transvaal. He wanted to assess the position there for himself in the wake of Shepstone's 'drifting do-nothing policy', about which he had been so mercilessly critical.¹⁸⁰ Brand had also urged Frere to consult the Boers before it was too late 'to stem the tide of discontent' and, in their correspondence, Frere had taken the opportunity to consult Brand about suitable representative organs that might be set up in the Transvaal.¹⁸¹ Frere was among the few British officials in southern Africa who felt that serious trouble might be brewing in the region in early 1879, but his preoccupation with Zululand had made it impossible for him to enter discussions with the Boer leaders. He had also, of course, observed the 'intensity of the Boer feeling' against the border commission, and by mid February 1879, with Lanyon about to take over in Pretoria, he felt that the Boers had to be shown that 'we are masters of the situation'.¹⁸² No doubt the very public censure he had to endure after Isandlwana was a bitter pill, but he had recovered his composure and still had no inkling of the humiliation of Wosley's appointment. He was anxious to show the Boers that Britain still had southern African affairs under control; any thought that their chances of independence had been improved by developments in Zululand had to be discounted immediately.¹⁸³

Frere's role as Carnarvon's 'great statesman' was obviously one that he was reluctant to shed, despite the fact that Carnarvon had left the Colonial Office and that hopes of confederation had been dwindling since January 1879. He therefore felt that it was imperative to undertake the journey to the Transvaal and that he 'assist Lanyon in his very difficult task of keeping the Boers

¹⁷⁹ See for example African 176, Frere – Lion Cachet, 28 February 1879, p 42. Frere assured Revd F Lion Cachet of the Transvaal that he would soon be in the colony to meet with deputations from interested parties and to discuss with them 'the future administration of the Transvaal'.

¹⁸⁰ GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, Pcc/2/1, Frere – Hicks Beach, 5 January 1879; Pcc/2/15, Frere – Hicks Beach, 26 March 1879.

¹⁸¹ FS, GS 1283, Frere – Brand, 9 January and 5 February 1879; De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, p 236.

¹⁸² GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, Pcc/2/12, Frere – Hicks Beach, 15 February 1879; Pcc/2/15, Frere – Hicks Beach, 26 March 1879.

¹⁸³ See for example Lanyon's affirmation of this; TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 10 February 1879. Lanyon writes: '... matters are in a critical state there ... the Boers, taking advantage of the troubles on the Zulu border, are making demands for their independence'.

quiet'.¹⁸⁴ He was in perfect agreement with Lanyon that an aggressive stance should be taken in the face of any show of opposition and was convinced that it would be

a great disgrace to throw up the Transvaal because we cannot perform what we undertook when it was annexed, but it would be a still greater misfortune if we had to put down by force opposition which but for our apparent weakness would not be attempted.¹⁸⁵

Having met with the Boers a few weeks earlier and given them some plain answers, Lanyon was concerned that they might adopt a threatening attitude towards the high commissioner, so he rode out towards Heidelberg on 10 April 1879 to meet Frere and guide him safely through the Boer camp.¹⁸⁶ He need not have worried. The Boer leaders had in the meanwhile sent Frere a courteous letter promising that the meeting would be 'quiet and dignified'.¹⁸⁷ The Erasmus farm, some six miles to the east of Pretoria, was chosen as the place for discussions and Lanyon and Frere travelled to Pretoria to prepare themselves for the meeting.¹⁸⁸ In a letter to his sister, Lanyon reported that

He [Frere] passed through it and stopped for a short time; they [the Boers] were very sullen, but they were quiet. Tomorrow we will meet their representatives where they will receive the same reply as they got from me. After that it will remain to be seen what they will do. I don't think they will fight, though one can never be sure what a silly, ignorant lot of people as they are, may be led into doing.¹⁸⁹

Frere had already decided that he was not going to give in to any pressure for independence, but he also had to take the 'gravity of the situation' into consideration. While on his journey through the rural districts of the Transvaal he claimed that many people had approached him to complain about intimidation to compel people to join the malcontents. Because the Colonial Office had refused the Boer requests to hold a plebiscite to prove the wide support they enjoyed, they were clearly hoping to impress upon Frere that the large majority of Transvaal whites were in favour

¹⁸⁴ GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, Pcc/2/15, Frere – Hicks Beach, 26 March 1879.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, Pcc/2/12, Frere – Hicks Beach, 15 February 1879.

¹⁸⁶ TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – his sister Florence, 11 February 1879.

¹⁸⁷ C 2367, enclosure in no 23, Frere – Hicks Beach, 9 April 1879, p 53.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, no 24, Frere – Hicks Beach, 14 April 1879, pp 53-54. The report on the meeting with the Boers at Erasmus farm on the 12 April 1879, and the Boer memorial to the Queen, dated 16 April 1879, are also printed in African 182, pp 1-20.

¹⁸⁹ TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – his sister Florence, 11 February 1879.

of rescinding the annexation, and would accept nothing less.¹⁹⁰

Lanyon had arranged to have a tent pitched at the appointed site and the conference was held there on 12 April 1879. Frere and Lanyon were accompanied by a party of seven, and the Boers were represented by four of their most prominent leaders – MW Pretorius, M Viljoen, SJP Kruger and PJ Joubert – as well as a group of 19 supporters. The polished Frere, who was a skilled speaker and a quick thinker, was well prepared and dominated the discussion completely, putting the Boers on the defensive and avoiding any discussion about British withdrawal from the Transvaal.¹⁹¹ Apparently cowed by Frere's emphatic oratory, and his firm statement that in any case he had no authority to give them back their republic, the Boer delegates tried to argue their case, but Frere would have none of it. He insisted that he would only continue the conference if the discussion turned to the granting of acceptable representative institutions under British rule. Frere went so far as to promise the Boers 'as large a measure of self-government as was enjoyed by any Colony in South Africa',¹⁹² but the leaders were apparently not interested in talk of such concessions. Instead they asked if Frere would be prepared to forward a petition on their behalf to the British government. He agreed to do so, but emphasised that he would under no circumstances add his personal recommendation to what he considered to be an unwarranted and futile request for independence. Frere, Lanyon and their party returned to Pretoria that same afternoon, leaving the Boers to discuss the compilation of the proposed petition and accompanying letter.¹⁹³

At the 12 April 1879 discussions, Lanyon and the other British officials backed Frere's arguments wherever they could, and the minutes show that Lanyon had made an important contribution by way of comments and suggestions. Writing to Hicks Beach after the meeting,

¹⁹⁰ C 2367, no 23, Frere – Hicks Beach, 9 April 1879, p 51. Frere claimed that along the road there was 'unquestionable evidence of the terrorism exercised by the malcontents ... to swell its numbers'.

¹⁹¹ For the Boer reaction to this criticism, discussed at the Kleinfontein meeting on 19th March, see C 2367, Sub-enclosure 1 in enclosure no 2, no 24, Frere – Hicks Beach, 14 April 1879, p 60.

¹⁹² Ibid, no 24, Frere – Hicks Beach, 14 April 1879, p 55. It was Wolseley and Owen Lanyon, once Sir Garnet had superseded Frere's authority in the Transvaal, who implemented so-called representative institutions. These were of very a very limited nature and did not meet with the approval of many Transvalers. See Chapter V.

¹⁹³ C 2367, no 24, Frere – Hicks Beach, 14 April 1879, pp 54-57.

Frere singled Lanyon out for the 'energy he has shown for putting Pretoria in a state of defence as well as his temper and judgement in dealing with these excited and misguided people'. Despite the fact, said Frere, that prior to Lanyon's arrival the government of the country was 'virtually in abeyance' outside the capital, he was convinced that Lanyon would rectify the situation and that under his exemplary and 'vigorous rule, law would assert its authority' in the Transvaal.¹⁹⁴ Lanyon was proud and pleased with the compliments from the high commissioner and wrote to tell his father how well he had done and what an asset he was to the Colonial Office staff, even if they were tardy in realising it.

Sir Bartle has reported home that I 'averted a civil war by my firmness and conciliation'. It is very kind of him to say so for he had as much to do with it as I; in about 8 months time possibly the C Office may acknowledge the despatch, though had there been a civil war there would have been no knowing where it would have stopped, and the ministry would have had a rough time of it.¹⁹⁵

On 16, 17 April and 23 April a small Boer delegation of six men held discussions at Government House on the format of the Boer petition that Frere had agreed to hand over to the British government. They also conferred with Frere on the contents of the accompanying letter – stating the Boer case – that Frere had undertaken to write to Sir Michael Hicks Beach. Again Lanyon was present, and a perusal of the minutes makes it clear that he asked some leading questions and made a meaningful contribution to the discussion.¹⁹⁶ To Frere's credit, the letter he wrote in fulfilment of his promise to the Boers, was a reasonable summary of the opinions of the *volkskomitee*. At no point did he pass judgement on their arguments. Furthermore, unlike Lanyon and Wolseley who were always free with their denigration of the Boers and their lack of credibility as civilised people, Frere referred to them as respected leaders, whose opinions were worthy of Hicks Beach's 'earnest consideration'.¹⁹⁷ The non-judgemental tone of the letter, which was duly approved by the *volkskomitee* was an important reason why the Boer leaders were able to calm their followers and persuade them to disperse quietly. There must have been some concern about possible trouble because Lanyon was relieved at their orderly departure on 18

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, p 57. See also GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, Pcc/2/17, Frere – Hicks Beach, 25 April 1879.

¹⁹⁵ TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 25 April, 1879.

¹⁹⁶ For the minutes of these meetings, see C 2367, pp 146-149.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, no 36, Frere – Hicks Beach, 17 April 1879, pp 83-84.

April, and wrote home to say that the crisis had been averted.¹⁹⁸

Hicks Beach's assessment of Frere's handling of the Boer agitation in April 1879 is perceptive. In a handwritten minute in the margin of Frere's letter, passed, as was the practice, to each of the senior Colonial Office staff, Hicks Beach made the following comments:

Sir B. Frere has in this matter shown singular coolness and courage in a very trying position. And even if the result has merely been to gain time by referring the matter here again, that alone is a great gain. Any act of violence by the Boers at the present moment would probably have entailed very serious consequences, and at the best would have added immensely to the difficulties of a situation already sufficiently grave.¹⁹⁹

In retrospect, had Lanyon been less blinded by crass prejudice some 18 months later he might have paused to learn from Frere on how to handle the Boers. The contrast between the Boers' attitude to Frere and that towards Lanyon is quite marked. The Boers clearly had far more respect for Frere than for the administrator. Perhaps Frere's seniority, age, reputation and urbane manner had a great deal to do with this, but his handling of the Boers and his recognition of them as people who were entitled to respect, was also important.²⁰⁰ Lanyon was far less conciliatory; he had pre-judged them as worthless and uncivilised and stubborn without listening to what they had to say. Had he endeavoured to see the merits of another point of view, even while holding a diametrically opposite opinion, the explosive situation that developed in November and December 1880, particularly as there was a new government in power in Britain, might conceivably have been peaceably averted. In the event, the responsible imperial agent in the Transvaal could hardly have been a more disdainful and dismissive person. One of the most significant flaws in Owen Lanyon's character was becoming increasingly clear: his own point of view was the only one that mattered and to ask or accept advice, or to lean towards another opinion, was to show weakness and thus to become vulnerable. This made him blind to the hidden dangers of pent up resentment that had no avenue for acceptable expression. The paradox here is that Lanyon believed implicitly in imperialist control but translated it into colonial prerogative in policy making; indeed, he appeared to regard imperial and colonial control as one

¹⁹⁸ TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 25 April, 1879.

¹⁹⁹ PRO, CO 291/2, Frere – Hicks Beach, 17 April 1879, minute by Hicks Beach, 30 May 1879.

²⁰⁰ Nowhere in the documents that I have seen is there any indication that the Boers were contemptuous of Lanyon's youth.

and the same thing. This had the effect of weakening imperial authority as relations with the Boers (and others before them) deteriorated.

To return to April 1879. Frere remained in Pretoria with Lanyon until the end of the month. There were important constitutional and administrative issues to discuss, for both men agreed that the Transvalers deserved a better government than they had thus far enjoyed under British rule. Following their discussions, Frere drew up a report which embodied 'the measures which, in consultation with his Excellency Colonel Lanyon, have been devised during my stay in the Transvaal for the preservation of peace, and for the better administration of the territory'. The report was submitted to Hicks Beach in the form of a long letter, dated 6 May 1879. It comprised suggestions for a new constitution with representative organs, and also gave an outline of what Frere and Lanyon had decided about judicial administration, police and gaols, district councils, and the assessment and collection of taxes.²⁰¹

The proposals put forward for a new Transvaal constitution under British control indicate an intriguing combination of the ideas of each man. As has been shown, Lanyon was not in favour of representative bodies. He disliked the idea of being a puppet, of being manipulated by anyone, although he had been willing to further Carnarvon's confederation scheme which embodied a policy that he endorsed. But in truth he preferred to keep rigid autocratic control, confident that this was the best way of getting things done effectively. But the far more experienced Frere must have prevailed upon Lanyon's better judgement; in April 1877 Shepstone had made promises to the Transvalers, and Britain had to make a gesture to deliver on these promises. The Transvalers should be given some form of limited self-rule with a view to their becoming part of a confederation. Frere was still hopeful, despite all indications that this was now a virtual impossibility, that confederation might yet come to pass. The suggestions the two men eventually made fell between two stools. They amounted to very little more than a gesture, and the so-called 'dummy' legislature they recommended was destined, when eventually implemented, to become the cause of a great deal of criticism for the hapless Lanyon.

²⁰¹ African 193, 'Proposed measures for the future administration and preservation of the peace of the Transvaal', Frere – Hicks Beach, 6 May 1879, pp 1-10.

In his report Frere suggested that crown colony rule was the best option for the Transvaal and that an executive council should be formed comprising the administrator, the commander of the troops, the colonial secretary, the attorney general and the secretary of native affairs. This council should also have an additional three non-official members, 'to be selected by the administrator'.²⁰² Frere was, however, tentative about proceeding prematurely to a representative legislature. He and Lanyon were of the opinion that for the present it would be best to make use of a legislature comprising the executive council plus the chief justice and six members – who could be either official or non-official at the discretion of the administrator – to be selected, as were the additional members of the executive, by the administrator.²⁰³

The reaction in the Colonial Office to Frere and Lanyon's proposals for the 'future administration and preservation of the peace of the Transvaal' is interesting. Hicks Beach's conviction, expressed a year previously, that the Boers be granted as much self-government as possible,²⁰⁴ had presumably been tempered in the aftermath of the British setback at Isandlwana. Lanyon could make no move to act on Frere's proposals until given the go ahead. When Frere's letter was circulated for comment in the first week of July 1879, news was breaking that Chelmsford had finally managed to get the better of the Zulu at Ulundi on 4 July, but matters in the region were obviously still in a state of confusion. Fairfield felt it best to delay any decision on a new-look Transvaal administration until there was clarity on the settlement of the Zulu. Bramston provided another talking point – one that Lanyon subsequently acted upon – by suggesting that if several of the Boer leaders could be persuaded to serve, as non-official members, on the proposed executive council, this might be a useful tool to manipulate Boer resistance in the Transvaal.²⁰⁵

His work completed in the Transvaal, and with other regions to visit for similar consultations,

²⁰² Ibid, enclosure 1 in no 1, Minute by Frere, 15 April 1897, p 7.

²⁰³ Ibid, Frere – Hicks Beach, 6 May 1879, pp 3-5; Ibid, enclosure 1 in no 1, Minute by Frere, 15 April 1897, pp 7-8.

²⁰⁴ See above.

²⁰⁵ PRO, CO 291/2, no 10661, Proposed measures for the administration and preservation of peace in the Transvaal, minute by Fairfield, 5 July 1879; minute by Bramston, 7 July 1879.

Frere had to move on. It was envisaged that Lanyon would accompany Frere to Kimberley, where the high commissioner would spend time conferring with Charles Warren, who had succeeded Lanyon as administrator of Griqualand West. Lanyon, who admitted to being 'awfully busy' with local matters, was then planning to hasten back to undertake what he felt was a necessary campaign against Sekhukhune. On 1 May 1879 Frere and Lanyon duly set off for Potchefstroom, the first stop on their journey, where they received an enthusiastic welcome from the local British residents. Almost immediately, however, Lanyon received word from Chelmsford that his services were required to organise border defences while the imperial troops advanced into Zululand, and Lanyon had to take his leave of Frere and return hurriedly to Pretoria. Once he had caught up with 'pressing matters', he told his father, he would go to Utrecht.²⁰⁶

Frere's visit to the Transvaal and the discussions held on the Erasmus farm in April 1879 were something of a turning point in the relations between the British government and the Transvaal Boers. Not only had two Boer delegations to Britain failed to produce any favourable result; now the most senior representative of the British government in southern Africa had effectively ended all hope of a voluntary British hand-over of the Transvaal, and Frere's right-hand man during the proceedings, Owen Lanyon, who was the head of the Transvaal government in Pretoria, had done the same. The Boers must have been bitterly disappointed that they had reached such a low point in their campaign and Lanyon should perhaps have realised that if this setback did not bring their endeavours to a halt, nothing would. When resistance flared up again and the hydra grew several new heads such as a seditious campaign in the press and an organised drive against paying taxes, he should, in retrospect, have been alive to the possibility that armed revolt might be the next step.

After Lanyon had left Griqualand West behind him and embarked upon his Transvaal career, it appears that his attitude towards subject peoples was hardening, and may well have been the root of his failed administrations in both these developing regions in the southern African interior. This is an issue that will now be scrutinised for the years that Lanyon spent in Pretoria. His utter failure to empathise with the Griqua or to understand their resistance to his authoritarianism was

²⁰⁶ TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 25 April and 3 May 1879.

to have parallels in his attitude of disregard towards the Boers and his failure to realise the intensity of their developing nationalism. Furthermore, Lanyon's progress – and lack of progress – is mirrored in that of British rule at the time. And Lanyon's hand is everywhere. The litany of imperial mistakes from the war in Griqualand West to Isandlwana to the Boer War that was about to erupt, did not bode well for Britain's position in South Africa. The prognosis for Lanyon in the Transvaal at the beginning of the 1880s was indeed no better than that for Britain in southern Africa.

CHAPTER V

LANYON IN WOLSELEY'S SLIPSTREAM

For the first of his two years in the Transvaal Lanyon was under close imperial control. At this time, more than any other during his years in South Africa, Lanyon must have felt like a puppet, powerless in the hands of his immediate superior, the high commissioner. Even while Frere retained his full brief over southern Africa, Lanyon probably felt irked by the fact that it was the high commissioner who was making the important decisions in the Transvaal. After being left largely to his own devices in Griqualand West, he now had to take second place. Frere, not Lanyon, had laid down the administrative priorities for the Transvaal,¹ and Lanyon had to wait for these to be sanctioned by the Colonial Office. As will be seen below, Lanyon was to feel even more powerless during the high commissionership of Sir Garnet Wolseley. Then too, quite apart from the stifling presence of the high commissioners, Lanyon was also subject to the dictates of the home government. In 1879 circumstances in the Transvaal were not conducive to great progress and Lanyon faced a difficult task. Shepstone's term of office had left Lanyon hamstrung not only by Boer anger and resentment but also by a lack of public funds, and crippling legislative restrictions which meant that he was only able to rule by proclamation.

As for Lanyon's subjects, there was stout resistance from the Pedi who were struggling to retain their land in the face of colonial pressure. As long as the ownership of land in the region where they lived was under question, Sekhukhune saw no necessity to pay taxes. He had resisted Boer imperialism for years and would not lightly give way to British inroads into his domain. The Boers were also reluctant to pay taxes to a government that they did not recognise, and were becoming more determined to regain their independence. They neither liked nor respected Lanyon, and he did nothing at all to appease them, believing that conciliation was a sign of weakness. Firm control was needed; this was the only way he knew how to rule.

¹ African 193, 'Proposed measures for the future administration and preservation of the peace of the Transvaal', Frere - Hicks Beach, 6 May 1879, pp 1-7, and enclosures, pp 7-10.

It is to Lanyon's credit that under these difficult circumstances, and despite imperial supervision that was often restrictive, he was able to make modest progress in his first six months in Pretoria. However, it was not long before he had to adapt to another twist of fate. London saw fit to remove the disgraced Bartle Frere's control over the eastern regions of southern Africa, and to appoint Wolseley as high commissioner of South-East Africa and governor of Natal and the Transvaal.

For Lanyon, Wolseley's appointment had important repercussions. It is the intrigues of colonial power – the politics of colonial authority in which the jockeying for position made Lanyon a lieutenant to Wolseley – that come to the fore in this chapter and the next. The imperial strings were very evident in the appointment of Wolseley, and Lanyon felt them keenly. The new high commissioner, not only outranked Lanyon by far, but the small general was a flamboyant person who loved the limelight. While he was in the Transvaal from the end of September 1879 until April 1880, he completely outshone Lanyon, who was not by nature outgoing or attention seeking. But this is not to say that Lanyon had no role to play while Wolseley was in Pretoria. Wolseley took all the credit for the more public imperial achievements in the Transvaal, but it was Lanyon who beavered away in the high commissioner's slipstream, keeping the administration going and putting colonial controls in place. In some cases Lanyon functioned in accordance with Wolseley's instructions, while in others, he showed his considerable skill as an innovator.

Two examples will suffice here and others will become increasingly evident as these two chapters unfold. Firstly, it was Wolseley who arrived in the Transvaal with expansive promises of a new constitution for the Transvaal, but it was Lanyon who actually did the groundwork and set up the new legislative and executive bodies in March 1880. Secondly and perhaps the most striking evidence of Lanyon's contribution was that although Wolseley conquered Sekhukhune in a blaze of glory in November 1879, it was Lanyon – after Wolseley had left the Transvaal – who implemented imperial controls over the polity in June 1880. He was the imperial official who subjugated the Pedi in line with the dictates of the rising new capitalist political economy.

The administrative challenge: getting started

In the first six months in the Transvaal, from early March until September 1879, before Wolseley burst into Pretoria, Lanyon was able to make some progress in streamlining the shaky administrative system of the Transvaal. Frere had told Hicks Beach that the Transvalers were entitled to a 'strong, firm and well-established Government of some sort', and he was confident that Lanyon's 'firm yet conciliatory rule' would do the trick.² Lanyon was to be guided by Frere's report. The highly autocratic character of the previous administration was the first matter Frere had indicated needed Lanyon's attention, but as sanction from the Colonial Office was needed for this, Lanyon began with reform in other areas. The judicial system, the question of police and gaols, the establishment of district councils and the overhaul of the entire system of tax assessment and collection of public revenue were singled out as his priorities.³ To these Lanyon applied himself with his customary vigour, just as Frere had predicted he would.

More or less as he took over, Lanyon had a crisis on his hands in the form of a blow struck at the rule of law in the Transvaal by the chief justice, JG Kotzé. Like Shepstone before him, Lanyon was faced with a dilemma when it came to the question of whether or not, as administrator, he was empowered to introduce new legislation in the Transvaal. The controversy had started two years earlier, in May 1877, no more than a few weeks after the annexation of the Transvaal. Kotzé, the republican chief justice, continued in his office after the annexation. In May he ruled that Shepstone was not empowered to 'alter or abrogate existing laws', but only to issue proclamations of an administrative nature. Kotzé maintained that although the Transvaal had come under British control, this had not been by 'conquest, occupancy or cession', and therefore Shepstone's proclamation of 12 April 1877 and the undertakings given in this proclamation were still binding. Shepstone had put it down in black and white, and signed it to boot, that as a colony, the Transvaal would remain a 'separate Government with its own laws and its own legislature'. He had also promised that the laws in force in the republic would be retained until altered by a 'competent legislative authority'.⁴ The law officers of the crown, when the matter was referred back to London, although expressing a somewhat different view, reluctantly agreed

² Ibid, Frere – Hicks Beach, 6 May 1879, p 4.

³ Ibid, pp 1-7.

⁴ C 1776, Annexation Proclamation, 12 April 1877, pp 157-159.

that the administrator did not have full legislative power and that Shepstone's 'provision for the peace and good government of the Transvaal' would have to be done by way of proclamations.⁵

There the matter rested for two years until it surfaced again early in 1879. There was still no legislative assembly in the Transvaal, although there were plans for one, to be introduced later by Wolseley. To Lanyon's anger and frustration similar restrictions were placed on his authority by Kotzé, now Lanyon's chief justice, when he gave his judgement in the case of *White & Tucker v Rudolph*, on 17 May 1879. The dispute arose when Lanyon, in compliance with a request from Colonel Evelyn Wood, the British commander of an imperial force in the Utrecht area, ordered the *landdrost* of Utrecht, GM Rudolph, to seize all the supplies of strong drink in the town because Wood felt that liquor was having a disruptive effect on the military preparedness of his soldiers. White and Tucker, who were the licensees, objected strenuously and took the matter to the high court, where the case was heard by Kotzé on 14 May 1879. Using much the same argument he had given two years earlier, Kotzé ruled on 17 May that neither Her Majesty in Council nor her officers in the Transvaal had any authority to legislate or enforce instructions that were binding in the region.⁶ This decision was most unfortunate for Lanyon, coming as it did right at the beginning of his rule, because it cast a shadow of illegality over every move he made. It opened a chink in his armour for his antagonists, and put him on the defensive rather than on his favoured firm, confident front foot.⁷ Inevitably, *De Volksstem* seized upon Lanyon's questionable authority to legislate. The newspaper made much of the fact that the British government had apparently been acting illegally in the Transvaal for more than two years.⁸ The obvious corollary then arose: was the government authorised to tax the Boers? Lanyon could do no more than retain his customary bravado and resign himself to the fact that like Shepstone, he had to rule by way of proclamations until an elective legislative assembly of

⁵ JW Kew, *John Gilbert Kotzé and the chief justiceship of the Transvaal*, AYB, 2 (Pretoria, 1984), pp 172-176; Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, p 46.

⁶ On the issue of legislative authority in the Transvaal and the attitude of the British government see African 204, no 17, Hicks Beach – Lord High Chancellor, 28 July 1879, p 35.

⁷ Lanyon reported to Hicks Beach that as an outcome of the debate over the rule of law and Kotzé's judgement, the situation was very difficult and there was 'no one in the Transvaal who can say for certain what is the state of the law on any particular point'; TA, ATC/3, Lanyon – Hicks Beach, 1 June 1879, p 202.

⁸ *De Volksstem*, 27 May 1879.

Transvalers was constituted.

No sooner had this particular constitutional crisis passed than word came through to Lanyon from Hicks Beach at the end of May 1879 that Garnet Wolseley had been appointed 'to take chief command of the military forces in South Africa, and at the same time to hold the chief civil authority in the Transvaal and in Natal, and to discharge the duties of High Commissioner in the adjacent territories'.⁹

There had been a great deal of debate in the Colonial Office and British governmental circles generally, in the aftermath of the January 1879 defeat of the British at Isandlwana. As has been shown, ignominious defeat at the hands of the Zulu was a turning point in British colonial policy in southern Africa,¹⁰ but as Benyon so graphically puts it, although 'the fatal cancer that Isandlwana had implanted in the vitals of confederation was of slow growth',¹¹ some emergency measures had to be taken to make sure it did not die too publicly.

The first and most obvious method of damage control was to find someone to blame, and here Frere, who had so ardently pursued the removal of the 'Zulu obstacle' in order to further federation, was the prime target. The obvious failure of British policy in the Transvaal and the growing danger of a Boer revolt¹² was arguably one of the major reasons why Frere had instigated a war with the Zulu in the face of the very explicit wishes of the home government.¹³ Despite his vast experience and lofty reputation, Frere had been blinded by his passionate belief in the grand design and his policy, 'for all its dynamism, was no more than Carnarvon's policy pricked from a canter to a gallop by the presence in South Africa of a man who combined the

⁹ C 2318, no 20, Hicks Beach – Lanyon, 28 May 1879, p 83.

¹⁰ See Chapter IV, *Isandlwana: the death knell for confederation*.

¹¹ Benyon, *Proconsul and paramountcy*, p 166.

¹² Hicks Beach had reported to Frere in mid-1878 that the second Boer deputation had been most insistent that they wanted their independence back. He was afraid that they might even resort to arms if not given a sop in the form of representative institutions. Frere was thus very aware that trouble was brewing, trouble which might endanger the realisation of confederation.

¹³ Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African federation*, p 165; Cope, *Ploughshare of war*, pp 233-234.

authority to initiate with the capacity to execute'.¹⁴ Frere had convinced himself that when the Zulu were defeated and Zululand was safely annexed, a federation of southern African states would fall neatly into place. Despite Hicks Beach's frantic efforts to curb Frere's relentless pursuance of a Zulu war, Frere had gone ahead anyway. As the secretary of state explained in a letter to Disraeli, 'I have impressed this view on Sir B. Frere ... to the best of my power, but I cannot really control him without a telegraph – (I don't know that I could, with one) ...'.¹⁵ Frere had simply decided that he was not going to be stopped, and the unexpected Zulu attack at Isandlwana rocked the British presence in southern Africa back on its heels.

Disraeli's cabinet was under great pressure to salvage its position. The British government had been quick to point out that there was no blame at its door: it had sent out all the troops that had been requested. Frere became the obvious scapegoat. In both the Lords and the Commons, there was acrimonious comment and much debate, and Hicks Beach was hard pressed to defend the highly unauthorised action Frere had taken in South Africa.¹⁶ And the always outspoken British press was relentless in its criticism. In Natal, however, the urbane high commissioner recovered his composure remarkably quickly and sent in a calm request for more regiments; it was just a matter of time, he said, before the Zulu would bow to imperial Britain. But Frere could not pass off this grave error so easily, for all his smooth protestations of the absolute rectitude of his actions. Due to the intercession of Hicks Beach, who had to go to great lengths to extol Frere's great success elsewhere, and apparently even had to call on all his influence with Disraeli, Frere was not immediately recalled.¹⁷ Instead he was virtually sidelined by the appointment, on 23 May 1879 of the 46 year-old Sir Garnet Wolseley as high commissioner for South-East Africa.¹⁸

In making this decision, Disraeli had effectively removed the authority of both Frere and Chelmsford. Once Wolseley arrived in Pietermaritzburg, Frere's powers would be restricted to

¹⁴ Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African confederation*, p 166.

¹⁵ GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, Pcc/13, Hicks Beach – Disraeli, 3 November 1878.

¹⁶ Hicks Beach, *Life of Sir Michael Hicks Beach*, pp 130-132.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, pp 128-130.

¹⁸ H Kochanski, *Sir Garnet Wolseley, Victorian hero* (London, 1999), pp 97-98.

Cape affairs and Chlelmsford was outranked by the 'super general', the opinionated, outspoken Wolseley, who could be relied upon to get things done in a hurry. His reputation 'to gallop through everything as if he were God Almighty,'¹⁹ was well known. He had little time for Bartle Frere, whom he frequently referred to in his personal letters to his wife Louisa,²⁰ and in his diary, as 'Bottle Beer'.²¹ Wolseley was apparently indifferent to Frere's humiliation in South Africa after May 1879. Indeed it appears that he might even have enjoyed it. Until Frere specifically asked for information on the settlement of the Zulu and the situation in the Transvaal, Wolseley gave him none, and when he did write to Frere his tone was not one of respect to a distinguished colleague, although these letters were signed off 'very truly yours'.²² In his diary Wolseley recorded:

I sometimes think that Frere is going off his head: at least he has certainly begun to write silly despatches, and my position here in complete independence of him seems to have soured his temper & to make him fretful like an injured old maid. I fancy the Govt. will have to recall him sooner or later, the sooner the better if they don't want to run any more risks of expensive wars.²³

That Wolseley was such an abrasive go-getter served to rub even more salt in the wounds of the dignified Frere, who wrote privately to Hicks Beach to protest. He felt injured at the slur the new appointment had cast on his good name, and considered that the whole issue could have been handled with more sensitivity. His position had, in effect, been reduced to that of governor of the Cape Colony'.²⁴

¹⁹ Quoted in Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, p 127.

²⁰ Garnet Wolseley is a biographer's delight. I trust I may be forgiven for introducing a lighter note by recording that in his letters (to be found at Hove, Wolseley Papers, WP 8/1-39 and WP 9/1-19) to his wife while he was in South Africa in 1879-1880, Wolseley addressed Louisa variously as: Dearest little woman; Darling Loo; Dear little whipper snapper; Dearest little owl; Dearest little periwinkle; Dearest little spider and Darling little tiddly wink. He was clearly very fond indeed of her, although he did remark in one of his letters that he loved her despite the fact that 'you do pitch into me sometimes'.

²¹ See for example Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 272; Hove. Garnet Wolseley Papers, WP 9/18 ii, Wolseley – Louisa Wolseley, 18 April 1880.

²² See for example Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Frere, 6 November 1879, in which Wolseley expresses his irritation that Frere failed to contact him by telegram on a certain matter. See also Wolseley – Frere, 11 November 1879 and 9 December 1879. In the letter of 9 December, Wolseley reacts angrily to Frere's allegation that one of Wolseley's staff had caused an unflattering report about Frere to be written in the *London Times*. Wolseley's defence is one of attack; he blames Frere for being behind the criticism of his Zulu settlement.

²³ Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 111.

²⁴ GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, Pcc/2/22, Frere – Hicks Beach, 21 June 1879.

In Zululand, meanwhile, Lord Chelmsford was left to grind away at his task of subduing the Zulu by force of imperial arms and finally at Ulundi in July 1879, he was able to defeat the Zulu conclusively and thus save his tarnished image. Wolseley, to his great irritation, arrived just too late to claim any credit for Chelmsford's imperial victory; Wolseley's own piece of military glory in southern Africa had to wait until later in 1879 when he orchestrated a British victory over Sekhukhune's Pedi in the Transvaal. But before moving north to join Lanyon in Pretoria, Wolseley was charged with engineering the post-war Zulu settlement. Zululand was not to be annexed after all, which was a sure sign that Frere's opinion no longer held much credibility in Whitehall or the Colonial Office, and that British policy was losing its momentum in South Africa. Indeed, from a British point of view, 'the settlement of Zululand was an act of scuttle', and Hicks Beach had made it perfectly clear to Wolseley that expansion in the region was no longer on the British agenda.²⁵

Lanyon was not at all pleased by the news that Wolseley was soon due to arrive in the Transvaal in a temporary capacity²⁶ to straighten out matters on behalf of the Colonial Office. He was fully confident that he needed no help and was handling his brief in the Transvaal very competently.²⁷ Lanyon was one of Frere's staunch admirers, although Wolseley's statements that Lanyon was 'completely under Frere's thumb' and that he was 'completely spell bound by him',²⁸ were probably somewhat exaggerated, as were many of the statements Wolseley habitually made. Certainly Lanyon expressed his great dismay to his father at the news that Frere was to be sidelined and Wolseley was to take over as high commissioner for South-East Africa. Lanyon was in Sekhukhuneland when the news came through, but in his letters home, once he returned

²⁵ De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, pp 246-247.

²⁶ Wolseley was determined that he would only be in the Transvaal for a few months and would leave for home by the end of 1879. Despite frequent complaints that he had finished his work and wanted to return to England, Hicks Beach kept him in the Transvaal until April 1880; Hove, *Wolseley Papers*, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 3 September 1879; WP 8/24 i Wolseley – Louisa Wolseley, 11 September 1879; WP 9/1 ii, Wolseley – Louisa Wolseley, 2 January 1880.

²⁷ TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 16 May 1879.

²⁸ Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, pp 130, 201. Wolseley also claims that there was a rumour that Lanyon was engaged to Frere's daughter; there is no evidence that this was true. Had there been any substance to this piece of gossip, some mention would surely have been made of the relationship in Lanyon's letters to his father.

to Pretoria, he accused Wolseley of ‘throwing stones all round since he came out without in the least knowing where they would fall or having any cause for their being hurled’.²⁹ ‘Things are not going pleasantly with us here’, he wrote,

The ministry has made a grand mistake, they have turned out two excellent and experienced men [in Frere and Chelmsford] and have substituted one who knows nothing of the position, and who further was wholly untried as a politician. They have also put up the backs of the Colonists, and effectively spoked the wheel of confederation.³⁰

In marked contrast, Lanyon was full of praise for Frere, whom he felt had been ‘set upon by Sir M H-B in a very unfair way’,³¹ Lanyon was full of praise:

... he is one of the most able and conscientious men I have ever met. He has more statesmanship and ability in his little finger than his successor has in his whole body, and I think I can set up as being a judge having served under both.³²

Not only did Lanyon criticise Wolseley for the early implementation of his new brief in South Africa, he also cast aspersions on what he saw as the general’s unscrupulous publicity-seeking tactics. Lanyon alleged that Wolseley had manipulated the press through the appointment of his personal staff as correspondents of leading British newspapers. St Leger Herbert, who was Wolseley’s private secretary, and Captain Biggs were writing for the *Times*, while Captain F Maurice was on the *Daily News*, Colonel Henry Brackenbury on the *Standard* and another of Wolseley’s cronies, WH Russell, was writing for the *Daily Telegraph*. Lanyon remarked sourly that he had no doubt that ‘they will make him [Wolseley] out the most successful general ever made, in the hopes that they may get a lift up by holding on to his coat-tails’.³³ To say that Lanyon was bitter about Wolseley’s appointment is putting it mildly. To someone as anxious to collect ‘kudos’ as Lanyon was, it is ironic that he could complain so bitterly that

I very much fear that there is too much grasping after kudos and too great a desire to reap the credit of everything in South Africa in the actions of the present regime, and consequently everything likely to result in kudos is reserved for the carrying out of the one great man.³⁴

²⁹ TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 11 July 1879.

³⁰ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 24 July 1879.

³¹ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 5 September 1879.

³² Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 15 August 1879. Lanyon had previously served under Wolseley in the Ashanti campaign of 1873-1874. See Chapter I.

³³ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 15 August 1879.

³⁴ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 29 August 1879.

As Wolseley, rather than Frere, was to be Lanyon's new guiding hand, Lanyon was not to implement any of the changes outlined by Frere, particularly those of a constitutional nature, until Wolseley arrived. For the rest Lanyon could follow the general directions Frere had plotted for the Transvaal and wait for Wolseley's input.³⁵ Wolseley had been asked to proceed to the Transvaal as soon as it was convenient for him to do so, to provide this guidance for Lanyon. Hicks Beach was also very careful not to ruffle Lanyon's feathers – or indeed those of Bulwer in Natal either³⁶ – and had told both men that Wolseley's temporary appointment to settle matters in Zululand and the adjacent territories in no way indicated a lack of confidence on the part of the Colonial Office in the excellent work the two men were doing in their respective posts.

While waiting for Wolseley's arrival, Lanyon undertook important preparatory work. He conducted a census to establish the population of each district and appointed more *landdrosts* for better control.³⁷ These officials acted as magistrates to enforce the law and also dealt with local administrative matters. The existing republican system of *landdrosts* had been retained by Shepstone, with many of the Dutch incumbents keeping their posts, a tradition Lanyon decided to keep in place. He also took steps to promote education in the Transvaal and by September 1879 the number of state schools had been increased substantially.³⁸

To ensure that the annexation promise to accord equal status to the Dutch language was met, Lanyon sent out a circular to establish the language proficiency of his staff. His investigation revealed that of the 88 officials, 21 were British, 21 were Hollanders and 21 were Cape colonials.

³⁵ Frere had provided detailed instructions on the form of the proposed executive and legislative councils in a letter to Hicks Beach compiled after consultations with Lanyon in Pretoria in April 1879. He had also in fact given Lanyon permission to go ahead with setting up the proposed executive council, although he had told him to delay with the introduction of the legislative body until he received official sanction from the Colonial Office. Hicks Beach's announcement of Wolseley's appointment at the end of May 1879 came with instructions to Lanyon that he should hold any pursuance of plans for the new constitution until Wolseley arrived. Interestingly, the representative bodies Wolseley finally introduced were exactly the same as those devised by Frere and Lanyon in April 1879. See African 193, 'Proposed measures for the future administration and preservation of the peace of the Transvaal', Frere – Hicks Beach, 6 May 1879, pp 1-7, and enclosures, pp 7-10.

³⁶ C 2318, no 19, Hicks Beach – Bulwer, 28 May 1879, p 83.

³⁷ African 193, Frere – Hicks Beach, 6 May 1879, pp 6-7.

³⁸ TA, ATC/3, no 148, Lanyon – Hicks Beach, 24 September 1879. The acting superintendent of education was HS Bosman, one of Pretoria's most widely respected ministers of religion.

There were also six officials from Natal,³⁹ nine Transvalers and ten Germans. Only 14 had no Dutch at all, and most had been placed where proficiency in Dutch was unnecessary.⁴⁰ JAVorster claims that Lanyon's statistics do not tell the whole story, and that there is evidence that in the treasury department and the supreme court the business of the day was conducted entirely in English. To the irritation of the Boers the landdrosts issued receipts in English, and only in the case of the surveyor general's department was Dutch used more or less exclusively.⁴¹ Lanyon himself was not conversant in Dutch, although in one of his letters to his father he writes that 'owing to the number of Dutch speaking people, officials must know that language, and I am myself learning it, for I find it is essential'.⁴²

The majority of *landdrosts*, including those appointed by Lanyon, were local Dutch-speaking Transvalers. The efficient and orderly collection of taxes was the responsibility of the *landdrosts* in each district, a duty that proved particularly onerous since many of them sympathised with the Boer cause and with the growing Boer habit of making non-payment of tax a means of expressing dissatisfaction towards the government.⁴³ Lanyon decided therefore that absolute loyalty of everyone on the government payroll, including those in the districts, was imperative. Shepstone had initiated the idea of civil servants taking an oath of allegiance but had not pursued it effectively. Now under Lanyon, officials were summarily informed that if they had not yet done so they were required to take the oath,⁴⁴ the argument being that they would then be unable to participate in the Boer protest movement. Had Lanyon been more sensitive to human nature he would have realised that to be forced to take such an oath detracted from its very significance,

³⁹ These statistics appear to contradict the claim that Shepstone had appointed many Natalians on his Transvaal staff, but it is worth noting that several of the most senior posts were indeed held by people from Natal including Shepstone's son, Henrique, the secretary of native affairs and WB Morcom, who Lanyon appointed as attorney general.

⁴⁰ TA, SS 345, R 1877/79, Memorandum by Lanyon, 5 June 1879.

⁴¹ JA Vorster, *Die Engelse administrasie van die Transvaal gedurende die eerste anneksasie-periode 1877-1881* (MA, UP, 1951), p 65.

⁴² TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 16 May 1879.

⁴³ See Chapter VI for the best documented example of a tax dispute that arose in the Potchefstroom district over the non-payment of tax by PL Bezuidenhout.

⁴⁴ PRO, CO 291/3, no 67, Lanyon – Wolseley, 15 July 1879.

and was bound to arouse vehement opposition. Demanding a compulsory oath was an indication of weak rather than strong administration, and the measure was greeted with scorn by the man on the street. There were a number of Boer officials who refused to comply and handed in their resignations. Piet Joubert, who was a justice of the peace and had been appointed by the republican government refused to resign but also declined to take the oath. He maintained that he had taken an oath of allegiance to a government that still, according to Kotzé, had legal standing.⁴⁵ It is significant that Lanyon did not dismiss Joubert or try to make a test case of the issue. Joubert and the Boer leaders must have seen this as a minor victory.

Policing necessarily became one of the pillars of Lanyon's administration, precisely because his whole regime rested on the strict enforcement of controls. His governance became an endless round of putting down Boer sedition and forcing them to pay taxes and arrears; in effect it gradually evolved into a fiscal and police despotism, making Lanyon increasingly unpopular. Frere had suggested that a police force under government control, rather than the one in use, which was based on informal 'burgher responsibility', should be introduced without delay.⁴⁶ However, no such force was ever raised, and presumably Lanyon had to use the military when the law had to be enforced.⁴⁷ In a letter to Hicks Beach, written as he approached Pretoria, Wolseley also stressed the dire necessity of an effective police force, but bemoaned the fact that 'at present we have not the money to support a police force even if we had the necessary legal power to create it'.⁴⁸ It appears that this was yet another aspect of Lanyon's early administration that was hamstrung by his lack of constitutional authority to legislate, and perhaps more importantly, by lack of money.

⁴⁵ Piet Joubert, who held the official post as justice of the peace, was one of the Boers who refused to take the oath of allegiance. He was also, Lanyon added, in arrears with his tax and was refusing to pay, claiming that the government was not authorised to levy taxes. Lanyon 'did not think it prudent to take active steps against him ... until a force is available in the Transvaal to overawe overt measures of opposition'; PRO, CO 291/3, Lanyon – Wolseley, 15 July 1879. See also Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, pp 122-123.

⁴⁶ African 193, Frere – Hicks Beach, 6 May 1879, p 6, and enclosure 4, memorandum by Frere, 28 April 1879, pp 9-10.

⁴⁷ With the Anglo-Zulu War over imperial troops were available for use in the Transvaal.

⁴⁸ Central Library, Hove, East Sussex, (hereafter Hove), Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 25 September 1879.

While in Griqualand West Lanyon had gained the reputation of being capable of pulling a colony out of the red and balancing revenue and expenditure. Indeed his sound financial management was one of the reasons why Hicks Beach had decided to give him the Transvaal post.⁴⁹ Early in March 1879 the British treasury was still reeling from the huge cost of the Anglo-Zulu War and the large bill for the Griqualand West Rebellion had raised eyebrows in Whitehall too.⁵⁰ The whole question of finance was thus a very sensitive issue in the Colonial Office. When Lanyon arrived in the Transvaal he found that his available staff knew little about even the most rudimentary accounting principles such as preparing the estimates. He set to work to improve matters,⁵¹ but it was going to be a slow process.⁵² Nevertheless, due to the 'establishment of a more secure form of government and an improved system of collection and supervision,' the revenue of £82 319 in 1878 was increased to £93 408 in 1879 without a hike in taxation.⁵³ After a year he was proud to report a surplus in revenue over expenditure of nearly £6 000,⁵⁴ writing home that 'so satisfactory a statement of affairs as has been brought within the last 12 months ... though I say it, who oughtn't, I may crow over the past 12 months work ...'.⁵⁵

Lanyon soon discovered that there was 'considerable laxity' in the collection of various forms of taxation.⁵⁶ The system previously used was very irregular and there was no proper assessment

⁴⁹ GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, Pcc/22, Hicks Beach – Frere, 18 July 1878; Hicks Beach, *Life of Sir Michael Hicks Beach*, p 96.

⁵⁰ De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, pp 237-238.

⁵¹ PRO, CO 291/3, Lanyon – Hicks Beach, 15 July 1879, and enclosed memorandum by Lanyon re revenue and expenditure in the Transvaal, 15 July 1879; Ibid, Steele – Lanyon, 11 July 1879.

⁵² Even in December 1880 Lanyon was apologising profusely to Kimberley for the delay in forwarding the Transvaal accounts to the exchequer. He claimed that 'we have greater difficulties to contend against here than in any other colony', including 'incompetent officials' who had been inherited from the 'former government' and the 'drawback of two languages'; TA, ATC/5, no 189, Lanyon – Kimberley, 7 December 1880.

⁵³ Ibid, no 11, Lanyon – Kimberley, 22 February 1881.

⁵⁴ PRO, CO 291/5, no 21, Lanyon – Hicks Beach, 14 February 1880.

⁵⁵ TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 6 March 1880.

⁵⁶ Another form of tax that was payable, and that was also very haphazardly collected, was an import duty of 3s 6d on 100 lbs of goods imported. Traders frequently avoided payment or did not declare exactly how much they received; African 193, Frere – Hicks Beach, 6 May 1879, p 6. In July 1879. Lanyon initiated a more effective system to collect this tax by contacting Bulwer in Natal and organising to have officials

of tax; those who paid their dues did so more or less voluntarily, while those who refused usually managed to get away without paying.⁵⁷ Moreover, the 10 shilling hut tax Africans were obliged to pay was not collected efficiently either, and Sekhukhune's dissatisfaction over settler land claims in what he considered to be Pedi territory was making his subjects increasingly reluctant to part with any tax.⁵⁸ Lanyon decided that it was necessary to establish a new post, that of a revenue commissioner, whose brief would be 'to inquire and report on the mode of assessing, collecting and bringing to account all existing sources of revenue',⁵⁹ and he appointed CES Steele to the position.⁶⁰ Steele subsequently became Lanyon's close adviser on matters financial, and Steele and WB Morcom, the attorney general, who was also one of Lanyon's close confidants, became almost as unpopular among Transvaalers as Lanyon. All three were the butt of merciless criticism at the hands of the local press, particularly *De Volksstem* and its editor, JF Celliers.⁶¹

The militarist in Lanyon was not long in coming to the fore, and he wasted no time in setting up small garrisons in the main Transvaal towns to keep the peace and quell any African or Boer unrest that might arise. Taking his cue from Shepstone and Frere, Lanyon anticipated that his military expertise would soon be called into play against the Pedi polity and on the Transvaal border with Zululand. In the latter region, matters were still in a state of flux as Chelmsford's imperial troops struggled to overcome the Zulu. As far as the Pedi under Sekhukhune were concerned, Lanyon's determination to keep the peace soon saw 'the embers of resistance fanned

based at Durban but paid by the Transvaal government, to monitor incoming goods destined for the Transvaal; NA, GH/791, Lanyon – Bulwer, 17 July 1879.

⁵⁷ African 193, Frere – Hicks Beach, 6 May 1879, pp 6-7; De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, p 237.

⁵⁸ See below for a discussion of the reasons behind Pedi dissatisfaction and the action taken by Lanyon and Wolseley against Sekhukhune in 1879.

⁵⁹ PRO, CO 291/2, Frere – Hicks Beach, 19 May 1879; African 193, Frere – Hicks Beach, 6 May 1879, p 7.

⁶⁰ Wolseley was later to remark that there was a 'good deal of jealousy amongst the officials here regarding Steel's [sic] appointment at a higher salary than that received by any of the other officers of Govt.'; Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 130. See also reference to Lanyon's 'endeavours at all times to push this wretched little man to the front. His appointment was a most injudicious one & has given general offence', *Ibid*, p 201.

⁶¹ Davey, *The siege of Pretoria*, p 273.

into the flame of open revolt'.⁶² The Transvaal needed revenue and Lanyon was determined to collect it, but the state's claim to much of the territory in the north east, land occupied by the Pedi, was questionable, and Sekhukhune argued that if the state's legitimacy was rejected, its right to collect tax also fell away. The Pedi had been under pressure from settler land encroachment for years and festering conflict between white farmers and the Pedi was more or less endemic. Typically, Lanyon did not flinch from enforcing old republican claims to land or from taking aggressive action if he met with any Pedi recalcitrance, but he did appear to be disturbed by the fact that Africans were not permitted to own land under republican law. He pointed out that:

The law that natives cannot hold land is repugnant to the letters patent and British law generally. The sooner it is done away with the better. The question is, what can be done to alter this? Can a proclamation affect a law that is in existence? If so it would be well to take steps at once to do so. I should be obliged by the Attorney-General advising on it.⁶³

Until such time as a legally constituted legislative assembly was set up in the Transvaal, there was nothing Lanyon could do to change an existing republican law, and despite the establishment of the legislative assembly, British rule was ended before the question of African landownership could be brought before it.⁶⁴

Delius sees the larger picture on the fortunes of the Pedi in the 1870s. He maintains that land rights in this region of the Transvaal provided one of the most significant bases for the emergent capitalist order by facilitating the accumulation of land by Transvaal-based individuals and companies, as well as those operating from the other British colonies in South Africa and from

⁶² Delius, *The land belongs to us*, p 221.

⁶³ African 204, enclosure 4 in no 4, memorandum by Osborn: 'Natives holding title to land', 14 March 1879, and minute by Lanyon, 15 March 1879, pp 8-9. As was noted in the discussion of Lanyon's labour regulations in Griqualand West, discussed in Chapter II, *Labour control and recruitment*, the fact that British law prohibited the introduction of any legislation that was made specifically with reference to any indigenous community, was one of the few remaining humanitarian imperatives in British colonial policy of the 1870s.

⁶⁴ The first session of the newly constituted Transvaal legislative assembly was opened on 10 March 1880, and although in his opening address Lanyon mentioned a number of issues that needed urgent attention, changing the law on African land holding was not among them. TA, A596, vol 7, 'Opening address of the first Legislative Assembly' by His Excellency Colonel W Owen Lanyon, CB, CMG. In 1880, however, Timothy Gale of Edendale in Natal approached Henrique Shepstone to purchase lands near the Swazi border. The request received a favourable response but was thwarted by the restoration of the republican government. See J Lambert, *Africans in Natal, 1880-1899: continuity, change and crisis in a rural society* (D Litt et Phil, Unisa, 1986), p 139.

London. If 'the shaky foundations of this pattern of property holding' were exposed or allowed to fall prey to the assertion of Pedi land rights, not only would the authority of Lanyon's state be prejudiced, but in a wider context colonial and imperial interests could be undermined and even jeopardised.⁶⁵ Then too, the prevailing climate of economic transformation did not only lead to the loss of land claims; throughout southern Africa it also undermined and subsequently broke down the authority of African leaders, yet another step towards the loss of independence and subjugation of all the African societies under colonial rule before the end of the century.

Lanyon's campaigns in Griqualand West had initiated the imperial onslaught against the Griqua and the Tlhaping in 1878. In the case of the Zulu, Frere and Shepstone had together engineered the process of conquest, and once Chelmsford had succeeded, Wolseley was to 'settle' Zululand and the Zulu before moving up to the Transvaal. In Pretoria, Shepstone – and Lanyon after him – mistakenly thought that Sekhukhune's Pedi would be relatively easy to bring under the control of the Transvaal state, particularly once the Zulu (in Shepstone and Frere's minds the alleged leaders of the plot against white rule), had been defeated. But it was not until late in 1879, when Wolseley arrived and was backed by imperial troops and a large contingent of Swazi,⁶⁶ that Sekhukhune was captured and his polity forced into submission.

In the early months of his new post Lanyon found that the Pedi were not, however, going to be an easy nut to crack. Sekhukhune's people had been subjected to almost continuous warfare for years and this had taken its toll. Their agricultural production was down and there was a shortage of grain. Furthermore there was internal disunity in their ranks and some groups had moved off under new leaders.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, Lanyon was aware that Sekhukhune was still a force to be reckoned with, and he began laying plans for a campaign against the Pedi headquarters.⁶⁸ He remanned the forts in the region with his customary thoroughness and patrols were resumed to

⁶⁵ Delius, *The land belongs to us*, p 224.

⁶⁶ In his conquest of the Pedi in November 1879 Wolseley had the assistance of a contingent of 8 000 Swazi warriors. Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 22 November 1879, and Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 1 December 1879, in which Wolseley admits that '...they [the Swazi] have been very useful, for without their assistance our success here could not have been as complete as it has been'.

⁶⁷ Delius, *The land belongs to us*, p 240.

⁶⁸ It was this campaign, begun in early June 1879, that Wolseley summarily halted. See below.

stamp out any sign of alleged Pedi resistance to and non-compliance with Transvaal law. Lanyon was gratified that his efforts were apparently having the desired effect and that there appeared to be 'a changed attitude' not only among the Pedi but also among Africans under Mapoch and other communities in the vicinity.⁶⁹

Early in May 1879, once Lanyon had escorted Frere out of the Transvaal, he decided that he should improve the military preparedness of the state on both the south eastern and the north eastern borders. He planned to go first to Utrecht to organise a special peace-keeping corps to assist Wood on the Zululand border before beginning his drive against the Pedi.⁷⁰ Before leaving for Utrecht Lanyon held an interview with the Boer leader, MW Pretorius, and scored what he felt was a moral victory when the Boer leader agreed to raise a volunteer force of 500 Boers who would operate as a peace-keeping border force. Lanyon felt that this represented a breakthrough in his relations with the Boers,⁷¹ but his satisfaction was short-lived because Pretorius subsequently changed his mind and withdrew his undertaking in the face of pressure from his fellow Boers and criticism of his apparent collaboration with Lanyon.⁷²

Towards the end of May 1879 Lanyon was back from Utrecht. While there, Chelmsford – who was the commander-in-chief of the imperial troops in southern Africa – had asked him to take on the responsibilities of commander of the Transvaal forces as well as his administrative duties.⁷³ Pleased with this mark of confidence, Lanyon was keen to begin his campaign against Sekhukhune but had to wait for reinforcements that Chelmsford had promised to send him.⁷⁴ The

⁶⁹ Smith, *The campaigns against the Bapedi of Sekhukhune*, p 38; Delius, *The land belongs to us*, p 240.

⁷⁰ TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 3 and 7 May 1879.

⁷¹ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 7 May 1879.

⁷² African 203, enclosure 1 in no 189, Lanyon – Frere, 10 June 1879, pp 283-284. The ageing Pretorius was to prove something of an enigma to the British officials in the Transvaal. He no longer realistically represented the true spirit of the Boer resistance movement and time and again he flummoxed Lanyon and Wolseley with his typically vague and elusive 'Ja ... nee, ... miskien'. They never knew quite what to make of him, and attempts to use him to assuage Boer dissatisfaction invariably came to naught. See for example, De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, pp 251-252.

⁷³ Smith, *The campaigns against the Bapedi of Sekhukhune*, p 38. See also TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 30 May 1879.

⁷⁴ Smith, *The campaigns against the Bapedi of Sekhukhune*, p 38.

Pedi leader, said Lanyon,

has been a thorn in the side of our northern border for the last three years and ... is becoming stronger and more aggressive every day ... we must begin operations at once ... Sikukuni's [sic] country is deadly to horses save during the four winter months, so we must begin on 1st June.⁷⁵

He anticipated that this expedition against the Pedi would be 'much the same as I had all last year' in which case his experience would be useful. He had also been actively involved in raising 'a tidy little force' including some Africans, and was warming to the idea of being involved in another military campaign. He predicted happily that in his new post it was beginning to look as if he might well be 'more of a military administrator than ever',⁷⁶ but this was a hope that was dashed in mid June when he heard that Wolseley had been appointed to take over supreme control of both the military and civil affairs of the colony.⁷⁷ Lanyon, however, had the bit between his teeth and did not let the news interfere with his planned attack on Sekhukhune. While he waited for the promised reinforcements, he sent out a number of patrols to take cattle and harass some of the small Pedi settlements. As far as Lanyon was concerned, these patrols were just beginning to achieve some success, when to his great irritation, he received a telegram from Wolseley ordering him to stop all operations against the Pedi. Wolseley told Lanyon in no uncertain terms:

I do not approve of the present very extensive weekly expenditure. Please check and restrict it in all possible ways, and do not embark on any new plans entailing large outlay of public money. Desire paymaster to report at once, in writing, the payments he has already made, giving all possible details to objects of expenditure, and report to me fully, yourself, on the subject. In future you will please take orders only from me.⁷⁸

The tone of the instruction was perhaps unfortunate, even in a telegram, and it harped on two areas where Lanyon felt that he was on particularly safe ground – his reputation as a penny-pinching civil administrator and his competence as a military commander with recent success in Griqualand West, and one who furthermore had just been asked by Lord Chelmsford to take over military command of the Transvaal forces. To Hicks Beach, not Lanyon, Wolseley admitted that

⁷⁵ TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 16 May 1879.

⁷⁶ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 3 and 7 May 1879.

⁷⁷ C 2318, no 20, Hicks Beach – Lanyon, 28 May 1879.

⁷⁸ African 204, enclosure 2 and 3 in no 30, Wolseley – Lanyon, 29 June 1879 and telegram dictated to Bray by Wolseley, 29 June 1879, p 52. See also reference to Wolseley's telegram in Lanyon's reply; PRO, CO 291/3, Lanyon – Wolseley, 13 July 1879.

he was concerned lest Lanyon's force was too weak to take the Pedi stronghold. For British troops to be repulsed again by an African polity would be nothing short of disastrous and Wolseley did not want to take the risk of denting his own pride, as high commissioner for the region, or that of imperial Britain.⁷⁹

Lanyon was furious.⁸⁰ He protested to Wolseley that the expense involved in his drive against the Pedi was not high when the cost of everything in the Transvaal was taken into account. Moreover, all expenses had been scrupulously authorised and horses, which were expensive, were a vital part of any attack on Sekhukhune's fortress. Lanyon justified each item of expenditure meticulously, giving all the details that had been requested, but he was clearly irritated by what he saw as undue intervention by Wolseley in the governance of the Transvaal, which he felt he had under efficient and scrupulous control. He made the point that both Frere and Shepstone had concurred that Sekhukhune's 'aggressive attitude' towards 'existing authority' urgently needed to be checked. After all, he concluded, once the Pedi were subdued, 'a very large revenue may be expected from native taxes ... our revenue would thereby be doubled'.⁸¹

In his letters home in mid 1879 Lanyon had nothing but criticism for Wolseley. He berated him for 'upsetting everything', for not contacting Lanyon immediately on his arrival in Natal, and for putting him in the position that he could neither deal with the Africans who were 'daily becoming more aggressive' nor discipline the Boers who were now 'more open in their opposition to Govt'.⁸² He also claimed, with some justification, that Wolseley knew little about the conditions in the north-eastern Transvaal, and he even hinted to his father that he suspected Wolseley wanted to save the glory of defeating the Pedi for himself – which, on the face of it was

⁷⁹ C 2482, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 29 June 187, p 35.

⁸⁰ NA, Shepstone Papers, A96/6, Lanyon – Shepstone, 11 July 1879, p 2170. For Lanyon's reaction to Frere's fate in May 1879 and to Wolseley's appointment, see below under *Enter Wolseley with a flourish*. In his letters to his father Lanyon's criticism of the new high commissioner was unsparing, even after Wolseley arrived in Pretoria at the end of September 1879.

⁸¹ African 204, enclosure in no 52, Lanyon – Wolseley, 14 July 1879, pp 101-102.

⁸² TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 11, 24 July and 15 August 1879.

probably not far from the truth.⁸³ Of the 'new order' being implemented by the home government he wrote despairingly: 'Anything more stupid or ill-advised than their action could not well be imagined.'⁸⁴

Nevertheless, Lanyon had his orders and he was obliged to follow them. For the best part of six months he was indeed reduced to little more than a puppet controlled by the irrepensible Sir Garnet Wolseley. Before assessing how Lanyon and Wolseley fared in the Transvaal for the remaining months until April 1880, when Wolseley went home – and there was a change in government in Britain and a new secretary of state for the colonies took over – it is necessary to examine the relationship that had developed between Lanyon and the discontented Boers. Lanyon had proved himself to be a capable administrator, but administrative skills were by no means all that were required of him. Coming to terms with stubborn republicans, who had little respect for or goodwill towards officious imperial agents, was not Lanyon's strong suit.

'Lang Jan' and the disaffected Boers

In mid 1879 while Lanyon was setting the Transvaal administration on a better footing, the Boers were impatiently awaiting the British reaction to their petition of April 1879 to Queen Victoria. The *Volkskomitee* had also taken the opportunity to put out feelers in the Cape, Natal and the Free State to see what support they had for their quest for independence. In the Free State this tentative enquiry had caused ripples of discontent because Brand favoured a neutral stance and his *volksraad* wanted to be more supportive of their kin in the Transvaal.⁸⁵ There were also indications of strong support in Cape Afrikaner circles which later took the form of a petition to

⁸³ However, according to Smith, *The campaigns against the Bapedi of Sekhukhune*, p 40, the decision to stop all operations against Sekhukhune was Hicks Beach's, not Wolseley's, and that it was thus unjustified to put the blame on Wolseley's shoulders. In Lanyon's defence, Wolseley's letter to Hicks Beach 'explaining why he had ordered Lanyon to remain on the defensive', (p 38), does indicate that Wolseley had some part in the decision.

⁸⁴ TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 24 July and 29 August 1879. See also Smith, *The campaigns against the Bapedi of Sekhukhune*, p 39.

⁸⁵ African 203, no 191, Frere – Hicks Beach 23 June 1879, p 287. See also C 2454, no 36, Frere – Hicks Beach, 23 June 1879, p 105.

the queen indicating sympathy with the Boer cause.⁸⁶ Generally speaking, there was a lull in organised Boer resistance against the government after the Kleinfontein meeting, in expectation of the outcome of the petition of April 1879.

Lanyon's administrative drive in the Transvaal was closely linked to his relations with hardline Transvalers, not least because his efforts to put the Transvaal's budget back on track involved extorting taxes from tight-fisted Boers.⁸⁷ But it was more than this. The very virtues of the new administration, its efficiency and penny-pinching made it unpopular, and the way Lanyon imposed the new measures conspired to make him hated. His reaction was to hate back and to tighten controls. Within five months of starting his new post he complained – in his now familiar vein – to his father: 'I am sick of the place, for it has ever been the grave of reputation and honesty'.⁸⁸ It is also true that unpopularity makes reconciliation harder and tends to breed autocracy. Throughout his career in South Africa, Lanyon was averse to and critical of 'others' on the imperial periphery, be they Boers or Africans.⁸⁹ It was a racist attitude, but it was not specifically anti-Afrikaner or anti-black. Rather, it was an extraordinary preconceived dislike of anything and anybody that was un-British.

It was not long before Lanyon's surname was slurred by Dutch-speaking tongues into the nickname 'Lang Jan',⁹⁰ meaning 'Tall John'. Somehow, too, although it is not clear how this originated, the rumour was spread – in a community where to be 'coloured', or anything other

⁸⁶ African 204, enclosure in no 32, Frere – Hicks Beach, 12 July 1879, Petition to Queen Victoria, praying that the independence of the Transvaal may be restored, signed by JH Hofmeyr and others, pp 54-55. See also Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, p 121.

⁸⁷ On 21 June 1879 Piet Joubert refused to pay his tax, arguing (much as Kotzé had done in his judgement of the White & Tucker case) that the present government was not the one he recognised as legitimate and was not empowered to demand that he pay his dues. Cases of refusal to pay taxes were not uncommon and were the cause of many of Lanyon's headaches. PRO, CO 291/3, Lanyon – Wolseley, 15 July 1879; Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, p 122.

⁸⁸ TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 15 August 1879.

⁸⁹ For an outline of the new trend in American and British historiography on the 'forging of class and gender identities ... and under what circumstances race should be inserted as a category of analysis ... to historians of empire and metropole in their quest to understand the precise and contingent relations between class, gender and racial identities', see M Daunton & R Halpern (eds), *Empire and others: British encounters with indigenous peoples, 1600-1850* (London, 1999), pp 3-4.

⁹⁰ Davey, *The siege of Pretoria*, p 272.

than white, was to be of lower class, uncivilised and of questionable worth – that Owen Lanyon had ‘mixed blood’. Wolseley, soon to become Lanyon’s fellow imperial agent in the Transvaal, linked Lanyon’s unpopularity and his ‘vindictive’ personality in a typically outspoken statement about the administrator as he left Pretoria after working with Lang Jan for six months. He wrote in his diary:

It is curious how very unpopular Lanyon is here: his character is to be personally vindictive and the tendency of his mind is to view everything from a personal standpoint. He will never be a good Govr. in my opinion although he is a very good fellow & by no means wanting in brains. I cannot help thinking that his vindictiveness comes from the taint of black blood which he evidently has had the misfortune to inherit.⁹¹

Some light is cast upon the origin of this rumour in the work of another of Lanyon’s contemporaries, Bellairs, who was appointed commander of the troops in the Transvaal in 1880.⁹² He quotes an excerpt from an article called ‘The Boers at Home’ in *Blackwood’s Magazine* of December 1881:

Sir Owen Lanyon who followed Sir Theophilus Shepstone, proved a most unfortunate selection; exactly the man to rub up the Boers the wrong way, and that with no wish on his part, but with the desire to do all that he could for them compatible with his duty. To begin with he was a soldier; and to a Boer a *rooi batjee* [sic] is the incarnation of all that is bad in the English Government. He belonged to a West India regiment, and the cleverer Boers were not slow in finding out that these are black regiments. To associate or have anything to do with blacks, except to make them work or *sjambook* [sic] them if they don’t work hard, is an unpardonable crime in a Boer’s eyes. Worse than all, the Governor [sic] was a man of swarthy complexion, and they at once started the idea that he was of black descent himself; carrying their hatred of the race to such a height, that I am told that one day a Boer said to him to his face that he would not be ruled by a black man. Of course the idea was utterly false, the Governor (sic) being as pure-bred an Irishman as any other; but it was spread about, notwithstanding, and did much harm to him and his government.⁹³

On the face of it, the rumour that Lanyon was of mixed descent was without foundation; he was an Irishman with Celtic blood.⁹⁴ Nor is the fact that he was of swarthy complexion apparent in the available photographs of him. Lanyon certainly looks melancholy and reserved and none of

⁹¹ Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 265. Several other sources mention that Lanyon’s swarthy complexion aroused speculation about his having ‘mixed blood’. The Boers, who disliked Lanyon intensely, probably disseminated the rumour. See for example Davey, *The siege of Pretoria*, p 272 and footnote 16; De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, p 243; *Dictionary of South African Biography*, (hereafter DSAB), I, p 466.

⁹² Bellairs took over the command of the Transvaal troops in May 1880; Lady Bellairs (ed) *The Transvaal War 1880-1881*, p 27. This book, purportedly edited by Bellairs’ wife, who apparently never visited the Transvaal, was presumably written by William Bellairs himself; Davey, *The siege of Pretoria*, p 270.

⁹³ Quoted in Bellairs, *The Transvaal War, 1880-1881*, p 9, footnote 1.

⁹⁴ Davey, *The siege of Pretoria*, p 272, footnote 16.

the photographs shows the least hint of a smile, but more than that he is as inscrutable as are the available documents about his real nature. His letters to his father, and several references to his wife, whom he married the year after his return to England,⁹⁵ do show a more human side to his character, but while in the Transvaal he showed little, if any, of this to the Transvalers.

Nevertheless, it is very clear that there was mutual dislike and animosity between Lanyon and the Boers for the entire duration of his career in the Transvaal, and this does not at any stage appear to have tempered in the very least. While it is probably true to say that at this time British officials were generally unpopular with Boers and *vice versa*, the degree of animosity in the case of Lanyon and the Transvaal Boers was intense. While the Boers were spreading rumours about him of the worst kind they could conceive of, he in turn was calling them ‘cowards’, ‘semi-civilised windbags’ and ‘pusillanimous toads’... from first to last.⁹⁶ Bellairs was very critical of Lanyon’s administrative style and his alleged poor decisions on troop reduction in the Transvaal in late 1880.⁹⁷ He claims that Lanyon made absolutely no concessions in his ‘high-handed system of government, nor did he make any apparent effort to conciliate the Boer people or their leaders.’⁹⁸

In addition, Lanyon questioned the sincerity and motives of the Boer malcontents. He maintained that there was only ‘a frail cordon of agitators and place seekers’ and that in most cases the Boer rank and file were distrustful of one another and were far from united: ‘Were the annexation cancelled’, he said, ‘these men would at once drop the common cause in order to secure individual advancement, and a general scramble for power would ensue which would be

⁹⁵ Lanyon married Florence Levy of London in 1882, but she died in 1883; DSAB, I p 466. See also Lanyon’s reply to Godfrey Lagden who sent condolence’s on Florence’s death; Rhodes House Library, Oxford (hereafter RH), Godfrey Lagden Papers, Mss Afr s 210/2/1, Lanyon – Lagden, 15 July 1883. See also Chapter VII.

⁹⁶ See for example TA, A596, vol 13, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 31 October 1878; vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 4 April 1879. Also ATC/5, no 9, Lanyon – Kimberley, 1 February 1881, written near the end of his Transvaal career.

⁹⁷ See below Chapter VI.

⁹⁸ Bellairs, *The Transvaal War*, p 29.

disastrous.⁹⁹ According to Van Zyl, Lanyon grossly underestimated the unity and resolve of the Boer protest movement in 1879.¹⁰⁰ It was an underestimation that would subsequently cost Lanyon dearly in 1881.

In June 1879 when Lanyon was himself under strain because he had just heard that Wolseley was arriving soon to lord it over him, he decided that it was time to show the Boers that he was not cowed by their opposition. He had heard that a meeting had been held in the first week of June on a farm near Potchefstroom and that some of those present had suggested an 'appeal to arms' if the reply to their petition was unfavourable. Anticipating that there might be trouble, Lanyon drafted a strongly worded proclamation designed to 'curb the evil disposed and to strengthen the well-inclined', threatening to take concerted action against any further show of seditious behaviour.¹⁰¹ He sent the draft proclamation to Frere for approval. Although Frere approved the proclamation, his supersession by Wolseley meant that it was sent to the new governor for approval. Wolseley promptly vetoed the idea,¹⁰² quite conceivably because Frere had agreed to it. He felt, quite rightly, that Lanyon's proposal was far too confrontational, and pointed out that the administrator did not have enough troops to back up his threats. Although Wolseley thereupon organised to send reinforcements to Pretoria, soldiers who could be spared now that the Zulu had been defeated, he told Lanyon to drop his ambitious plans to hold the Boers in check. He was to do nothing at all until Wolseley arrived in Pretoria.¹⁰³

Again Lanyon had been hamstrung by Wolseley, and again he resented what he saw as undue intervention¹⁰⁴ by someone whom he alleged knew very little about the prevailing circumstances

⁹⁹ African 199, Lanyon – Frere, 10 June 1879, pp 3-5.

¹⁰⁰ Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, p 123.

¹⁰¹ African 204, enclosure 1 in no 21, Lanyon – Frere, 16 June 1879, and draft proclamation by Lanyon, pp 41-45.

¹⁰² It may well be that Wolseley was more inclined to veto Lanyon's idea of a proclamation in the light of the fact that Frere had given it his approval. There was a great deal of acrimony between Frere and Wolseley in the wake of Wolseley's appointment.

¹⁰³ African 204, no 56, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 27 July 1879, p 110.

¹⁰⁴ Wolseley was aware that Lanyon felt injured at the intervention and was 'somewhat sore about my having stopped his Sikukuni campaign'; Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 115.

in the Transvaal. 'Experience and local knowledge go for little now,' he complained to his father.¹⁰⁵ To add insult to injury a new commanding officer was appointed for the Transvaal troops. Wolseley explained that as he could now spare a regular officer, a new appointment would relieve Lanyon of his onerous military duties and leave him free to concentrate on his civil responsibilities. Lanyon claimed that as the man Wolseley was planning to send up to the Transvaal, Lieutenant Colonel Harrison, was from an engineering section of the British army, he would have

no experience whatsoever in commanding in this sort of work. However I suppose one must bow to higher authority, but I can only say that there is not a soldier in S. Africa who is not disgusted at the work which is now going on, save the 'brilliant staff' which came out at the eleventh hour and out of whose way everyone else is quietly elbowed in order to make room for them. For of such is the present regime.¹⁰⁶

Despite Wolseley's rejection of Lanyon's idea of a proclamation, Lanyon persisted. He sent another despatch in the same vein to Wolseley on 16 August 1879, giving the high commissioner the news of another Boer meeting that was to be held near Heidelberg on 24 September. Lanyon reiterated that some 'decided steps' should be taken by the government at once. He claimed that it would be 'highly prejudicial to the peace and tranquillity of the Transvaal were another meeting of this sort to be assembled'.¹⁰⁷ Because of Lanyon's insistence, Wolseley gave reluctant approval to the idea, but then drafted his own shorter and less detailed version of a 'more suitable' proclamation. He also pointed out that the reinforcements he had organised should reach Pretoria soon, and hopefully this would be 'sufficient to overawe the disaffected party'.¹⁰⁸ Within a month Wolseley arrived in the Transvaal and Lanyon felt it unnecessary to publish Wolseley's draft version of the proclamation. He felt irritated that the high commissioner saw fit to tamper with his proposed draft, and he might well have decided to hold it back when the Boer meeting did not prove to be of major import.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 11 and 15 August 1879.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 22 August 1879. Lanyon subsequently changed his mind about Harrison's ability and described him as a 'fully competent officer'; Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 24 October 1879.

¹⁰⁷ African 204, enclosure 1 in no 137, Lanyon – Wolseley, 16 August 1879, p 318.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, no 137, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 3 September 1879; enclosure 2, Wolseley – Lanyon, 28 August 1879, pp 318-319 and enclosure 3, draft proclamation by Wolseley, p 319.

¹⁰⁹ It appears that it was not a mass meeting but a meeting of the *Volkskomitee* that was scheduled for 24 September 1879. Wolseley wrote on 25 September: 'The people's committee were to have assembled yesterday near Heidelberg, but they failed to form a quorum, I hear, or they postponed their discussions

While Lanyon was having to deal with the situation at the periphery, Hicks Beach was pondering how best to react to the Boer petition Frere had submitted to him. Although the feeling in the Colonial Office, and indeed public opinion, was now markedly non-expansionist, Hicks Beach thought it best that Britain retain the Transvaal. He was, however, by no means convinced of what line he should take. And he certainly did not want to be pushed to keep the colony by force of arms. In a private letter to Frere, written at the end of May 1879 – by which time Hicks Beach had studied the petition and Frere had had time to digest the devastating news that Wolseley was on his way to South Africa – Hicks Beach explained:

For every reason we should keep the Transvaal if possible. But we *could* not keep it by force of bayonets against the wish of a large majority of the population. Public opinion here would probably not sanction such a policy at all, and would certainly not pay the cost it would entail.¹¹⁰

He went on to make the very valid point that neither Frere nor Lanyon had provided any evidence of ‘any opposite feeling in any part of the country’. If the malcontented Boers did not represent the majority opinion among the Transvalers then why had this other point of view not yet manifested itself? And why had Lanyon not provided the secretary of state with any substantial proof of this opposite feeling? Revealingly, Hicks Beach asked: ‘Is it because people don’t believe we shall give the country up? If so, it is really time they should bestir themselves.’ It is interesting that Wolseley, who in his forthright manner was the first to admit that Boer opposition to British control in the Transvaal did, in fact, represent the majority view. And being Wolseley he repeated it several times, increasing the emphasis on each occasion.¹¹¹ Shepstone, Frere and Lanyon had all consistently avowed that the malcontents were no more than a lunatic fringe.

But at the end of May 1879, when Hicks Beach had to react to the Boer petition, he had not yet had the benefit of Wolseley’s new insight. Nevertheless Hicks Beach comes across as almost

until today, when some more members were expected. The rumour is that they intend calling all the Boers to assemble at some central place.’ Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 25 September 1879, p 49.

¹¹⁰ GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, Pcc/23, Hicks Beach – Frere, 29 May 1879. See also Hicks Beach, *Life of Sir Michael Hicks Beach*, pp 140-142.

¹¹¹ See for example Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 28 October 1879 and Wolseley – Frere, 6 November 1879. To Frere he wrote: ‘It is ... quite certain that the great mass of the Boers in this territory are most hostile to the British government.’

inclined to allow the Boers their right to independence; he may perhaps have seen this as inevitable. He decided to try to win them over by introducing representative governmental organs. Encouraged by Frere's report of his recent Transvaal visit,¹¹² Hicks Beach went a long way further towards considering retrocession of the Transvaal than Frere, Wolseley or Lanyon ever did.¹¹³ He foresaw that in the Transvaal the newly elected legislative assembly,

... as soon as it met, would very likely proceed to discuss, and perhaps to pass, resolutions for 'independence', on the passing of which resolutions they might perhaps be dissolved and an appeal on the point thus made to the country. All this would take time, and keep people quiet: our friends would see they must move if they want to keep us: and thus matters *might* be ultimately brought right.¹¹⁴

With this at the back of his mind, Hicks Beach planned to send his reply to the Boer petition along with an outline of his proposed new constitutional reforms based on Frere's original proposals. Wolseley could then announce that specific details, once approved, were on their way.¹¹⁵ Hopefully this would keep trouble at bay. Wolseley was told to make an announcement of these plans an urgent priority once he arrived in the Transvaal. If nothing else, setting up a legislative assembly in which a number of the troublesome Boers would presumably serve, would take time.¹¹⁶ And time, he hoped, might bring some relief of the tension that Lanyon had told him was building up with renewed vigour.

In the end, however, no official, written response to their petition was ever sent to the Boers.

¹¹² African 193, Frere – Hicks Beach, 6 May 1879, pp 1-7 and enclosure 1, minute by Frere, 15 April 1879, pp 7-8.

¹¹³ Frere, of course, still had hopes of a confederation in South Africa, which was why he would never have promoted retrocession. Wolseley was even more markedly against the idea, as will be seen in his strong statements about Britain retaining control in the Transvaal 'forever', and his criticism that Frere had led the Boers to believe that they had a chance to regain their independence by telling them that their April petition was worthy of 'careful consideration' by Britain. Lanyon, of course, had only indirect influence over Colonial Office policy, but he was an avid Frere and confederation supporter and was suitably pained when, in 1881, Britain took what he saw as a decision that could only do great harm to her paramouncy and prestige in South Africa.

¹¹⁴ GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, Pcc/23, Hicks Beach – Frere, 29 May 1879.

¹¹⁵ On 3 October 1879, five days after he arrived in Pretoria, Wolseley issued a proclamation to the effect that an Executive Council made up of five official and three non-official members would be set up in the Transvaal. A legislative body would follow. African 204, no 185, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 6 October 1879, p 385.

¹¹⁶ GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, Pcc/23, Hicks Beach – Frere, 29 May 1879.

Hicks Beach wanted to make sure that the result of the Anglo-Zulu War was a *fait accompli* before sending the Boers a definite answer; success in Zululand would free troops for possible trouble in the Transvaal.¹¹⁷ It was therefore not until Wolseley arrived in Pretoria, gave the Boers his own strongly worded statements that Britain would never, under any circumstances, reverse the annexation, and promised them that some constitutional reform was on the way, that Hicks Beach's message finally filtered down to the *Volkskomitee*.¹¹⁸ Once more the Boers were disappointed and once more they resolved to renew their efforts to regain their independence.

Enter Wolseley with a flourish: the conquest of the Pedi polity

As Wolseley travelled to Pretoria where Lanyon awaited his arrival, the general made loud statements to the press, the Boers, and anyone else who was prepared to listen, that Britain would never, under any circumstances, withdraw from the Transvaal.¹¹⁹ The annexation, he said, 'cannot and never will be undone' and 'as long as the sun shines in the heavens' the Transvaal would 'for ever be an integral part of HM's dominions'.¹²⁰ He was a particularly outspoken ultra-imperialist, and it is interesting that as such he did not reflect the prevailing attitude to the South African situation in the Colonial Office or that of Hicks Beach in mid 1879. As has been shown, the feeling in London was far more subdued and there was already talk of a more conciliatory approach, reducing the government's commitments, and even of withdrawal.¹²¹ The British government, in other words, was not whole-heartedly behind Wolseley's appointment, and it is a measure of its uncertainty at the time, as De Kiewiet has remarked, 'that to so unconvinced a

¹¹⁷ Ibid, Pcc/8/2, Hicks Beach – Wosleley, 31 July 1879. There was of course at this stage no serious thought of having to put down a Boer rebellion, but visible troops, in the imperial mind, always served as a deterrent to subject people who were inclined to be troublesome.

¹¹⁸ Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, p 124.

¹¹⁹ Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 114.

¹²⁰ Hove, *Wolseley Papers*, SA 1, Wolseley – Frere, 9 December 1879, pp 190-191. See also Oxford University, Bodleian Library, (hereafter OXF), Kimberley Papers, Mss Eng c 4144, Kimberley – Gladstone, 1 June 1881.

¹²¹ PRO, CO 48/489, Frere – Hicks Beach, 20 February 1879, minute by Fairfield, 29 March 1879; minute by Herbert, 2 April 1879.

policy it gave so decisive an agent'¹²². The more bombastic, outspoken and energetic Wolseley's actions became in the Transvaal, the more tentative and nervous was the support of the Colonial Office.

Wolseley entered the Transvaal through Zululand on 7 September 1879 with a large force of imperial troops,¹²³ and arrived outside the Transvaal capital on 27 September 1879. He was met by Lanyon and the Pretoria Horse, and escorted into the town, where there was an impressive guard of honour and all the appropriate pomp and ceremony. According to Wolseley there was a big crowd to witness his arrival and he took the opportunity to tell the gathering 'what I had generally told everyone else since I entered the Transvaal' – that Britain had no intention whatsoever of reversing the annexation.¹²⁴

In his correspondence while on his journey through the Transvaal, Wolseley was already complaining of having to deal with the 'half civilised Dutchmen' – a reference to an interview on 19 September with Joubert whom he found to be 'an unrelenting hater of the British' – in an attempt to smooth the 'ruffled dignity of these stupid and illiterate Boers'.¹²⁵ Like many imperial agents in southern Africa in the 1870s, including Lanyon, Wolseley had little regard for the Boers. He considered them a 'cowardly lot' and found them difficult to reason with, precisely because they were not inclined to be bullied into agreeing with his point of view. As Wolseley arrived he was sent a letter from the *Volkskomitee* reiterating its continued protest against the annexation and asking whether or not there was any reply to their petition from the queen.¹²⁶ Wolseley claimed to be the bearer of the queen's reply, which was that the annexation would never be annulled. To do so, he pronounced, would assuredly lead to anarchy and civil war in the Transvaal, but he had good news for them about a new constitution. But they were

¹²² De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, p 244.

¹²³ Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 189.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, pp 109, 124.

¹²⁵ Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 25 September 1879; WP 8/24 ii and WP 8/25 i, Wolseley – Louisa Wolseley, 11 and 15 September 1879. Joubert irritated Wolseley because he bluntly refused Wolseley's offer of a well-paid position on the new executive council that was being planned for the Transvaal.

¹²⁶ African 204, enclosure in no 206, Pretorius & Bok – Wolseley, 25 September 1879, pp 434-435.

unenthusiastic about the prospect of representative organs under British control.¹²⁷ 'I have done all in my power to be gracious', he wrote, 'but there is no arguing with them ... They have all the bad qualities of the Zulu without his noble traits. It is much easier to deal with a clever knave than an illiterate Boer.'¹²⁸ It seems that Lanyon and Wolseley, like many imperial officials at the time, had similar sentiments about the Boers. But Lanyon was less outspoken about his feelings, except perhaps to his father.

Wolseley's was not interested in maintaining of the *status quo* or in slow progress of the kind that Lanyon was empowered to make. He very soon found Lanyon too tardy: 'Lanyon is a slow coach' he wrote in his diary 'and I cannot work him up to quick action.'¹²⁹ He wanted to achieve his goals as quickly as possible before returning to Britain in a blaze of glory to more important matters, namely the furtherance of his career in the top echelons of the military establishment.¹³⁰ Wolseley meanwhile moved into the 'little bunk' which Lanyon had rented for him in picturesque Pretoria. 'In front of it are two fine lilac trees about 20 feet high now one mass of blossom,' he wrote in his diary, 'this is certainly a very pretty town; in no part of the world have I ever seen such a profusion of roses; every hedge here is one mass of flower.'¹³¹

Within two days of his arrival Wolseley issued a proclamation to the effect that the Transvaal was to remain part of Her Majesty's dominions in South Africa, come what may.¹³² In a second proclamation – despite the fact that he had not yet received full details of the new representative organs that had been approved for the Transvaal, he announced that in the near future an executive council comprising five official members and three non-official members would be

¹²⁷ See for example *De Volksstem*, 23 September 1879.

¹²⁸ Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 25 September 1879.

¹²⁹ Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 189.

¹³⁰ Wolseley was hoping for a senior military position in India; Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, pp 38-39.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, pp 126-127.

¹³² C 2482, Proclamation by Wolseley, 29 September 1879, pp 242-243.

set up, and a new legislative assembly would then follow.¹³³ Because Wolseley embarked in mid October on a protracted campaign against the Pedi, from which he only returned early in December 1879, the promise of a new constitution was clearly a holding tactic to parade in front of the Boers. The executive and legislative organs, when they were eventually set up by Lanyon the following year, became the object of much scorn from the Transvalers because they were decidedly illiberal bodies.

One of Wolseley's main objectives – and here he would have had the full support of Lanyon – was to make the situation in the Transvaal more conducive to the collection of taxes. Within a week of taking over in Pretoria he announced to Hicks Beach that he was 'setting to work at overhauling the financial position here' by first collecting all the dues from the whites before turning to 'collecting taxes from the natives'.¹³⁴ Wolseley's plans thus implied, firstly, calming the Boers with the introduction of a new constitution, so that they would become obedient taxpayers. Secondly, taxes and acceptance of British sovereignty had to be enforced on the Pedi, because as far as the other Africans communities in the Transvaal were concerned, 'none will pay as long as Sikukuni [sic] is allowed to go untaxed'.¹³⁵ This would not only almost double the revenue in the state coffers, but would also comply with the larger plans for the region, namely that it should serve as a base for the emergent capitalist order in southern Africa and encourage the accumulation of land by Transvaal-based individuals and companies, as well as those operating from other British colonies and from London.¹³⁶ With this in mind, the ongoing recalcitrance on the part of the Pedi – in imperial terms, their vehement resistance to British supremacy – had to be brought to a swift and satisfactory close. Wolseley believed he was just the man to do it and this could have been a reason for his insistence that Lanyon refrain from marching against the Pedi. After all, when it came to the routine matters, the actual *implementation* of British control, the mundane issues that Wolseley found too boring, he had the services of Lanyon, who could be relied upon to put the necessary measures in place. It was

¹³³ Ibid, Proclamation by Wolseley, 2 October 1879, pp 333-335.

¹³⁴ Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 3 October 1879.

¹³⁵ Ibid, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 28 October 1879.

¹³⁶ See discussion above under *The administrative challenge: getting started* and Delius, *The land belongs to us*, p 224.

this fine-tuning of colonial policy that became Lanyon's task; it was also the task that ensured British expansion.

Lanyon was also expected to be closely involved in Wolseley's endeavours, but certainly only in a subordinate role. While Wolseley was in Pretoria, Lanyon was certainly his puppet. At the root of Wolseley's rather patronising disdain of Lanyon was the administrator's esteem for Frere, whom Wolseley disliked intensely. Lanyon was not senior enough, or indeed enough of a public figure to detract from Wolseley's image as a brilliant soldier and diplomat. In Wolseley's eyes Lanyon was a pleasant, if ordinary and rather slow young imperial official, who was useful enough to do the work in Wolseley's slipstream. Needless to say, he felt that the administrator was too much in the Frere mould, being bent on having a war at every turn, rather than concentrating on 'ways and means' of collecting revenue and settling the community down happily under British control.¹³⁷ In his diary Wolseley recorded: 'I am afraid that Lanyon is severely bitten with Frere's madness for wars: he is always referring to various disturbances on his frontiers in a manner that makes me feel he would like to march a military force to the locality to put it down.'¹³⁸ Such wars as Frere and Lanyon were inclined to wage, Wolseley complained, were expensive and brought with them 'a sad reaction', because 'trade is checked, almost paralysed for the time being'. Presumably he also had Lanyon's May-June 1879 expedition against the Pedi in mind here, the one Wolseley had nipped in the bud.¹³⁹

In early October Boer unrest broke out in Middelburg. They seized ammunition from the local stores and Lanyon had to hasten there with some troops to take matters in hand. Although there were a number of other issues underlying the outbreak,¹⁴⁰ Lanyon blamed it on the home government's ill-conceived 'new order' and Wolseley's lack of experience in the Transvaal. He grumbled, not without some justification, that once the high commissioner had left,

¹³⁷ Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 3 October 1879.

¹³⁸ Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 118.

¹³⁹ Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 3 October 1879. See above for Wolseley's instructions to Lanyon at the end of May 1879 that he should halt his expedition into Sekhukhuneland immediately.

¹⁴⁰ Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, pp 129-130. See also Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 17 October 1879.

I am the poor devil who will have to reap a crop of blunders which I have neither sown nor helped to sow ... I am not happy about the future of the territory, nor is anyone else who knows what is being done – and I was so hopeful before. What is the use of working like a slave when one is ignored and experience put on one side. I am angry; if an angry shot be fired by the Boers it will be the outcome of blundering policy at home.¹⁴¹

Wolseley meanwhile left Pretoria in mid October and after a show of military strength in Middelburg to remind the Boers that imperial troops were not to be trifled with, he moved on to the north east to persuade Sekhukhune and his Pedi people to accept British sovereignty. With some justification, in the light of Wolseley's criticism of Lanyon's warmongering and the order which had ended Lanyon's military endeavours so abruptly in May, Lanyon was bitter that the high commissioner was setting off on a similar expedition. 'Sir Garnet has gone to Sikukuni's with a force of 2 000 whites', he wrote,

and he has incurred ten times the expense for which he wigged me. He is beginning to see that it would have been better had he been a trifle more careful in his orders and less precipitate in his jumping at a conclusion about matters of which he was totally ignorant.¹⁴²

In the hope that the recent British defeat of the Zulu had inspired enough fear in Sekhukhune for the Pedi chief to accept peace terms, Wolseley sent Captain M Clarke, the native commissioner for the Lydenburg district, to consult with Sekhukhune on 10 October 1879. The terms offered were that Sekhukhune accept British sovereignty and the payment of tax, and that he henceforth take responsibility for peace in the areas under his control – those areas the government had ruled were indeed his. Furthermore he was liable for a fine of 2 500 head of cattle and had to allow the government to set up military posts in his territory.¹⁴³ Lanyon played no part in these negotiations with the Pedi. On Wolseley's instructions he remained in Pretoria to monitor the Boer protest movement and keep the administration running smoothly.

Smith and Delius both make the point that the British government's right to exert their rule over the Pedi in the first place, is open to argument.¹⁴⁴ The matter was debated in the Colonial Office

¹⁴¹ TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 10 October 1879.

¹⁴² Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 24 October 1879.

¹⁴³ Smith, *The campaigns against the Bapedi of Sekhukhune*, pp 42-43. See also Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 28 October 1879. Wolseley was apparently also 'prepared to accept money instead of cattle, at the rate of £5 per beast, if Sekhukhune preferred paying in gold'.

¹⁴⁴ Smith, *The campaigns against the Bapedi of Sekhukhune*, p 43; Delius, *The land belongs to us*, p 241.

and Fairfield minuted that ‘Our title to sovereignty ... is very weak, and has been discredited by ourselves.’ However, he quickly justified Wolseley’s proposed attack by pointing out that Sekhukhune had been guilty of ‘mischief’ for years and that Britain therefore had the ‘moral right’ to insist on the acceptance of sovereignty and the payment of taxes. Hicks Beach concurred that this was the best line of argument.¹⁴⁵ Wolseley added his comment that one could not, after all, settle such matters using the usual civilised methods of adjustment as far as Africans were concerned. He felt that instead, the issue would have to be dealt with ‘by the confirmation of the ascendancy of the stronger and the subjection of the weaker’.¹⁴⁶ The ongoing difficulties in the north east, he said, were not of Britain’s making. They had been ‘inherited from the Boers in annexing the territory and should be settled by a war, provided we come well out of it, as I have every confidence we shall’.¹⁴⁷ To his wife, Wolseley admitted that if Sekhukhune did not accept the terms that he had been offered, ‘I must do something to annoy him’.¹⁴⁸

There is no evidence either in Lanyon or Wolseley’s correspondence that Lanyon was consulted in 1879 for advice about how best to negotiate with Sekhukhune or what action, if any, should be taken against the Pedi. This despite the fact that Lanyon had been administering the Lydenburg region, liaising with the Pedi chieftains and carrying out raids in the Steelpoort area for six months before Wolseley arrived in the Transvaal. Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that Lanyon felt injured that the domineering little general was taking all the credit for the consolidation of British supremacy in the Transvaal in 1879.

To Frere, whom Wolseley had ironically seen fit to criticise for being too fond of wars – as indeed he was – Wolseley gave what must rank among the most callous and yet most revealing summaries of the November 1879 British campaign against the Pedi:

I am very much put out by having to send troops out against this wretched Sikukuni, but he would have nothing to do with the easy terms I offered him, nor indeed he said with any terms at all; he and his people

¹⁴⁵ CO 291/3, no 17514, minute by Fairfield, 4 September 1879 and minute by Hicks Beach, 12 November 1879.

¹⁴⁶ Hove, Wolseley papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 28 October 1879. See also Delius, *The land belongs to us*, pp 239-240; Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Lanyon, 30 October 1879.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 28 October 1879.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, WP 8/29 ii, Wolseley – Louisa Wolseley, 15 October 1879.

wanted to fight so I am forced by this savage to enter the lists against him. I have however the satisfaction of knowing that the war is none of my creating and that I have done all that any Governor could do to avert it. As he has defied me I hope to read him a lesson he is never likely to forget and one that may have a lasting effect on the native mind in these regions. All the natives both within and without the Transvaal borders are now anxiously watching events here, and on the manner in which Sikukuni is disposed of, will very much depend our future success or want of success in dealing with native questions.¹⁴⁹

The evidence suggests that although Sekhukhune called a *pitso* to discuss the peace terms Clarke delivered, the Pedi chief's political power was under threat by 1879. He was in no position to go against the majority opinion among his people, which was to resist the British demands, and he was eventually obliged to turn down the terms offered.¹⁵⁰ Over the next weeks Wolseley was based at Fort Weeber and corresponded infrequently with Lanyon; he was far too involved in his campaign to be concerned about much else. It was particularly significant that Wolseley was able to raise a contingent of 8 000 Swazi warriors, who arrived to join the imperial force on 19 November¹⁵¹ and was destined to play a vital role in the subsequent British victory.¹⁵² The battle began at dawn on 28 November 1879 against Sekhukhune's mountain stronghold in the Leolu Mountains, and took a very heavy toll of both Pedi and Swazi warriors. Sekhukhune himself escaped but was subsequently captured and taken to Pretoria, arriving there on 9 December 1879.¹⁵³

A crowd of onlookers witnessed Wolseley's triumphant return and Sekhukhune's bemusement and shame. Lanyon sent out a detachment of the King's Dragoon Guards to escort the party into Pretoria,¹⁵⁴ and it was also the administrator who organised the imprisonment of the Pedi chief in the local gaol. The suggestion was made that Sekhukhune be sent to the Cape to join Langalibalele, but this was subject to the approval of the Cape legislative assembly and in the end the Pedi chief was held in Pretoria until his release, by the restored republican authorities,

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, SA 1, Wolseley – Frere, 6 November 1879.

¹⁵⁰ Delius, *The land belongs to us*, pp 241-242.

¹⁵¹ Smith, *The campaigns against the Bapedi of Sekhukhune*, pp 49, 56.

¹⁵² Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 1 December 1879.

¹⁵³ For military details of the battle see Smith, *The campaigns of the Bapedi of Sekhukhune*, pp 51-55 and Delius, *The land belongs to us*, pp 244-245.

¹⁵⁴ Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 186.

in 1881.¹⁵⁵

Wolseley was thus able to report to Hicks Beach that Sekhukhune's power had been broken and that taxes collected from the Pedi and other African communities, who were now obliged to respect British sovereignty, would henceforth be a good source of revenue in the Transvaal coffers. Clearly he had no intention of setting any of these measures in place himself, this was to be Lanyon's task, although he did not say as much to Hicks Beach. Wolseley did, however, make a point of telling the secretary of state that the victory would 'have a very good effect upon the Boers,' who themselves had been unsuccessful over the years against the Pedi. This would show them the awesome power of imperial troops and in his view the impressive victory would certainly help to quell any ideas they might have harboured of resorting to armed resistance. He also managed to slip in a mention of his earnest desire to return home to Britain now that matters looked far more settled.¹⁵⁶

In the immediate aftermath of the Pedi conquest, Lanyon and Clarke – the latter appointed by Wolseley to assist the administrator in effecting the settlement of what had been Sekhukhuneland – were instrumental in notifying the African chiefs that taxes of 10 shillings per hut were payable to the Transvaal state. Furthermore, as no successor to Sekhukhune was to be appointed, each Pedi headman had to surrender his firearms and would in future be answerable to a resident magistrate. In December 1879, as an added precaution to enforce control of the area, a new fort to be known as Fort Albert, was built on a carefully chosen site overlooking the Steelpoort valley.

Although it was Wolseley who masterminded the conquest of the Pedi and took all the credit for the impressive victory, his involvement in African policy in the Transvaal Colony began and ended there. It was Lanyon who had to engineer and then implement the subjugation of the Pedi polity. Lanyon's crucial contribution in this regard will be assessed in the next chapter, because it was only after March 1880, in the newly-created Transvaal legislative assembly, that Lanyon

¹⁵⁵ Smith, *The campaigns of the Bapedi of Sekhukhune*, pp 57, 60.

¹⁵⁶ Hove, *Wolseley Papers*, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 1 December 1879.

was empowered to pass the necessary legislation.¹⁵⁷ By June 1880, by which time Wolseley had already left the Transvaal, Lanyon embarked upon an extensive tour of the Middelburg and Lydenburg regions to address the Pedi and other African chiefs in surrounding areas. It fell to him to ensure that they accepted British sovereignty, surrendered their chiefly power, and paid their taxes. It was Lanyon, in other words, who completed the process of subjugation that Wolseley had begun with his dramatic conquest of Sekhukhune in November 1879.¹⁵⁸ His presiding presence in the making of African policy, both in Griqualand West and in the Transvaal is of crucial importance in any assessment of his role in southern Africa.

The imperial intervention that ended Pedi independence was a turning point in Transvaal history. In contrast to the situation in 1876, when the Pedi polity was still proudly independent and the Transvaal state was in such disarray, by 1881, when Britain withdrew, the power of the colonial state and white supremacy had been secured. As Delius shows, Lanyon's administration of Africans in the Transvaal state became more effective and centralised than that of his colonial predecessors after the Pedi defeat, and it was under his direction that a relatively efficient method of revenue collection was introduced. A system of private land ownership had been secured and the migrant labour system, which depended heavily upon Pedi labour on the diamond mines, was facilitated.¹⁵⁹ Under Lanyon, in other words, the state structure of the Transvaal was more efficient in terms of the rising capitalist order in southern Africa than it had been before he arrived. And significantly, by the end of the 19th century the Transvaal had become the hub of the southern African economy. With two of the most powerful independent African chiefdoms, the Zulu and the Pedi, subdued by force of imperial arms by the end of 1879, the balance of power had swung decisively in favour of a society in southern Africa that was dominated by whites. Lanyon's role in these developments was a significant one.

¹⁵⁷ It will be remembered that Lanyon had to rule by proclamation as there was no legally recognised legislative body in the Transvaal. The legislative and executive councils were set up in March 1880. See Chapter VI.

¹⁵⁸ Smith, *The campaigns of the Bapedi of Sekhukhune*, pp 58, 60. TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 14 August 1880.

¹⁵⁹ Delius, *The land belongs to us*, pp 246.

CHAPTER VI

THE PRELUDE TO WAR

The year 1880, which is the focus of this chapter, was a crucial one for the Transvaal and for Lanyon in many respects. In the closing months of 1879 Wolseley was in Sekhukhuneland on his military campaign against the Pedi and Lanyon had meanwhile to keep the Transvaal administrative machine operating smoothly and quell the growing Boer discontent as best he could. While he was away Wolseley corresponded with Lanyon on a fairly regular basis and sometimes sent the administrator instructions, but he was also called upon to exercise his own discretion on a number of occasions, particularly in his dealings with the Boers.

Wolseley returned victorious to Pretoria in December but was impatient to leave for home, and was not committed to promoting progress in the Transvaal in matters that he considered mundane. Indeed, when Colonial Office approval for the new Transvaal constitution finally came through it was not Wolseley, but Lanyon who began to set up the vital legislative machinery that would release the Transvaal from its restricted proclamation-driven regime. Wolseley was then called away to Natal for six weeks until the end of February 1880, so Lanyon once again had to take full responsibility for the governance of the colony. Wolseley had no input in the constitutional process that Lanyon was orchestrating in Pretoria, returning barely in time to attend the official opening of the new assembly.

Less than a month later, on 3 April 1880, Sir Garnet finally left Pretoria and Lanyon laboured on alone. And very significantly, within weeks of Wolseley's departure, the news arrived that there was a new ruling party in Britain and that Kimberley had returned to the Colonial Office as secretary of state for the colonies. These developments had important implications for British colonial policy in southern Africa, and the same can also be said for their impact on Lanyon. Wolseley's successor as high commissioner for South-East Africa was George Pomeroy Colley, but as will be seen, he had significantly less control over Lanyon and Transvaal affairs than Wolseley. Indeed – for the first time since leaving Griqualand West – Lanyon enjoyed

considerable freedom of action. He was still, of course responsible to the Colonial Office, but the imperial string was less taut and Lanyon, like many other imperial agents of his time took advantage of the fact that London was conveniently far away and that communications were slow and, in the case of the Pretoria telegraph line, frequently unserviceable.¹

Now with the authority to legislate – in fact well-nigh autocratic authority because of the illiberal nature of the new constitutional organs – Lanyon again, as he had done in Griqualand West, was able to play a crucial role in the making of African colonial policy. It will be shown that he was instrumental in deciding the fate of the Pedi and other African communities resident in the Transvaal. On a protracted tour of the north-eastern districts in June-August 1880 he established colonial control over them, began collecting taxes and started formulating a land policy.

Sekhukhune's arrival in the Transvaal capital at the end of the previous year, bound for the local gaol,² had been witnessed by crowds of curious onlookers and Wolseley was hopeful that the Boers would be suitably awed by the impressive imperial victory, would curb their aggressive intentions and pay their taxes with better grace. But this was not to be. As Britain was soon to realise, it was one thing for imperial soldiers to put down untrained and poorly armed blacks but quite another in the case of well-armed whites who were inspired by a common cause. Despite Lanyon's assurances that the Boers were settling down and that he had everything under control in the Transvaal, as 1880 drew to a close Boer resistance to colonial rule gathered momentum, exacerbated by Lanyon's determination to collect taxes that were due to the state. But Lanyon, who had beavered on, weathering one crisis after another for nearly two years, did not, it seems, realise that this time the situation was teetering on the brink of war.

Lanyon and Wolseley in the Transvaal

Wolseley's brief in the Transvaal was to stabilise British rule and improve the financial status

¹ Preston, *The South African diary of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 217.

² At Wolseley's suggestion Sekhukhune was to be sent to the Cape so that he, Langalibalele, and Cetshwayo could be detained together to avoid unnecessary expense; C 2695, no 16, Hicks Beach – Frere, 21 April 1880. However, the Cape parliament had not yet agreed to this by the time war broke out in the Transvaal. The Pedi chief was thus held in Pretoria until 1881 when in terms of the Pretoria Convention he was released. He returned to the eastern Transvaal but was murdered by a rival, Mampuru, on 13 August 1881; Delius, *The land belongs to us*, pp 251-252.

of the colony by putting down the resistance of the Pedi and the Boers. With Lanyon's conscientious but rather grudging assistance – because the administrator, as he confessed to his father, was finding it oppressive to work under Wolseley³ – the two British agents made some progress. The working relationship between Lanyon and Wolseley was often contradictory and will be addressed again below, but it is sufficient at this stage to say that while neither had much respect for the other, and each, indeed, on occasion expressed criticism of the other, they worked together well enough. Lanyon went out of his way to be cordial and helpful to Wolseley, for which the general was grateful.⁴ In short, Lanyon was a dutiful puppet although he did not approve of Wolseley's showy, limelight-loving personality, and chafed to be allowed to take responsibility for rule in the Transvaal once more.

On at least one matter they saw eye to eye: the dissident Boers. Neither Lanyon nor Wolseley made any effort to understand the reasons for their resistance to British rule and Lanyon's contempt for the Boers⁵ was matched by that of Wolseley, who was as always particularly outspoken:

I believe the Transvaal Boer to be a coward pure and simple, who will swagger & talk big when he knows he can do so with impunity, but the moment he is collared he collapses ... A Boer's idea of life is that he should pay no taxes of any sort or kind, that he should be amenable to no sort of law he disliked, that there should be no police to keep order.⁶

He had recognised the Boers' fierce individualism but had little insight into their aspirations for independence and the force this exerted on their protest movement. To fulfil their commitment to improving the finances of the Transvaal, and in the pursuit of peace and order, it was necessary that Lanyon and Wolseley gain the Boers' confidence and persuade them to pay their taxes. The Boers were the settler land-owner elite and without their contributions to the state revenue the Transvaal coffers would remain comparatively empty. This was despite the fact that the traders

³ See for example TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 29 August, 24 October, 1879; Ibid, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 4 September 1880. See also Chapter V.

⁴ See for example Chapter V for reference to Lanyon finding accommodation for Wolseley in Pretoria. There is also mention in Wolseley's diary to his socialising, playing tennis and horse riding to see the countryside with Lanyon. See also below for Wolseley's arrangements as he left Pretoria to send a gift to Lanyon to thank him for his friendly cooperation.

⁵ See Chapter V.

⁶ Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, pp 138-139.

and merchants in Pretoria – which as yet was the only Transvaal town with any significant commercial development – were largely of British origin and could be counted among the supporters of British rule.

Although Wolseley arrived full of confidence that the Pedi and the Boers would soon be made to toe the imperial line, his success with the Pedi – from a British point of view – was not matched as far as the Boers were concerned. As De Kiewiet puts it, ‘It is clear how utterly he stood outside the Dutch ... because he saw their faults and their unconformity before their virtues and their affinity, his every step became a chafing and a fretting.’⁷ He proved to be as inept as Lanyon in making any headway with the hardline republicans. On his way to Pretoria from Natal, Wolseley had his first encounter with one of their leaders, Piet Joubert. Wolseley used his most winning ways, offering Joubert a well-paid position on the executive council that was about to be introduced, and was amazed when Joubert flatly refused to be tempted. He hid his surprise, however, when reporting to Hicks Beach: ‘He is irreconcilable as I expected to find him.’⁸ On his arrival in Pretoria he informed the Transvalers in his usual brusque manner that he ‘intended to enforce a due respect for the law’, and that if necessary he would enforce the payment of taxes through sale of the property of the guilty party.⁹ The local press immediately criticised such brash British confidence, taking the view that the present government had very shaky legal standing in the Transvaal.¹⁰ Instead of intimidating the Boers, Wolseley’s affirmation of Lanyon’s tactics simply antagonised them.

It was Lanyon who had to put down an incident of Boer unrest at Middelburg in mid October 1879.¹¹ Wolseley was too busy preparing to leave for the north-eastern Transvaal on his military campaign. This was to be characteristic of Lanyon’s role for the next two months – while Wolseley was defeating the Pedi Lanyon took full responsibility for running the administration

⁷ De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, p 250.

⁸ Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 25 September, 1879.

⁹ Ibid. The allegation that there was disunity among the Boers in 1879, is refuted by Van Zyl. See for example van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, p 127.

¹⁰ See for example *De Volksstem*, 7 and 21 October 1879.

¹¹ See Chapter V.

and trying to keep one step ahead of the Boer unrest. At Middelburg Lanyon organised the trial of the Boer suspects and then hurried back to Pretoria to make sure that the danger of an armed revolt was over, reporting to his father that ‘they talk very big about resisting the Govt. if any [Boer suspects] be punished, but they are such braggarts I don’t think they will attempt opposition in the face of a military force’.¹²

Both Lanyon and Wolseley noticed that during October 1879 the Boers seemed to have developed a more determined frame of mind. From Fort Weeber, where he was now orchestrating the Pedi campaign, Wolseley remarked to Hicks Beach that word was going around that the Boers ‘now mean business’. He put this down to pressure from their leaders and what he called ‘an inflammatory press’, presumably *De Volksstem*. Apparently more astute at reading human nature than his administrator, Wolseley began to realise that the Boers were inspired by a certain ‘sentiment’. Even if defeated, they would ‘at least have the satisfaction of knowing that they have struck a blow for the cause they believe to be that of truth and justice’, thus erasing their shame at having allowed Britain to take their republic in 1877 ‘without firing a shot’.¹³ In his letters to Hicks Beach, ‘Hitch Bitch’, as the disrespectful Wolseley referred to the secretary of state in his letters to Louisa,¹⁴ the general went so far as to suggest that Britain might even at some stage have to consider withdrawing from the Transvaal altogether.¹⁵ The Colonial Office must have been taken aback at this new insight on the Transvaal imbroglio. To some extent it answered the question Hicks Beach had posed to Frere some five months earlier: ‘If such feeling [support for annexation of 1877] exists [in the Transvaal] why is it not manifested?’¹⁶ Wolseley made it clear in his despatch that support for annexation had not been manifest because it was virtually non-existent. ‘The main body of the Dutch population are disaffected to our rule,’¹⁷ he concluded, ‘we are hated by ⁹/₁₀ of the Boers with an intense hate.’ The annexation should never

¹² TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 24 October 1879.

¹³ Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 28 October 1879.

¹⁴ Ibid, WP 9/6, Wolseley – Louisa Wolseley, 2 February 1880, also WP 9/11, 28 February 1880 and WP 9/14 i, 15 March 1880.

¹⁵ Ibid, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 28 October 1879.

¹⁶ Quoted in Hicks Beach, *Life of Sir Michael Hicks Beach*, p 141.

¹⁷ C 2866, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 29 October 1879, pp 189-190.

have taken place; in Wolseley's opinion, it had been 'a great political blunder'.¹⁸

While he was out of Pretoria on his military campaign the only way Wolseley could keep the Colonial Office accurately informed about the Boer protest movement and whether it was likely to escalate into armed conflict, was through Lanyon. It was frequently left up to Lanyon, as the man-on-the-spot, to take the decisions on how best to handle Transvaal affairs. For example, Lanyon reported to Wolseley that the Boers were planning a mass meeting for 10 December 1879 at Wonderfontein between Pretoria and Potchefstroom 'to discuss and determine their future line of action',¹⁹ and that they were actively spreading rumours that they intended to escalate their resistance into an armed struggle. Wolseley, never at a loss for a cunning ruse, decided to play the Boers at their own game, and told Lanyon to 'adopt the Boers tactics of spreading all sorts of alarming rumours'.²⁰

In the *Transvaal Argus* Lanyon accordingly placed a notice about the 'horrible and annihilating effects of a newly-invented explosive ... to be used in our shells', explaining that a consignment of these shells had just arrived for use in the Transvaal.²¹ In order to discourage attendance at the mass meeting of 10 December, Lanyon, also spread the rumour that on the way back home from the Pedi expedition the Swazi warriors would be passing through the Lydenburg and Middelburg districts and would be given instructions to destroy the homesteads and take the livestock from farms that had been left unoccupied for the week of the meeting. Wolseley was confident that rumours of this type were likely to 'find credence with these ignorant Boers'.²² Lanyon's opinion of these harebrained ideas is not recorded, and he did not mention them in letters to his father.

¹⁸ Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 28 October 1879. Despite his misgivings, Wolseley continued to say publicly that Britain would never give up the Transvaal.

¹⁹ Ibid, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 11 November 1879.

²⁰ Ibid, SA 2, Wolseley – Lanyon, 11 November 1879.

²¹ Ibid, Wolseley – Lanyon, 9 November 1879 and Ibid, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 11 November 1879. See also *The Transvaal Argus*, 19 November 1879.

²² Ibid, SA 2, Wolseley – Lanyon, 11 November 1879. Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 163. See also Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 11 November 1879.

They apparently had little or no effect on the Boers.²³

Lanyon also made a concerted effort to thin out the ranks of Boer leadership by offering certain individuals well-paid government posts. On Wolseley's instructions he approached Paul Kruger – 'a difficult man to deal with' – Jorissen and Bok with lucrative job offers. He also tried to persuade Pretorius to accept nomination as one of the non-official members in the executive council that was soon to be formed, on the condition that he did whatever was necessary to get the Boer meeting to disperse quietly. Wolseley claimed that Pretorius was 'so hard up that a little ready money down, might square him', so he told Lanyon to lure Pretorius into the British fold with a bonus of £300, for which Wolseley himself would foot the bill.²⁴ Lanyon's efforts came to naught. None of the Boers accepted the posts.²⁵ Pretorius subsequently kept Lanyon guessing for some months; he simply could not be persuaded to say yes or no to Lanyon's offer.

Military precautions were also taken by Lanyon in case the December meeting escalated into violence. He made sure that there was a strong body of troops in Pretoria 'with all three arms', and he stationed several companies of infantry at Heidelberg to protect the town. The 2nd Regiment and the two companies of the 80th which were in the district would also reinforce Lanyon's forces.²⁶ Once these steps had been taken Wolseley felt reassured that Lanyon would be 'quite strong enough to put down by force of arms any number of Boers that may assemble together to make war upon us'. But Wolseley added a note of caution: Lanyon was to avoid armed conflict. A clash would not look good at home.²⁷ 'The first overt act of hostility and the

²³ Ibid, SA 2, Wolseley – Lanyon, 11 November 1879. Attendance at the meeting was probably not affected by the rumour campaign although leaders such as Joubert took the trouble to gainsay them at public meetings prior to the 10 December; Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, pp 132-133.

²⁴ Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 11 November 1879.

²⁵ Kruger was offered a post as diplomatic agent to the Swazi at a salary of £600-£700 pa; Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, pp 131-132.

²⁶ Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Lanyon, 15 November 1879. See also Ibid, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 11 November 1879, where Wolseley mentions that he has requested the permission of the secretary of state for war to send reinforcements to Pretoria. These troops could now be dispensed with in Zululand.

²⁷ Ibid, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 11 November 1879.

first shot must be fired, if one is to be fired at all, by the Boers and not by us.²⁸ Britain could not be seen as culpable in any armed outbreak.

Lanyon also arranged to have a notice published in both Dutch and English in the *Transvaal Government Gazette* of 21 and 25 November and 2 December 1879 to warn the Boers not to disturb the peace in any way or to intimidate others into attending their mass meeting. To do so would be asking for trouble because the republican laws against treason and sedition were still in force in the Transvaal and 'all persons convoking or attending meetings for a treasonable purposes (sic) ... or aiding in treasonable projects' might well find themselves charged with breaking the law.²⁹

Many Boers decided to hold their taxes back at least until the December meeting was over and there was more clarity on what steps, if any, the Boers were going to take against the government. Paying tax had become a key issue. On Wolseley's suggestion Lanyon embarked on a strenuous programme of law enforcement in November. Anyone trying to avoid paying tax, inciting others to do so or coercing the 'loyal and quietly disposed people into attending the meeting' was to be charged in court.³⁰ The government had to be seen to be firmly in control. Lanyon acted promptly and a case was duly lodged against JF Celliers, the editor of *De Volksstem*, and EJP Jorissen, the legal adviser to the *Volkskomitee*, for refusing to pay tax.³¹ On the usual gambit, the two Boers averred that the present government was not empowered to demand taxation; they were citizens of the republic and would only pay tax if called to do so by the legally constituted republican *volksraad*. Celliers was particularly outspoken in his editorials in *De Volksstem*, blatantly advising all Transvalers to refuse to pay taxes to the government.³² When the two men lost their case in the Pretoria *landdrost* court they appealed to the high court,

²⁸ Ibid, SA 2, Wolseley – Lanyon, 9 November 1879.

²⁹ TA, ZAR/55, *Transvaal Government Gazette*, 21 and 25 November, 2 December 1879.

³⁰ Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Lanyon, 15 November 1879. Wolseley went so far as to propose that monetary rewards be offered to anyone providing information in this regard. He suggested anything from £20 to £50 and authorised Lanyon to spend up to £100.

³¹ *De Volksstem*, 18 November, 2 and 9 December 1879, 13 January 1880.

³² See for example *De Volksstem*, 27 May and 22 July 1879.

a case that was heard on 27 November 1879.³³ Kotzé reserved his judgement and in the meantime Lanyon's hands were tied. Being unable to collect any taxes, his irritation knew no bounds. It was untenable that the judge could hold the government to ransom. Lanyon and Wolseley agreed that it was time that Kotzé be relieved of the chief justiceship.³⁴ And Lanyon began what almost amounted to a personal hate campaign against Kotzé.³⁵ When judgement was finally delivered on the Celliers and Jorissen test case on 12 January 1880, the ruling went against them and they were obliged to pay their taxes.³⁶ This did not, however, bring the tax issue to an end, and many Boers still refused to pay until forced to do so, under protest, by the due process of the law. The whole tax debacle, as will be seen in Chapter VII, culminated in the Bezuidenhout affair in late 1880, and proved to be one of the issues which accelerated the outbreak of war.

That the pro-British element was relatively small in number and was based almost exclusively in Pretoria became apparent three weeks before the scheduled Boer gathering when a meeting of Pretoria residents was held in the town on 17 November 1879. Those who attended, about 500-600 people according to the pro-British *Transvaal Argus*,³⁷ expressed their satisfaction that the Transvaal was to be kept under British sovereignty, but made an urgent appeal for the introduction of significant constitutional changes that would enable them to promote economic progress in the Transvaal. They elected a committee to negotiate with the Boer *Volkskomitee* and to inform them that 'loyalists', the commercial element in Pretoria, were determined to work towards maintaining the British presence in the Transvaal.³⁸ This meeting of British residents apparently had little impact on the Boer resistance movement, but it did place Lanyon in a predicament because the constitutional changes this commercial sector was looking for were

³³ C 2528, enclosure in no 10, 'Legality or illegality of taxation', extract from *De Volksstem*, 5 December 1879, pp 17-23.

³⁴ Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 19 December 1879.

³⁵ See below for details of Kotzé's replacement as chief justice, and Wolseley's criticism of Lanyon for handling the issue tactlessly.

³⁶ C 2528, enclosure in no 32, Kotzé's judgement, extract from the *Transvaal Argus and Commercial Advertiser*, 12 January 1880, pp 40-41.

³⁷ *Transvaal Argus and Commercial Advertiser*, 19 November 1879.

³⁸ Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 1 December 1879. See also Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African confederation*, p 178.

certainly not to be found in the so-called representative organs that he was about to introduce.³⁹

As 10 December 1879 drew nearer, Lanyon remained confident that the Boers would not resort to arms, but that if by any chance they did pluck up courage, the fight would be 'a very short one, and not sweet to them'.⁴⁰ On 9 December 1879 a triumphant Wolseley returned to Pretoria, fresh from his conquest of the Pedi, arriving just as the Boers were gathering at Wonderfontein.⁴¹ Both Lanyon and Wolseley felt that the news of Sekhukhune's comprehensive defeat and the chief's very public entrance into Pretoria – on the eve of the Boer meeting – on his way to the local gaol, would make an impression on the Boers and give them a sense of what they were up against.⁴² To reinforce this Lanyon organised a flashy military parade in Pretoria to re-enforce the image of British military superiority.⁴³ The Pretoria people, wrote Lanyon, were 'astonished' by this impressive parade of about 2 000 imperial troops.

The guns astonished them more than anything else, for they would not believe that they could move about so quickly. It will have a great effect upon the Boers who are now having their mass meeting, and threaten to play us all out. Poor devils, they are all brag and bunkum and I don't believe in their pluck or anything else'.⁴⁴

The Boer meeting at Wonderfontein did not, after all, end in an armed clash, although those who attended resolved to keep up their protest until they reached their goal. The estimated 6 000 Boers⁴⁵ spent a full week discussing future plans, and although there was some support for violent measures the leaders were able to keep this tendency in check. The *Volkskomitee*

³⁹ Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, p 134. A dinner was also held by 80 loyalists in Pretoria on 17 December 1879. Wolseley addressed those present and gave them the assurance that Britain had their interests at heart and would never give up the Transvaal; *Ibid*, p 139.

⁴⁰ TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 14 November 1879.

⁴¹ Wolseley arrived in Pretoria on 9 December 1879, accompanied by Sekhukhune. Wolseley writes that there was 'a very large crowd eager to see him'; Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 186.

⁴² See for example Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 1 and 12 December 1879; TA, A 596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 12 December 1879.

⁴³ Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 12 December 1879.

⁴⁴ TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 12 December 1879.

⁴⁵ Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, pp 136-137, bases his estimate on reports from *De Volksstem*. Wolseley claims that the 6 000 total was 'an extravagant untruth'; Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 190.

compiled a list of resolutions which reiterated the Boers' determination to reclaim their country and recognise their own *volksraad* once again. Those present also undertook to avoid bloodshed, but strenuously to oppose any restrictions on their nationhood, and to boycott the purchase or sale of produce from those who supported the government. On 17 December they dispersed quietly.⁴⁶

Lanyon was smugly satisfied that he had been right about the Boers' lack of spunk and wrote to tell his father that they had done nothing 'save to resolve that they will hold another meeting next April'.⁴⁷ Wolseley too, made light of the week's deliberations and reported to Hicks Beach that as he had predicted, the meeting had been 'a sort of picnic where they [the Boers] can indulge in that tall talk they delight in'. He now took a 'very hopeful view of the present condition of affairs' in the Transvaal. If the matter of the Boers could be 'disposed of, everything would be very plain sailing'.⁴⁸

The aftermath of the Boer meeting was, however, not without incident. In their capacities as chairman and secretary respectively of the *Volkskomitee*, Pretorius and Bok were the signatories to the list of resolutions that was sent to Wolseley once the Boers had dispersed. Wolseley took legal advice on whether or not, in terms of the proclamation Lanyon had issued, the two men were punishable on grounds of 'treason and sedition'.⁴⁹ The attorney general, CG Maasdorp, was of the opinion that there was indeed some basis for this charge, and the two men were arrested.⁵⁰ Lanyon was in full support of Wolseley's action and even ventured some predictions about the future of the Transvaal. 'It is useless trying the conciliatory measures any longer,' he wrote, 'for

⁴⁶ C 2505, Pretorius and Bok – Wolseley, enclosure 1 in no 52, 17 December 1879 and sub-enclosure, pp 128-129; Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 195; Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, p 138. It appears that this latter resolution was not strictly adhered to, largely because there was no means of monitoring it. However, Wolseley records that trade was 'suffering a good deal' as a result; Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 243.

⁴⁷ TA, A596, vol 14, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 19 December 1879.

⁴⁸ Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 1, 12 and 19 December 1879.

⁴⁹ See above and TA, ZAR/55, *Transvaal Government Gazette*, 21 and 25 November, 2 December 1879.

⁵⁰ C 2505, no 52, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 2 January 1880, and enclosure 2, attorney general's opinion on the question, pp 127-130.

the Boers only say we do so because we are weak. We must look to a troubled reign here for some time to come, but it will all come right in the end.’⁵¹ The decision to make an example of Pretorius and Bok did not prove to be sound, and the whole issue eventually fizzled out. De Kiewiet maintains that having arrested Pretorius, Lanyon saw that there was little he could do to make an example of the elderly Boer, the ‘silly old goose’ as Wolseley called him.⁵² He was sick and had only chaired the Boer meeting twice. Kotzé would certainly not find him guilty, and there was not a suitable prison to keep the old man in relative comfort.⁵³ Further attempts to bribe Pretorius into accepting a position on the executive council by offering to drop the case against him and to give him a cash ‘bonus’ proved fruitless. Pretorius could not be persuaded to make any firm undertakings at all, although he made plenty of vague hints that he might perhaps be tempted.⁵⁴ To punish him was not advisable either; the last thing that Lanyon and Wolseley wanted was to give the Boers a martyr. The trial was postponed for three months and a few days before Wolseley left Pretoria he decided to “‘wriggle” out of the affair’ as best he could. He claimed that the threat of the trials had served their purpose, and the matter was quietly shelved.⁵⁵

Another of Lanyon and Wolseley’s attempts to control Boer resistance – one which was apparently equally ineffectual – was an attempt to establish a Dutch newspaper in Pretoria. Wolseley instructed Lanyon to start a bi-weekly paper in opposition to *De Volksstem* and have it delivered free to the Boers. Sir Garnet enclosed his own cheque for an initial sum of £300. In his diary Wolseley refers to the new publication as the ‘*Volkfreund*’, but Wolseley’s spelling in his diary is suspect at the best of times, and apparently Lanyon’s new enterprise was to be called the *Transvaalsche Volksvriend*.⁵⁶ There are no known copies extant, and no indication of who the editor might have been; it appears that the endeavour must have been a failure.

⁵¹ TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 2 January 1880.

⁵² Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 203.

⁵³ De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, p 251.

⁵⁴ Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 21 January 1880; De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, p 252; Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, pp 213-215.

⁵⁵ Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, pp 263-264.

⁵⁶ Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Lanyon, 16 January 1880; Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 195.

Among the other matters that Lanyon and Wolseley handled before Sir Garnet left was a failed customs arrangement with Natal that would bring more revenue into the Transvaal. Lanyon had begun his campaign with Bulwer of Natal as early as July 1879,⁵⁷ arguing that the interior communities were entitled to some share of the customs duties collected at the British ports. But even when Wolseley added his weight to put pressure on Natal, the bid failed.⁵⁸ In December 1879 the tight-fisted Natal executive council rejected the Transvaal overtures.⁵⁹ In retaliation Wolseley entertained hopes of developing a railway to Delagoa Bay to serve Transvaal imports, a move which would have cut Natal revenue and serve them right for their heartlessness.⁶⁰ But this was as unrealistic as Burgers's pipe-dream had been. Delagoa Bay was too far away and too underdeveloped, and the British treasury was horrified at Wolseley's financial projections of what it would cost to make the idea viable.⁶¹

An issue in which both Lanyon and Wolseley were involved was the appointment of a new chief justice to replace the controversial JG Kotzé. Kotzé, as has been shown, was a staunch member of the Boer protest movement and had been a thorn in Lanyon's side since the administrator's arrival in the Transvaal.⁶² He had bedevilled the legislative process at every turn and as far as Lanyon was concerned the first requirement of a new chief justice was that he should be more malleable. Wolseley agreed that it was 'impossible to go on here with Mr Kotzé as our only judge' and felt that Kotzé was 'very unfit to hold such an office'. A number of candidates were proposed by Wolseley and the man he eventually selected was JP de Wet who had been the recorder in Griqualand West.⁶³ It fell to Lanyon to inform Kotzé of the new appointment and

⁵⁷ NA, GH/791, Lanyon – Bulwer, 17 July 1879.

⁵⁸ See for example African 204, enclosure in no 190, Wolseley – Bulwer, 22 September, 1879 pp 389-390; NA, GH/501, Wolseley – Bulwer, 23 October 1879.

⁵⁹ Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 12 December 1879.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ PRO 291/5, no 2551, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 16 January 1880. See also De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, pp 255-257.

⁶² See Chapter V.

⁶³ He suggested Judge Phillips of Natal, failing which he felt that someone from the Cape should be recruited. De Wet, the eventual appointee, was able to speak Dutch which Wolseley felt was 'desirable for political reasons'; Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 19 December 1879. See also

offer him a position as one of the puisne judges under De Wet. Kotzé was outraged and refused to suffer this indignity. He wrote a letter of protest to Hicks Beach,⁶⁴ sent an appeal to Queen Victoria and subsequently accepted the more junior post only while this appeal was pending.⁶⁵ Wolseley maintained that Lanyon had handled the incident tactlessly, which was probably true. Lanyon had a reputation for being outspoken and opinionated; he disliked Kotzé and no doubt bore a grudge against him. He probably enjoyed giving Kotzé the bad tidings that he was to be replaced as chief justice, and might well have made good use of the opportunity to humiliate Kotzé. Kotzé, for his part, was self-assured and inclined to be supercilious and according to Wolseley had a high opinion of himself.⁶⁶ All the ingredients were there for what must have been a very explosive encounter. The inability to forgive was certainly a flaw in Lanyon's character, and one that had already become apparent in his years in Griqualand West. He disliked Kotzé and had made a bitter and permanent enemy of him. In Wolseley's words:

He [Kotzé] attributes all his misfortunes to Lanyon's dislike of him ... It is curious how all classes of the officials dislike Lanyon. It seems to me that the moment any man runs counter to his wishes or plans, from that moment he hates him, & would do him all the harm in his power: I am afraid he will never be a first-rate Governor.⁶⁷

With the Pedi under control and the Boer meeting safely over, Wolseley was very anxious to leave for home. He had already been in the Transvaal far longer than had originally been envisaged.⁶⁸ It appears that he was becoming impatient that the Boer unrest was still a factor and general progress in the Transvaal was moving too slowly, and he blamed Lanyon for dragging his feet. 'Lanyon is a slow coach and I cannot work him up to quick action,' he complained in his diary.⁶⁹ This was somewhat unfair in light of the fact that Wolseley himself had been in the

Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 189.

⁶⁴ PRO, CO, 291/9, no 6653, Kotzé – Hicks Beach, 29 March 1880.

⁶⁵ Kew, *John Gilbert Kotzé and the chief justiceship of the Transvaal*, pp 208-210; Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, pp 250-252.

⁶⁶ Wolseley wrote of Kotzé: 'He is a prig with an overwhelming opinion of his own legal knowledge...'; Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 189.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p 252.

⁶⁸ See for example his remarks in his diary, *Ibid*, pp 194-195. In his entry for 27 December 1879 he writes: 'It is too ridiculous my staying on here for I have now nothing to do.'

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p 189.

Transvaal for months, supposedly getting the Transvaal on track, but it is also a clear indication that Wolseley saw Lanyon as responsible for keeping the government machinery turning. Wolseley, it would seem, felt that his own role had been accomplished without so much as a hitch: he had conquered the Pedi and this alone more than justified his six-month sojourn in the Transvaal. Lanyon had to take care of the rest and he should hurry up about it. Lanyon, for his part, found his work very demanding and slow or not, was apparently working conscientiously. He complained to his father that he was buckling under the strain. He claimed that he was very busy with routine administration and monitoring the Boers and that he was working into 'the small hours of the morning, for our troubles increase every day'.⁷⁰

Nor did it help matters that Lanyon's unpopularity was reaching new heights in the Transvaal; he could do nothing right. This, Lanyon felt, was as a result of his efficient system of tax collection: 'As we touch the people's pockets', he wrote in what was surely mock bravado

so do they increase in their abuse of me. it is truly delicious to find oneself once more the best abused man in Africa. I have in their ideas no head, no heart and but a poor body, and evidently they think I can stomach anything they may write. It pleases them but doesn't hurt me.⁷¹

Hicks Beach delayed his permission for Wolseley to return to Britain, feeling that there were a number of matters that still needed attention. The introduction of the new constitution was one of these, and when the London post arrived in Pretoria on the morning of 1 January 1880, the letters patent were there with parliament's sanction of the new constitution.⁷² With Wolseley itching to leave for home, and having received instructions from the Colonial Office that he should go to Natal to settle some constitutional matters there,⁷³ Lanyon had to organise the inauguration of the new executive and legislative councils for which the Transvaal had waited so long. His handling of this will be discussed below.⁷⁴ Once again Wolseley was happy to put the responsibility on Lanyon's shoulders.

⁷⁰ TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 8 January 1880.

⁷¹ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 7 February 1880.

⁷² Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 199. See also Hove, *Wolseley Papers*, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 2 January 1880.

⁷³ Wolseley was away from Pretoria from 22 January to 28 February 1880; Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, pp 218, 242.

⁷⁴ See below under *Lanyon labours on*.

Surprisingly, despite Wolseley's criticism that Lanyon was rather slow, very unpopular and generally not the sort of man to be successful in a leading civil service post, Wolseley wrote him a very favourable testimonial. The indications are that this largesse was probably to serve the general's own purpose by strengthening his case that he be allowed to return home as soon as possible. Although both Lanyon and Wolseley were military officers and might perhaps have been expected to get along better than they did, Lanyon was clearly not in the same flamboyant, outgoing mould as Wolseley. As has been shown, when Sir Garnet was first appointed Lanyon was highly critical of him and his image as an exhibitionist. But once the general arrived their working relationship mellowed. Although there was never any real warmth or friendship between them they were cordial to one another. Be that as it may, Wolseley recommended to Hicks Beach that 'Colonel Lanyon be made supreme in the Transvaal', so presumably, despite his reservations about Lanyon, he had enough confidence that he would be able to cope with the situation. He even claimed that his own continued presence in the Transvaal over Lanyon – and over Bulwer in Natal – was hardly fair on the two officials because it 'injured their authority'. They were both capable and they should, he felt, be given the opportunity to test their wings.⁷⁵

To his wife Wolseley was more frank about his own self-interest rather than the well-being of either Lanyon or, indeed, the Transvaal:

It is very hard on me that I should be kept here to do merely governor's [sic] work. I came out here to do the work of a soldier and diplomatist, to destroy all enemies I might find in the field against me and then to settle the country from which those enemies were driven. This I have now done and I regard my mission as over. ... Now all this is duty work and not that for which I came to South Africa.... All this is very provoking ... I think this is working the willing horse rather too far. Everyone's private wishes seem to be thought of and considered except mine.⁷⁶

Wolseley assured Hicks Beach that there was little more he could accomplish in the Transvaal. Lanyon's new constitution was bound, he said, to be a great success, and the Boers were much

⁷⁵ TA, A596, vol 3, Wolseley – Lanyon, 6 January 1880, p 56 and enclosure, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 24 December 1879, in which Wolseley attests to Lanyon's 'coolness of judgement, so valuable in times of popular excitement' and his 'loyal cooperation'. See also Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 12 and 19 December 1879. For Lanyon's reaction to Wolseley's testimony that he had 'not been wanting in my efforts to do my duty' see TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 8 January 1880.

⁷⁶ Hove, Wolseley Papers, WP 9/1 ii, Wolseley – Louisa Wolseley, 2 January 1880 and WP 9/2 i, 6 January 1880.

quieter.⁷⁷ This was hardly accurate on either count, and again Wolseley's motives must be questioned; he was clearly anxious to leave. His arrest of Pretorius and Bok had estranged him even further from the Boers, and his inventive efforts to quell their resistance to British rule, carried out largely by Lanyon, had all failed. Lanyon, it is worth noting, agreed that the Boers were beginning to settle down. Before Wolseley set off for home, Lanyon wrote to tell his father: 'The Boer troubles are gradually disappearing, and I feel pretty confident that we shall quietly overcome opposition and live down distrust.'⁷⁸

Some months earlier Wolseley had recommended Sir George Pomeroy Colley, 'the ablest man in the army' as the best candidate to succeed him when he returned to Britain.⁷⁹ In March 1880 Lanyon heard that Colley was to take over from Wolseley⁸⁰ as high commissioner for South-East Africa and governor of Natal, and would have the military command of Natal and the Transvaal.⁸¹ Lanyon initially accepted the news with equanimity: 'He is a lucky fellow, but he has worked hard for it and deserved all he has got.'⁸² But by the end of May he was clearly far less accepting of the new appointment. What irked him most was that he thought – mistakenly as it turned out – that Colley was to be governor of the Transvaal as Wolseley had been. Colley had no previous experience in a governor's position and Lanyon's nose was clearly out of joint. He wrote to his father to complain:

I should like to get away from here for that brute Hicks Beach has put me under the Natal Lieut Governor. Now Colley is a very nice fellow, but as he has never before been in the position of a governor, I consider it is hard times putting me after 12 years Colonial Service, (5 of which were in charge of govt) under one who is fresh to the work.⁸³

⁷⁷ See for example Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 30 January 1880; Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 264.

⁷⁸ TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 3 April 1880.

⁷⁹ Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 11 November 1879.

⁸⁰ Wolseley received a telegram from Hicks Beach on 8 March 1880, telling him of Colley's appointment. Sir Garnet must have relayed the news to Lanyon, because Hicks Beach's letter of 26 February 1880 would only have arrived towards the end of March.

⁸¹ GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, Pcc/8/7, Hicks Beach – Wolseley, 26 February 1880.

⁸² TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 20 March 1880.

⁸³ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 29 May 1880.

Hicks Beach, who certainly had the reputation of being a hard task-master, had in fact done his utmost not to ruffle Lanyon's feathers, but he clearly had doubts about Lanyon's ability to cope with what he saw as a potentially dangerous situation in the Transvaal. In a long private letter to Wolseley, explaining how the new south-eastern dispensation in South Africa would work, he made some interesting – and prophetic – observations about Lanyon's abilities and sensitivities:

Although Lanyon is known to be a good officer, yet it is of course no flattery to say that the public confidence in him is very much less than their confidence in you. If anything did occur and we had sanctioned your return before April without replacing you by such a man as Colley as Genl. and High Comm., we should certainly be severely blamed and I think should deserve blame. Therefore I have pressured you to stay ... Colley will not be placed over Lanyon as you were. Lanyon will have the Civil Administration of the Transvaal, but looking both to the military requirements and to Colley's position as High Comm, Lanyon will be instructed to consult him on important functions, and to be guided by his opinions – the Transvaal correspondence with the CO passing through Colley. ... I propose to recommend Lanyon for a KCMG, so that I trust he will understand that his worth is appreciated and will not consider himself superseded by Colley's appt.⁸⁴

Lanyon was flattered and highly delighted when he heard of the award of the 'well earned honours' from Hicks Beach.⁸⁵ In the same mail which brought news of his knighthood, Lanyon heard from Wolseley and to his great relief learned that 'Colley was not to be Governor of the Transvaal, but only of Natal'. He had high hopes that this would mean that he was to be independent; being a puppet was not the ideal role, particularly as he had now grown in confidence and experience. 'I like working on my own', he told his father, 'I work better. It is always annoying to have to report through another man who gets all the kudos of one's trouble.'⁸⁶ He resolved to write to Lord Kimberley, who had just taken over from Hicks Beach in the Colonial Office, to appeal to him that as administrator of the Transvaal he should report directly to the secretary of state rather than through Colley, the high commissioner for South-East Africa.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, Pcc/8/7, Hicks Beach – Wolseley, 26 February 1880.

⁸⁵ See for example TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 22 May 1880.

⁸⁶ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 10 April 1880. On Colley's brief as high commissioner of South-East Africa and his duties as far as the Transvaal and Lanyon were concerned see C 2586, no 5, Kimberley – Colley, 27 May 1880, pp 13-15.

⁸⁷ TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 29 May 1880. In reply to Lanyon's request, Kimberley agreed that in all matters other than those with reference to Africans, Lanyon could in future report directly to the Colonial Office rather than to Colley, the high commissioner. Colley was, however, to be sent copies of all Lanyon's correspondence to Kimberley, so that he would be in touch with affairs in the Transvaal. See PRO, CO 291/6, no 10467, Lanyon – Kimberley, 9 June 1880 and Kimberley – Lanyon, 22 July 1880.

Lanyon was not the only one to have reservations about Colley's appointment. Bartle Frere had been hoping that with Wolseley going he would regain high commissionership over the entire southern Africa. He complained bitterly to Hicks Beach of this second blow to his wounded pride.⁸⁸ He also wrote privately to Kimberley bemoaning this twist of fate and asking why, now that Wolseley's post-Isandlwana appointment as 'dictator' was over, he could not be reinstated to his former position.⁸⁹

On 4 April 1880 Wolseley, who had been chafing to get back home for months, finally left Pretoria.⁹⁰ Over the previous months he had complained frequently to his wife that 'Hitch Bitch kept on inventing silly reasons for my staying on'.⁹¹ Wolseley brushed aside any argument that his presence was still needed in the Transvaal. He assured the Colonial Office that the Boers no longer represented any real threat.⁹² They had come to realise, he said, that they were hopelessly outclassed militarily and had begun paying their taxes. The arrest of Pretorius and Bok had had a sobering effect on them and he was still hopeful that Lanyon would be able to win Pretorius over.⁹³ Wolseley had misread the gravity of the situation completely. Pretorius had no intention of being bought and although some taxes were being paid, others were not. More importantly, the attitude of the Boers towards British overlordship was becoming increasingly sullen and determined.⁹⁴

⁸⁸ GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, Pcc/3/12 and Pcc/3/13, Frere – Hicks Beach, 21 March and 29 March 1880.

⁸⁹ Bodleian Library, Oxford University (hereafter OXF), Kimberley Papers, Mss Eng c 4141, Frere – Kimberley, 22 June 1880.

⁹⁰ Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, pp 266-267.

⁹¹ Hove, Wolseley Papers, WP 9/14 i, Wolseley – Louisa Wolseley, 15 March 1880. The Boer meeting had been scheduled for 6 April, not 8 April, but was then postponed 'indefinitely'; C 2676, enclosure 1 in no 11, Lanyon – Wolseley, 25 March 1880, p 27. This was not, as Lanyon and Wolseley thought, because they were more settled, but because they were regrouping; Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, pp 144-145.

⁹² Goodfellow alleges that Wolseley's haste to get out of South Africa was because 'his sensitive nostrils could already detect the smell of failure' and that his assurances that all was quiet in the Transvaal were merely a ruse to persuade his superiors to allow him to leave; Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African federation*, p 182.

⁹³ GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, Pcc/6/26, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 6 March 1880; C 2676, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 10 April 1880.

⁹⁴ Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, pp 144-145.

Wolseley was clearly grateful that he had received such loyal support from Lanyon for the six months they had worked together. To show his appreciation he asked Louisa

to buy the showiest silver cup you can purchase for £20 or £25 ... I feel I ought to give him [Lanyon] something for I have lived upon him for months and I don't know what I could do better to show him my gratitude for his kindness and hospitality. It should be a cup to stand on his dinner table as an ornament, but it need not be an old one as he has no taste in plate. ... Size is of more consequence than good taste.⁹⁵

With Wolseley gone, Owen Lanyon, soon to be the proud owner of a large silver cup, was left to cope alone as best he could. He seemed oblivious to the inherent danger of his situation. 'The Boer troubles are gradually disappearing and I feel pretty confident,' he wrote to his father the day before Wolseley departed.⁹⁶ His confidence was not well grounded. George Pomeroy Colley was indeed on his way to South Africa, but was to be based in Pietermaritzburg, not Pretoria. And Colley, for all his good credentials, knew little about the hazards of the simmering situation in the Transvaal. By mid April the news came through of a Liberal Party victory at the polls in Britain. Gladstone became the British prime minister and Lord Kimberley returned to the Colonial Office. All of this had implications for the Transvaal.

The Liberal Party policy and Kimberley in the Colonial Office

With the British parliamentary election looming in early 1880, Lanyon was among those imperial agents in South Africa who had been hopeful that Disraeli and the Conservative Party were safe enough to retain power,⁹⁷ but he was also realistic enough to fear that if by any chance

the Conservatives go out, there may be some attempt made to give way to the clamour of the Boers which would have the effect of unsettling everything and cause the European element to become troublesome.⁹⁸

When the election results were known a week later he declared that they 'have perfectly astounded everyone here; I am at a loss to understand the feelings of the British public, ... I suppose ... that Dizzy, if he can live under his disappointment, will be able to come in on another

⁹⁵ Hove, Wolseley Papers, WP 9/14 i, Wolseley – Louisa Wolseley, 15 March 1880.

⁹⁶ TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 3 April 1880.

⁹⁷ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 27 March 1880. Others were Wolseley and Frere. See for example Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, pp 278-279. Wolseley was clearly self-seeking and showed preference for the ruling party that best served his interests.

⁹⁸ TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 10 April 1880.

flood wave of Toryism.⁹⁹ But in the meanwhile changes were bound to reverberate in the Colonial Office and Lanyon was to find himself in the thick of changes at the periphery.

In Britain, some months prior to the election, the writing had been on the wall. British opinion towards the colonies was changing. Although Britons could not begin to fathom why Transvalers did not appreciate the advantages of British rule, there was talk of the possibility of retrocession, particularly because the southern African possessions were proving so expensive. Lanyon's reports of balancing his revenue and expenditure and collecting more tax in the Transvaal paled into insignificance in the face of the alarming reality that British military expenses in southern Africa had increased tenfold over the previous eight years, and by 1879 stood at a staggering £1,5 million.¹⁰⁰ Why, it was asked in the press and elsewhere, if the settlers did not want British control, was the British government paying so much to force it upon them?

From the end of 1879 there had been what Goodfellow calls 'intense irritability' in the treasury over southern African questions. The Colonial Office staff had been made very aware that expenses had to be curbed and that any talk of more funds for promoting confederation was out of the question. Even the ever-hopeful Herbert had to admit that it seemed unlikely that British money would continue to be poured into the seemingly bottomless pit of confederal policy in southern Africa. Discussions began increasingly to turn to Britain's changed responsibilities, particularly in Natal and the Transvaal, if federation were finally to be abandoned and self-government were granted to the settlers and the Boers. The whole issue of self-rule in these two regions would have to be 'reconsidered' very seriously.¹⁰¹

In his Midlothian speeches, delivered in the closing months of 1879 and early 1880, before the British general election, Gladstone had put particular stress on the failed Tory policy overseas. In his widely publicised view, imperial expansionism had to be tempered, and conquest and

⁹⁹ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 17 April 1880.

¹⁰⁰ Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African federation*, p 179.

¹⁰¹ GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, Pcc/8/5, Hicks Beach – Wolseley, 20 November 1879 and Pcc/23, Hicks Beach – Frere, 20 November 1879. See also Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African confederation*, pp 179, 185; De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, p 257.

annexation had to give way to a policy of protecting only what belonged to Britain. The best way to preserve the imperial link was for the home government to allow self-rule in the colonies. And importantly, British policy overseas had to be cheap. Gladstone's attitude was also sympathetic to subjected or down-trodden nationalisms,¹⁰² and the Transvaal Boers chose to think that Gladstone had all but promised to give them back their independence. But they were to learn that pre-election promises and policies were seldom kept by prime ministers in power.

The Transvaal Boers reacted directly after the election results came out. On 10 May 1880 Kruger and Joubert wrote to Gladstone from Cape Town,¹⁰³ where they were doing what they could to help abort Frere's proposed conference on confederation. But even before their letter arrived in London, their hopes were dashed. They heard of the official announcement on 20 May in London that the Transvaal would remain – in terms almost as blunt as Wolseley had used – forever British. The Boers considered this a breach of faith. They saw Gladstone as having used their country 'as a bludgeon against his political opponents', only to cast the Transvaal aside when it had served his base political purpose. But as De Kiewiet points out, the Boer reading of events was skewed. Gladstone's bitter election campaign against Disraeli had not been provoked specifically by events in the Transvaal, even if that is how the Boers had chosen to read it.

Meanwhile, the Whigs had a government to run. Black Michael stood down in the Colonial Office for John Wodehouse, the first Earl of Kimberley, who returned for a second term, having previously been secretary of state for the colonies from 1870 to 1874.¹⁰⁴ He was to all accounts not an intellectually brilliant man, nor indeed a very popular figure, but was widely recognised as a solid and conscientious statesman.¹⁰⁵ Early in May 1880 Gladstone's cabinet met to decide what policy they should follow in southern Africa. A number of memoranda on the 'present position of confederation' were prepared by Colonial Office staff for submission to the cabinet;

¹⁰² De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, p 258.

¹⁰³ C 2676, enclosure 1 in no 24a, Kruger & Joubert – Gladstone, 10 May 1880, pp 46a-46b.

¹⁰⁴ British Library (hereafter BRIT), WE Gladstone Papers, Add Mss 44225, Gladstone – Kimberley, 25 April 1880.

¹⁰⁵ BM Theron, 'Searching for gems: the Kimberley Papers at Oxford University', *Kleio*, 32, 2000, p 105.

the most important was one on the situation in the Transvaal, compiled by Edward Fairfield.¹⁰⁶ As has been seen, Fairfield was personally in favour of withdrawal,¹⁰⁷ but his May 1880 memorandum is a dispassionate account of events from the April 1877 annexation onwards, making it very clear that the large majority of Boers were opposed to British rule. Fairfield also attached a copy of Wolseley's despatch of 13 November 1879 to Hicks Beach to his memorandum. Wolseley made it plain: the Boers were incapable of governing themselves and giving them self-rule would be a recipe for chaos. There was also another document that came under consideration: Frere had sent a desperate telegram to Kimberley pointing out that abandonment of the Transvaal would 'be fatal to confederation' and that he was hoping to hold a conference if such a proposal was accepted by the Cape parliament.¹⁰⁸

The cabinet took its decision on 12 May 1880 – the one that came through to the Boers before any reply to their letter: the policy of confederation had to be upheld. However moribund it had become, confederation remained an outside possibility in the Cape and it might yet rescue Britain's position in southern Africa. Kimberley's telegram conveying the news to southern Africa was sent to Frere,¹⁰⁹ but the following day a slightly abridged version was sent to Lanyon:

Sir B Frere has been instructed to use his best efforts to secure confederation, and has been informed that the sovereignty of the Queen over the Transvaal cannot be relinquished, but I hope that the speedy accomplishment of confederation will enable free institutions to be given to that Colony with promptitude.¹¹⁰

Frere was to remain in his post, despite mounting Liberal pressure for his recall. To prevent Frere's interference in either the Transvaal or Natal in the brief interregnum between Wolseley's departure and Colley's arrival, however, he was bluntly told to keep his hands off the south-

¹⁰⁶ African 217, Memorandum by Fairfield, 5 May 1880, pp 1-10 and appendix: Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 13 November 1879, pp 11-15.

¹⁰⁷ See Chapter IV, *Isandlwana: the death knell for confederation*.

¹⁰⁸ African 223, Telegram 6587, Frere – Kimberley, 3 May 1880, p 4. See also Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African confederation*, pp 188-189.

¹⁰⁹ African 223, Telegram 6725, Kimberley – Frere, 12 May 1880, p 5. In mid May 1880 Frere was the senior imperial official in southern Africa. Wolseley had already left for England and Colley was only due to take up his appointment on 28 May 1880.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, Telegram 6725, Kimberley – Lanyon, 13 May 1880, p 5. The telegram was given the same register number as the one to Frere on 12 May, despite the fact that it was sent on the following day.

east.¹¹¹ Frere and confederation had survived, but not for long.

Gladstone replied courteously to Kruger and Joubert's letter from Cape Town of 10 May, but reiterated the decision of the cabinet on Britain's continued presence in the Transvaal. If they agreed to confederate, the Transvalers could of course have control over their local affairs, but that was as far as he would go. To this he added the argument – one he had also used against Leonard Courtney, who had pleaded the Boer cause in the Commons – that Britain had an obligation to retain control of the Transvaal for the sake of the indigenous population.¹¹² In Pretoria on 7 June 1880 Lanyon's newly constituted legislature¹¹³ passed a resolution in favour of a federal union¹¹⁴ but decisions of this body were hardly significant in terms of popular consent, and were simply ignored by everyone.

The two Boer leaders had been in the Cape since early April 1880 and had been working avidly with Cape Afrikaners to scotch Frere's plans for a confederation in which they would have no part; it would certainly have a detrimental effect on their protest movement. Gladstone and Kimberley were also eagerly awaiting the outcome of Frere's date with destiny. On 22 June 1880, the eastern Cape confederationists moved the resolution proposing a conference but it was opposed so vehemently that it was eventually withdrawn. Kruger and Joubert were delighted, and claimed with justification that their hard work over the past weeks had played a decisive role in the outcome.¹¹⁵ Kimberley, for his part, regarded the whole debacle as positive proof that confederation had 'completely broken down' and added his own voice to the widespread clamour in parliamentary circles that now, at last, Frere had to go.¹¹⁶ Bartle Frere was recalled on 1 August 1880. In his telegram Kimberley explained to Frere that he simply no longer represented

¹¹¹ Ibid, Telegram 7658, Kimberley – Frere 22 May 1880, pp 6-7.

¹¹² C 2676, enclosure 2 in 24a, Gladstone – Kruger & Joubert, 8 June 1880. p 46b.

¹¹³ See below. The new legislative assembly met for the first time on 10 March 1880.

¹¹⁴ C 2676, no 30, Kimberley – Lanyon, 19 July 1880, p 64.

¹¹⁵ Frere agreed that Kruger and Joubert had 'urged their countrymen to withhold their sanction' and that this had been an important factor in the outcome. See C 2655, no 5, Frere – Kimberley, 6 July 1880, pp 95-97, and enclosure, Kruger & Joubert – Courtney, extract from *The Cape Argus*, 3 July 1880, pp 97-99.

¹¹⁶ Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African federation*, pp 193-195.

the opinions of the Liberal Party. In fact, he said,

there had been so much divergence between your views and those of Her Majesty's present Government ... that they would not have thought it ... fair towards yourself that you should remain at the Cape, had it not been for the special reason that there was a prospect of your being able ... to forward the policy of confederation. This special reason has now disappeared ... and Her Majesty's Government have therefore with regret come to the conclusion ... to replace you by another Governor.¹¹⁷

When he heard the news, Lanyon was 'disgusted' with the way the Liberals had pushed his mentor, Bartle Frere, out of office; this was further proof, he told his father, that South Africa was 'the grave of reputations'.¹¹⁸ On Kimberley's recommendation, Frere was to be replaced by Sir Hercules Robinson,¹¹⁹ and until such time as he could get to the Cape from New Zealand, Sir George Strahan would act as governor.

However, it proved easier to replace Frere than his policy. Gladstone, Kimberley and the Liberals had to deliberate on how best to fill the policy vacuum. Eventually it was decided that the Cape, Natal and the Transvaal, certainly for the years 1880-1881 (and thus, conveniently for the purposes of this thesis) would be treated separately according to the needs of each region. It was however, stressed that British policy in the colonies had to be comparatively cheap. Exorbitant amounts such as those spent in southern Africa in 1879 would simply not be tolerated.

Lanyon labours on

Kimberley's brief in the Transvaal in 1880, with Lanyon at the helm, was to economise. Federation was no longer an issue but peace and order were, and so was the avoidance of expensive wars against Africans or Boers, Britain's traditional combatants in the Transvaal. Wolseley had neutralised the Pedi threat to imperialism, but he had not yet formalised control over the Africans, nor had he persuaded the Boers to accept British rule. These tasks fell to Lanyon. Once Wolseley had left the Transvaal in the first week of April 1880 Lanyon had comparative freedom to act on his own. Colley – who was in any case to have less authority over Lanyon than Wolseley – did not arrive immediately and the Liberal Party government had only

¹¹⁷ African 223, Telegram 11792, Kimberley – Frere 1 August 1880, p 15.

¹¹⁸ TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 14 August, 18 September 1880.

¹¹⁹ OXF, Kimberley Papers, Mss Eng c 4142, Kimberley – Gladstone, 29 June 1880.

just come to power and would still take some time to find its feet.

Lanyon's first project on his own was to get the new Transvaal constitution up and running. This was a legacy from Wolseley, a task the Colonial Office had assigned to Sir Garnet and one he had conveniently fobbed off onto Lanyon because of the delay in official sanction from the cabinet.¹²⁰ This permission, as has been seen, only arrived in Pretoria on the first day of 1880 and because Wolseley was in Natal from mid January to the end of February, and then left for Britain a month later, it was Lanyon who had to put the constitutional wheels in motion in the Transvaal. Indeed, Wolseley only arrived back in Pretoria after five weeks in Pietermaritzburg¹²¹ in time to attend the opening of the first session, on 10 March 1880, of what he was happy to call 'Lanyon's legislative council', and to sit through the celebratory dinner, 'a heavy, dull affair,' which Lanyon organised for that same evening.¹²²

When Lanyon had taken over in Pretoria in March 1879, the governmental system in the Transvaal was purely autocratic. Shepstone had been supported by several government departments which were very poorly organised and had had only a skeleton staff. Because there was no representative element in the governance of the colony, the settlers, including the wealthy Boer landed class,¹²³ many of whom did not read English newspapers, knew little of how the government was being run. Furthermore, none of the Boer leaders held any important administrative office.¹²⁴ The Transvalers, Frere had said in his May 1879 report to Hicks Beach, needed some concessions in the way of a more liberal constitution. But he was wary of trusting them with too much power, particularly in a legislative assembly that might not have enough

¹²⁰ GRO, Hicks Beach Papers, Pcc/8/5, Hicks Beach – Wolseley, 20 November 1879; African 204, Hicks Beach – Wolseley, 27 November 1879. See also Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African confederation*, p 177.

¹²¹ Wolseley was in Natal from 22 January to 28 February 1880 attending to constitutional matters there; Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, pp 217-242.

¹²² *Ibid*, pp 250-252.

¹²³ In republican times the Boers had become the owners of vast tracts of land. Indeed when the treasury had run dry, prominent politicians and government officials had been paid for their services in land, resulting in an even larger class of wealthy landed proprietors. See Delius, *The land belongs to us*, pp 127-131.

¹²⁴ De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, p 237.

checks on the law-making process.¹²⁵ Goodfellow suggests that Frere's motives were not merely to offer a sop to Boer agitation, but were rather an attempt, on the part of this ever-hopeful confederationist, to create the kind of legislative body that would be likely to adopt a resolution in favour of confederation in the future.¹²⁶ Frere still fostered these ambitions, but his days of influence over Transvaal affairs were numbered, and since Isandlwana the Colonial Office was less sanguine of holding on to the ex-republic. Both Fairfield and Herbert had minuted that the British government might well have to reconsider its position there in the near future.¹²⁷

The instructions Lanyon had to work with were based, to the letter, on Frere's recommendations that he and Lanyon had devised in Pretoria in April 1879.¹²⁸ The two 'representative' bodies were by no means liberal. The executive council comprised five officials, namely the administrator and four of his departmental heads: the commander of the imperial forces in the Transvaal; the colonial secretary; the attorney general and the secretary for native affairs. A further three members were then selected and appointed by the administrator to represent non-official interests. They were to be paid £300 per annum for their services, and it was suggested that they should preferably be persons with trade or landed interests.¹²⁹

The executive council was to advise the administrator on all matters, but the final responsibility for the measures adopted would rest with the administrator – a stipulation that suited Lanyon very well. In effect his fellow councillors, both official and non-official, were merely advisers and he had the freedom to act as autocratically as he wished. The only limitation of his power was that if he took a decision that was opposed by fellow councillors he was obliged, within a month, to inform the secretary of state, through the high commissioner, of his motivation for the

¹²⁵ African 193, Frere – Hicks Beach, 6 May 1879, pp 4-5 and enclosure 1, minute by Frere, 15 April, 1879, pp 7-8.

¹²⁶ Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African confederation*, p 177.

¹²⁷ De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, pp 240-241. See also Chapter IV, *Isandlwana: the death knell for confederation*.

¹²⁸ C 2482, Transvaal Constitution, Letters Patent, 8 November 1879, pp 160-163. Compare with African 193, 'Proposed measures for the future administration and preservation of the peace of the Transvaal', Frere – Hicks Beach, 6 May 1879, pp 1-10.

¹²⁹ C 2482, Transvaal Constitution, Letters Patent, 8 November 1879, pp 160-163.

decision.¹³⁰ The non-official members were virtually powerless. Not surprisingly the executive council had little or no credibility, particularly being under the control of a self-confessed autocrat,¹³¹ and the council did not address the need for representative organs at all. Even the pro-government *Transvaal Argus* expressed some reservations about the representative nature of the new constitution.¹³² Lanyon was nevertheless satisfied that he had done what was required of him. Representative institutions were all very well, but rigid law enforcement and financial stability were his prime objectives.

The Transvaal's new executive council met for the first time on 23 February 1880.¹³³ With Wolseley still away, Lanyon appointed PJ Marais, JC Holtshausen and JS Joubert as the three non-official members, all of whom had previously been members of the republican *volksraad*.¹³⁴ Lanyon had apparently decided to ignore the stipulation that 'trade interests' should be represented on the council. The inauguration of the legislative assembly followed, opening for the first time several weeks later, on 10 March 1880, once Wolseley had returned from Natal. It comprised the executive council plus an additional six nominated members. Again, as the press was quick to point out, this was hardly a liberal body because there were no elected members at all, and the new assembly soon earned the nickname of the 'dummy' legislature.¹³⁵ None of the prominent Boer leaders who had been approached to join agreed to serve. The nominated members were CK White, OWA Forssman and four farmers: JA Esterhuyse, FAR Johnstone, AH Stander and JH Nel.¹³⁶ All these members, said Lanyon in his opening address, were men who

¹³⁰ Ibid, p 162.

¹³¹ Lanyon frequently expressed the opinion that representative institutions were an obstacle to progress in the governance of a crown colony. See for example NA, A96/16, Lanyon – Shepstone, 2 February 1877; A96/17, Lanyon – Shepstone, 16 February and 23 February 1878.

¹³² See for example *De Volksstem*, 21 February, 27 March, 3 April 1880; *The Transvaal Argus*, 3 December 1879, 11 February 1880.

¹³³ C 2584, no 87, Lanyon – Wolseley, 5 March 1880, p 192.

¹³⁴ Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, p 142; C 2584, no 87, Lanyon – Wolseley, 5 March 1880, p 192.

¹³⁵ *De Volksstem*, 27 March 1880.

¹³⁶ TA, EVR, vol 19, Minutes of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of the Transvaal; C 2584, no 87, Lanyon – Wolseley, 5 March 1880, p 192.

‘from their position and character, fitly represent the general interests of the Province, and cannot fail to command the confidence of their fellow countrymen’,¹³⁷ to which *De Volksstem* retorted: ‘We have no wish to discuss the character of the chosen nine but with the public at large we are at a total loss to know what interest in the country any one of them “fitly represents”’.¹³⁸

In truth the appointees who had been named for the new legislative assembly were not representative of the white Transvalers across the board, quite apart from the fact that there was no thought of African representation. *De Volksstem* was brutal in its criticism of the ‘hybrid Executive Council and Legislative Assembly ... nine persons – we cannot call them men – [are] ready to play dummies in his [Lanyon’s] model puppet councils’.¹³⁹ It described the opening of the first meeting in a report headed: ‘Opening of the Legislative farce.’¹⁴⁰ The nominees did not include a single acknowledged member of the protest movement, the largest group of Transvaal Boers, although Wolseley claimed that almost all those selected are well-known Boers.¹⁴¹ Men such as Joubert, Bok and Pretorius, the latter Lanyon’s favoured target, were conspicuous by their absence. All had turned down the offers made to them except Pretorius. He had not turned the repeated offers down, nor had he yet accepted. The Boers, it must be said, appeared unmoved by the introduction of Lanyon’s new constitution.

Backed by his executive and legislative councils – that he himself had nominated – Lanyon now had virtually full control over all civil matters in the Transvaal. Furthermore he could veto anything he disapproved of and he could – and did – manipulate these bodies as he saw fit. For the first time in his southern African career he had become the puppeteer, pulling the strings controlling his councillors. Moreover, because of his appeal to Kimberley in June 1880, Lanyon had been given permission to send his official correspondence directly to the secretary of state

¹³⁷ TA, A596, vol 7, ‘Opening address of the first Legislative Assembly by His Excellency Colonel Owen Lanyon, CB, KCMG,’ 10 March 1880. Among Lanyon’s papers there are no less than seven copies of this address.

¹³⁸ *De Volksstem*, 20 March 1880.

¹³⁹ *De Volksstem*, 21 February 1880.

¹⁴⁰ *De Volksstem*, 13 March 1880.

¹⁴¹ Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 21 January 1880.

rather than through Colley. He was no longer manipulated, in fact he was as unfettered as he had ever been in South Africa. He was responsible, for the first time, directly to London, and the imperial string was wellnigh invisible. Colley had to be sent copies of the despatches and he was responsible for military matters and affairs involving Africans in the Transvaal. The reality was that he exercised no restraint over Lanyon at all; he was more than busy in Natal and made very few, if any, demands on the Transvaal administrator.

With added authority Lanyon's administrative style, if the local press is to be believed, became more dictatorial and unpopular.¹⁴² He was slated mercilessly by the local press, particularly the Boer newspaper, *De Volksstem*, and by mid 1880 he was already feeling the strain of all the acrimony. 'South Africa stinks in my nostrils', he wrote, 'and my murmur is daily "How long?"'¹⁴³ He felt that he 'had harder work and more anxiety than most men' and 'wished to get out of it'.¹⁴⁴ He wrote to his father early in the year when he read in the British newspapers that Lord Dufferin stood a good chance of being posted to India as viceroy, thinking that perhaps the position of Dufferin's private secretary would be one he would enjoy, as he had 'long wished to go to India'. Lanyon asked his father if he could make discreet enquiries about the post,¹⁴⁵ but to his disappointment, Lord Ripon, not Dufferin, was appointed. Lanyon resolved instead to write to Herbert in the Colonial Office to see whether he could organise a spell of leave to go home to Britain for a good break.¹⁴⁶

Lanyon's relentless pursuit of solvency in the Transvaal in 1880 did not prevent him from making some progress in other spheres. The minutes of the 'dummy' legislative assembly show that he presided over two sessions of this body. The first was from 10 March until 11 June 1880,

¹⁴² See for example *De Volksstem*, 25 May, 20 July, 7 September 1880.

¹⁴³ TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon -- Charles Lanyon, 21 February 1880.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, Lanyon -- Charles Lanyon, 14 February and 27 March 1880.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, Lanyon -- Charles Lanyon, 14 February 1880.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, Lanyon -- Charles Lanyon, 29 May 1880. Lanyon applied for leave on 3 September 1880 and this was granted subject to the 'Boer difficulty' being under control. Lanyon had not yet taken his leave when told to return to Britain after the war, in early 1881. See Chapter VII.

on which date the legislature was adjourned until 15 November 1880.¹⁴⁷ The second session lasted only two weeks, from 15 to 30 November 1880. Due to the unrest in the Transvaal, the subsequent outbreak of war and the siege of Pretoria, the work of the assembly was suspended and it did not meet again.¹⁴⁸

One of Lanyon's most significant contributions in the Transvaal, as indeed it had been in Griqualand West, was his presiding presence in the making of African policy. He was very aware that the imperial conquest of the Pedi the previous year had brought a changed attitude not only among the Pedi people but also among other African communities in the vicinity who had been waiting to see how well Sekhukhune fared against the British.¹⁴⁹ Now that they had their answer, Lanyon felt that it was imperative to meet the African chiefs personally and impress upon them that his government had their interests at heart. In return, for all the benefits of the Transvaal state, Africans would be obliged to pay hut tax and agree to accept British rule.

From 15 June to 13 August 1880 Lanyon undertook an extended tour of north eastern Transvaal, visiting Middelburg, Lydenburg, Pilgrim's Rest, Sekhukhune's *stat*, Marabastad and Spelonken. He held 'most successful interviews with all the chiefs' about their responsibilities to the government in Pretoria, and duly collected the 10s per hut dues that had not been paid for years.¹⁵⁰ According to Lanyon the Africans were 'all paying up quietly' and were 'anxious to be on good terms with the Govt'.¹⁵¹ Henrique Shepstone, Lanyon's secretary for native affairs, subsequently took over the duty of tax collection and reported to Lanyon that by the end of 1880 no less than £33 690 had been 'cheerfully paid'.¹⁵²

From August 1880 Lanyon, Colley and Kimberley were involved in a three-way correspondence

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 12 June 1880.

¹⁴⁸ TA, EVR, vol 19, Minutes of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of the Transvaal.

¹⁴⁹ Hove, Wolseley Papers, SA 1, Wolseley – Hicks Beach, 6 November 1879.

¹⁵⁰ Smith, *The campaign against the Bapedi of Sekhukhune*, p 60.

¹⁵¹ *The Transvaal Argus*, 15 September 1880; TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 5, 12 June and 14 August 1880.

¹⁵² NA, A96, vol 29, HC Shepstone – Lanyon, 31 January 1881.

on African affairs which included the question of land rights for Africans in the Transvaal. Although the discussion on the land issue had only just been broached and had not reached anything like finality before the outbreak of war at the end of 1880, the matter bears reflection because it provides insight into Lanyon's views on African landownership rights and the possibility of creating locations in the Transvaal similar to those he had set up in Griqualand West.

In May 1880, the Revd G Blencowe of London, who had previously resided in the Wakkerstroom district of the Transvaal for some years, addressed a letter to the Colonial Office in reaction to the queen's speech at the opening of parliament in which she mentioned provision being made for 'the security of the indigenous races' in the Transvaal. In his letter he sketched a brief history of land ownership in the Transvaal under the Boer republic, pointing out that the 'late government' had seen fit to give away 'nearly the whole of it in farms' – which were more often than not left largely unoccupied. This was despite the fact that the land belonged to the original African inhabitants who had 'been in continuous possession, although without title'. Blencowe felt strongly that the British government now had no right to confiscate this land from Africans, despite an undertaking in 1877 upon annexation to take over 'all the rights and obligations of the late government'. He called upon those in whose hands the matter rested – Lanyon and Colley – to honour the queen's assurance to 'maintain native rights' and restore the ownership of the land to the Africans. Blencowe also made an appeal that the Transvaal's levying of the 10s hut tax be reassessed. He had, he said, seen the proud claim to having already collected £35 000 of a projected revenue of £50 000 from this source. He felt that the burden of this tax upon Africans, most of whom lived in far-flung rural districts and did not benefit from much in the way of state services, was grossly unfair.¹⁵³

Copies of Blencowe's despatch were sent by Kimberley to both Colley and Lanyon. In his official response, advised by Lanyon, Colley pointed out that although he was well-meaning, Blencowe was not particularly well-informed about the difficulties of controlling Africans in the

¹⁵³ C 2740, no 3, Blencowe – Colonial Office, 24 May 1880, pp 5-6.

Transvaal. Colley and Lanyon had discussed the matter fully in Pretoria¹⁵⁴ and had also decided to consult someone 'far more knowledgeable' about the well-being of the Pedi people, the Revd A Merensky of the Berlin Missionary Society at Botsabelo, who had submitted his memorandum to Lanyon.¹⁵⁵ Not surprisingly, Merensky's evidence was in full support of Lanyon's policies. On the tax issue both Colley and Lanyon openly disagreed with Blencowe; the 10s hut tax was neither unfair nor excessive, and the fact that Africans were paying it so readily was proof that they recognised the advantages for them of a strong government. Lanyon pointed out that many Pedi, who were migrant workers on the diamond fields and earned good wages, had considerable spending power. So much so, that many had appeared well able to pay their taxes and had done so without reluctance. The present hut tax, in Lanyon's words, was 'fair and equable', was far lower than that paid by Africans in Natal,¹⁵⁶ and would in any case not cover the amount which the state incurred on behalf of Africans residing within the Transvaal's borders.

As far as African land ownership was concerned, Lanyon agreed that there were injustices inherited from republican days, but insisted that Blencowe had many of his facts wrong. Furthermore, Merensky's evidence showed that Blencowe's allegations of undue missionary involvement in land deals to the detriment of Africans, were false. Land ownership by Africans was a complex issue, but the first necessity was a land survey, a matter which Lanyon assured Kimberley was receiving his 'close attention'. But, as Colley put it, returning land to Africans was not necessarily always to their advantage, because

to recognise Native ownership of lands in the sense in which a white man holds land would be at once to place them at the mercy of every adventurer and land speculator; and we have had ample illustration in India of the danger of conferring property rights on persons unfitted to exercise them. I concur, therefore, with His Excellency the Administrator in thinking that for some years to come a system under which land is held in trust for Natives by the Secretary for natives affairs is best suited to the country. Further, I entirely concur with him in considering that no satisfactory settlement of the conflicting claims to land can be devised ... until the country shall have been surveyed; and that [this will be] in the interests of European

¹⁵⁴ Colley paid Lanyon a brief five day visit at the end of August 1880, mainly 'as major general, to inspect the troops at out-stations'. Lanyon was at pains to make it clear to his father that Colley could not of course 'interfere' save in military matters, and in the event of war; TA, A596, Vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 14 and 28 August 1880.

¹⁵⁵ C 2740, no 52, Colley – Kimberley, 8 October 1880, p 88; enclosure 1 in no 52, Lanyon – Colley, undated, pp 88-89; enclosure 2 in no 52, Merensky – Lanyon, 10 August 1880, pp 89-91.

¹⁵⁶ In Natal the hut tax was 14 shillings as compared to the 10 shillings in the Transvaal. J Lambert, *Betrayed trust: Africans and the state in colonial Natal* (Pietermaritzburg, 1995), p 19.

and Native alike.¹⁵⁷

And there the matter rested. The query into taxation of Africans was now obviously considered closed: it was working well and the government felt fully justified in collecting these dues. It was also clear from Lanyon's memorandum that state controls over African policy were closely geared to the provision of labour to the diamond mines and to serve the new economic order. Lanyon's rule in the Transvaal thus translated into facilitating the labour supply as well as controlling land use, increasing taxation and implementing a pass law. All this put Africans, particularly the valuable Pedi, the fount of migrant labour, securely under imperial control.

Lanyon did address another letter on the land issue to Kimberley on his return to Pretoria from his tax collecting mission in the north east in September 1880. This despatch is particularly interesting in that Lanyon takes the land issue a step further. He refers to the 'subject of land for native locations', so presumably he envisaged a system of locations to serve as labour reservoirs similar to those he had created in Griqualand West. There is no mention in this letter of property rights for Africans, which was presumably landownership as Blencowe understood it. Instead Lanyon's version entails the state 'buying back land' taken from Africans under the republican government 'by reckless and dishonest land inspectors' and only then being in a position to set up 'native locations'. But implementing this policy, Lanyon said, could only commence once the land had been properly surveyed, a matter that he would address shortly. In the meantime, as the 'natives are still in occupation, pending a legal decision', there was no immediate necessity of interference.¹⁵⁸ Nothing more was done in this regard, and within a matter of months of writing this letter, Lanyon had left Pretoria and the government of Africans in the Transvaal reverted to the republican authorities.

In addition to this significant contribution in African policy making, Lanyon and his legislative assembly were active in a number of other fields in 1880. Despite the fact that the legislature had little public support, Lanyon pushed ahead and considerable progress was made. Certainly Colley was impressed by Lanyon's efforts and reported to Kimberley that in the Transvaal 'a strong

¹⁵⁷ C 2740, no 52, Colley – Kimberley, 8 October 1880, p 88.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, no 42, Lanyon – Kimberley, 10 September 1880, p 83.

government' had been set up and 'the evidences of progress are most remarkable'.¹⁵⁹ Lanyon's new legislation, some introduced by the members of the legislature, included measures to improve conditions in government schools; impose a more comprehensive and restrictive pass law for control of Africans; make improvements to gaols; establish the Transvaal Police; inaugurate 'municipal corporations' in the main towns, and establish a new system of district councils.¹⁶⁰ The better collection of import duties was also addressed,¹⁶¹ and a committee was formed to look into the possibility of a railway link to Delagoa Bay.¹⁶² On 15 November 1880, with the legislature now in its final session, a bill was introduced to reduce the unpopular railway tax,¹⁶³ but no finality could be reached before the legislative assembly faded into disuse.

The activities of the legislative assembly ended on a sour note. On 29 November 1880, the day before it finally closed, CK White, a nominated member, tabled a motion of no confidence. In a lengthy tirade which drew a great deal of discussion from the other members, none of whom supported White, he pointed out that the legislative assembly was by no means representative of the settlers, and that Lanyon's overbearing voice in its every move made its deliberations no more than a farce.¹⁶⁴ Lanyon brushed the criticism aside. He wrote to Kimberley several days later to say that White's views were of little consequence, but it was very unfortunate that he had chosen to raise this issue at a time 'when a certain section of the inhabitants are defying the law'. Lanyon was also under a great deal of strain as a result of a poorly handled tax collecting crisis in Potchefstroom, and to make matters worse the Boers were planning another mass meeting.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁹ OXF, Kimberley Papers, Mss Eng c 4139, Colley – Kimberley, 12 July 1880.

¹⁶⁰ Laws no 10, 11, 14 and 20 of 1880, the Municipal Law of 1880 and the District Council Law of 1880, respectively; C 2676, no 26, Lanyon – Kimberley, 12 June 1880, pp 47-48; TA, EVR, vol 19, Minutes of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of the Transvaal.

¹⁶¹ TA, ZAR/56, *Transvaal Government Gazette*, 25 May 1880.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, *Transvaal Government Gazette*, 27 May 1880.

¹⁶³ This was possibly as a sop to discontented Boers who had just made a determined demonstration of their feelings about payment of taxes. As had frequently been pointed out to Lanyon, to have to pay a railway tax when there was no railway and indeed no prospect of one in the near future, was hard to stomach.

¹⁶⁴ C 2783, enclosure in no 13, Report of Mr White's motion in the legislative assembly, and the debate which followed, 29 November 1880, pp 28-39.

¹⁶⁵ See Chapter VII.

He admitted to Kimberley that while the legislature was by no means liberal, even to contemplate giving the Boers legislative power would be ‘most risky and dangerous’, and the present unrest near Potchefstroom was the best proof of this.¹⁶⁶ The fact that the legislative assembly held only one more meeting, on 30 November 1880, before its demise, was probably because of the troubled situation in the Transvaal,¹⁶⁷ or perhaps Lanyon felt it would be wiser to adjourn the session and nominate new members, possibly replacing White, before continuing the work of the assembly. Either way, he was rapidly running out of time.

The Boers, it is true, had been disappointed by Gladstone’s reply to their May appeal, and felt badly done by. But on the other hand, as *De Volksstem* put it when Sir Garnet departed, the little general had stimulated the protest movement rather than curbed it and Lanyon, his ‘faithful lieutenant’, looked set to add even more fuel to the fire of Boer discontent.¹⁶⁸ Nevertheless Lanyon was confident that the situation in the Transvaal was under control. He felt that Gladstone’s unyielding attitude to the Boer plea for independence had been a cruel setback for them, and that it would make them realise that to accept British rule was their only feasible option. At the end of June 1880 he wrote as much to Kimberley. There was, he said, a ‘considerable change for the better in the feelings of the population’. In his opinion – which, characteristically, was not humble – there were two reasons for this. In the first place there was a realisation that his ‘strong and stable government’ and the new legislature in the Transvaal were progressing admirably. Secondly, the news that the Liberals were not going to bring about ‘a change of policy’ had settled any doubts the people had about the Transvaal’s future. He assured Kimberley that ‘anything like open and avowed insubordination’ would be ‘firmly dealt with, in order to prevent others being drawn into the whirlpool’. And he concluded his despatch with a confident: ‘But this I do not anticipate or think probable.’¹⁶⁹

Lanyon was, however, misreading the situation. He was equating silence with acceptance. Van

¹⁶⁶ C 2783, no 13, Lanyon – Kimberley, 4 December 1880, p 28.

¹⁶⁷ This is the impression given in the minutes; TA, EVR, vol 19, Minutes of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of the Transvaal.

¹⁶⁸ *De Volksstem*, 13 April, 1880.

¹⁶⁹ C 2676, no 31, Lanyon – Kimberley, 26 June 1880, pp 64-65.

Zyl shows that there was a reasonably high level of unrest, and gives examples of Boer antagonism towards British ‘loyalists’ in June and July in the western Transvaal and the Rustenburg area, both of which received wide coverage in *De Volksstem*.¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, the payment of tax by Boers was not progressing very well at all – despite Lanyon’s insistence that it was. It was unfortunate indeed that a man with a fixation on the collection of taxes should have been placed in a position of authority over a community that comprised largely of landowners who hated parting with their hard-earned money and found every excuse to balk at handing it over to Lanyon. The idea of paying arrears was even more abhorrent, and many Boers had not paid taxes for years, even under their own government. A number in the Rustenburg area refused point blank to pay their dues. When charged and forced to do so they requested that their strenuous objection to paying tax to an illegal government be reflected on their receipts. British officials also had trouble exacting dues from Boers in the Potchefstroom district; so much so that by August 1880 less than half the estimated revenue from taxation in that district had been collected.¹⁷¹

Kruger and Joubert returned to Potchefstroom from Cape Town in late July 1880. It was felt that the full committee should meet the *volk* to discuss what to do about Gladstone’s reply. It was decided to hold such a meeting on 8 January 1881 at Paardekraal, MW Pretorius’s farm near the present town of Krugersdorp. The Boers’ decision to persist with their quest for independence was no longer at issue. It was now a matter of how and when this should be effected, and whether or not Gladstone’s May 1880 reply should be made the catalyst. Leonard Courtney’s strenuous efforts – which had come to naught – on the Boers’ behalf in the House of Commons at the end of August 1880, had proved that another approach to Gladstone would probably be in vain. Realistically speaking, with Lanyon’s assurances to Kimberley that all was quiet in the Transvaal, and news from Colley that he and Lanyon had agreed that three of the minor military posts in the Transvaal could be abandoned and one regiment of infantry be dispensed with,¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ See for example *De Volksstem*, 8 June, 20 July 1880.

¹⁷¹ Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, pp 149-150.

¹⁷² OXF, Kimberley Papers, Mss Eng c 4139, Colley – Kimberley, 25 August 1880. On criticism of the withdrawal of imperial troops from the Transvaal in 1880-1881 by Colley, and Lanyon’s part in such measures, see Chapter VII.

neither Gladstone nor Kimberley was likely to be receptive to the idea of handing back the republic to the Boers.

For his part, when Lanyon heard that a date for another mass meeting of Boers had been set, he was not unduly perturbed. He wrote to Kimberley that nothing much had transpired at the discussions held by Kruger and Joubert with the sub-committee on 14 September, and that although another big meeting of the *volk* was being arranged for January, he was confident that little would come of it because the signs were all there that the Boer protest movement was on the wane. It was merely being kept alive by men like Pretorius and Bok who were dependent on the salaries they received from the *Volkskomitee*. There was little cause for concern.¹⁷³

In any assessment of Owen Lanyon's achievements, in this case specifically during the nine months prior to the outbreak of war in the Transvaal in 1880, his financial management is perhaps the sphere of his work that brings him the most credit. This was Lanyon's forte and his management style was focused upon increasing his revenue by efficient tax collection, balancing his budget and keeping a meticulous set of accounts. His considerable success in turning the Transvaal finances around was reported with great self-satisfaction to his superiors¹⁷⁴ and to his father,¹⁷⁵ although in a colony as cash-strapped as the Transvaal, the improvement was hardly sensational.¹⁷⁶ Between January and August 1880 under Lanyon's direction, the revenue collected by CES Steele, the finance and revenue commissioner, whom the administrator praised for his zealous hard work, reached an unprecedented £146 000.¹⁷⁷ The defeat of the Pedi in late

¹⁷³ PRO, CO 291/7, no 17282, Lanyon – Kimberley, 23 September 1880.

¹⁷⁴ Lanyon reported to the secretary of state that the estimated surplus for 1880 was almost £6 000; PRO, CO 291/5, Lanyon – Hicks Beach, 14 February 1880. See also Hove, Wolseley Papers, autograph collection, Lanyon – Wolseley, 8 May 1880.

¹⁷⁵ See for example TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 21 February 1880 and 3 April 1880.

¹⁷⁶ Lanyon reported that in 1879 the actual revenue had improved by 16% while expenditure had gone down by 5%. The revenue, 'without extra taxation or any receipts from native taxes, only fell short of the expenditure by £363'. Lanyon put this down to 'improved collection and supervision of revenue'; TA, A596, vol 7, Opening address of the Transvaal legislative assembly, 10 March 1880.

¹⁷⁷ C 2584, no 73, Lanyon – Wolseley, 14 February 1880, pp 150-153, giving a comparative statement of receipts for 1879 and 1880; Ibid, enclosure 1 in no 73, Estimates of the revenue and expenditure of the Transvaal for 1880, p 153. Lanyon told his father that 'revenue is coming in more than double than it did last year'; TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 21 February 1880. On the comparison between

1879 had of course opened up a new avenue for the collection of the statutory 10 shilling hut tax. Despite Wolseley's veto of a move initiated in March by the newly constituted executive council – supported by Lanyon – to double the hut tax to £1,¹⁷⁸ collection of this tax from Africans proved lucrative, although it only commenced in June 1880. The revenue from Africans, over a mere matter of months, reached £20 000 of the estimated £35 000 for 1880.¹⁷⁹ Lanyon reported his good progress in the financial sphere to Kimberley,¹⁸⁰ who was suitably impressed and congratulated the administrator, remarking that 'your statement as to the financial condition of the province has afforded me much satisfaction'.¹⁸¹ In December 1880, despite the turmoil created by Boer resistance to payment of taxes in November – an issue which will be assessed in the next chapter of this thesis – Lanyon published his financial statement for 1880-1881 in the *Transvaal Government Gazette* of 6 December 1880. The mass of facts and figures compiled by the painstaking administrator bristle with confidence. He mentions only in passing that due to 'political causes' the current taxes had thus far 'failed to reach the amounts estimated' and might unfortunately have to 'stand over for the time'.¹⁸²

Lanyon looked back with satisfaction on the dedicated work he had done since Wolseley's departure. Progress had been made in a number of fields. Importantly, the state's policy towards Africans was being addressed. In accordance with the new economic order after the discovery of diamonds, the authority of the African chiefs in the Transvaal had been replaced, in Lanyon's view, by African acceptance of British sovereignty and the supply of African labour had thus been facilitated. Issues of land ownership and the possibility of setting up locations had been broached, a pass system put in place and – most importantly as far as Lanyon was concerned – Transvaal Africans had begun to pay taxes. He was particularly proud that there had been no general increase in taxation; success began to depend, in his mind, on boosting revenue by

revenue for 1878 and 1879 see also vol 7, Opening address, first legislative assembly, 10 March 1880.

¹⁷⁸ Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 256.

¹⁷⁹ TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 4 September 1880.

¹⁸⁰ C 2676, no 26, Lanyon – Kimberley, 12 June 1880, pp 47-48.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, no 29, Kimberley – Lanyon, 19 July 1880, p 64.

¹⁸² TA, ZAR/56, *Transvaal Government Gazette Extraordinary*, Financial statement for 1880-1881, 6 December 1880. See also TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 18 September 1880.

efficient collection of the taxes that were due to the state. He told his father: 'They may look through the history of any other colony, and will fail to find a precedent for this statement.'¹⁸³ He had weathered a change of government at home and brokered a new-style independence in his administratorship of the Transvaal.¹⁸⁴ It was true that he had not managed to control the recalcitrant Boers, but felt reasonably sure that despite their sullen attitude to British rule and to him personally, they were all brag and lacked the courage to fight for the independence they so dearly sought.¹⁸⁵

Ironically, in November 1880, as will be seen, it was Lanyon's blind determination to push the Transvaal revenue up to impressive new heights and earn more praise to boost his flagging morale in the face of growing unpopularity, that started the roller coaster that led to war and his humiliating recall. To the Boers, the payment of taxes symbolised an acceptance of British overlordship, which they hated with a passion. Lanyon's reading of the issue was in a curious way similar: his dogged enforcement of tax collection – among both Boers and Africans – was proof that British rule was alive and well in the Transvaal.

¹⁸³ TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 28 August, 4 and 18 September 1880.

¹⁸⁴ PRO, CO 291/6, no 10467, Lanyon – Kimberley, 9 June 1880 and the reply, Kimberley – Lanyon, 22 July 1880. On Lanyon's wish to be independent of Colley's control see also TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 10 April and 29 May 1880

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 22 November 1880.

CHAPTER VII

WAR, WITHDRAWAL AND LANYON'S RECALL

By the end of 1880 the 38 year-old Owen Lanyon, now Sir Owen and proud to be the youngest knight of the distinguished order of St Michael and St George,¹ was weary. He had completed five long years of colonial service in southern Africa in two struggling, new British colonies. His years in Griqualand West had been challenging and his subjects far from easy to control, but he had found that his autocratic rule had borne some fruit, even at the expense of personal popularity: he had balanced his books, formalised imperial control over Africans and put in place an all-important African labour supply system and implemented rigid labour controls. Furthermore he had rounded off his rule in Kimberley with brief military glory. Now administrator of the Transvaal, as the year 1880 drew to a close, he felt that he was beginning to make significant headway, but it had been tough going.

Wolseley was gone, there was a new ruling party in Britain, and Lanyon felt that the financial stability of the Transvaal was at last within his grasp. With five years experience behind him, he was happy to be in more or less sole control of the governance of the Transvaal. He liked it that way.² No matter that he was unpopular – this was the price he felt he had to pay for being the instrument of firmness. Lanyon chose to put the acrimony down to Boer dislike of any sort of control, much less his strong and determined brand of control. In any case, a reformer was always unpopular.³ In his letters home to his father, he expressed the opinion that the Boers were settling down at last, and he also reported this comforting news to both Colley and Kimberley.⁴ Although this was not a true reflection of the situation, the indications are that he believed this fervently.

¹ TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 10 April 1880.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 28 November 1880.

⁴ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 4 September 1880; OXF, Kimberley Papers, Mss Eng c 4139, Colley – Kimberley, 25 August 1880; PRO, CO 291/7, no 17282, Lanyon – Kimberley, 23 September 1880.

Colley, fed by Lanyon's complacent reports about orderly government in the Transvaal, announced in his speech at the opening of the Natal legislative assembly, a copy of which he sent to Kimberley, that all was quiet in the Transvaal in October 1880 and there was every reason to hope for 'permanent prosperity' under Lanyon's 'firm and settled Government'.⁵

The administrator, to his own detriment, underestimated the extent of his unpopularity as surely as he underestimated the Boers' courage and resolve to oppose British rule. Throughout Lanyon's years in Pretoria, *De Volksstem* had kept up a constant barrage of criticism of Lanyon personally, his 'dummy' legislature, his officials and the 'iron heel of despotism' which was the mark of his administration.⁶ Certainly Lanyon was aware that Celliers' vitriolic pen had been 'productive of much of the agitation' against British rule and 'had kept alive the spirit of antagonism'⁷, but he did not realise how powerful that antagonism was, or how committed the Boers were to regaining their independence. Colonial officialdom in the Transvaal under Lanyon was not only marked by firmness, it was also characterised by unwarranted complacency, and the two proved to be an ominous combination.

As a bulwark against this unsparing criticism from the press and the public in general, Lanyon drew a few chosen officials around him. These men appeared to respect him, despite Wolseley's opinion that Lanyon had 'succeeded in making everyone his enemy', including his staff.⁸ WB Morcom, the state attorney, was one of Lanyon's close associates, and was frequently slated – with justification – by the press for being grossly underqualified for the position he held.⁹ CES Steele, whom Lanyon appointed as finance and revenue commissioner at a salary higher than the other officials, was another. According to Wolseley, Steele's bigger pay packet was a great cause

⁵ C 2740, enclosure in no 54, Colley – Kimberley, 21 October 1880, p 93.

⁶ *De Volksstem*, 16 January 1880. Virtually every issue of *De Volksstem* consulted carried some disparaging reference to the government, either in the editorial comment or in the correspondence from its readers.

⁷ C 2740, no 68, Lanyon – Kimberley, 19 November 1880, p 115.

⁸ Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, p 250. The sources which mention Lanyon's unpopularity are almost as numerous as the sources which mention Lanyon. See for example Davey, *The siege of Pretoria*, pp 272-273; De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, pp 26; Bellairs, *The Transvaal War*, pp 9, 12; DSAB, I, p 466; Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, p 145.

⁹ *De Volksstem*, 4 December 1880; Davey, *The siege of Pretoria*, p 273.

of jealousy and had been 'unwise' on Lanyon's part, but then Sir Garnet had never seen eye to eye with Bartle Frere, and anyone who professed to admire Frere – as both Lanyon and Steele did – was doomed to suffer under Wolseley's pen: 'Except that Lanyon is completely under Frere's thumb & that Steele is Frere's protege,' he wrote in his diary, 'I cannot understand why it is that Lanyon endeavours at all times to push this wretched little man to the front.'¹⁰ Lanyon's private secretary, GY Lagden,¹¹ and G Hudson, the colonial secretary, were apparently more acceptable to the Transvalers, possibly because they were not seen as part of Lanyon's inner circle, and Hudson was of South African birth, which might have counted in his favour in Boer eyes.¹² Godfrey Lagden corresponded as a friend with Lanyon after he had left southern Africa, so he must have been reasonably close to the administrator.¹³ Lanyon made very infrequent reference to his Transvaal officials in his letters home, but in late October 1880, when there was an outbreak of typhoid in the Transvaal and Lagden fell victim to the disease, he was apparently nursed back to health in Government House.¹⁴

At the beginning of September 1880 Lanyon felt that there was every inducement to take a well earned rest. He had worked extremely hard and had done everything that could be expected of him. He had been dogged by poor health since his days in Kimberley,¹⁵ and now that the Boers seemed quiet, he wrote to the Colonial Office requesting six months leave:

After five years of hard work and some anxiety, I really feel the want of a change to more pleasant scenes than South Africa can afford. I am sorry to say that I am again suffering from that numbness in the arm and the hand which obliged me once before to take sick leave in 1877 from Griqualand West, a sort of scribblers' paralysis, which is not a pleasant companion. But I do not wish to leave unless I see that I can do so without prejudicing my service ... in the Transvaal.

He pointed out that there was 'a change for the better among the Boers' and – inevitably – that

¹⁰ Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, pp 130, 201.

¹¹ On Godfrey Lagden and his role in southern Africa see DR Burton, *Sir Godfrey Lagden: colonial administrator* (PhD, Rhodes, 1991).

¹² Davey, *The siege of Pretoria*, p 273.

¹³ See for example RH, Godfrey Lagden Papers, Mss Afr s 210/2/1, Lanyon – Lagden, 19 April 1883 and Lanyon – Lagden, 15 July 1883.

¹⁴ TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 23, 30 October 1880.

¹⁵ Lanyon's health was indeed suspect. In 1887, six years after he left the Transvaal, he died of cancer when only 44 years of age.

he was 'very proud of the improvement in our revenue' despite not having resorted to increased taxation. The leave was approved in the Colonial Office, although Kimberley minuted that Lanyon's replacement would have to be 'thoroughly trustworthy and efficient'.¹⁶ He need not have worried; Britain did not have occasion to replace Lanyon, and he was only credited with six months' leave after he had been relieved of his post as administrator.

On the same day as he wrote to the Colonial Office, Lanyon addressed a similar letter to Kimberley, underlining that he had not been absent from his work 'beyond the 2 months sick leave in 1877 when my health broke down from overwork'. He did not mention a specific date on which he wished his leave to commence because he undertook to go only if all was quiet. But he had good reason to feel that it might be possible to go home 'towards the end of the year'. And again he judged improved circumstances in the Transvaal by a financial yardstick: there was 'a decided change for the better ... the natives are paying up their taxes quickly'.¹⁷

The notion that Africans in the Transvaal were indeed being made to accept British sovereignty and rigid colonial controls, and that Lanyon, as had been the case in Griqualand West, was the instrument of these measures, is borne out by the evidence.¹⁸ When Lanyon appealed that he might be independent of Colley's direct influence in the Transvaal as far as civil matters were concerned, Kimberley was inclined to agree, but in the Colonial Office there were some reservations about Lanyon's competence – principally those suggested by Robert Herbert. Herbert felt that Lanyon was far too abrasive and autocratic, particularly in his handling of the Boers, and mindful of this, Kimberley granted Lanyon's request on two express conditions. Firstly, Lanyon had to refer all matters pertaining to African affairs directly to Colley, who was held in high regard and could provide his input more promptly than could the Colonial Office. Secondly, although Lanyon was granted permission to address his despatches in all other civil matters to the secretary of state, except in the event of war, in which case Colley had overall

¹⁶ PRO, CO 291/6, (Separate), Lanyon – Colonial Office, 3 September 1880, and minute by Kimberley, 8 October 1880. Colonel William Bellairs, the commander of the Transvaal forces was named to act; Ibid, CO 291/7, Colonial Office – Bellairs, 14 October 1880.

¹⁷ PRO, CO 291/6, (Separate), Lanyon – Kimberley, 3 September 1880.

¹⁸ For a discussion of Lanyon's African policy in the Transvaal in 1880 see Chapter VI.

control, Colley had to be sent copies of everything for his information. It would not do for the high commissioner for South-East Africa to be kept in the dark about affairs in the Transvaal.¹⁹

However, Lanyon did not allow Colley's official supervision of the administration of Africans to become a damper on his progress. He was confident enough to think that he knew far more than Colley, the newcomer to southern Africa, about matters in the region. As has been seen, the administrator's two-month tour of the north-eastern regions to hold discussions with the chiefs and collect the hut tax in each district was from the colonial government's point of view successful,²⁰ in that the Africans paid up 'willingly' and without exception were 'anxious to demonstrate their friendliness towards the government'.²¹ By the end of 1880 a start had also been made with defining state control of labour, passes and land use.²²

The fact that Lanyon was unable to take his leave at the end of the year was not only because of the increased recalcitrance of the Boers. In September 1880 when Lanyon's programme of tax collection and his tightening of imperial screws on the Africans was progressing well, his Cape counterparts were having less success. At the time that Kruger and Joubert were meeting in the Potchefstroom district to decide how best to proceed in the Transvaal Boers' continued quest for independence, and Lanyon was oblivious of their determination to succeed, the Cape government was experiencing determined resistance to the imposition of colonial control from the well armed Sotho in Basutoland.²³

The wide availability of arms on the diamond fields, an issue that Lanyon was well acquainted

¹⁹ PRO, CO 291/6, no 10467, Lanyon – Kimberley, 9 June 1880; Colonial Office – Lanyon, 22 July 1880. Herbert, in particular, expressed serious doubts whether Colley's supervision would not perhaps be wise. He felt that Lanyon was not conciliatory enough towards the Boers; Ibid, minute by Herbert, 20 July 1880.

²⁰ As has been shown by John Lambert in the case of Africans in Natal, the Africans themselves soon became disillusioned with the colonial government's control over land, labour and chiefly authority. See for example J Lambert, *Betrayed trust: Africans and the state in colonial Natal*, pp 124-127.

²¹ C 2740, no 6, and no 22, Lanyon – Kimberley, 15 June and 20 August 1880, pp 7, 28-29; TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 14 August 1880.

²² See Chapter VI.

²³ On the reaction of the Sotho to colonial control see E Bradlow, *The Cape government rule of Basutoland, 1871-1883* (AYB, II, 1968).

with, and on which he had expressed his unequivocal opposition,²⁴ was behind yet another expression of African resistance to advancing colonialism. The Cape decided that it was necessary to disarm the Sotho as part of the process of extending colonial control over subject Africans, and the Basotho strenuously resisted this move. The 1880-1881 Basotho War is only relevant to this thesis in passing, because it was in the midst of the Sotho upheaval that the Boer rebellion in the Transvaal broke out, adding to Britain's woes in southern Africa. The Basotho War and the inevitable necessity of using imperial troops – and, by implication, involving imperial expense – which is exactly what Britain wanted to avoid, therefore influenced the British decision to withdraw from the Transvaal in 1881, which in turn meant the end of Lanyon's southern African career.

In Pretoria, Lanyon observed that trouble was brewing for the Cape Colony and wrote to tell his father about the serious implications this could have:

I am sorry to say I fear the Cape Govt are in for a row in Basutoland, for which they are neither ready nor able to cope with. If there be trouble, it will be a serious matter for the Basutu (sic) can turn out some 8 to 10 000 mounted men exclusive of the more than double that force of footmen and their country is admirably adapted for cavalry work ... the Cape people will have more on their hands than they can manage, and ultimately the Imperial Govt will have to help for it cannot stand by and see its colonists thrashed.²⁵

Once the war began, volunteer forces were hurriedly raised in the Cape, but as Lanyon put it, 'they should have been ready with an extinguisher when playing with fire'. Priding himself on being something of an old hand at raising and equipping volunteers, Lanyon offered to send a force of 300 men and two guns from the Transvaal. As will be seen, his decision was ill-advised. It was a drain on his own defences, and only a few weeks later these soldiers were as urgently needed in the Transvaal as was an extinguisher. The Cape initially turned down his offer, only to change its mind and accept a week later when matters grew worse. As for the Transvaal, Lanyon felt that all was 'quietude'. He seemed so preoccupied with the notion that the Cape unrest would spark African disturbances elsewhere, as to be oblivious to any danger nearer home. By the end of October 1880 he resigned himself to the fact that with the Cape war still raging he would not be able to take his leave as planned. 'It is very hard on the rest of us', he complained, 'for I was looking forward to the prospect of getting a holiday, which of course will be

²⁴ See Chapter III.

²⁵ TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 11 September 1880.

impossible so long as active operations are going on.²⁶

After his letter of 30 October, Lanyon did not write to his father again until 22 November 1880, a full three weeks later, which was unusual for this devoted son and punctilious letter-writer. The reason was that November 1880 proved to be a fateful month, providing the spark that set the Boer rebellion alight. Ironically, because accumulating revenue for the state was so central to Lanyon's confidence of administrative success, it was a dispute about Boer non-payment of tax that precipitated the armed revolt.

Collecting tax in Potchefstroom: the spark to light the powder keg

The state revenue, the symbol in Lanyon's mind of any government's stability, had increased again in 1880.²⁷ He felt that it was now simply a matter of mopping up outstanding taxes from the more recalcitrant Boers; he planned to redouble his efforts to bring the full force of the law to bear on those who chose to be obstructive about paying their dues. As has been shown, in the latter part of 1880 there were increasing incidents of Boer reluctance to pay their taxes.²⁸ Many Boers saw such payment as tacit recognition of the authority of the government. Lanyon, in response, told his officials to step up their efforts; in cases where payments were made expressly 'under protest' the money was to be accepted but care taken by the officials not to give either verbal or written recognition of such protest.²⁹ Blunt refusal to pay was to be followed by court action.³⁰

The Boer stronghold of Potchefstroom seemed to be the eye of the trouble. On 7 October 1880,

²⁶ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 25 September, 16, 23 and 30 October 1880.

²⁷ TA, ZAR/56, *Transvaal Government Gazette Extraordinary*, no 227, 6 December 1880: Financial statement for 1880-1881, delivered in the legislative assembly on 30 November 1880. See also TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 18 September 1880. Ironically, the very next publication of the *Government Gazette*, no 228, also dated 6 December 1880, gives a public statement about the tax collection incident at Potchefstroom.

²⁸ See Chapter VI; Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, pp 149-150.

²⁹ An earlier demand that their protest to payment of tax be registered on their receipts was ignored.

³⁰ Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, p 152.

following the Rustenburg example, about 130 burghers drew up a letter of protest which they handed to the local *landdrost*, AM Goetz, to say that they were not prepared to pay tax to an unlawful government and that they would only do so if it was recorded on their receipts that they did so under protest. Their stance was published in *De Volksstem*,³¹ and Goetz began issuing summonses to the men involved. Similar incidents meanwhile cropped up in Standerton and Pretoria,³² but it was in Potchefstroom, where less than half the revenue from taxes had been collected by August, that events were precipitated in the case of a certain PL Bezuidenhout.

Bezuidenhout was prepared to pay £14 of the £27 5s in taxes that the government was demanding from him, which according to him was all he owed, but Goetz held out for the full amount. When summonsed, Bezuidenhout again refused, upon which his wagon was attached by the authorities. Goetz reported to Lanyon on 11 November 1880 that it was the intention to have the wagon sold that same morning. He added that there were 'About at least 100 Boers ... assembled in front of my office on the Church Square', and that their 'foremen' were addressing them and saying that they would not allow the sale of the wagon to take place.³³ When the wagon came up for sale, PA (Piet) Cronjé and a number of Boers seized it and returned it to Bezuidenhout. Goetz's staff tried to restore order but were hopelessly outnumbered.³⁴ This was open defiance and Lanyon refused to brook such opposition. In his view, defiance of the law had to be met with force; any other response would be one of weakness. He called in the troops.³⁵

Lanyon wrote to Kimberley on 14 November 1880 informing him of the 'action of some of the disaffected Boers' in Potchefstroom. Despite the fact that he was, he said, fully confident that the matter could be resolved, he had requested William Bellairs, the officer commanding the Transvaal forces, to send troops to the town

³¹ *De Volksstem*, 12 October, 1880.

³² C 2740, no 68, Lanyon – Kimberley, 19 November 1880, p 115-119 and enclosure, pp 119-120; no 73, Lanyon – Kimberley, 28 November 1880, pp 122-123.

³³ C 2740, enclosure 1 in no 61, Goetz – Hudson, 10.30 am, 11 November 1880, p 110.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 11.30 am, p 110. For other contemporary accounts of the incident see Bellairs, *The Transvaal War*, pp 46-48; *De Volksstem*, 7 December 1880; C 2783, enclosure in no 12, Report by PA Cronjé, pp 24-27.

³⁵ C 2740, enclosure 2 in no 61, Lanyon – Bellairs, 14 November 1880, pp 110-111.

to support the civil authority and to show these misguided people that the law cannot be defied. I do not anticipate that any serious trouble will arise out of the affair. It is only a repetition of what has occurred at Middelburg and other places where there was no force available. But it is time that more serious notice should be taken of such acts in order to deter further breaches of the peace.³⁶

The troops, under the command of Major Thornhill, entrenched themselves outside the town. Lanyon and Morcom, the attorney general, also made the necessary arrangements to bring the guilty rebels and their ring leaders of this 'outrage' to justice. The principal offenders, said Morcom, were to be imprisoned without the option of a fine, and the legal system would then proceed.³⁷ Lanyon also sent Hudson, the colonial secretary, to Potchefstroom to deal with the situation.³⁸ In the days that followed, Captain PE Raaff, sent to the town to apprehend the four main participants, proved unsuccessful, with Piet Cronjé, the Boer spokesman, defying Raaff's authority and warning him of the consequences should he and his men try to arrest any Boers. Furthermore there was to be no more tax collection, or the Boers would resist.³⁹ Raaff and Thornhill decided to stay their hand and await orders from Lanyon on how to proceed. In truth they had no other option.

Meanwhile Lanyon determined to make an example of JF Celliers of *De Volksstem* by arresting him on charges of treason and sedition. In addition to his constant barrage of criticism, Celliers had seen fit on 16 November to publish a defiant declaration by a group of Boers that they would not pay their taxes, or if they did so, it would be under protest.⁴⁰ To Lanyon, Celliers' gall in encouraging the non-payment of tax, the life blood of government, was like a red rag to a bull.

³⁶ TA, ATC/5, no 180, Lanyon – Kimberley, 14 November 1880, pp 3-4. See also C2740, no 61, Lanyon – Kimberley, 14 November 1880, pp 109-110.

³⁷ C 2740, enclosure 3 in no 61, Morcom – Public Prosecutor, Potchefstroom, 13 November 1880, pp 111-112 and Hudson – Goetz, 14 November 1880, p 112.

³⁸ Hudson, after conducting interviews with the Goetz and Raaff, was apparently shocked to realise how little the government really knew of the Boers' intentions. He clearly had more insight into their drive for independence. He subsequently arranged to meet a group of eight Boers, including Kruger and Cronjé on 29 November 1880. The meeting was unproductive, and in a letter on 5 December to Kimberley Lanyon used this as evidence that the Boers had no real notion of what they wanted to achieve; Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, pp 157-158.

³⁹ Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, p 156.

⁴⁰ C 2740, enclosure in no 68, Declaration by 111 burghers of the Wakkerstroom district, extract from *De Volksstem*, 16 November 1880, p 120. In his letter Lanyon claimed that only 10 of the signatories were farm owners, the rest being impressionable young *bijwoners*; Ibid, no 68, Lanyon – Kimberley, 19 November 1880, p 119.

Lanyon explained to Kimberley that Celliers was the source of 'evil counsels and false reports'; his influence was behind much of the Boer agitation and had to be curbed. Lanyon had Celliers arrested so that the Boers would realise that there was no question of any leniency. As far as the Boers were concerned, he said, leniency meant 'weakness' and conciliation was interpreted as 'indecision'. The *volk* – the 'people' – as he put it, were merely an incited, clamouring crowd, which was 'not even a constituted part of an organised whole'. The Boers had no plan of action; they were ignorant and could do no more than follow their leaders blindly, and they had to be taught a sharp lesson. Action like the imprisonment of Celliers would do the trick, and with luck the Boers might even give up the idea of their January 1881 mass meeting: 'If the people see that the government is determined and strong enough to enforce the law, I do not believe that anything will come of it.' In the conclusion to this inordinately long letter, Lanyon reiterated: 'I do not think that there is much – if any – cause for anxiety.'⁴¹

He remained unafraid. He was backed by troops and the Boers would not have the courage to take them on. It seems almost inconceivable that with his military experience he did not realise that his troops were limited and awkwardly scattered. Almost as if he could not bring himself to admit that he had been wrong about the 'quietude' in the Transvaal, or that his orderly government had been found wanting, a week later he repeated to his father the 'no reason for concern' platitudes he had made to Kimberley on 14 and 19 November 1880:

I have just arrested the Editor of a paper here for sedition and I expect every day to have to go to Potchefstroom (100 miles off) to keep things quiet there. I have two horses in readiness to start away if I hear of any chance of a row. I don't believe that these cowardly Boers have it in them to fight, but there is a possibility, tho' not a probability of a row. I am woefully hard pressed, ... They [my staff] say I am killing them with work; all I can say is that they don't do half as many hours as I do, so they can't complain.⁴²

Nor, it would seem, was Lanyon's stubborn denial his only shortcoming. The author of *The Transvaal War*, who was in all probability William Bellairs,⁴³ accuses Lanyon of two grave tactical errors in the immediate aftermath of the tax debacle in Potchefstroom. Bellairs also

⁴¹ TA, ATC/5, no 183, Lanyon – Kimberley, 19 November 1880, pp 4-14; See also C 2740, no 68, Lanyon – Kimberley, 19 November 1880, pp 115-119.

⁴² TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 22 November 1880.

⁴³ The book is supposedly edited by Bellairs wife, who in fact never visited the Transvaal at all. Davey claims that all the indications are that William Bellairs himself, the man who subsequently took over as administrator once Lanyon had left for Britain, was the author; Davey, *The siege of Pretoria*, p 270.

contacted Lanyon on 16 November 1880 and expressed his concern that, because of the departure of the troops to Potchefstroom, the force left in Pretoria was seriously depleted.⁴⁴ His informed advice to Lanyon was that more troops should be brought in from one of the rural outposts, but inexplicably, Lanyon demurred, delaying until 23 November 1880 before sanctioning this move. The delay, Bellairs said later, was a grave tactical mistake on Lanyon's part because it was not until 27 November that the call for additional forces reached Lydenburg and the movement of troops to Pretoria could be effected. The Lydenburg detachment of the 94th Regiment subsequently clashed with the Boers at Bronkhorstspuit, with disastrous results.⁴⁵ Secondly, having persuaded himself – despite all indications to the contrary – that there was no immediate cause for concern, Lanyon delayed his decision to telegraph Colley in Pietermaritzburg for military assistance until as late as 25 November 1880. His telegram gave no hint of urgency. He asked Colley to send the 58th Regiment back to the Transvaal because the Boer protest had become 'more marked' and they were planning a meeting in January. Colley, clearly not in possession of the full facts and lulled into a sense of false security by the equable tone of Lanyon's telegram, reluctantly agreed to comply because he felt that the 58th might well be needed in Pondoland, where trouble had also broken out.⁴⁶ He was unhurried in his shuffling of the available troops to see what he could spare for the Transvaal, and in the end so much time was lost that when the forces eventually reached Standerton, they were too late to be of much help.⁴⁷

In effect, Lanyon had split up his patently inadequate forces by stationing small parties of soldiers at different and distant points. He could safely have dispensed with posts at Rustenburg, Marabastad and Lydenburg, and used them to strengthen Pretoria, as Bellairs had suggested, but

⁴⁴ C 2783, enclosure in no 49, Bellairs – Lanyon, 16 November 1880, p 84 and Lanyon's reply, 17 November 1880, p 84; Bellairs, *The Transvaal War*, p 51; Davey, *The siege of Pretoria*, p 274.

⁴⁵ Bellairs, *The Transvaal War*, pp 51-53. According to Lanyon, these 250 men only left Lydenburg on 5 December 1880, but the administrator took no blame for the delay, putting it all on Anstruther, the commanding officer; TA, ATC/5, no 1, Lanyon – Kimberley, 23 January 1881, p 52.

⁴⁶ C 2783, enclosure 1 in no 14, Lanyon – Colley (Telegram), 25 November 1880 and reply, Colley – Lanyon, (Telegram), 26 November 1880, p 40.

⁴⁷ Bellairs, *The Transvaal War*, p 56. Colley had not the vaguest clue how serious matters were. He told Kimberley: 'There has been a slight disturbance in Potchefstroom ... but we have had several of these small tax disturbances'; OXF, Kimberley Papers, Mss Eng c 4140, Colley – Kimberley, 15 November 1880.

instead these were retained⁴⁸ and only the 94th began its belated and fateful march to Pretoria. Lanyon also reluctantly admitted that his magnanimous gesture of sending volunteers to Basutoland had been ill-advised; they were sorely needed nearer home.⁴⁹ As De Kiewiet puts it in his criticism of the administrator, a self-confessed militarist of considerable experience, 'The cardinal sins of strategy were all his.'⁵⁰

As the fateful month of November 1880 drew to a close, Lanyon was under mounting pressure from all sides, but he found time to write to his father to assure him that things were still under control in the Transvaal:

The Boers are as troublesome as they can well be, the natives are restless on account of the Basutu (sic) War, the Legislative Assembly is sitting ... the folks say I am killing them all with work, but there are very few here who know what honest conscientious work is ... [As for me,] a reformer is always unpopular, and I am a moral Ishmael in this place ... The Boers are very troublesome just now for they think the Basutu war is their opportunity ... I don't believe in their brag and bounce, but I am almost alone in this opinion, and general funk prevails. But I cannot close my eyes to the fact that a crisis is at hand, and we may have a row on any day unless careful handling is practised.⁵¹

Seemingly by the time he wrote this letter, Lanyon was aware that there was a crisis on his hands, but he was still confident that it could be put down. He realised that he was virtually alone in his complacency, and yet his self-assurance overrode the counsel of others. Perhaps his need to answer his detractors and stem the growing tide of unpopularity – which he admits here to his father – had something to do with his foolhardy attitude. It is possible that he was determined to prove them wrong and take all the glory. There seems to be no other explanation for his blunders.⁵²

⁴⁸ C 2866, enclosure to no 76, (A), Bellairs – Lanyon, 16 November 1880, p 131; Davey, *The siege of Pretoria*, p 274.

⁴⁹ This force of 300 volunteers, known as Ferreira's Horse, had been raised and equipped by Lanyon and sent to help the Cape in their quest for disarmament of the Basotho. See above.

⁵⁰ De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, p 273.

⁵¹ TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 28 November 1880. This is a significant source, because Lanyon was later to argue that the outbreak was a complete surprise and that 'no one' imagined it would come to a head.

⁵² De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, p 273, is alone in his claim that Lanyon actively 'goaded' the Boers into war. This is not borne out by the evidence. There would have been no possible reason for Lanyon to do so; it was fraught with danger for his position as administrator. It is much more feasible that he was overconfident on two counts, namely that the Boers would not have the courage and that their protest would fizzle out, and secondly that they could be easily out down by imperial troops if they did decide to fight.

Lanyon's despatches in the aftermath of the November disturbances were not well received in the Colonial Office. His bombastic assurances that he had everything under control did not ring true. There were too many snide remarks about the Boers' ignorance and lack of courage and the government's ability to handle it. In a word, Lanyon came across as too cocksure. Herbert minuted his disapproval of the arrest of Celliers and wondered whether it had precipitated the outbreak. He felt that Lanyon relied far too much on the 'notorious cowardice of the Boers'. Kimberley was also irritated by Lanyon's patronising attitude and like Herbert feared that trouble might well be on the way.⁵³

Paardekraal: the die is cast

On 5 December 1880 Lanyon wrote to Kimberley again to inform him that the Boer meeting originally planned for January had been brought forward to 8 December 1880. The Boers had decided that with feelings riding high and Lanyon apparently in a quandary,⁵⁴ it would be a good idea to bring the January meeting forward. They felt that this decision was warranted even if it meant that some of the Boers would be pressed to reach Paardekraal, the appointed place some 35 miles south west of Pretoria, by the new date.⁵⁵ Even at this stage the administrator did not see how critical the situation had become: 'I still do not think there is much cause for anxiety,' he wrote, 'but the position of affairs is one that requires careful attention and watching.'⁵⁶ He brushed aside the fact that the troops he had requested from outlying posts would not be able to reach the Pretoria district before the date of the meeting when he might well have need of them.⁵⁷

On the eve of the Boer meeting there were those who saw the impending danger and they did

⁵³ PRO, CO 291/7, no 19856, minutes by Herbert, 24, 25 December 1880, and Kimberley, 26 December 1880.

⁵⁴ CK White's motion of no confidence, laid before the legislative assembly on 29 November 1880, was another headache as far as Lanyon was concerned. This matter could not have come to a head at a worse time for him. See also Chapter VI.

⁵⁵ Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, p 157; Bellairs, *The Transvaal War*, p 59.

⁵⁶ TA, ATC/5, no 185, Lanyon – Kimberley, 5 December 1880, pp 16-18. See also C 2783, no 12, Lanyon – Kimberley, 5 December 1880, pp 19-20.

⁵⁷ Bellairs, *The Transvaal War*, p 58.

what they could do to intervene. In Pretoria JG Kotzé wrote to Lanyon, giving him some advice on other forms of government that might be acceptable to the Boers in place of the present autocratic regime. Perhaps offers such as these could have averted the immediate crisis. Lanyon did no more than acknowledge receipt of the letter.⁵⁸ Brand of the Orange Free State contacted both Strahan in the Cape, who was acting while awaiting the arrival of Robinson, the newly appointed high commissioner, and Colley, asking each of them to take whatever action they felt appropriate to calm the worrisome tension in the Transvaal.⁵⁹ Colley's almost breezy reply to Brand makes it clear that he had little clue of the gravity of the situation. He was, he said, confident that Lanyon had matters well under control.⁶⁰ In fact, two days earlier Colley had written to Kimberley about other general matters and in his final paragraph he mentioned in passing:

There is little news from the Transvaal. The present agitation seems principally connected with the annual tax notices. Protests have been made ...a good deal of violent language has been used ...I still trust that ... a firm enforcement of the law will ultimately tire out these spasmodic efforts of disaffection.⁶¹

It was patently clear that not only had Lanyon failed to give Colley the full facts; he had given him virtually no news at all. It is true that Lanyon had been under immense pressure, and that Colley had presumably been sent copies of Lanyon's despatches to Kimberley. Nevertheless, bearing in mind that any instructions from the Colonial Office in reaction to letters from Pretoria took several months, Lanyon might have been expected to have been in frequent telegraphic communication with Colley, who was, after all, the high commissioner of the region and the supreme commander of the imperial troops. Lanyon's insistence that he preferred to work alone, that Colley was his junior in terms of service in southern Africa and that Colley knew little of the circumstances in the Transvaal, are hardly convincing excuses for Lanyon's conduct, which bordered on dereliction of duty. Nor, it must be said, can Colley be exonerated. True, he was distracted by the urgency of the situation in Pondoland and his heavy military responsibilities, but on paper his was the final responsibility, and he later paid the ultimate price for Lanyon's poor judgement and complacency, and for his own inept acceptance of Lanyon's assurances.

⁵⁸ Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, pp 159-160.

⁵⁹ C 2783, enclosure 1 in no 10, (Telegram) Brand – Strahan, 6 December 1880, p 18, and enclosure 1 in no 36, Brand – Colley, 9 December, pp 58-59.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, enclosure 2 in no 36, Colley – Brand, 15 December 1880, p 59.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, no 25, Colley – Kimberley, 13 December 1880, p 54.

Lanyon's father, as ever, was given enough news to stop him fretting about his son. In an unusually short letter, Charles Lanyon was told:

In two days we shall have an excited camp full of Boers close to our capital, and the usual amount of funk on both sides. The situation is both interesting and amusing for a few days might possibly see us on the war tramp tho' I don't think it is by any means probable. However, long before you get this you will have heard by wire whether the pusillanimous Boers have mustered or rather drunk sufficient Dutch courage to try conclusions with the Govt. I enclose you an account of our budget speech which will show you how we are getting on.⁶²

It is significant, and even verges on the ludicrous, that at a time of such high political crisis, Lanyon once again saw fit to equate the well-being of his Transvaal administrative machine with the state of its finances.

On 6 December 1880, he published a notice in the government gazette. It outlined his version of the lawlessness at Potchefstroom the previous month, and warned those who were planning to attend the Boer meeting in two days' time that all defiance of the law would be punished. He reminded them that meetings held for seditious purposes were unlawful and that the authority of the British crown would be upheld. As for the 'quietly disposed', they were reassured that the government would make sure that the law was respected.⁶³ The notice had no apparent effect on the Boers other than to make them more determined to attend. They claimed with some justification that Lanyon had left them with no choice. By exercising what they saw as their basic right to independence they became declared rebels. Lanyon had made the decision easier for them.⁶⁴

On 12 December 1880, while the Boers were deliberating at Paardekraal, Lanyon wrote to his father to complain that Pretoria was filled with the 'panic-stricken who have flocked into the town for protection', so he was well aware that the general public was of the opinion that the Boers meant to take up arms if necessary to reclaim their independence. Lanyon – who was growing increasingly sensitive to criticism – claimed many of those who had come into the

⁶² TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 6 December 1880.

⁶³ TA, ZAR/56, *Transvaal Government Gazette Extraordinary*, 6 December 1880, Government Notice 257 of 1880.

⁶⁴ C 2783, enclosure in no 12, 'Letter from Mr Hudson on his meeting with certain Boers at Potchefstroom', pp 25-26.

capital were abusing his government

for not taking proper steps to defend them, so one gets abused all round. However, this don't (doesn't?) interfere with my appetite or sleep so it don't matter much. The Boers say they really intend to fight this time; I won't believe it till I hear their bullets. But they are assembled in camp ... and talk very big – the inflated toads.⁶⁵

Lanyon also informed Kimberley that he had been told by the native commissioner in the Zoutpansberg district and by Henrique Shepstone, the secretary of native affairs, that some of the Boers were trying to 'incite the natives to join issue with them against the Government' but that the chiefs had remained loyal and refused to submit to the Boer entreaties. Whether there was any truth in these reports is open to question.⁶⁶ Be that as it may, Lanyon then turned the information into a tool to impress Kimberley: '... this serves to prove how gladly the natives welcome the change of rule, even though it necessitated their paying their taxes and being subordinate to the government.'⁶⁷

The Boer meeting at Paardekraal was attended by approximately 6 000 men, although due to the short notice of the meeting some of the Boers arrived several days late. Conflicting estimates of total attendance varied from 4 000 to as high as 8 000, and even 10 000 Boers.⁶⁸ The deliberations began on 9 December and lasted for nearly a week. Lanyon did his best to plant some spies among the Boers but found it 'almost impossible to obtain the services of reliable men to go to the camp'. Those who managed to infiltrate the Boer ranks were soon detected and 'had to fly'.⁶⁹ The general Boer attitude was one of determination that this time their quest should not be denied. It was agreed that the old *volksraad* should be reconstituted and at its first

⁶⁵ TA, A 596, Vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 12 December 1880.

⁶⁶ Similarly, the Boers made allegations that the British had 'armed natives in the field', although Lanyon claimed that all offers of assistance from friendly chiefs were naturally refused; Davey, *The siege of Pretoria*, p 199.

⁶⁷ TA, ATC/5, no 198, Lanyon – Kimberley, 12 December 1880, p 32.

⁶⁸ De *Volksstem* 14 December 1880. An estimate by a government spy, was put at 5 000; Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, pp 161-162. Bellairs, *The Transvaal War*, pp 59-60, claims that there were 4 000 men at the meeting as it opened, but that others arrived later. All told he estimated that the Boers claimed to have 7 000 men under arms.

⁶⁹ TA, ATC/5, no 1, Lanyon – Kimberley, 23 January 1881, p 50-57. In this letter to Kimberley, written while besieged in Pretoria, Lanyon gives a report of proceedings in December 1880 to fill the secretary of state in on events since his previous letter of 12 December 1880.

meeting, on Monday 13 December 1880, a triumvirate comprising Kruger, Joubert and Pretorius was formed. Heidelberg was to be the seat of the new government.⁷⁰ The triumvirate immediately drew up a proclamation to announce the restoration of a republican government. It did not exclude the possibility of conferring with the British government, or even, under certain conditions, of considering federation, but it was clear that acceptance of British overlordship was a thing of the past. This was a virtual declaration of war.

Cronjé left to have the proclamation printed in Potchefstroom and on 15 December the Boers moved away from Paardekraal and headed for Heidelberg. On their way they cut the telegraph wires,⁷¹ putting an end to Lanyon's communication with Colley in Natal; one of the last telegrams that left Pretoria was Lanyon's sobering report to the high commissioner that the Boers had decided to re-establish their republic.⁷² On 16 December 1880 Heidelberg was occupied, and the Boers then took over the government offices and raised the *Vierkleur*.⁷³

Lanyon, secure for the moment in Government House, had no official information of these developments until a letter, which amounted to an ultimatum, was delivered to him by a Boer representative on 17 December 1880. He was handed a copy of the Paardekraal proclamation and informed that the republican government had been duly established at Heidelberg. He was given 48 hours to respond to the call for the recognition of the Boer republic and asked to agree that Pretoria be transferred back under Boer control.⁷⁴ This was clearly unacceptable to Lanyon and his reply was prompt and characteristically unequivocal. The Boers had acted unlawfully and their resistance to the government constituted a rebellion. He issued a proclamation the following day calling on the commander of the imperial troops to take the necessary steps against the rebels in order 'to vindicate the authority of Her Majesty's Government, and to put down insurrection

⁷⁰ TA, ZAR/58a, *Staatscourant der ZAR*, 12 January 1881: Volksraadnotule, 13 December 1880; TA, ATC/5, no 1, Lanyon – Kimberley, 23 January 1881, p 50-51.

⁷¹ C 2783, enclosure 2 in no 49, Bellairs – Deputy Ajutant-General, Pietermaritzburg, 17 December 1880, p 80.

⁷² Bellairs, *The Transvaal War*, p 61.

⁷³ *Ibid*, p 63; TA, ATC/5, no 1, Lanyon – Kimberley, 23 January 1881, p 51.

⁷⁴ TA, ATC/5, no 1, Lanyon – Kimberley, 23 January 1881, p 51; Davey, *The siege of Pretoria*, p 276-277.

wherever it may be found to exist'.⁷⁵ This message was also sent back to the triumvirate.⁷⁶

Some shots had already been fired in Potchefstroom on 16 December but the first major encounter of the war was the virtual elimination of the 94th Regiment that had been called from Lydenburg to Pretoria by Lanyon on 23 November. Bellairs, who had recommended on 16 November that reinforcements be requested, was critical that Lanyon had delayed so long to issue the order.⁷⁷ But in his letter to Kimberley, Lanyon took none of the blame. His order had been given promptly once affairs were 'beginning to assume a more serious aspect,' he declared, but in Lydenburg a shortage of transport and the very slow preparations on the part of the officer in command – Lieutenant Colonel PR Anstruther – meant that the 250 men only started out on 5 December 1880. Furthermore, said Lanyon, Bellairs had specifically warned Anstruther to be wary of a possible Boer attack on the way to Pretoria. Anstruther was not careful enough, and at Bronkhorstspuit, on 20 December his force was intercepted and decimated by a body of about 1 500 mounted Boers under Frans Joubert.⁷⁸

The next day, 21 December 1880, when news of the disaster that had befallen the 94th reached Pretoria, Lanyon declared martial law throughout the Transvaal.⁷⁹ He argued that this was necessary to ensure public safety, more particularly because there were many Boers in the town who were flushed with their success of the previous day.⁸⁰ With the hoped-for reinforcements snuffed out at Bronkhorstspuit, Pretoria was under siege, encircled by Boer troops that were closing in on the capital and cutting off all communication and supplies. For a full 100 days, until the news came through to Pretoria on 15 March 1881 that an armistice had been concluded, they

⁷⁵ TA, ZAR/56, *Transvaal Government Gazette Extraordinary*, 18 December 1880, Proclamation by Administrator; C 2838, Proclamation by Lanyon, 18 December 1880, pp 15-16; TA, ATC/5, no 1, Lanyon – Kimberley, 23 January 1881, p 51.

⁷⁶ TA, ATC/5, no 1, Lanyon – Kimberley, 23 January 1881, p 51.

⁷⁷ See discussion above on Lanyon's alleged strategic blunders in the later part of November 1880.

⁷⁸ TA, ATC/5, no 1, Lanyon – Kimberley, 23 January 1881, pp 52-53. See also OXF, Kimberley Papers, Mss Eng c 4140, Lanyon – Colley, 21 December 1880, where Lanyon criticises Anstruther for his 'culpable carelessness'.

⁷⁹ TA, ZAR/56, *Transvaal Government Gazette Extraordinary*, 21 December 1880.

⁸⁰ TA, ATC/5, no 1, Lanyon – Kimberley, 23 January 1881, pp 53-54.

had to hang on in the hope that Colley's relieving force would come to their rescue.⁸¹

Lanyon and Bellairs, the administrator and the commander of the Transvaal forces respectively, although they did not really see eye to eye,⁸² were the two senior government officials in the beleaguered town. Under martial law, Bellairs, to Lanyon's irritation could – both literally and figuratively – call the shots. Furthermore, Lanyon's brief as administrator in full control of all civil affairs in the Transvaal was superseded by Colley 'in the event of war'.⁸³ Once again Lanyon was forced into puppet status and was powerless to change his circumstances. Admittedly, Colley was in Pietermaritzburg and between him and Lanyon there was no telegraphic link and no regular mail. Blockade-runners did manage to deliver some despatches in and out of Pretoria,⁸⁴ but for his final 100 days in Pretoria, while Lanyon was 'cribbed, cabined, confined and bound in',⁸⁵ along with the other residents of Pretoria, he would almost certainly have found it very irksome that he had very little public standing, if any at all.

Lanyon and the siege of Pretoria

The siege of Pretoria, as far as the Boers were concerned, was a sound tactical decision. They realised that despite their early success in the war it was to their advantage to tie down a large British force which might otherwise have advanced on Potchefstroom or their new capital of

⁸¹ It never did come. Confirmation of the news of Colley's death and the Boer triumph at Majuba reached Pretoria on 24 March 1881; Davey, *The siege of Pretoria*, p 301.

⁸² See for example Lanyon's comment to Lagden about how little Bellairs deserved the KCMG he was awarded; RH, Godfrey Lagden Papers, Mss Afr s 209/1/1, Lanyon – Lagden, 31 June 1882. There was also an incident just prior to the lifting of the siege, when meat became scarce and Bellairs suggested that Africans should be asked to throw meat into the fort at Rustenburg. Lanyon flatly turned this idea down – and later Kimberley agreed with him that it was a foolish idea. Lanyon claimed that it would not do to 'let the natives think their aid was necessary'; TA, A596, vol 5b, Lanyon – Bellairs, 14 March 1881.

⁸³ See for example, TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 14 and 28 August 1880.

⁸⁴ Bellairs, *The Transvaal War*, pp 106-107; Davey, 'Inventory to the Lanyon collection', *South African Archives Journal*, 2, 1960, p 53.

⁸⁵ This was the motto of *The News of the Camp*, a wartime newsletter published in Pretoria during the war. It was produced on the presses of the *Transvaal Argus* and its two editors were Charles Du-Val, an Irish entertainer and CW Deecker, the former editor of the *Transvaal Argus*.

Heidelberg.⁸⁶ It left them free to reinforce the south east approaches to the Transvaal, where they knew that their commandos would be put to the test by the professionally trained imperial troops.⁸⁷ On 19 December Colley's heavily armed reinforcements finally left Natal for the Transvaal, and could be expected, he told Kimberley, to reach Standerton by 20 January 1881.⁸⁸ This is clear evidence of just how slow and ponderous the imperial forces were, and how difficult it was to move troops and equipment along the rough tracks through the veld.⁸⁹ Colley's reinforcements would take a full month to be within helpful distance of Pretoria, where the relief of the capital was presumably their first priority.

Within the town there was much to do. Lanyon was full of praise for the 'excellent arrangements' made by Bellairs.⁹⁰ The town was evacuated and the residents of the town were moved into the adjacent military camp, gaol and convent, 'in quarters and under canvas' ... 'The town is very open and scattered', explained Lanyon, 'and it would have been impossible to guard it from any sudden raid'. There had also been concerns that the Boer residents might try to make contact with the enemy if not kept under close surveillance. A rationing system was introduced and foodstuffs in the town were commandeered.⁹¹ Despite the cramped conditions morale was apparently high among the residents, particularly after a messenger had managed to enter the town with the good news that reinforcements were on the way.⁹² Lanyon made a public announcement in the government gazette that strong reinforcements had arrived in Natal from Britain, more were on their way, and that Colley was 'on the South-Eastern Districts with a strong column'.⁹³ It was a

⁸⁶ Davey, *The siege of Pretoria*, p 276.

⁸⁷ On the Boer laagers in the vicinity of Pretoria see Bellairs, *The Transvaal War*, Appendix, p 464-466.

⁸⁸ C 2783, enclosure 1 in no 49, Colley – Secretary of state for war, 19 December 1880, p 77.

⁸⁹ On the poor state of the roads in the Transvaal in the early 1880s, see Davey, *The siege of Pretoria*, p 275.

⁹⁰ TA, ATC/5, no 12, Lanyon – Kimberley, 18 March 1881, p 92.

⁹¹ Davey, *The siege of Pretoria*, pp 279-280. The provision of water to the camp and acceptable sanitary arrangements were also made.

⁹² TA, ATC/5, no 1, Lanyon – Kimberley, 23 January 1881, pp 56-57. There were 3 700 civilians moved to the military encampment; *Ibid*, no 12, Lanyon – Kimberley, 18 March 1881, p 90. See also Bellairs, *The Transvaal War*, Appendix, p 468.

⁹³ TA, ZAR/57, *Transvaal Government Gazette Extraordinary*, 21 January 1881, Government Notice no 4, 1881.

vain hope.

The defence of Pretoria and the command of the armed forces were the responsibility of Bellairs,⁹⁴ but Lanyon was involved in the raising of a local mounted volunteer corps. He reported that it was disappointing that only a third of the men who were capable of bearing arms offered their services.⁹⁵ The lack of a regular cavalry force made the largest of these units, the Pretoria Carbineers, particularly useful to Bellairs, and they were assigned the task of conducting regular patrols around the town.⁹⁶ Lanyon reported that within the first month of the siege 'several engagements have taken place in the immediate vicinity of Pretoria, in all of which our men have been successful'.⁹⁷ Perhaps anticipating criticism from the Colonial Office for his lack of conciliation towards the Boers, and his poor judgement about the severity of the situation in the months prior to the war, Lanyon made brief mention of the excuses he was to repeat time and again over the following months. In a later despatch, he said he would report fully on the 'causes which led to this sudden outbreak and show how unanticipated it was, even by the people themselves'.⁹⁸ That it was the result of a sudden impulse, he claimed 'there can be little doubt'.⁹⁹ The evidence proves that the contrary was true. The outbreak was not sudden, nor had the Boers acted on impulse. And it was anticipated by many people. Indeed, Lanyon, by his own admission, was one of the very few who did not foresee a war.

He was unable to write to his father for more than a month, there being no postal service to and from the town, but on 23 January 1881 a despatch rider volunteered to make a dash through

⁹⁴ On Pretoria's military capability during the siege see Davey, *The siege of Pretoria*, pp 282-283.

⁹⁵ TA, ATC/5, no 1, Lanyon – Kimberley, 23 January 1881, pp 53-54. Lanyon also complained that some of the shopkeepers would not allow their employees to join the volunteers for fear that this became known to their Boer customers.

⁹⁶ TA, ATC/5, no 12, Lanyon – Kimberley, 18 March 1881, pp 91-92. On the formation of a civil guard, a 'nondescript body of from forty to fifty men', see Bellairs, *The Transvaal War*, pp 112-113.

⁹⁷ TA, ATC/5, no 1, Lanyon – Kimberley, 23 January 1881, p 56.

⁹⁸ Here Lanyon refers to his long letter of 1 February 1881; TA, ATC/5, no 9, Lanyon – Kimberley, 1 February 1881, pp 61-84. The letter does not in fact investigate the root causes of the outbreak. Instead it is a tirade about the ignorance and backwardness of the Boers and the fact that 'no one', not even the 'Boers themselves' anticipated the outbreak. As an attempt to vindicate his actions it fails abysmally.

⁹⁹ TA, ATC/5, no 1, Lanyon – Kimberley, 23 January 1881, p 57.

enemy lines, and he took the opportunity to send his father some news. He was still confident of victory, and although there were skirmishes almost daily, the Boers were risking an attack on the town because they knew they would be outclassed:

I have no greater opinion of their bravery than I had before, and the whole thing will collapse when our reinforcements arrive and they get one good dressing ... Colley should be here next month ... The rising surprised everyone and no one more so than the Boers themselves. [sic] In fact it was the result of a mobs impulse, and having put their foot into it they are afraid to stop.¹⁰⁰

That Lanyon believed what he wrote about the outbreak of war is difficult to comprehend. And yet there seemed no need to lie to his father. There is no apparent explanation other than the possibility that he had convinced himself that what he wrote was true.

Apart from the administration of justice and his civil correspondence to Kimberley to keep him apprised of developments within the beleaguered town and the progress of the government, Lanyon, as ever, kept a close check on Transvaal finances. A few days after the war broke out he appointed a four-man valuation and compensation board to regulate the prices paid for foodstuffs and the level of compensation payable to those whose goods were commandeered. This board liaised closely with the commissariat and also organised the distribution of rations to the civilians in the town.¹⁰¹ Lanyon also ensured that there was sufficient African labour for running the besieged town. The approximately 1 400 Africans in Pretoria formed a useful labour pool and Lanyon also arranged for workers to act as scouts, messengers and scavengers. The pass system was still rigidly applied during the siege, but a notice was issued within a week of the beginning of the siege that there was to be no threatening behaviour or ill-treatment of Africans by either the military or civilians.¹⁰² On 22 February 1880 Lanyon was able to send the secretary of state one of his familiar self-laudatory reports on the condition of the Transvaal finances. He provided impressive comparative figures on the revenue and expenditure returns for the years 1878-1880, and made much of the fact that annual revenue, without an increase in taxation – and despite the fact that revenue was ‘almost uncollected’ for the last two months of 1880 – had almost trebled since the British takeover in 1877. He put this ‘great improvement’ down to the fact that ‘the establishment of a more secure form of government and an improved system of

¹⁰⁰ TA, A596, vol 16, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 23 January 1881.

¹⁰¹ Davey, *The siege of Pretoria*, p 290.

¹⁰² Bellairs, *The Transvaal War*, p 139.

collection and supervision' had been introduced.¹⁰³ He was clearly hoping that his progress in matters financial would stand him in good stead should there be any recriminations about his handling of the crisis.

Lanyon's inability to get on well with most of his fellow officials became even more focused in the confined situation of a siege. With JG Kotzé, the demoted ex-chief justice, Lanyon had a long history of animosity and he was not one to set a grudge aside. The executive council which was still functioning – under Lanyon's domination – had occasion to complain about delays in the legal system which apparently met with hostility by Kotzé, who for his part, as were many others, was critical of Lanyon and his close associates, particularly Morcom and Steele.¹⁰⁴ Under martial law the high court and *landdrost* courts were closed for the duration of the war and this gave rise to friction between the military and the law-enforcement officers. Lanyon's way out of the difficulty was to rely heavily on Morcom's input and to appoint Steele as inspector of prisons,¹⁰⁵ which proved to be an unpopular choice. Because there was little else to report upon, the camp newspaper, *The News of the Camp*, seized upon these snippets of information. Even after the siege, when the publishers reverted to printing the *Transvaal Argus and Commercial Gazette*, it criticised Lanyon for allowing himself to be misled by his close advisers and being guilty of what it called 'misdirection of affairs' in the Transvaal.¹⁰⁶

February and March 1881 were apparently quiet months in besieged Pretoria after the number of brisk 'engagements' Lanyon had reported in January, and to counter the boredom in the camp, diversions were arranged such as concerts, performances by a band and occasional sporting activities. In his diary, Garnet Wolseley recorded that while in Pretoria he played tennis with Lanyon,¹⁰⁷ but apparently Lanyon's athletic ability also stretched to cricket and during the siege

¹⁰³ TA, ATC/5, no 11, Lanyon – Kimberley, 22 February 1881, pp 85-86.

¹⁰⁴ Davey, *The siege of Pretoria*, p 297.

¹⁰⁵ TA, ATC/5, no 13, Lanyon – Kimberley, 17 March 1881, p 95.

¹⁰⁶ See for example *The Transvaal Argus and Commercial Gazette*, 2 April 1881; Davey, *The siege of Pretoria*, pp 273, 298-299.

¹⁰⁷ See for example Preston, *The South African journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, pp 135, 246, 250; TA, A596, vol 8, Lanyon's diary, entry for 7 January 1881.

he took part in a cricket match between the military and the civil officials. He did not fare well; he was 'run out' for one run.¹⁰⁸

It was a matter of a few weeks before he was to leave Pretoria that Lanyon had another opportunity to send a letter to his father. He reported that all was quiet in the town and that the lack of news about the war outside was very trying. He wished heartily that he could 'cast off civil thralls' and take part in the fighting. There is no mention of the progress of the war in his letter or the fact that Colley had not yet arrived. Again, but more determinedly, he reiterated his views on the outbreak of war, and there is a hint that criticism might be coming his way:

I more I see and hear the more convinced I am that there was no one in the Province, not even the rebels themselves or their leaders, who had any idea that the crisis was so near at hand when the rebellion broke out and I feel quite certain that such will be acknowledged when facts are known, and the public at home are fully aware of what has transpired.¹⁰⁹

In a letter to Charles Lanyon, two days after the armistice had been concluded, Robert Herbert of the Colonial Office explained that the cease-fire meant that the relief of Pretoria and the release of 'your gallant son' would have to wait for a few more weeks, but he assured him that 'I hope it will not be long before your son marches out with all honour'.¹¹⁰ Herbert's minutes on Colonial Office correspondence had thus far been decidedly critical of Lanyon's conduct of Transvaal affairs; presumably on 8 March 1881, when the note to Charles Lanyon was written, discussions about 'gallant' Lanyon's fate had not yet been held. One would like to think that Herbert had some pangs of conscience about his glowing report of the Colonial Office's soon-to-be-recalled imperial agent.

There had been whisperings coming through to Pretoria about peace talks towards the end of February, but it was only on 15 March 1881 that the people in the besieged town heard that an armistice had been concluded. Unbeknown to them, Colley had made one last desperate attempt to invade the Transvaal but his force had been stopped in its tracks. Rumours of the Boer triumph at Majuba on 27 February 1881 and the fact that Colley had been mortally wounded, were rife

¹⁰⁸ Davey, *The siege of Pretoria*, p 295, footnote 3.

¹⁰⁹ TA, A596, vol 16, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 24 February 1881.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, Herbert – Charles Lanyon, 8 March 1881.

in the besieged town in subsequent weeks, but were only confirmed officially on 24 March.¹¹¹ Meanwhile the Boers still maintained their siege and the Pretoria garrison kept up its vigil.¹¹² Lanyon addressed a letter to Kimberley on 18 March 1881, amidst all the conflicting rumours, asking for clarity on the situation. The government, he said, 'is utterly ignorant of what is going on around us' and had only been able to glean some information from 'friendly natives' from the surrounding districts. The despatch then provides a general report on progress during the siege and a justification of the efficient and orderly manner in which Lanyon and his government had prevented the capital from falling into the hands of the enemy, listing the numbers of men killed and wounded in Pretoria's defence.¹¹³ Furthermore he refutes most indignantly the 'wholly unreliable' Boer statements about his non-conciliatory attitude, the harsh treatment of prisoners and the British manipulation of African people to participate in the war effort against the Boers. He writes most pointedly that

I feel very deeply the position in which the Government has been placed by these and other mis-statements made, for many will be led to believe what we have been powerless to contradict. I only trust that a rigid enquiry may be hereafter instituted, for nothing has been done by the Government which it need be ashamed of or would afford cause for animadversion. I only ask that judgement may be suspended regarding any statement which may emanate from such sources, till the government shall have had an opportunity of replying to them.¹¹⁴

Lanyon's earnest appeal to Kimberley did not reach the Colonial Office before the decision had been taken to relieve him of his position in the Transvaal and recall him to Britain.

On 28 March 1881 the siege of Pretoria was at last lifted when an officer rode into Pretoria to deliver instructions from Sir Evelyn Wood, Colley's successor. Facing up to the grim reality that a 'peace without honour' had been conceded, did not come easily to Lanyon. His obvious distress at the proposed withdrawal of Britain from the Transvaal was tempered with indignation that it appeared he was to be made the 'scapegoat'. Wood's letter had details of a telegram from Kimberley which ordered Lanyon to 'take the leave applied for last year and return to this

¹¹¹ TA, ZAR/57, *Transvaal Government Gazette Extraordinary*, 24 March 1881, Government Notice no 25, 1881.

¹¹² Bellairs, *The Transvaal War*, p 230.

¹¹³ Seven men were killed and 19 were wounded in the defence of Pretoria.

¹¹⁴ TA, ATC/5, no 12, Lanyon – Kimberley, 18 March 1881, pp 88-94.

country, handing over government to Colonel Bellairs'.¹¹⁵ In obvious distress Lanyon wrote to his father:

The last stage in our siege was arrived at yesterday, when an officer rode in ... [to say] that peace had been proclaimed and forwarding the details, of which the enclosed is a precis. If you do not blush for our country when you read it I shall be astonished. To me it is positively heartbreaking that ...when large reinforcements were close at hand the Govt at home should have caved in after bragging for 4 years that the country would never be given back. ... The military operations have [brought] little credit to our arms ... I should have dearly liked to have had a slap at the Boers. But they have scored where we should and accordingly we are in the disgraceful position we are, and the laughing stock of South Africa. ... The only part of the news which I got in this letter, which affects me personally is that Lord Kimberley says I can now take leave and go home. This is, I suppose, a polite way of saying they intend to make me their scapegoat, but I won't, and so have telegraphed to say that if they intend enquiring into past action of this Govt, I shall remain out so as to protect myself. ... I intend to fight, and I have good grounds to fight on.¹¹⁶

He was full of bluster, but his 'good grounds to fight on' were perilously thin. Much of this bravado was clearly meant to impress his father. Although he was to remain in Natal for a while, no one was particularly interested to hear his views on his recall. Admittedly Lanyon was made a scapegoat, but he certainly contributed to his own downfall.

On 29 March 1881 Lanyon published an official statement in Pretoria to the effect that a peace agreement had been reached, that hostilities had ceased and that the country, 'until finally handed over by the Royal Commission, will remain, *ad interim* under British rule'.¹¹⁷ The arrival in Pretoria of the Boer commandant general, Piet Joubert, and a number of his followers, was reported in the local press on 30 March 1881 and many of the Boers began drifting back to their neglected farms.¹¹⁸ The next day Lanyon revoked martial law and declared the high court and *landdrost* courts open for deliberations once more. In the same gazette it was announced that postal communication would be re-established throughout the Transvaal.¹¹⁹

The British decision to withdraw from the Transvaal and to recall Owen Lanyon will be

¹¹⁵ PRO, CO 291/10, Kimberley – Wood, handwritten draft of telegram by Kimberley, 23 March 1881; TA, A596, vol 5b, Wood – Lanyon, 24 March 1881.

¹¹⁶ TA, A596, vol 16, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 29 March 1881.

¹¹⁷ TA, ZAR/57, *Transvaal Government Gazette Extraordinary*, 29 March 1881, Government notice no28 of 1881.

¹¹⁸ *The News of the Camp*, 30 March 1881.

¹¹⁹ TA, ZAR/57, *Transvaal Government Gazette Extraordinary*, 31 March 1881.

discussed below, but it is pertinent to note that Colley's vacant position was to be taken over by Sir Frederick Sleigh Roberts¹²⁰ and for the meanwhile Sir Evelyn Wood was to act as Colley's successor on the spot.¹²¹ Lanyon went through the motions of saying goodbye and had a notice printed in the government gazette to 'convey an expression of his warmest thanks to the inhabitants of Pretoria'.¹²² He was duly presented with two addresses of appreciation for his 'indefatigable industry, diligence and wide office experience', the first signed by his colleagues on the executive council, and another from 45 members of the civil service who similarly regretted his 'early departure and relinquishment of the Government of the Transvaal'.¹²³ The press were less laudatory. *The News of the Camp* predicted that he might well come in for some criticism at home, while *De Volksstem* was heartily pleased to see him leave and hoped fervently that he would never return.¹²⁴ Lanyon quietly left Pretoria for Natal on the morning of Friday 8 April 1881, together with Wood who had spent three days in the capital.¹²⁵ Lanyon's private secretary, Godfrey Lagden, was assigned the task of packing up Lanyon's personal effects to send off to Britain and he wrote to Lanyon for instructions on certain of these matters.¹²⁶ On the day that Lanyon left Pretoria Colonel William Bellairs took over. In his first official despatch to the Colonial Office, Bellairs informed Kimberley that he had been sworn in as administrator of the Transvaal.¹²⁷

¹²⁰ By the time Roberts arrived the peace had been concluded and 'Bobs', of later Anglo-Boer War fame, did not take up the new post he had been assigned. He spent only 24 hours in Cape Town before returning to Britain. The duties of high commissioner in South-East Africa were restored to the governor of the Cape and Sir Hercules Robinson became sole high commissioner.

¹²¹ C 2873, no 72, Kimberley – Wood, 1 March 1881, p 18; Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African confederation*, p 200.

¹²² TA, ZAR/57, *Transvaal Government Gazette Extraordinary*, 7 April 1881, Government notice no 30, 1881.

¹²³ C 2959, enclosures in no 10 and no 11, Lanyon – Kimberley, 18 and 21 April 1881, pp 42-44. Kotzé's name is conspicuously absent from the list of signatories on the second address. The addresses were forwarded to Kimberley from Newcastle in Natal as Lanyon headed towards Durban to leave for home.

¹²⁴ *The News of the Camp*, 30 March 1881; *De Volksstem*, 13 April 1881.

¹²⁵ *De Volksstem*, 9 April 1881.

¹²⁶ TA, A596, vol 1, Lagden – Lanyon, 3 May 1881.

¹²⁷ TA, ATC/5, no 17, Bellairs – Kimberley, 8 April 1881, pp 88-94.

British withdrawal: finding someone to blame

Since the horrifying news of the British defeat at Bronkhorstspuit on 20 December 1880, Kimberley and his Colonial Office staff had become increasingly troubled by the Transvaal situation. Lanyon and Colley had assured them that everything was under control, but niggling doubts had begun to creep in when Lanyon's overconfident reports arrived. Referring to Lanyon's letter of November 1880 on the 'attitude of the Boers', Kimberley minuted: 'it is an unfortunate letter both on a/c of the mistaken estimate of the danger and the general tone of the remarks ...'¹²⁸ And now their worst fears were realised. Not only had the Boers, contrary to Lanyon's predictions, risen in revolt, but they were handing out a thrashing to imperial troops.¹²⁹ Moreover, the Transvaal government was huddled in a military encampment in the capital, hemmed in by determined Boers. Kimberley and the War Office made arrangements to send a large force to the Transvaal with all speed, but the secretary of state now had grave reservations about the mistakes Britain had made in dealing with the Boers. Their alleged lack of courage, was proving to be a less than accurate basis for British policy in the Transvaal. Lanyon's complacency had meant that the Boer rebellion had taken Britain by surprise. Kimberley had clearly lost all confidence in Lanyon's judgement and had instructed Colley to take Lanyon out of the equation: 'I leave it to you' to clean up behind Lanyon, 'who should have kept me informed'.¹³⁰

Justifying Britain's decision to withdraw, Kimberley was even prepared to minimise Lanyon's financial successes. It was hardly fair to blame Lanyon for a bankrupt imperial policy in southern Africa, to which he was only an accessory, but Kimberley used this excuse anyway. 'As a colleague of Gladstone', as De Kiewiet observes, 'Lord Kimberley was himself something of a connoisseur of surpluses. He seized upon Lanyon's vaunted figures and destroyed them.'¹³¹ What about imperial loans, money spent on imperial troops, the huge expense of maintaining garrisons in Pretoria and Potchefstroom, he asked? Lanyon, he said, was hopelessly out of his depth when

¹²⁸ PRO, CO 291/7, Lanyon – Kimberley, 19 November 1880, minute by Kimberley, 26 December 1880.

¹²⁹ Kimberley was becoming increasingly concerned: 'I fear Sir O Lanyon was completely deceived as to the state of the Transvaal'; OXF, Kimberley Papers, Mss Eng c 4140, Kimberley – Colley, 7 January 1881.

¹³⁰ Ibid, Kimberley – Colley, 20 January 1880.

¹³¹ De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, p 279.

the broader picture was studied. Almost contemptuously Kimberley turned Lanyon's brave little surplus into what he described as an 'enormous and hopeless deficit'.¹³² British policy in the colonies was about economising; to go on spending money like water in the Transvaal was ridiculous. This was the second nail in Lanyon's coffin and ironically it had been pounded into what Lanyon himself thought was his most solid defence. British policy in the Transvaal had failed and Kimberley, anxious to withdraw as quickly as was decent, was determined to cast the blame on Lanyon.

Then, too, there were other pressures in the southern African situation. The troubles in Basutoland and Pondoland were still unresolved, and although Brand had declared himself to be neutral and had been hovering about offering help,¹³³ his *volksraad* had shown that they were inclined to be less conciliatory towards the British. There were even rumours that the Free State Boers might swell the ranks of their Transvaal brothers. And at the back of Liberal Party minds there were sneaking feelings that their policy was, after all, one of non-interference in the colonies, and they had come into power less than a year earlier pronouncing that they advocated self-help in the empire. The longer the war continued and the more depressing the news that came back to Whitehall became, the more sensible it seemed to admit defeat and yield to Boer separatism.

The British press was less informed about Lanyon's role in the Boer rebellion in the Transvaal, and more inclined to blame the British government for trying to hold on to a region that was not worth the effort involved. There was trouble enough closer to home in Ireland; if the Boers were determined to regain their republic it seemed sensible to comply with their wishes. As the influential *Illustrated London News* put it,

England may well ask herself some pertinent questions. What does she want with the Transvaal? It adds nothing to her glory. Its annexation to her territories is not demanded by justice. All that she professes, or has professed, to be concerned in obtaining by annexation may be obtained otherwise. ... A slight concession now may have a more beneficial effect on all parties than a much larger concession after a long interval of angry estrangement.¹³⁴

¹³² PRO, CO 291/7, no 199, Lanyon – Kimberley, 8 December 1880, minute by Kimberley 5 January 1881.

¹³³ Brand certainly played a prominent part in the peace process after the war but at home, in his *volksraad*, he was beginning to lose some of the wide support he had held in earlier years.

¹³⁴ *Illustrated London News*, 8 January 1881.

In January 1881, in reply to a telegram from Brand suggesting that the time had come to talk about peace, Kimberley agreed on condition that the rebels laid down their arms. When nothing came of this initiative Brand tried again in February 1881 and again Kimberley said that if the rebellion was stopped he would frame a 'scheme' to settle the present 'difficulties'.¹³⁵ But still no brake was put on Colley's frantic military efforts to redeem his tarnished reputation and with a conclusive Boer victory and Colley's death on 27 February 1881, matters came to head. There was no longer any question that the time had come to annul the annexation of the Transvaal, and Evelyn Wood, with Colonial Office and War Office sanction, eventually negotiated an armistice with Joubert on 6 March 1881.¹³⁶

Not everyone was satisfied that this was the right way to go. There were certainly those, among them Lanyon and Wolseley, two imperial agents who confidently claimed to know more about the Boers than most – but neither of whom, in truth, could really make this claim – who felt that to 'shuffle out of the Transvaal in defeat' was the ultimate blow to British pride. Queen Victoria was suitably shattered by the suggestion that there be a withdrawal. She 'did not feel inclined to approve' the eventual peace settlement and thought the whole idea placed Britain in 'a humiliating position'.¹³⁷ Carnarvon, now watching from the sidelines, was another public figure who was horrified at the prospect of pulling out of the Transvaal, and he gloomily predicted disaster in the region – one of his more perceptive opinions on South African affairs.¹³⁸ Kimberley was particularly annoyed by Carnarvon's criticism published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* at about the time when the idea of withdrawal was being bandied about. He wrote indignantly to Gladstone:

Did you ever see a more foolish letter than Carnarvon's! ... this is not a moment for him to impugn others when we are reaping the bitter fruits of his policy in South Africa.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African confederation*, pp 198, 200.

¹³⁶ C 2873, no 91, Evelyn Wood – Kimberley, 6 March 1881, p 22; See also the official approval of Wood's actions, *Ibid*, no 95, Kimberley – Evelyn Wood, 7 March 1881, p 23.

¹³⁷ OXF, Kimberley Papers, Mss Eng c 4143, Victoria – Kimberley, 22 March 1881.

¹³⁸ Theron, 'Searching for gems: the Kimberley Papers at Oxford University', p 110. See also Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African confederation*, p 202.

¹³⁹ OXF, Kimberley Papers, Mss Eng c 4142, Kimberley – Gladstone, 25 December 1880.

British public opinion was mixed, but after all, the Transvaal, now that federation was beyond reach, had little to recommend it. Kimberley himself had mentioned to Colley that ‘there is a current of feeling here in favour of the Boers as a people striving for their independence’.¹⁴⁰ The ‘wretched conflict’ had brought ‘neither profit nor honour to the British political and military administration in South Africa’.¹⁴¹ *The Times* of London probably spoke for many Britons when it pointed out in one of its editorials that ‘the Empire is big enough without the Transvaal’.¹⁴² There were also those who felt that the Boers had been wronged and deserved to realise their national aspirations, which had clearly meant more to them than most Britons had realised. The *Illustrated London News*, for example, put the Transvaal debacle down to the annexation ‘blunder’ and felt that Britain was now ‘reaping the harvest of folly which some time since, we sowed for ourselves’.¹⁴³

The legality of the situation was that parliament did not have to sanction the withdrawal, but there would certainly be those who would ask questions, and these would have to be answered. Kimberley was probably also aware that the philanthropic lobby in the cabinet was a strong one and that its input might conceivably threaten peace negotiations if they were allowed to press for a more liberal policy towards Africans.¹⁴⁴ The best way to preempt some of the debate was to find someone to blame, someone reasonably dispensable, and then to get the withdrawal over and done with as cleanly and quickly as possible. The fewer questions asked, the better for all concerned. It was only human nature for the Colonial Office and Kimberley to look for some one to blame. Lanyon, with all his blunders, had made himself an obvious target. He had been appointed by the Conservatives, so responsibility for choosing him did not present a problem; he was young and reasonably inexperienced so his failures could be explained away without too much effort. Was he made a scapegoat? Certainly he was, but his personal responsibility for the disasters of the war are undeniable.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, Mss Eng c 4140, Kimberley – Colley, 20 January 1881.

¹⁴¹ *Illustrated London News*: ‘The Transvaal War’, 19 February 1881.

¹⁴² *The Times*, 21 July, 1881.

¹⁴³ *Illustrated London News*, 5 February 1881.

¹⁴⁴ De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, p 281 maintains that Bright and Chamberlain headed a powerful humanitarian group in the cabinet.

Owen Lanyon departs: his last years, 1881-1887

After leaving Pretoria on 8 April, Lanyon travelled to Newcastle, arriving on the afternoon of 12 April 1881.¹⁴⁵ He stayed there in the military camp with Sir Evelyn Wood, who was heavily involved in negotiations with the Boers. Lanyon telegraphed Lord Kimberley to find out whether the Royal Commission was going to make an enquiry into the administration of the Transvaal.¹⁴⁶ If so, he was determined to stay in the country long enough to have his say.

I have no idea of any stones being thrown at me behind my back, and unless I get a clear reply from the Colonial Office, I will remain here whether they like it or not. I have no fear of any enquiry, for there is nothing that I am ashamed of. ... If I stay I will not be home for a couple of months. I cannot tell you how rejoiced I am at the prospect of getting out of South Africa and seeing you all again. I trust never to have my lot thrown in this part of the world again.¹⁴⁷

When Kimberley contacted Lanyon it was to say that there would be no enquiry into Transvaal affairs, but he asked Lanyon to stay on for a while to give his 'assistance and information' to the commission.¹⁴⁸ It appears that there were two areas where Lanyon gave his advice. At the request of the Colonial Office he drew up a detailed memorandum on the boundary line between the Transvaal and the Zulu 'so that the interests of the Boers and natives should not clash',¹⁴⁹ and he also submitted suggestions to Wood concerning the duties of the British resident who was soon to be installed in Pretoria.¹⁵⁰

Lanyon predicted that the commission would have a difficult task. The Boers were 'rampant', he said, and would not be easy to please, and many English-speaking residents were so disillusioned that they were streaming out of the Transvaal in the face of Boer rule. He also claimed that the Boers were flying their flag in every town and had started a reign of terror,

¹⁴⁵ TA, A596, vol 8, Lanyon's diary, entries for 8, 12 April 1881.

¹⁴⁶ PRO, CO 291/10, Lanyon – Kimberley, (Telegram) 14 April 1881.

¹⁴⁷ TA, A596, vol 16, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 14 April 1881.

¹⁴⁸ PRO, CO 291/10, Kimberley – Lanyon, (Telegram) 14 April 1881.

¹⁴⁹ OXF, Kimberley Papers, Mss Eng c 4199, Lanyon – Kimberley, 10 May 1881; TA, A596, vol 5b, Memorandum by Lanyon, 10 May 1881.

¹⁵⁰ TA, A596, vol 5b, Minute by Lanyon, 15 May 1881; *Ibid*, vol 3, Wood – Lanyon, 4 May 1881.

‘persecuting the loyal whites and natives in every direction’.¹⁵¹ As for the future, Lanyon was not sanguine about the prospects for harmony in the region, and he felt that ‘stormy times’ were on the way. He admitted to being ‘glad to get out of the place’ and placed the whole debacle squarely at the door of the Liberals and their policy in southern Africa:

Before long the blundering of the home Govt, will become known in all its ugliness; the Boers spit upon the name of an Englishman; the English are thoroughly downhearted, and ashamed ...

He then went on to make some perceptive and interesting comments about the African reaction to the British withdrawal, information which might well have been seized upon by Bright and Chamberlain and their humanitarian pressure group in British parliamentary circles:

The natives are fast losing all respect for us ... the chiefs are asking why they are being deserted and thrown back under Boer rule, more especially after they have incurred increased resentment by remaining loyal to the Queen during all this trouble. It is a cruel and crying shame that they should receive such treatment after the solemn assurances made by the Govt. to them that they would ever receive protection so long as they were quiet and obeyed the laws.¹⁵²

Perhaps his sudden concern about the effect of the British withdrawal on Africans was simply another way of expressing his unmitigated hatred of the Boers who had brought him down. After all, he had been instrumental in engineering the foundations of an African policy based upon white supremacy and the relegation of Africans in southern Africa to the status of a rightless working class. Be that as it may, he was correct that the aftermath of the war was to be a growing hatred between Boer and Briton in southern Africa. The grim truth, as he put it in his letter home, is that ‘our prestige is forever gone in S Africa.’¹⁵³

Lanyon’s letter of 11 May 1881 appears to be the last that he wrote to his father from South Africa. On 17 May he left Newcastle and spent the night of 22 May in Pietermaritzburg, leaving the next morning for Durban. He sailed from Durban on 24 May, stayed for two days in Cape Town, and finally steamed out of Table Bay on Tuesday 31 May 1881, bound for Southampton.¹⁵⁴ Lanyon’s departure from southern Africa marked the end of his civil career and

¹⁵¹ Among his papers is a statement from Potchefstroom, dated 5 April 1881 and signed ‘Richard’, that the Boers were guilty of ‘murder, theft and sacrilege’; TA, A596, vol 5b, Richard – his father, 5 April 1881. This appears to be the only clear evidence of a Boer post-war rampage.

¹⁵² TA, A596, vol 16, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 25 April 1881.

¹⁵³ Ibid, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 11 May 1881.

¹⁵⁴ TA, A596, vol 8, Lanyon’s diary, entries for May 1881.

he never returned, although he was subsequently posted to north Africa on two occasions in a military capacity.

By September 1881 he was back with his father at the Lanyon ancestral home in Whiteabbey just outside Belfast. Here he wrote to Robert Herbert about his personal travelling expenses incurred on his trip back home. He pointed out that leave had been granted to him some months earlier and that his delay in Natal en route was at the behest of Wood and for matters of an official nature. He should not therefore have to forfeit any of his pay for the period while in Natal nor, indeed, the travelling allowance that would have been due to him had his post not been 'summarily abolished'. Furthermore, he claimed that because he had been given so little notice concerning his departure, his personal effects in Pretoria had of necessity to be sold by public auction and this had been a drain on his pocket. The tone of the letter is distinctly injured.¹⁵⁵

Several weeks later, perhaps prompted by Lanyon's plaintive request for funds and the realisation that he was languishing unemployed in Ireland – his period of leave being over – Herbert forwarded to Lanyon a copy of a letter that the Colonial Office had sent to the War Office on 12 October 1881. It amounts to something of a vindication of Lanyon's blunders in South Africa. But not quite. Kimberley almost exonerates Lanyon and praises his abilities: he is good at bookkeeping and has received military honours which deserve to give him a fresh start. As a soldier. It is the military that promoted him to the rank of Brevet-Colonel and awarded him the CB, so the War Office can have him back. But as far as a civil career as a colonial official was concerned, Lanyon had clearly reached the end of the road. Kimberley added that there should be no hint of 'apology' which might give the impression of absolution: 'The general words of approval will be sufficient', he noted.¹⁵⁶ The War Office was accordingly informed that Lord

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, vol 5b, Lanyon – Herbert, 29 September 1881. It appears that Lanyon was to be on full pay while in Natal and half pay for a period of 4 months (ie until 4 August 1881) while on leave. Lanyon had applied for 6 months but apparently only 4 were granted. There are a number of conflicting opinions reflected in the minutes. Kimberley minuted that it was 'a rather awkward question'; PRO, CO 291/10, Lanyon – Kimberley, 11 May 1881 and Kimberley – Lanyon, 28 June 1881, minute by Kimberley 19 June 1881.

¹⁵⁶ PRO, CO 291/11, Drafts, Colonial Office – War Office, 12 October 1881 and minute by Kimberley, 3 October 1881. There is once again (four months later) evidence that the issue was quite contentious. Kimberley minuted: 'Write fully, bearing testimony to his zeal and efficiency ... it cannot for a moment be supposed that the mere fact that he did not know the Boers would break into open rebellion ... alters the opinion of his high administrative talents. ... In the meantime ... he is without civil or military pay and has received no intimation ... of his ... general conduct'. The attitude is one of wanting to support Lanyon if

Kimberley

wished to acquaint you that owing to the changes in regard to Transvaal affairs, this department has not any present occasion for Sir Owen's services, and Lord K is glad to take this opportunity of placing on record his appreciation of the zeal and efficiency of Sir Owen Lanyon as an administrator, especially in the Dept of Finance, and his Lordship hopes that he may now be restored to military pay and regarded as eligible for some early employment commensurate with his abilities and services. While Sir Owen has been in Colonial Employment he has had the opportunity also of rendering active military service in connection with the recent wars in S.A., but as these services have been recognised by the high military distinction of a Brevet Colonelcy in the army and a companionship of the Bath, his Lordship feels that there is no occasion to refer to them in detail.

To this Herbert appended a note for Lanyon's information; Kimberley had asked that he be sent a copy of the letter, which bore 'testimony to the value of your services under this department'.¹⁵⁷

Kimberley had thus eased his conscience and officially washed his hands of Owen Lanyon.

Details of Lanyon's life after this official announcement that he was no longer needed for colonial service, are hazy. It appears that early in 1882 he married Florence Levy of London, the daughter of one of the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph*,¹⁵⁸ and that shortly afterwards he was appointed to serve as a full colonel in the Egyptian campaign of 1882.¹⁵⁹ His letter of appointment came through on 1 August and within a week he had to say goodbye to his new bride at Liverpool, which he found a heartbreaking ordeal. On his way to Malta he wrote to tell his father that 'the separation has been a terrible blow to us both'.¹⁶⁰ By November 1882 Owen and Florence were together again, and Lanyon received a congratulatory letter on the 'valuable assistance' he had rendered in the campaign from none other than his old associate from Transvaal days, Garnet Wolseley, under whom he had served in Egypt.¹⁶¹ On his return to Britain Lanyon then took up a position as an assistant adjutant and quarter master general in January 1883, and was based in Portsmouth.¹⁶²

possible, but there is no mention of reappointing him in a civil post again.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, Colonial Office – War Office, 12 October 1881, and undated note by Herbert. See also Ibid, Herbert – Lanyon, 13 October 1881.

¹⁵⁸ *The Natal Mercury*, 'Death of Sir Owen Lanyon', 8 April 1887.

¹⁵⁹ TA, A596, vol 3, Hawley – Lanyon, 1 August 1882.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, vol 16, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 5 August 1882.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, vol 3, Wolseley – Lanyon, 30 November 1882.

¹⁶² Ibid, Hawley – Lanyon, 18 December 1882.

Lanyon's wedded bliss was short-lived and his beloved Florence died in mid 1883, a blow which he felt very keenly. Lagden, who had been Lanyon's private secretary in the Transvaal, wrote to express his condolences on Lady Lanyon's death, and Owen's reply is evidence of his great distress: 'It has been such that I cannot write of it, for each day serves but to make it harder to bear.'¹⁶³ Thereafter he subsequently served in north Africa, where he took part in the Nile expedition of 1884-1885.¹⁶⁴ Once home in Britain again his health began to fail. He did not take up any further employment and while on a trip to the United States of America he died of cancer on 6 April 1887 at only 44 years of age.¹⁶⁵

Lanyon was clearly a victim of circumstances. He certainly made some serious errors of judgement in the Transvaal, but in his defence it is pertinent to ask whether by late 1880 any imperial official could have stopped the escalation of Boer resistance and the restoration of their independence. Underpinning the Boer success was a rapidly developing sense of self-awareness and nationalism and by 1880 this was completely incompatible with continuing British rule. Realistically, all Lanyon, or anyone else for that matter, could have done was to ensure that Britain was militarily ready to fight – and had he done so the war would merely have been prolonged, because the Boers were not to be denied. Even had he realised how critical the situation was, it is most unlikely that in such a short time he could have avoided the outbreak of war by alerting Kimberley to the fact that Britain should revoke the annexation of the Transvaal.

¹⁶³ RH, Godfrey Lagden Papers, Mss Afr s 210, Lanyon – Lagden, 15 July 1883.

¹⁶⁴ Davey, 'Inventory of the Lanyon Collection', p 51.

¹⁶⁵ *The Natal Mercury*, 'Death of Sir Owen Lanyon', 8 April 1887.

CONCLUSION: A PUPPET ON AN IMPERIAL STRING?

At the beginning of the 21st century, imperial history is at something of a crossroads. The more traditional preoccupations of historians of the British empire, those in the Robinson and Gallagher mould, are still being actively pursued, notably in Britain, as the new *Oxford history of the British Empire* shows.¹ But imperial scholarship is currently shifting and rearranging itself to accommodate the insights of post-colonial theory and to examine the cultural dimensions of colonial power which are now coming under the spotlight.² In some ways this thesis, a study of imperial policy as implemented at the colonial periphery, while admittedly researched in the early and mid 1990s, straddles the two fields. It interprets Britain's imperial experience in the southern African interior in the late 1870s yet it also blurs the once-sharp division between metropole and periphery. It studies the role of an imperial agent in terms of what Thompson calls 'the multiple identities inhabited by rulers and ruled, and the way these identities were constructed and contested'.³ The 'ruler' here is the very British, very jingoistic, William Owen Lanyon, and the gendered nature of imperialism is depicted well in his masculinity: the ruthless militarist, dealing harshly with subject peoples. The 'ruled' in this instance are the non-British 'other', predominantly Boers, and the Africans, but also include a new British group, the mining community. All three groups, in different ways, in Griqualand West and the Transvaal, the two regions where Lanyon held sway, put up stubborn resistance against being made to toe the imperial line.

¹ See for example JM Brown & WR Louis (eds), *The Oxford history of the British empire, vol IV: The twentieth century*, (Oxford, 1999). The large majority of contributors are from the UK and the tendency is to downplay the newer postmodernist approaches to the writing of imperial history.

² This is evidenced in the series of conferences entitled 'British worlds' being held at regular intervals in Britain and the countries which make up the 'old dominions'; for example that held in Cape Town in January 2002. While many of the papers offered at Cape Town reflected traditional metropole-centred imperial concerns, others offered exciting insights into new imperial interests and reflected the shift in interest to social and cultural history and to the investigation of imperial and colonial identities. See also Catherine Hall, *Civilising subjects, metropole and colony in the English imagination 1830-1867* (Cambridge, 2002).

³ AS Thompson, Review article: 'Is Humpty Dumpty together again? Imperial history and the *Oxford History of the British empire*', *Twentieth Century British History*, 12(4), 2001, p 514.

But having said that, this particular study is one that is perhaps more comfortable with what appears to be the current *Oxford History* approach, namely one that is less culture-oriented and more in line with what might be called political imperial histories. It is a study of high politics as well as policy making on the ground, and it takes a biographical approach. It is proudly – rather than apologetically – empirical and it is based on a very wide range of archival sources.

In exploring the identity that Owen Lanyon carved out for himself in his more than five years in South Africa, and how this came to bear upon, and was itself moulded by the Boers and Africans, a central theme has been pursued. Was Owen Lanyon a mere puppet on an imperial string? Was he indeed manipulated from Britain? Did the Colonial Office dictate the ways in which he influenced his ‘audience’, the Boers, Africans and settlers over whom he ruled, and was in turn influenced by them? Or was he, in his own right, able to wield considerable and innovative power over the making of colonial policy in southern Africa? The evidence points to the latter, but to substantiate the validity of this claim, it is necessary to dig a little deeper. To do so, the metaphor of the puppet on the imperial string must be stretched still further. To what extent, it is asked, did the puppeteers, the manipulators of the metropole, personified by the secretary of state for the colonies, dictate the actions of the puppet, Owen Lanyon, the imperial agent and ruler at the distant periphery? Was he in fact a puppet or an independent actor? And how did the audience experience the performance? First of all, how strong, how pliable and how visible was that string?

The string was a tenuous one. In the 1870s and early 1880s the world was still a big place and southern Africa was a long way from the metropole. Even after 1879, when there was a telegraphic link, albeit frequently unserviceable, between London and Cape Town via Madeira, communications were difficult. Despatches, which were in effect the only realistic means of handing down policy directives, took a full two months by steamer to reach the Colonial Office, to be passed around for those telling comments, be drafted into replies and returned to southern Africa. Imperial agents with any gumption, a quality which Lanyon prided himself on, had traditionally taken control of the situation in the far-flung colonies. The distance between metropole and periphery and the as yet primitive infrastructure in the colonies are thus the most obvious reasons why some administrators were more or less obliged to be innovative. And in

Lanyon's case this was certainly true. So much so, as will be explored below, that it is surprising that his role in providing form and contrast to colonial policy in southern Africa from 1875 to 1881 has thus far been largely overlooked.

It is clear that an imperial agent like Lanyon did have to answer to the high commissioner and did have to carry out the imperial policy of the day. In Lanyon's early years in Griqualand West, Lord Carnarvon was a supreme puppeteer and Owen Lanyon was, to some extent, a willing puppet. Certainly in the three secretaries of state under whom he worked, Lanyon had three superiors with strong personalities to pull the imperial strings, but none more so than Carnarvon. Carnarvon was driven by a very personal desire to confederate the states and colonies in southern Africa and while in Griqualand West, from 1875 until Carnarvon resigned in early 1878, Lanyon certainly danced to Carnarvon's tune. He was indeed appointed to carry out an imperial policy and had little freedom in as far as that policy was concerned, but he fully supported the policy and from that point of view was a willing puppet. Lanyon was of course relatively inexperienced and impressionable when he arrived in Kimberley, being only 33 years of age, but he soon became an avid confederationist. His efforts to encourage the political assimilation of Griqualand West under the Cape government, his meticulous memoranda on the proposed representation of the region in the Cape legislature, his friendly cooperation with Brand – in accordance with the changed imperial attitude to the Boer republics – and his important role in providing information to Carnarvon in the pre-1877 planning phase of the annexation of the Transvaal in 1877, all attest to this. But Lanyon can be described as a puppet in Griqualand West only in so far as he had been appointed as an agent to further Carnarvon's confederation scheme. In matters of domestic policy the imperial string was so tenuous as to be hardly felt and in this field Lanyon was anything but a puppet. As has been seen, he introduced significant measures that had not been masterminded by the secretary of state for the colonies. With Carnarvon gone in 1878 and his successor Sir Michael Hicks Beach exercising a far less stifling presence, Lanyon slowly began to gain confidence, shake off the control of the metropole, and carve out his own version of colonial policy on the diamond fields.

In Griqualand West his task as administrator was not an easy one; the region was a political anomaly, the settlers a strange money-grabbing lot, and there was resistance to colonialism from

indigenous people on whose land the diamonds had been found. The vagaries of the burgeoning diamond mining industry, the practical difficulties of getting the diamonds from the ground and the alarming fluctuations in the price of the gems made his rule all the more difficult. Nevertheless Lanyon met many of these challenges. He paved the way for large-scale mining interests and proved that he was certainly capable of independent action that was not dictated from above. Rising capitalism and imperialism demanded that Africans be dispossessed and transformed into a much-needed reservoir of labour, and it was Owen Lanyon who devised and implemented a location system and the stringent contract labour controls needed to achieve this. He also organised and regulated the labour supply on the mines. These were ground-breaking measures indeed. Not only was his version of colonial policy in Griqualand West innovative as far as meeting the demands of mining and mercantile capitalism were concerned, it also came perilously close to defying the metropole's unwritten humanitarian rule that legislation that was devised specifically for indigenous races was unacceptable. Here indeed he was no puppet.

In contrast, Lanyon's role as a militarist in Griqualand West, one that he looked back upon with great pride and satisfaction, shows signs of being heavily influenced not from the metropole but from a powerful peripheral agent: the smoothly impressive Bartle Frere. Lanyon had an undying admiration and respect for the statesmanship and political opinions of this high commissioner, Carnarvon's 'Great Statesman', who had been appointed specifically to implement confederation. Lanyon was directly responsible to him from early 1877 – when Frere took over from Sir Henry Barkly – until Wolseley's appointment in June 1879, a few months after Lanyon's move to the Transvaal. Frere was convinced that stamping British authority on the Africans was the key to confederation of the southern African states. There was, he averred, an anti-white conspiracy among Africans, and this had to be obliterated for confederation to be achieved. While Frere was plotting the overthrow of the Zulu, Lanyon, the very personification of the masculine ruler, readily accepted Frere's convictions and undertook a military campaign in Griqualand West in 1878, snuffing out the Griqua and Tlhaping rebels when they resisted his overt brand of colonialism in the region. Lanyon was very proud of his military exploits in 1878, because, he maintained, they proved that he was no push-over as a leader. He was also the prime mover in the campaign to stop the sale of arms to Africans. He was of the opinion that to continue selling arms freely to Africans was to court disaster in southern Africa: it made Africans so much more

difficult to subjugate.

Even when Frere fell from grace in the post-Isandlwana days and was taken out of the South-East African arena into which Lanyon had been posted as administrator of the Transvaal, Lanyon retained his self-image as a military man. It was an attitude and a style of governance that he carried over from Griqualand West into his term of office in the Transvaal. Conciliation was a sign of weakness and he refused to be branded as weak. Success as an administrator depended upon being aggressively masculine, firm and unbending. He did not see this administrative style as autocratic and pig-headed; he saw it instead as efficient and strong. His growing unpopularity in Kimberley and later in Pretoria, is clear evidence of how his subjects felt about his rule. They abhorred him and all he stood for. This was to impact disastrously on his relations with the Boers.

Once in the Transvaal, in the months before Wolseley's arrival, Lanyon grew in confidence and promptly shook off as much Colonial Office control as he could. He had no need to be manipulated from above; he was confident that he could cope alone. But before he could exercise much influence over the situation in the Transvaal, complicated as far as Britain was concerned by the refusal of both the Boers and the Pedi to bow to British overlordship, Garnet Wolseley arrived and the imperial string tightened again. Under the irrepressible Wolseley until early 1880, Lanyon chafed to be free to administer the Transvaal on his own. He did not admire Wolseley the way he had Frere. Wolseley gave Lanyon no latitude at all. The new high commissioner also appointed – to Lanyon's great irritation – as governor of the Transvaal, loved the limelight and relegated Lanyon to the background. He stifled Lanyon's initiative right from the beginning by unceremoniously stopping Lanyon's Pedi campaign and then promptly launching his own 'brilliant thrust' to subjugate Sekhukhune's polity in late 1879. But he failed to get the measure of the Boers; like Lanyon he misjudged them completely. Until Wolseley was gone, Lanyon was hamstrung and could do no more than keep administrative matters running smoothly and balance his beloved books. From September 1879 until April 1880 Lanyon was not even a puppet, Wolseley pushed him into the shadowy world of an administrative official. This was in stark contrast to the innovative role he had played in Griqualand West as the mover and shaker of African colonial policy.

The moment Sir Garnet rode out of Pretoria en route to Natal and Britain, Lanyon assumed his individual role as policy maker, bolstered by his now customary rigid system of control. He blossomed. For the remainder of his career in the Transvaal he made sure that he was unfettered by the metropole, because, as he admitted to his father, 'I strongly object to pipe for others' dancing'.⁴ Lanyon was relieved when, in 1880, the new Whig government in Britain decided to maintain its grip on the Transvaal, despite indications to the contrary in Gladstone's Midlothian speeches. Lanyon wasted no time in writing to Kimberley, the new secretary of state for the colonies, and managed to persuade him to allow the Transvaal administrator freedom to act more or less unilaterally. His request was granted by Kimberley, despite reservations expressed by some of the Colonial Office staff, notably the vastly experienced Robert Herbert, who felt that Lanyon was too pushy and too non-conciliatory as far as the Boers were concerned. Kimberley did not heed the implied warning and was instead comforted by the fact that George Pomeroy Colley – who for some inexplicable reason seems to have been the darling of the Colonial Office – would be there to keep Lanyon in check should an emergency arise. Furthermore Colley was to be responsible for African affairs in the Transvaal. That Colley would be able to exercise supervision of Lanyon in the Transvaal proved to be totally unrealistic. Lanyon's days of being a puppet were behind him. By this time he was too confident to be manipulated by anyone, and certainly not by Colley, whom Lanyon felt was far his junior. In his view, Colley was hardly qualified for the governorship of Natal, much less high commissioner for South-East Africa.

Throwing off all pretence of metropolitan control, Lanyon began his post-Wolseley career in the Transvaal by taking decisive, independent action to formalise British rule over the now-defeated Pedi. Once again, as he had done in Griqualand West, he devised the ground rules of a racialised colonial state. No matter that officially Colley was supposed to supervise matters affecting Africans in the Transvaal. Lanyon pushed the measures through on his own and merely informed Colley afterwards as a formality. Colley, for his part, was apparently content to be kept out of the picture. On his own initiative Lanyon then embarked on an extended tour of the Lydenburg region in June 1880. In what amounted to an important new drive to implement his own brand of British colonial policy, he addressed the African chiefs, informed them that their authority was at an end, and assured them that they were indeed fortunate to be under the strong and effective

⁴ TA, A596, vol 15, Lanyon – Charles Lanyon, 4 September 1880.

British government. He also saw to the imposition and efficient collection of a hut tax and laid the foundations of a survey of land, preparatory to the establishment of a location system. That this latter measure could not be implemented in the time Lanyon had at his disposal was because of his bungling in another area of his endeavour: his policy towards the Boers.

With African resistance quelled and the Pedi placed under Lanyon-style colonial control, the administrator continued his aggressive pursuit of colonial dominance over southern African independent states. The Boers were the next in line. Again, Lanyon's decisions on how best to counteract Boer opposition in the Transvaal were his own. He was by no means a puppet and there was little sign of an imperial string, at least not until later, when the string was transformed into a hangman's rope. Kimberley and the Colonial Office had passed the buck as far as the 'disaffected Boers' were concerned. And Colley was satisfied that he was being kept apprised of the situation, which he was not. Lanyon simply decided to go it alone. As has been explained at length in this thesis, Lanyon misjudged the Boers completely. And ultimately, it was his undoing. In the light of this, some discussion of Lanyon's character flaws is perhaps appropriate at this juncture.

The most widely documented criticism of Lanyon as administrator of both Griqualand West and the Transvaal is that his style was harsh and autocratic.⁵ He was extremely unpopular largely because he believed that to be conciliatory was a sign of weakness. Wolseley – who admittedly exaggerated everything – went so far as to suggest that Lanyon was marginalised because he was thoroughly unpleasant and even malevolent. According to Wolseley, Lanyon was not disliked only by his subjects, but also by his own staff; apart from a few chosen confidants. He was very diligent and hardworking, but this was because he trusted no one but himself to do a job well and delegated virtually nothing to the people under him. Unless he initiated a project himself he would take little interest in promoting it, and this discouraged any independent ideas on the part of his colleagues. He was prepared to do all the work but he also wanted all the credit. This is perhaps indicative of his lack of self-confidence and lack of close friends. His father, with whom he corresponded so regularly and to whom he confessed his true feelings, was probably his only

⁵ See for example Davey, *The siege of Pretoria*, pp 272-273; De Kiewiet, *The imperial factor*, p 242-243; Van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners*, pp 103-109.

real friend and confidant.

Furthermore, Lanyon had an inability to see the larger picture. He was so caught up in balancing his books, for example, that he failed to see the effects of what he was doing and his understanding of the wider scope of his actions was clouded. He was a competent administrator but lacked the added ability to cope with a crisis. There are great contradictions between the Lanyon who was regarded as successful by his imperial superiors and the Lanyon who was regarded with contempt and disdain by those he was called upon to administer. It could be argued that the frontier population in the 1870s and 1880s were rough and ready, unsophisticated and individualistic people, hardly the type of people who took kindly to being ruled by any one. Nevertheless Lanyon's unpopularity was a recurring theme in both Griqualand West and the Transvaal and this contrasts markedly with the commendation he received from his imperial superiors. It was only at the end of his southern African career that Lanyon fell from grace as far as the Colonial Office was concerned and even then there was never the same level of negativity towards him as there was, for example, to Frere. Frere was of course far more senior and experienced; it could well be argued that Frere had further to fall than Lanyon did.

Lanyon's attitude towards those he governed was not conducive to his success as an administrator. He hated the Boers and regarded them with contempt; in fact neither the Boers nor the Africans were acceptable in his eyes because neither was British. Neither measured up to British standards, and this meant that in his view, both groups were doomed to mediocrity and the Africans to servitude. As far as Lanyon was concerned both were utterly incapable of ruling themselves. Lanyon translated his position of authority and power into racism, overt masculinity and militarism; all these facets of his personality were inextricably linked. He was, in a word, the typical British chauvinist of his time.

Lanyon also lacked insight into human nature. Even after living among the Boers for nearly two years, he misread them completely. This is indicative of how aloof and distant he was from them, and how little he really understood about what motivated them to take the action they did. He had no inkling of how determined they were to regain their independence, and he completely misjudged their innate courage to fight. Late in 1880 he also made some critical military

blunders, which for someone of his military experience, seems incomprehensible. When virtually everyone felt that war was inevitable, he kept his head, ostrich-like, in the sand and refused to heed the signs that announced 'war' so starkly. There is no ready explanation of this foolhardiness. And, from an imperial point of view, no excuse for it. He simply persuaded himself that the Boers would not fight and he was not prepared to alter his uncompromising stance for fear they might take this as weakness in the face of resistance. Unwittingly on his part, Lanyon's preoccupation with collecting taxes in order to balance his revenue and expenditure provided the spark that started the war. As far as he was concerned, solvency was indicative of good government. If he could collect Boer taxes it would be an unmistakable sign that he had succeeded.

Lanyon saw himself essentially as a military man rather than an administrator and in Griqualand West he sought refuge, successfully, in military action. And yet, ironically, it was in his role as a military strategist in 1880 that he ultimately failed. It is certainly true to say that he was very much in the mould of so many other imperial soldiers at the end of the 19th century: triumphant when fighting against untrained and poorly armed Africans, but found wanting against organised and well-armed white opponents. It was clearly a colossal imperial blunder to entrust a soldier with civilian responsibilities, and this was a fairly constant refrain in British imperial policy.⁶

To what extent was Lanyon actually responsible for the disasters of the war? Certainly the Boers were determined to regain their independence, but Liberal party policy was far less convinced of the advantages of retaining possession of the Transvaal than the Conservatives had been. There is some merit in the view that the British government might well have negotiated a settlement similar to the one they signed in 1881 if the imperial agent in Pretoria had been more conciliatory. But on the other hand, was Lanyon given the opportunity to perform his difficult task in the Transvaal? Lack of money, legislative restrictions and delays in handing down imperial instructions all conspired to make success less attainable.

Having said that, Lanyon committed some cardinal blunders. He was indeed made a scapegoat in 1881 and perhaps the recall was unduly harsh. But he could hardly have been allowed to stay

⁶ Wolseley and Colley are two obvious examples.

on in southern Africa in a position of authority after the war. He had lost too much face. Furthermore he cannot escape personal blame for the outbreak of hostilities. His unacceptable authoritarianism, his foolish complacency and his errors of judgement and strategy are too damning. It might be argued that his youth and comparative inexperience made his blunders less glaring, and that some of the blame should be shifted to the door of the secretaries of state who appointed him, but this is hardly convincing. He was the imperial official in charge and young or not he made glaring mistakes that had dire consequences.

When he was recalled in disgrace in March 1881 the Colonial Office exercised their real control over the once-confident Transvaal administrator, and then it was to deal a deathblow to his southern African career. At the end Owen Lanyon was really, after all, a puppet again, and as such he was expendable. In the broader picture of British withdrawal from the Transvaal in 1881 his recall was perhaps relatively insignificant, but undeniably, he was an influential actor, not a puppet, in both Kimberley and Pretoria.

In a very real sense Lanyon's role in southern Africa can be seen on two levels. He arrived at a crucial time, the 1870s, when there were vibrant developments and a changing atmosphere. Diamonds had just been discovered and the subcontinent was poised for change. At a micro-level he was caught up in the relationships and struggle between the imperial power, the British settlers, Africans and Boers. On another level, in a far larger context, he was part of the struggle for white control over the land and labour resources of the Africans and the developing conflict between the old, pre-mineral southern Africa and the new, aggressive, capitalist, mining economy.

In his more than five-year career as an imperial agent in Griqualand West and the Transvaal, Owen Lanyon played a significant role in the shaping and making of colonial South Africa. He had considerable freedom of action and he was not afraid of using his own discretion. Not only did he transcribe British colonial policy from the halls of the Colonial Office to the southern African veld; he was undoubtedly one of the most important and innovative architects of African labour and land policies. His policy making in South Africa was a reactive process – it was sparked by resistance to colonialism. Once defeated, subject peoples, under his oppressive rule,

had to be suitably controlled and subjugated. That he failed in the case of the Boers does not detract from the importance of his role. That he was one of the early architects of African colonial policy is undeniable and it is remarkable that his role has been consistently underrated – and even ignored, in the historiography of 19th century colonialism in southern Africa. Indeed, in many ways he was a forerunner of that particular brand of British imperialism which reached its zenith in southern Africa by the close of the century.

SOURCES

I UNPUBLISHED ARCHIVAL SOURCES AND HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS

1 TRANSVAAL ARCHIVES, PRETORIA (TA)

(a) *WO Lanyon Collection* (A596)

Papers of Sir WO Lanyon

- 1: Letters received, private, 1875-1881
- 2: Letters received from JD Barry, official, 1877-1878
- 3: Letters received, official, 1877-1882
- 4: Official papers, 1872-1880
- 5: Official papers, 1880-1885
- 6: Draft official telegrams, 1880-1881
- 7: Newspaper cuttings, printed speeches and gazettes, 1877-1881
- 8: Private diary, January 1881-May 1881

Papers of JD Barry and the Griqualand West administration

- 10: Communications from WO Lanyon, official, 1878

Papers of Sir Charles Lanyon

- 11: Letters received, private, 1871-1876
- 12: Letters received, private, 1877
- 13: Letters received, private, 1878
- 14: Letters received, private, 1879
- 15: Letters received, private, 1880
- 16: Letters received, private, 1881-1887

(b) *State Secretary* (SS)

- SS 198 – 535, Incoming correspondence (R numbers), 1875-1881

(c) *Administrator of the Transvaal Colony, 1876-1881* (ATC)**Incoming despatches**

1: Register of despatches received, 1876-1880

Outgoing despatches

2: General Letter Book: Her Majesty's Special Commissioner to Transvaal government, 1876-1878

3: Despatches Administrator to Secretary of State, 1877-1880

4: Despatches Administrator to High Commissioner, 1878-1879

5: Despatches Administrator to Secretary of State and other representatives of the British government in South Africa, 1880-1881

6: Register of despatches to the Secretary of State and other representatives of the British government in South Africa, 1876-1880

(d) *Eerste Volksraad ZAR* (EVR)

19: Minutes of the Legislative Assembly of the Transvaal, 1880

20: Minutes of the Legislative Council of the Transvaal, 1880

223: Letters received, 1877-1881

(e) *HT Bührmann Collection* (W73)

7: Outgoing correspondence, family, 1848-1884

19: Outgoing correspondence, friends and clients, 1850-1890

40: Printed material

(f) *SP Engelbrecht Collection* (A371)

9: Correspondence SJP Kruger, 1864-1893

(g) *PJ Joubert Collection* (A14)

25: Correspondence etc, 1877-1881

26: Military matters, notices, instructions etc, 1880-1881

27: Peace negotiations, reports, newspaper cuttings etc, 1877-1881

(h) JG Kotze Collection (A524)

1: Relations with interim government, correspondence etc, 1877-1881

6: Letter book, 1878-1887

9: General correspondence, 1876-1909

13: Newspaper cuttings and printed material, 1876-1931

(i) Diaries of JR Lys (M3004)

Diaries, 1877-1879

(j) Microfilm copies of records housed at the Public Record Office, Kew, London

Cabinet Office, photographic copies of Cabinet Papers 1880-1914 (PRO, CAB 37/1, 1880 and CAB 37/5, 1881): M1711 and M1713

2 CAPE ARCHIVES, CAPE TOWN (CA)**(a) Government House (GH)****Papers received**

1/354 – 1/411: General despatches from Secretary of State, 1875-1881

2/1 – 2/15: Despatches from Secretary of State re Griqualand West and Transvaal, 1876-1881

7/1 – 7/3: Telegrams from Secretary of State, 1879-1881

11/8 – 11/23: Papers from Transvaal government, 1877-1881

12/38 – 12/58: Papers from Griqualand West and British Bechuanaland, 1875-1879

20/4: Papers received re affairs in the Transvaal, 1877-1881

21/2 – 21/3: Keate Award and territory, 1870-1881

Papers despatched

23/35 – 23/37: General despatches to Secretary of State, 1879-1881

25/1 – 25/3: Despatches to Secretary of State re Griqualand West and Transvaal, 1875-1881

27/1 – 27/3: Confidential and secret despatches to Secretary of State, 1871-1881

29/1 – 29/9: Enclosures to despatches, Secretary of State re Griqualand West, 1875-1879

30/16 – 30/17: Papers despatched to Natal, Transvaal, Orange Free State and miscellaneous officials, 1877-1881

Military Secretary, papers received

36/17 – 36/19: Military and naval matters, 1878-1881

(b) *Griqualand West Archives* (GLW)

9 – 19: Letters and papers received, Government House, 1875-1879

26: Transvaal despatches received, 1873-1880

27: Orange Free State despatches received, 1873-1878

85 – 89: Letters and papers received, semi-official, 1872-1881

104 – 106: Letters and papers despatched, 1873-1875

107 – 109: Letters and papers despatched, indexes, 1872-1880

200 – 201: Printed papers, ordinances, 1874-1880

202: Printed papers, Griqualand West Government Gazettes, 1876-1880

(c) *JM Orpen Collection* (A302)

1: Letters and telegrams received, 1874-1919

2: Letters and telegrams despatched, 1874-1821

5: Historical notes, Griqualand West

19: Miscellaneous press cuttings

(d) *IC Silberbauer Collection* (A439)

Private Letter Book, JD Barry, 1878

(e) *JE Tucker Collection* (A921)

3 THE SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARY, CAPE TOWN (SAL)

(a) *JB Currey Collection* (MSB140)

5: Typescript: *Half a century in South Africa*, by John Blades Currey, c 1900

(b) *JX Merriman Collection* (MSC15)

63: JX Merriman Letter Books 1 – 3, 1874-1888

(c) *Bartle Frere Papers* (MSB197)

4 JAGGER LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN (UCT)

(Documents housed in the Oppenheimer Centre for African studies)

(a) *JD Barry Collection* (BC127)

1: Private Letterbook, 1878-1895

(b) *Judge family Collection* (BC500)

Typescript: *An autobiographical account of his life in South Africa* by Edward Arthur Judge, undated.

5 NATAL ARCHIVES, PIETERMARITZBURG (NA)

(a) *Government House* (GH)

4 – 5: General despatches from Secretary of State, 1872-1883

282 – 285: Confidential despatches from Secretary of State, 1876-1882

500 – 502: Letters from Officer Commanding the forces in South Africa, 1875-1888

598 – 602: Despatches from High Commissioner, 1876-1882

686 – 687: Confidential despatches from High Commissioner for South Africa, 1856-1885

702: Telegrams from High Commissioner & High Commissioner of South East Africa, 1878-1895

747 – 749: Despatches from Governor Cape Colony, 1874-1881

789 – 792: Correspondence received, Transvaal Special Commissioner & Administrator, 1876-1881

1220 – 1221: Copies, despatches to Secretary of State, 1876-1881

1300: Copies, confidential despatches to Secretary of State, 1871-1895

1325 – 1326: Copies, despatches to High Commissioner, 1870-1883

1351: Copies, confidential despatches to High Commissioner, 1876-1878

(b) Colenso Papers (A204)

1: Bishop Colenso, letters despatched, 1849-1883

2: Bishop Colenso, Letter Books, 1872-1883

3: Bishop Colenso, letters received, 1853-1883

8: Frances E Colenso, letters despatched, 1879-1887

(c) Lys Collection (A1167)

1/2: JR Lys, Letter Book, 1876-1880

2/1: Lys family personal letters, 1847-1914

3/2: Miscellaneous, Scrapbook, 1876-1895

(d) HC Shepstone Papers (A1379)

3: Diaries, 1873-1882

9 – 10: Letters received, 1875-1882

11 – 12: Letters despatched, 1877-1882

(e) Theophilus Shepstone Papers (A96)

5 – 8: Diaries, 1876-1881

16 – 40: Letters received, 1876-1879

66: Annexures to letters received, 1874-1876

67: Letters despatched, Letter Book (official), Oct 1876-Aug 1877

68: Letters despatched, Letter Book (official), Aug 1877-Oct 1878

69: Letters despatched, Letter Book (official), Oct 1878-Nov 1880

71: Letters despatched, 1869-1880

79: Draft memoranda 1877-1883

84: Copies of despatches, 1860-1883

92: Transvaal: 'Family notes by Morcom', in Shepstone's camp at Pretoria before and after the annexation.

95: Uys papers, being copies of correspondence not found in the Shepstone collection.

(File VII: letter from WO Lanyon to Shepstone, Pretoria 30/9/1880)

(f) *Sutton Collection* (A160)

Box 1: George M Sutton diaries, 1874-1878

Box 2: George M Sutton diaries, 1879-1882

Box 6: Morris Adlard Sutton diary, 1877-1879

(g) *Sir H Evelyn Wood Papers* (A598)

II/2: Incoming letters & documents, 1878-1880

II/3: Outgoing letters & documents, 1878-1879

III: Transvaal War, incoming & outgoing correspondence & documents, 1880-1881

III/7/1: War sketches by Maj Fraser for Lady Wood

6 KILLIE CAMPBELL AFRICANA LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF NATAL,
DURBAN (KCM)

(a) *Shepstone Papers* (KCM 31356 – 53155)

31366: 'The late Sir Theophilus Shepstone': supplement to *The Times* of Natal, Friday 3 October, 1896

31394: Genealogy of the Shepstone family

31408: Nine letters from T Shepstone to Henrique, 1878-1892

(b) *Wolseley Papers*

53176: Letter Book, Wolseley to Secretary for War Lord Stanley & others, June 1879-April 1880

(c) *Evelyn Wood Papers* (KCM 89/9)

7 FREE STATE ARCHIVES, BLOEMFONTEIN (FA)

(a) *Government Secretary* (GS)**Papers received**

1282 – 1283: Despatches from the Governor and High Commissioner, Cape Colony, 1875-1881

1315 – 1318: Despatches from the Cape Colony, 1875-1881

1435 and 1435a: Incoming telegrams to President and officials, 1877-1879

Papers despatched

1480: Outgoing telegrams from President, Dec 1880-April 1881

1515: Staatspresident, Diamantvelden, Confederatie, 1874, 1877

1517: Brievenboek Staatspresident, 1878-1881

2271 – 2274: Uittreksels uit Volksraadsnotules, 1876-1881

(b) *JH Brand Collection* (A1)

2/1/1: President Brand, Letters despatched, 1867-1880

3/2: Official papers: proclamations, 1875-1876

5/1: Financial papers, 1876-1887

8/1: Programmes, menus and invitations, 1876-1909

(c) *HPN Muller Collection* (A160)

55: Diary of HAL Hamelberg, 1876

56: Consular letters of HAL Hamelberg

8 WITWATERSRAND UNIVERSITY, JOHANNESBURG (Wits)

(a) *HB Bousfield Collection* (AB890)

Photograph albums and scrapbooks, 1869-1907

(b) *Rev J Mackenzie Collection* (A75)

(c) *Rev J Mackenzie Papers* (A783 fol)

8 Items, copies of originals held at the PRO, London, including letters to Sir B Frere, Sir WO Lanyon and Sir G Wolseley, 1878-1895

(d) *H Nourse Collection* (A743)

9 MCGREGOR MUSEUM, KIMBERLEY

Photograph collection:

WO Lanyon (MMKp 2195)

Carnarvon Hospital, Kimberley (MMKp 4832)

Diamond Fields Horse Irregular (MMKp 8079)

Diamond Fields Horse, Staff Officers (MMKp 8512)

10 AFRICANA LIBRARY, KIMBERLEY

Typescript: Lecture by Moses Cornwall, *Kimberley in the 1870s*, 27 September 1898.

Newspapers, 1876-1879 (see under Newspapers & Periodicals)

11 THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, KEW, LONDON (PRO)

(a) *Colonial Office* (CO)

CO 48: Original Correspondence, Cape Colony

CO 48/473 – 485: Correspondence, 1875-1878

CO 48/486: 1878 Aug-Oct, Despatches

CO 48/487: 1878, Nov-Dec Despatches; 1878, Offices: Admiralty & Crown Agents

CO 48/488: 1878, Offices (except Admiralty & Crown Agents); 1878, Individuals

CO 48/489: 1879 Jan-Apr, Despatches

CO 48/490: 1879 May-Aug, Despatches

CO 48/491: 1879 Sept-Dec, Despatches

CO 48/492: 1879, Offices & Individuals

CO 48/493: 1880 Jan-Feb, Despatches

CO 48/494: 1880 Mar-Aug, Despatches

CO 48/495: 1880 Sept-Nov, Despatches

CO 48/496: 1880 Dec, Despatches nos 25-177

CO 48/497: 1880 Dec, Despatch no 168

CO 48/498: 1880, Offices & Individuals

CO 48/499: 1881 Jan-Feb, Despatches

CO 48/500: 1881 Mar-June, Despatches

CO 48/501: 1881 Jul-Dec, Despatches; 1881, Offices

CO 48/502: 1881, Offices; 1881, Individuals

CO 107: Original Correspondence, Griqualand West

CO 107/1: 1875-May 1876, Despatches

CO 107/2: 1876 June-Dec, Despatches

CO 107/3: 1875-1876, Offices & Individuals

CO 107/4: 1877, Despatches, Offices & Individuals

CO 107/5: 1878, Despatches, Offices & Individuals

CO 107/6: 1879 Jan-Sept, Despatches

CO 107/7: 1879 Oct-Dec, Despatches, Offices & Individuals

CO 179: Original Correspondence, Natal

CO 179/123: 1877 Jan-Apr, Despatches

CO 179/124: 1877 May-Dec, Despatches

CO 179/125: 1877, Offices & Individuals

CO 179/126: 1878 Jan-Jun, Despatches

- CO 179/127: 1878 July-Dec, Despatches
- CO 179/128: 1878, Offices & Individuals
- CO 179/129: 1879 Jan-Jun, Despatches
- CO 179/130: 1879 July-Dec, Despatches
- CO 179/131: 1879, Offices (except War & Miscellaneous)
- CO 179/132: 1879, Individuals & Offices (War & Miscellaneous)
- CO 179/133: 1880 Jan-Mar, Despatches
- CO 179/134: 1880 Apr-Oct, Despatches
- CO 179/135: 1880 Nov-Dec, Despatches; 1880, Offices
- CO 179/136: 1880, Offices & Individuals
- CO 179/137: 1881 Jan-July, Despatches
- CO 179/138: 1881 Aug-Dec, Despatches
- CO 291: Original Correspondence, Transvaal**
- CO 291/1: 1877-1878, Despatches, Offices & Individuals
- CO 291/2: 1879 Jan-June, Despatches, Offices & Individuals
- CO 291/3: 1879 July-Dec, Despatches, Offices & Individuals
- CO 291/4: 1879, Offices & Individuals
- CO 291/5: 1880 Jan-Apr, Despatches
- CO 291/6: 1880 May-Sept, Despatches
- CO 291/7: 1880 Oct-Dec, Despatches
- CO 291/8: 1880, Offices
- CO 291/9: 1880, War & Miscellaneous; 1880, Individuals
- CO 291/10: 1881 Jan-July, Despatches
- CO 291/11: 1881 Aug-Dec, Despatches; 1881, Offices
- CO 291/12: 1881 April-Dec, Offices (Treasury)
- CO 291/13: 1881 Jan-Dec, Offices (Foreign & War)
- CO 291/14: 1881, Offices (Miscellaneous); 1881, Individuals
- CO 291/18 – 21: Report and evidence Transvaal Royal Commission, 1881
- CO 293/1: Minutes, Transvaal Executive Council (copies) Jan-June 1880
- Registers to correspondence:**
- CO 336/7 – 10: Cape registers of correspondence, 1870-1881

- CO 344/1: Griqualand West registers of correspondence, 1875-1880
- CO 357/6 – 8: Natal registers of correspondence, 1875-1883
- CO 431/34 – 40: Accounts branch: correspondence colonial governors, Treasury etc re financial matters, 1875-1878
- CO 462/2 – 3: Cape registers of out-letters, 1877-1882
- CO 476/1: Blue Book of statistics etc Transvaal, 1878-1880
- CO 510/1 – 2: Transvaal registers of correspondence, 1877-1881
- CO 511/1: Transvaal register of out-letters, 1877-1881
- CO 522/1: Griqualand West register of out-letters, 1876-1880
- CO 537/124 A: Original correspondence, supplementary; Africa, South, 1856-1883
- CO 621/9: Accounts branch, register, 1877-1880
- CO 622/4: Register of correspondence (accounts), 1875-1877
- CO 694/3, 5: Registers of secret correspondence, African & Mediterranean Dept, 1874-1888
- CO 879/7 – 19 and 21: Confidential Prints (for details see list of published sources)

(b) *Carnarvon Papers* (PRO 30/6)

- PRO 30/6/3: Correspondence Queen and personal staff, 1876-1878
- PRO 30/6/7: Correspondence Cabinet, Chancellor of Exchequer, 1874-1878
- PRO 30/6/8: Correspondence Cabinet, Foreign Secretary, 1874-1878
- PRO 30/6/11: Correspondence Cabinet, Prime Minister, 1874-1878
- PRO 30/6/12: Correspondence Cabinet, Secretary for War, 1874-1878
- PRO 30/6/23: Correspondence colonial governors etc South Africa, 1875-1878
- PRO 30/6/32: Correspondence colonial governors Cape Colony (Sir Henry Barkly), 1874-1877
- PRO 30/6/33-34: Correspondence colonial governors Cape Colony (Sir Henry Bartle Edward Frere), 1876-1878
- PRO 30/6/36: Correspondence colonial governors Griqualand, 1876-1877
- PRO 30/6/38: Correspondence colonial governors Natal, 1875-1878
- PRO 30/6/42: Colonial correspondence miscellaneous A-B, 1874-1878
- PRO 30/6/49: Memoranda, newspaper cuttings etc, South Africa, 1874-1877

PRO 30/6/84: Colonial Office, confidential (including James Anthony Froude's mission, June-Dec, 1875)

12 THE BRITISH LIBRARY, LONDON (BRIT)

(a) *Campbell-Bannermann Papers* (Add Mss 41206 – 41252)

41213 – 41243A: Correspondence, 1871-1899

(b) *Carnarvon Papers* (Add Mss 60757 – 61100)

60757: Correspondence received, members of the royal family & their officials, 1876

60766: Correspondence with Earl of Derby & Lady Derby, 1878-1889

60767: Correspondence, general, 1856-1878

60774: Letters received, Sir Michael Hicks Beach, 1878-1879

60798: Correspondence with JA Froude, 1873-1890

60805 A, 60805 B: Correspondence and papers relating to South Africa, 1856-1889

60809: Notebook, travels in South Africa & Australia, 1887-1888

60811: Miscellaneous, imperial federation

(c) *Sir Charles Dilke Papers* (1st series, Add Mss 43874 – 43967)

43875: Correspondence WE Gladstone, 1870-1881

43885: Correspondence J Chamberlain, 1871-1896

43891: Correspondence JP Spencer, 1870-1886

43893: Correspondence SH Northcote, 1872-1883

43924: Diaries, 1880-1882

(d) *WE Gladstone Papers* (Add Mss 44086 – 44835)

44125: Correspondence with Chamberlain, 1873-1883

44225: Correspondence with Kimberley, 1873-1880

44226: Correspondence with Kimberley, Jan-Sept 1881

44468 – 44470: General correspondence, 1881

44624, 44626 – 7: Official papers & Cabinet memoranda, 1834-1895

44668: Notes & memoranda by WE Gladstone for speeches delivered by him, 1881

(e) *Iddesleigh Papers* (Papers of Stafford Henry Northcote, Add Mss 50013 – 50064)

50017: Correspondence with Disraeli, 1875-1876

50018: Correspondence with Disraeli, 1877-1881

50021: Correspondence with Hicks Beach, 1879-1880

50022: Correspondence with Carnarvon, 1875-1879

50027: Incoming correspondence, 1877-1880

50053 – 50054: Letter Books, 1876-1880

13 THE BRITISH LIBRARY OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SCIENCE,
LONDON (BLPES)

Leonard Courtney Papers (R [SR] 1003)

II: Leonard Courtney's correspondence with family and personal friends, 1857-1879

IV: Correspondence, mainly political, 1880-1898

XV: Miscellaneous letters, 1864-1928

XVI: Miscellaneous papers, 1864-1927

XX: Notebook containing list of leaders and other articles for *The Times* by Leonard Courtney, 1864-1880

14 THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY, OXFORD UNIVERSITY (OXF)

Kimberley Papers

Mss Eng c 4074-4203: Political correspondence & papers, Secretary of State for the Colonies 1870-1874 and 1880-1882

c 4077: Correspondence Barkly, 1872

c 4078: Correspondence Barkly, 1873-1874

- c 4133: Correspondence Bulwer, 1880-1882
- c 4139: Correspondence Colley, June-Nov 1880
- c 4140: Correspondence Colley, Dec 1880-Feb 1881
- c 4141: Correspondence Courtney & Frere, 1880
- c 4142: Correspondence Gladstone, 1880- Feb 1881
- c 4143: Correspondence Gladstone, Mar-May 1881
- c 4144: Correspondence Gladstone, June-August 1881
- c 4159: Correspondence Robinson, Nov 1880-July 1881
- c 4160: Correspondence Robinson, Aug-Sept 1881
- c 4167: Correspondence Wood, 1880-Sept 1881
- c 4185: General correspondence, 1880-1882
- c 4198 – 4199: Miscellaneous, Colonial Office, 1880-1882
- c 4200: Printed govt papers relating to South Africa, 1880-1883
- c 4201: Telegrams to and from South Africa, 1881-1885

15 RHODES HOUSE LIBRARY, OXFORD (RH)

(a) *Hildersham Hall Papers* (Mss Afr s 1647)

1: Family letters and papers, 1879-1973

(b) *Godfrey Lagden Papers* (Mss Afr s 142 – 214)

143 – 145: Diaries, 1878-1880

147: Notes: Boer War, 1881

148: Diary, 1881

209 – 210: Correspondence, 1881-1883

(c) *Sir Lewis Michell Papers* (Mss Afr s 229)

1: Various correspondence, 1873-1901

(d) *Molteno Papers* (Mss Afr s 23)

1 – 2: Correspondence, 1872-1877

(e) **Rudd Trust** (Mss Afr t 14)

1: Papers, 1874-1901

16 BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY LIBRARY (BU)

Joseph Chamberlain Papers

4/5: Speeches, 1875-1881

5/24: Correspondence with Dilke, 1871-1896

5/32 1 – 4: Correspondence with JA Froude

5/34: Correspondence with Gladstone, 1880-1898

5/38: Correspondence with Harcourt, 1873-1897

5/76: Miscellaneous political correspondence, 1870-1903

9/1/1: Correspondence on imperial affairs, South Africa, 1879-1888

17 GLOUCESTERSHIRE RECORD OFFICE, GLOUCESTER (GRO)

Sir Michael Hicks Beach Papers (D 2455)

Colonial Office correspondence

Pcc/1 – 3: Letters received from Sir Bartle Frere, 1878-1880

Pcc/6/1 – 28: Letters received from Sir Garnet Wolseley, 1879-1880

Pcc/7/1 – 4: Copies of some parliamentary papers, including despatches to & from Sir Garnet Wolseley, 1879-1880

Pcc/8/1 – 7: Copies of letters to Wolseley, 1879-1880

Pcc/10/1 – 13: Letters received from Lady Frere, 1879

Pcc/11: Copies of letters to Queen Victoria, 1877-1885

Pcc/22 – 24: Copies of correspondence to Sir Bartle Frere, 1878-1880

Pcc/30: Copies of letters to Lord Salisbury, 1878-1885

Pcc/44: Memorandum of Mr Sargeaunt, 24.6.1878

Pcc/92: Letters from JA Froude, 1875-1880

Colonial Office, Parliamentary papers

Pc/PP/1 – 63: Miscellaneous parliamentary papers, printed memoranda etc, 1875-1880

18 SHEFFIELD ARCHIVES, SHEFFIELD (SHA)

Spencer Stanhope Papers (Sp St 60628)

Items 1 – 37: Letters from FW Spencer Stanhope to his brother & uncle during his service in the Transvaal, 1876-1878

19 CENTRAL LIBRARY, HOVE, EAST SUSSEX

Sir Garnet Wolseley Papers

SA 1: South Africa, civil private Letter Book, July 1879-Feb 1880

SA 2: South Africa, military private Letter Book, May 1879-April 1880

WP 8/1 – 39: Wolseley's letters to his wife from South Africa, 1879

WP 9/1 – 19: Wolseley's letters to his wife from South Africa, 1880

II PUBLISHED OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE SOURCES

1 GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

(a) *British (imperial) Blue Books*

C 1244 (1875): *Conference of delegates of South African colonies and states.*

C 1342 (1875): *Correspondence re colonies & states of South Africa part 1, Cape of Good Hope & Griqualand West.*

- C 1348 (1875): *Correspondence relating to Griqualand West.*
- C 1399 (1876): *Correspondence respecting the proposed conference of delegates on affairs of South Africa.*
- C 1401 (1876): *Further correspondence relating to the colonies and states of South Africa.*
- C 1631 (1876): *Further correspondence relating to the colonies and states of South Africa: confederation movement, Cape Colony and Griqualand West.*
- C 1681 (1877): *Proposed confederation: further South African correspondence.*
- C 1732 (1877): *Further correspondence respecting the proposed bill for enabling the South African colonies and states to unite under one government.*
- C 1776 (1877): *Further correspondence respecting the war between the Transvaal Republic and neighbouring native tribes and generally with reference to Native Affairs in South Africa.*
- C 1814 (1877): *Further correspondence respecting the affairs of South Africa.*
- C 1815 (1877): *Report and account of liabilities of the Transvaal.*
- C 1883 (1877), C 1961 (1878), C 2000 (1878), C 2079 (1878), C 2100 (1878): *Further correspondence respecting the affairs of South Africa.*
- C 2128 (1878): *Letter from Messrs Krüger & Joubert, delegates from the Transvaal to the Secretary of State for the colonies, with the reply.*
- C 2144 (1878), C 2220 (1879), C 2222 (1879): *Further correspondence respecting the affairs of South Africa.*
- C 2234 (1879): *Correspondence relative to military affairs in Natal and the Transvaal.*
- C 2242 (1879): *Further papers respecting the affairs of South Africa.*
- C 2252 (1879), C 2260 (1879), C 2269 (1879), C 2308 (1879), C 2316 (1879), C 2318 (1879), C 2367 (1879), C 2374 (1879), C 2454 (1879), C 2482 (1880), C 2505 (1880), C 2584 (1880), C 2586 (1880), C 2655 (1880), C 2676 (1880), C 2695 (1880), C 2740 (1881), C 2783 (1881): *Further correspondence respecting the affairs of South Africa.*
- C 2794 (1881): *Despatches from Sir GC Strahan & Sir G Pomeroy Colley, transmitting proclamations issued by the Boer leaders & by Sir W Owen Lanyon.*
- C 2837 (1881): *Further correspondence (telegraphic) respecting the affairs of South Africa.*

C 2838 (1881): *Copy of a despatch, &c, from Sir W Owen Lanyon, dated January 23, 1881, reporting on the affairs of the Transvaal.*

C 2866 (1881): *Further correspondence respecting the affairs of South Africa.*

C 2891 (1881): *Copy of a despatch from Sir W Owen Lanyon on affairs in the Transvaal.*

C 2892 (1881): *Instructions to the Royal Commission for the settlement of the affairs of the Transvaal and correspondence relating thereto.*

C 2950 (1881), C 2959 (1881): *Further correspondence respecting the affairs of South Africa.*

C 2962 (1881): *Paragraphs omitted from Sir Evelyn Wood's despatch of March 28, 1881, as printed at page 119 of C 2950 of July 1881.*

C 3098 (1882): *Correspondence respecting the affairs of the Transvaal.*

(b) British (imperial) White Books: Confidential Prints (CP)

The following Confidential Prints (African Series) are housed in the Public Record Office, London. They are in the collection CO 879, vols 7 – 19 and 21.

African 75A: *Difficulties at the diamond fields; memorandum by Mr Malcolm, May 1875.*

African 76: *Affairs of Griqualand; further correspondence, Aug 1874-May 1875.*

African 78: *Affairs of Griqualand West; further correspondence, June 1875.*

African 81: *Affairs; proposed conference of delegates; correspondence, July-Aug 1875.*

African 83: *Cape and Griqualand West; papers, Jan-Dec 1875.*

African 84: *Affairs; memorandum by Mr Fairfield, Jan 1876.*

African 86: *Native question in South Africa; memorandum by Mr Fairfield, Dec 1875.*

African 89: *Finances of Griqualand West; Lieutenant-Colonel Crossman's preliminary report, Feb 1876.*

African 93: *Letter from Mr Froude as to his mission, Apr 1876.*

African 96: *Griqualand West; Colonel Crossman's report, May 1876.*

African 98: *Laws affecting natives in Orange Free State, Transvaal and Cape; despatch from Governor, Feb 1876.*

African 99: *Affairs of South Africa; correspondence, Apr-June 1876.*

African 102: *Conference on affairs; Lord Carnarvon's speech and minutes, Aug 1876.*

African 103: *Territory in dispute between South African Republic and Zulus. Report on,*

by Mr Shepstone, June 1876.

African 104: *Relations between South African Republic and native tribes; despatches from Governor*, July 1876.

African 104A: *Conference on South African affairs; despatch to Sir H Barkly*, Jan 1876.

African 105: *Conference on South African affairs and settlement of Griqualand West boundary; papers*, Jan-Oct 1876.

African 107: *Description of Transvaal Republic by Frederick Jeppe*, 1868.

African 108: *State of affairs; deputation to Lord Carnarvon*, Oct 1876.

African 110: *War between Transvaal Republic and native tribes; correspondence*, Feb 1875-Dec 1876.

African 111: *Draft despatch to Sir H Barkly on Union Bill*, Dec 1876.

African 112: *South African and Transvaal Republic; notes by Mr Oats*, Nov 1876.

African 113: *Country between Pretoria and Lydenberg [sic]; description by Karl Mauch*, 1869.

African 117: *War between Transvaal Republic and native tribes; further correspondence*, Oct 1876-Jun 1877.

African 120: *Sir T Shepstone's report on his proceedings at Pretoria*, Mar 1877.

African 123: *Recent events in Transvaal; memorandum by Mr Fairfield*, June 1877.

African 128: *Annexation: deputation to Secretary of State (Dr Jorissen, Mr Kruger and Mr Bok)* July 1877.

African 129: *Affairs of South Africa; correspondence*, May-Aug 1877.

African 130: *Deputation to Lord Carnarvon from Transvaal*, July 1877.

African 132: *Survey of Griqualand West and Orange Free State boundary; correspondence*, June-July 1877.

African 135: *Captain Warren's report of a journey from Kimberley to Delagoa Bay*, June 1877.

African 138: *South African Confederation; correspondence*, May-Oct 1877.

African 141: *Financial arrangements; correspondence*, Aug-Oct 1877.

African 142: *South Africa; further correspondence*, July 1876-Dec 1877.

African 143: *Proposed railway from Delagoa Bay to Transvaal; correspondence*, Aug 1875-Dec 1877.

- African 147: *Affairs; further correspondence*, Dec 1877-Feb 1878.
- African 150: *South Africa; further correspondence*, Feb-Mar 1878.
- African 151: *South Africa; further correspondence*, Mar-May 1878.
- African 154: *Affairs; further correspondence*, May-Aug 1878.
- African 156: *Transvaal; Mr Sargeaunt's report*, Sept 1878.
- African 160: *Visit of delegates to England; correspondence*, May-Nov 1878.
- African 162: *Affairs; further correspondence*, July-Dec 1878.
- African 167: *Mr Sargeaunt's supplementary report*, Sept 1878.
- African 168: *South Africa and Zululand; future policy; memorandum by Mr Herbert*, Mar 1879.
- African 171: *Annexation as bearing on Zulu War; memorandum by Mr Herbert*, 1879.
- African 174: *Financial affairs of South African colonies; correspondence*, Aug 1877-May 1879.
- African 176: *Affairs; correspondence*, Sept 1876-Feb 1879.
- African 181: *Confederation of South Africa; draft despatch to Sir B Frere*, 1879.
- African 182: *Meeting between High Commissioner and Boer deputation at Erasmus' farm; despatch from High Commissioner*, April 1879.
- African 184: *Relations between civil and military authorities and attitude of natives; despatch from High Commissioner*, April 1879.
- African 186: *Constitution for Transvaal; correspondence*, Mar-Apr 1879.
- African 188: *Disposal of captured cattle in South Africa; correspondence*, Mar 1878-July 1879.
- African 193: *Future administration and preservation of the peace; despatch from High Commissioner*, May 1879.
- African 196A: *Appointment of Sir G Wolseley; despatches from Sir B Frere*, June 1879.
- African 199: *Affairs; Colonel Lanyon's report*, 10 June 1879.
- African 200: *Trade in arms; Mr Pearson's memorandum*, July 1879.
- African 202: *Sir Bartle Frere's defence of his policy*, June 1879.
- African 203: *Affairs; further correspondence*, Aug 1877-Aug 1879.
- African 204: *Affairs; further correspondence*, Jan-Dec 1879.
- African 208: *Trade in arms; further correspondence*, May 1879-Feb 1880.

African 210: *Affairs; correspondence*, Nov 1879-Jan 1880.

African 212: *Notes by Sir B Frere on Mr Froude's article in Fortnightly Review*, Jan 1880.

African 216: *Position of confederation; memorandum by Mr Hemming*, May 1880.

African 217: *Transvaal territory; memorandum by Mr Fairfield*, May 1880.

African 223: *Telegrams to and from Secretary of State*, April-Dec 1880.

African 229: *Correspondence respecting the temporary allowances granted to Sir B Frere and Sir G Pomeroy Colley on account of special duties as High Commissioners in South Africa*, Jan 1877-June 1880.

African 230: *Telegrams to and from South Africa*, 1881.

African 231: *Instructions to Transvaal Royal Commission*, Mar 1881.

African 243: *Affairs; further correspondence*, Feb 1881-Jan 1882.

African 272: *Reprint of certain documents on the Transvaal*, 1877-1881.

(c) Government Gazettes

*Transvaal Government Gazette/ Transvaal Gouvernements Courant (TGG)*1877-1881
(Transvaal Archives, ZAR 55-58a)

*Griqualand West Government Gazette (GWGG)*1875-1879 (Cape Archives, GLW 202)

(d) Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Third series, vols 232 – 265, February 1877-August 1881.

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III NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

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- The Diamond Field*, 1875-1877 (South African Library, Cape Town, MP1060)
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- Diamond News and Griqualand West Government Gazette*, 1876-1877 (Africana Library, Kimberley)
- The Friend of the Free State*, 1878-1881 (Transvaal Archives, M 1848, M 1849)
- Illustrated London News*, 1881 Jan-Apr (Transvaal Archives, M 1710)
- The Natal Mercury* 1879-1880 and 8 April 1887, obituary: WO Lanyon (Natal Society Library, Pietermaritzburg)
- The Transvaal Argus and Commercial Gazette*, 1877-1881 [incomplete series] (State Library, Pretoria, MS 179)
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