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## Sir Bartle Frere: Colonial administrator of the Victorian period

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SIR BARTLE FRERE: COLONIAL ADMINISTRATOR  
OF THE VICTORIAN PERIOD

A Thesis

Presented to the  
Department of History  
and the

Faculty of the Graduate College  
University of Nebraska at Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

by

Anthony C. Brewer

December 1972

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Accepted for the faculty of The Graduate College of  
the University of Nebraska at Omaha, in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts.

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## PREFACE

The following thesis aims at discerning the attitudes of Sir Bartle Frere as a guide to British colonial and administrative thought during the Victorian Period. By doing this, it becomes possible to ascertain the impact of the administrator on British colonial and foreign policy.

Appreciation for help in preparing this thesis must go first of all to Dr. A. Stanley Trickett, who provided the inspiration and did so much to guide it to a fruitful conclusion. Dr. Frederick Adrian is to be thanked for his helpful criticism of the text. Mrs. Elizabeth Laird of The Gene Eppley Library must be accorded a special tribute for the help she gave in procuring many of the works used. Finally, there is my wife, Sheila, who did the typing throughout.

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## CHAPTER I

### SIR BARTLE FRERE--A SUMMARY OF HIS LIFE<sup>1</sup>

Henry Bartle Edward Frere was born on 29 May 1815 in Brecknockshire, Wales. Following early schooling at Bath, he entered the East India Company college at Haileybury in 1832 to prepare for a career as a Company servant in India. At Haileybury, Frere was imbued with the economic philosophy of the day, which stipulated that the correct method of economic development was free trade, with the least possible government interference.<sup>2</sup> Haileybury also instilled in its students a belief in the moral and political superiority of British rule in India.<sup>3</sup> Territory under the control of the British East India Company at that time was extensive. It included the entire east coast, the west coast from Goa to Travancore, and Bombay with its island of Salsette. The Ganges valley to the Upper Jumna, with the exception of Oudh, was under

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<sup>1</sup>Unless otherwise noted, material in this chapter has been taken from Robert Kennanay Douglas, "Frere, Sir Henry Bartle Edward," Dictionary of National Biography, VII, 697-706. Hereinafter referred to as D. N. B.

<sup>2</sup>John Strachey, The End of Empire (New York: Random House, 1959), 56.

<sup>3</sup>George D. Bearce, British Attitudes Towards India, 1784-1858 (Oxford: University Press, 1961), 122. Hereinafter referred to as Bearce, Attitudes.



its sway. The Sind was annexed in 1834 and the Punjab in 1849.<sup>4</sup> In 1834 Frere assumed his first position in the Company's ranks as a writer in the Bombay Presidency. A year later he became an assistant revenue commissioner.

The career of Bartle Frere in the years from 1842 to 1866 was a story of great success, tarnished by failure at the last moment, as he rose in the hierarchy of Indian government. It was his good fortune to become personal secretary to the Governor of the Bombay Presidency, Sir George Arthur, in 1842. Since Sir George was new to his post and inexperienced, his secretary soon found himself in a highly responsible position. This was especially helpful, as he became quite conversant with the administration of the Sind, where he was later Chief Commissioner. Frere was an adviser to the Bahaj of Sattara from 1846 to 1849. During his tenure there, he supported such projects as irrigation and the building of the first tunnel in India. The annexation of Sattara by the British in 1849 propelled him into the position of Area Commissioner. Frere was Chief Commissioner of the Sind from 1850 until 1859, a position in which he showed considerable administrative ability; by pacifying what had once been a rather turbulent province, he turned it into a showcase of British reform. The Indian Mutiny which broke out in 1857

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<sup>4</sup>Sir Llewellyn Woodward, The Age of Reform, 1815-1870, Vol. XIII of The Oxford History of England ed. by Sir George Clark (15 vols.; 2nd ed.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936-1965), 403, 421-22, 425-26.

hardly affected the Sind,<sup>5</sup> which sent relief to the more threatened areas in India, especially beleaguered Multan. Frere received the thanks of Parliament and was made a Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath. Recognition of his ability led to nomination as the first civil service member from outside Bengal to the Governor's Council in 1859. He continued in this post until his appointment as Governor of Bombay in 1862. It was in Bombay that he faced the first storm of his career, which until then had been a placid ascent in the hierarchy of the Government of India. The economy there had experienced a sudden burst of prosperity when the American Civil War brought about a desperate need for cotton to supply the factories of England. The Bank of Bombay became involved and vastly overextended its credit. Its fall in 1866 led to charges that the Governor of Bombay had not held enough control over the situation, and Sir Bartle was removed the following year.

His removal from the Bombay governorship was not a complete cashiering for Sir Bartle Frere. He was subsequently appointed to the India Council in England. Frere began to redeem a tarnished reputation. When he returned in 1872 from a successful effort to induce the Sultan of Zanzibar to ban the slave trade, there was a seat awaiting him on the Privy

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<sup>5</sup>Alfred LeRoy Burt, The Evolution of the British Empire and Commonwealth from the American Revolution (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1956), 429-30. Hereinafter referred to as Burt, Evolution.

Council. Soon thereafter he was selected to accompany the Prince of Wales on a tour to India. Upon his return, in May 1876, from a most successful tour, he was awarded a baronetcy and the rank of Grand Commander of the Order of the Bath. In view of Sir Bartle's wide experience as an administrator and the esteem in which he was held, it was natural that he could not go into isolation upon retirement. That same year, therefore, he was appointed Governor of Cape Colony and High Commissioner for South African native affairs by Lord Carnarvon, the Colonial Secretary. What Carnarvon specifically had in mind in appointing Frere was a confederation of the South African states on the Canadian model.

Three problems presented themselves immediately upon Frere's arrival at the Cape: a Kaffir war; Boer unrest resulting from the annexation of the Transvaal by Sir Theophilus Shepstone; and the Zulu threat to Natal. Frere dealt with each in turn. The possibility of a Kaffir war led him to go to King William's Town on the eastern frontier to talk with the leading protagonist, Kreli. The latter was in no mood to talk and Frere returned empty-handed. A full-fledged war soon followed when the Kaffirs attacked a tribe friendly to the British, the Fingos. Subsequently put down by Sir Arthur Cunynghame and General Thesiger, it resulted in a constitutional crisis in the Cape Colony. Sir Bartle was unable to work with the Molteno Ministry and called upon Sir Gordon Sprigg to form a new government.

The Zulu threat soon began to take up most of Frere's time. Ascending the Zulu throne in 1872, Cetewayo found himself in disagreement with the Transvaal over territory claimed by the latter. A commission studying the case found that the Zulu claim was the valid one. When Frere made the award, however, he attached certain conditions. These demands were not met within a thirty-day time limit, and the task of enforcement was delegated to General Theisiger. The British invaded Zululand in January 1879 and were defeated at Isandhlwana. It was not the last word from the British, however, and they avenged their defeat the following July at Ulundi.

In the Transvaal, meanwhile, dissident Boers were on the verge of revolt. They were especially dissatisfied with the indifferent treatment accorded their deputations to London in 1877 and 1879. Frere met the Boers at Pretoria in April 1879, promising that their complaints would be conveyed to London with a recommendation that they be rectified. The British Government of Benjamin Disraeli, however, was not happy with Frere's handling of native affairs. Public and Parliamentary criticism and the approaching elections led to censure and loss of his authority as High Commissioner. He was finally recalled in July 1880 with the change of government in Britain.

The years from 1880 until his death on 29 May 1884 saw Sir Bartle Frere generally ignored by men of both parties.

He busied himself, however, with speaking engagements before various educational, religious, and institutional gatherings. He was also, for a time, President of the Royal Asiatic Society and was awarded an honorary LL.D from the University of Edinburgh. After his death, the Prince of Wales unveiled a statue of him on the Thames embankment.

The career of Sir Bartle Frere in the British colonial service spanned a period of forty-six years. Governor of both Bombay and the Cape Colony, he also served as High Commissioner for South Africa. This was enough to include him in a group of only thirty-seven governors who, as one writer has observed, "might be called 'hard-core' professionals . . . [dominating] the mid-nineteenth-century colonial service."<sup>6</sup> Only six, however, have received adequate biographical treatment, and Frere has not been one of them. This study is an attempt partially to remedy this fact, concentrating on Frere as the colonial administrator. It examines, largely through source material, his ideas on colonial matters in order to gain an understanding of the attitudes, and their roots, prevalent among colonial administrators of the Victorian Period. It also aims, in the process, to clarify the role of the colonial administrator in that particularly Victorian concept "imperialism."

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<sup>6</sup>John W. Cell, British Colonial Administration in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: The Policy-Making Process (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 49.

## CHAPTER II

### ECONOMIC PROGRESS IN INDIA

Between 1820 and 1853, Great Britain moved towards a wholehearted endorsement of free trade, and began to remove impeding barriers.<sup>1</sup> This policy was espoused in India by a group of utilitarians, humanists, liberals, and Christian reformers concerned with India's progress; they believed that free trade was the best way to promote the welfare of India at that time. They based their hopes on the infusion of capital into India, for without the roads, public works, steam navigation, and planting of crops such as cotton, tea and tobacco, free trade would be stemmed.<sup>2</sup> Not until the 1850s, however, did capital finally move into India as part of an Empire-wide movement. Investment on public works alone increased from an aggregate of £250,000 in 1850 to £4,000,000 in 1854, and the Indian Government created a public works department to handle the surge.<sup>3</sup> Politically, this period

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<sup>1</sup>C. R. Fay, "The Movement Towards Free Trade," The Cambridge History of the British Empire (8 vols.; Cambridge, England: University Press, 1929-1963), II, 388-414. Hereinafter referred to as C. H. B. E.

<sup>2</sup>Bearce, Attitudes, 214-16.

<sup>3</sup>H. J. Habakkuk, "Free Trade and Commercial Expansion, 1853-1870," C. H. B. E., II, 751-805, 788-89.

has been termed the "Age of Dalhousie," after the Governor-General of India (appointed in 1848) who pushed so hard for improvements basic to the policy of free trade in India.<sup>4</sup> The dissolution of the East India Company in 1858 did not impede the further development of public works.<sup>5</sup>

Bartle Frere, as a British administrator in India during this period, expressed the predominant attitude of free trade. Upon leaving the Sind in 1859, he stated:

"I have endeavoured to pursue the same policy in all matters affecting commerce, regarding Government interference and Government imposts as in themselves serious evils, and believing it to be the appropriate function of Government simply to protect all men in the enjoyment of their rights and possessions as long as they do not interfere with the rights and possessions of others, and to remove all obstacles, natural or artificial, to such enjoyment; it has been my study not to develop commerce and industry, but to leave commerce and industry free to develop themselves."<sup>6</sup>

Frere repeated this theme four years later, when Sir Charles Trevelyan requested his opinion on the disposition of an expected £1 million surplus in the Indian Government's budget. Sir Bartle emphatically recommended construction of roads and canals to fuel Indian prosperity. Utility was not the only reason for his interest in such projects as irrigation. He

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<sup>4</sup>Bearce, Attitudes, 220-25.

<sup>5</sup>C. H. B. E., V, 318.

<sup>6</sup>John Martineau, The Life and Correspondence of Sir Bartle Frere (2 vols.; London: John Murray, 1895), I, 289-90. Hereinafter referred to as Martineau, Frere.

was once asked why he espoused its cause so heartily, to which he replied: "'If you had seen men's bones as I have, lying unburied by the roadside, and on entering a village had found it untenanted by a living person, you would understand why.'"<sup>7</sup>

A better understanding of the emphasis laid by Frere on British public works in India is gained by examination of its most important aspects. Roads, for instance, had never been important prior to the arrival of the British, mainly because the Indian plains were traversable by cart; in any case, neither military nor civilian transport was attempted in the rainy season.<sup>8</sup> Construction of the Grand Trunk Road from Calcutta to Peshawar, started in 1839, signaled a new effort to upgrade the Indian road system in order to speed the country's development.<sup>9</sup> The description Bartle Frere gave of roads in the Sind presented a before and after picture of British road construction. "'There was not,'" he wrote, "'a mile of bridged or of metalled road, not a masonry bridge of any kind--in fact, not five miles of any cleared

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<sup>7</sup>Frere to Sir Charles Trevelyan (28 January 1863), Ibid, 402, 415.

<sup>8</sup>Great Britain, Sessional Papers (House of Commons), "East India (Improvements in Administration)," XLIII, 1857-1858, 22. Hereinafter referred to as B. S. P.

<sup>9</sup>Sir Percival Griffiths, The British Impact on India (n.p.: Archon Books, 1965), 420-21. Hereinafter referred to as Griffiths, Impact.



road.'"<sup>10</sup> The situation soon changed. Road construction mileage was 126 in 1851, and increased to 207 in 1852.<sup>11</sup> In the frontier districts alone, from 1853 to 1860, 1,872 miles of road were constructed and "'furnished with 786 masonry bridges, 88 of which, across navigable canals, were passable by boats of the largest sizes.'"<sup>12</sup> Frere described the roads he observed in the Upper Sind as being "'forty feet in width, and all of those constructed within the last two years [during his commissionership] generally run in perfectly straight lines from village to village.'" The 159 bridges constructed for this road network were "'built of burnt brick, with mud cement and semicircle arches. The largest . . . was a three-arch bridge, the centre arch of twenty-four feet and two side arches of eight feet each.'"<sup>13</sup>

While Governor of Bombay, Sir Bartle Frere grappled with problems resulting from the lack of good roads. Fever often accompanied deficiencies in road and harbor facilities, because food and clothing were in short supply.<sup>14</sup> Frere, however, had a deep interest in roads in the Presidency for reasons beyond this. In 1860, the British imported only

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<sup>10</sup>Minute 23 September 1861, Martineau, Frere, I, 92.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid, 107.

<sup>12</sup>Minute 14 August 1861, Ibid, 109-10.

<sup>13</sup>Frere to Lord Falkland (28 April 1853), Ibid, 108.

<sup>14</sup>Frere to Sir Charles Wood (22 February 1863), Ibid, 408.

seven per cent of their cotton from India; the American Civil War increased this figure to two-thirds of the amount used by British manufacturers.<sup>15</sup> Frere never doubted India's ability to supply Britain in cotton, but there were problems to be met. "If the demand for cotton continues, there can be no doubt we can supply all you want. . . . We have been backward in improving our roads and river navigation; but, I trust we have turned over a new leaf in this respect."<sup>16</sup> A description he gave of the North Canara area illustrated the problem faced:

"It has a magnificent back country, embracing . . . our best cotton, coffee, and betelnut districts, with forests of the finest timber, and a rich and very civilized coast population. It only wants roads. . . . /The present ones/ are already covered with traffic to an extent which the road-makers could never have expected."<sup>17</sup>

By not providing roads, the British went one step further in penalizing themselves: railroads would remain unprofitable and the sale of British manufactures lag.<sup>18</sup> Even so, Bartle Frere felt that the railroads by themselves did allow the Bombay merchants to get into the interior and bring out

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<sup>15</sup>C. H. B. E., II, 774-75.

<sup>16</sup>Frere to Bouchier (6 October 1861), Martineau, Frere, I, 399. Also 12 August 1862 (Bombay), Bálkrishna Niláji Pitalé, ed., The Speeches and Addresses of Sir H. B. E. Frere (Bombay, 1870), 231-32. Hereinafter referred to as Pitalé, Speeches.

<sup>17</sup>Frere to Lord Elgin (20 February 1863), Martineau, Frere, I, 406.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid, 407.

cotton; the resulting facilitation of commercial travel more than offset the cost of the railroad.<sup>19</sup>

Frere believed, as already noted above, that the great need in India, besides roads, was canals. When the British arrived, they had found the existing canals in sad shape due to neglect. An investigation of the canal system in 1850 led to the decision to put the entire program under one uniform plan with a public works department in each of the Presidencies. The Indian Government had a separate department of its own.<sup>20</sup> Frere probably had this example in mind when he created a public works department in the Sind.<sup>21</sup> Building the canals was a more complicated matter. Two approaches were tried in the Sind, both often using dry river beds. The first method utilized perennial channels, with dams diverting water to the desired location; the second method, inundation, used the flooded Indus to irrigate the land. The latter method predated the arrival of the British, while the former was an exclusively British innovation.<sup>22</sup> While Frere was in the Sind, both methods were used. The first was employed to divert water from the

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<sup>19</sup>12 August 1862 (Bombay), Pitalé, Speeches, 234.

<sup>20</sup>B. S. P., "East India (Improvements in Administration)," XLIII, 1857-1858, 20, 25.

<sup>21</sup>Martineau, Frere, I, 117.

<sup>22</sup>Sir William Hunter, The Indian Empire: Its Peoples, History, and Products (3rd ed.; New York: AMS Press, 1966), 629-30. Hereinafter referred to as Hunter, Empire.

Indus into the Eastern Narra, which was often dry. Inundation was used with the Bigarri Canal which was deepened and widened.<sup>23</sup> Frere described the result of this work in a letter of 10 June 1851. It brought both prosperity to the people of the region and increased revenue to the Government. Frere also believed that the Indians would be more friendly towards the Government because the improvements would give "subsistence to many thousands."<sup>24</sup>

Two areas in the Bombay Presidency in critical need of canals were Guzerat and the Deccan. During good years when rainfall was normal, water was taken from wells in Guzerat and tanks in the Deccan for irrigation.<sup>25</sup> Sir Bartle Frere described what could happen if there was a dry period:

"Last monsoon the rains failed us in the Deccan and Candeish, and we had to . . . provide relief by famine works, etc. They are provinces in which irrigation pays well, and where, . . . it must be done by Government. I inquired how much we had spent on new irrigational works within the last ten years, and found it was about £7,000, positively not more than £700 a year in a country larger than Scotland."<sup>26</sup>

The normal procedure in guarding against inadequate rainfall was the use of dams. They impounded water in the hill valleys and allowed its distribution by channels.<sup>27</sup> The most important

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<sup>23</sup>Martineau, Frere, I, 119-20. Also B. S. P., "East India (Improvements in Administration)," XLIII, 1857-1858, 21.

<sup>24</sup>Martineau, Frere, I, 117-18.

<sup>25</sup>Hunter, Empire, 630.

<sup>26</sup>Martineau, Frere, I, 414.

<sup>27</sup>Hunter, Empire, 630.

measure taken in this area while Frere was in Bombay was the damming of the Moola River. This created a lake some twelve miles long and helped supply Poonah and 86,000 acres of surrounding land with water for drinking and irrigation.<sup>28</sup>

One of Bartle Frere's constant interests while in the Sind was the port of Karachi and its improvement. He found no docks at all upon his arrival there. The Indus River steamers had to go to Bombay for repairs, and in a seven year span three vessels had been lost on the trip, including the newest and largest, the Falkland. It was obvious to Frere that the port of Karachi was needed both as an all-weather port for ships on the Sind coast and as a means of shortening the distance between northwestern India and Europe. He was incessant in recommending modern facilities for the port, continuing his interest while Governor of Bombay.<sup>29</sup> It was during this time that criticism by the new engineer superintending the Karachi improvement works threatened to bring the whole program to a halt. This raised Frere's ire, inciting him to complain that he was "ashamed to write to Englishmen of this nineteenth century on the general advantages of harbours, or to discuss the money value of a good harbour as compared with a bad one."<sup>30</sup> A Karachi

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<sup>28</sup>Martineau, Frere, I, 416.

<sup>29</sup>Minute 23 September 1861, Ibid, 92-99.

<sup>30</sup>Frere to Captain Eastwick (22 May 1866), Ibid, 98.

Port Trust was finally created in 1880 to expand and modernize the port's facilities.<sup>31</sup> A good index of the effectiveness of improvements of this type was contained in an account given by Frere showing that seaborne trade nearly tripled from the years 1853-54 to 1857-58. The number of sailing vessels entering Karachi harbor had risen from one to fifty-seven in the years from 1851 to 1857-58.<sup>32</sup>

Steamers from Britain steadily increased their range throughout the years from 1825 to 1853, until they reached Australia the latter year.<sup>33</sup> Frere believed that in addition to railroads, steamers would help the port of Karachi. He roundly chastised the decision of the Bombay authorities to turn down an offer by the Steam Navigation Company in June 1855 for a Bombay-Karachi mail service every two weeks. It was, in his opinion, a "very serious discouragement to the development of the commercial resources of this port [Karachi]" among other things, he believed it would have facilitated light freight and reduced the hardship of the overland route on invalids and others. Though Frere had lost one battle, he still fought for his idea by next endorsing, while in Calcutta in 1862, an attempt by William Mackinnon to obtain a subsidy from the Indian Government. The subsidy would allow Mackinnon to operate steamer service for ports stretching from Calcutta

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<sup>31</sup>C. H. B. E., V, 263.

<sup>32</sup>Frere to Seymour (17 March 1859), Martineau, Frere, I, 285.

<sup>33</sup>C. H. B. E., II, 411-12.

to Karachi. Opposition by the Bombay Presidency meant, however, that the plan had to be held in abeyance until 1863 when Frere became Governor and ended any opposition to it.<sup>34</sup>

Rail construction in India traced its beginnings back to 1848 and Governor-General Dalhousie. Prior to the administration of Dalhousie, rail lines had been short and built for strategic reasons. It was he who gave the Government the idea of using private British enterprise to build an Indian rail system. Dalhousie's suggestions were finally adopted with the decision to build 5,000 miles of rail using joint-stock companies from Britain.<sup>35</sup> Bartle Frere reflected both attitudes. While personal secretary to Governor George Arthur, he pressed for a short rail line across Salsette. His greatest interest lay, however, in the railroads used in conjunction with the port of Karachi. He suggested, in 1853, the building of the Karachi-to-Kotree rail line to connect the port with the transfer point for steamers from the Punjab; finally begun in 1858, it was completed in 1861.<sup>36</sup> Frere, speaking at the inauguration of the railroad, alluded not only to such obvious advantages as the time that would be saved and its profitability to all concerned, but also to the fact that its very existence was sure to bind India to and solidify the

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<sup>34</sup>Martineau, Frere, I, 103-04, 297-98.

<sup>35</sup>C. H. B. E., II, 789.

<sup>36</sup>Martineau, Frere, I, 45, 95, 102-03

Empire. He touched upon an even more significant development in a later speech. The work on the railroads was helping to foster a new sense of independence in the average rail worker; in turn, the caste system was being transcended. What would result, in Frere's opinion, was worthy of more than passing thought.<sup>37</sup>

British reform activity touched on other matters besides steamers and railroads. The Indian postage stamp, for example, owed a possible debt to Frere, if he himself is to be believed. The Sind postage stamp, which Frere introduced in 1854, preceded the Indian one by two years. Use of the stamp had been encouraged by the refusal of the Indian Government to provide money for post offices, and Frere noted that "'the system worked very well, and of course very cheaply, for we got a complete network of post-offices and postal lines all over the country without expense'"; it also, he believed, provided the spark for the all-India stamp.<sup>38</sup> India-wide, the increased use of postage stamps had cut the postal deficit by two-thirds by 1858.<sup>39</sup>

Municipalities were also affected by British reform activity. When the British first came to India, they followed

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<sup>37</sup>29 April 1858 (Karachi), 21 April 1863 (Khandallah), Pitalé, Speeches, 220, 244-45.

<sup>38</sup>Martineau, Frere, I, 111-12.

<sup>39</sup>B. S. P., "East India (Improvements in Administration)," XLIII, 1857-1858, 11.



quickly on the heels of the Mughal official who collected taxes and provided a few basic services to traders in return. The British followed the tradition by consulting with the leading traders and other citizens about taxes. But of all the Presidencies, Bombay was the most active in India in implementing Act XXVI of 1850, which allowed municipalities to be set up.<sup>40</sup> Bartle Frere reflected Bombay's interest in them. He had been President of the Karachi municipality from 1852 to 1859. The importance of municipalities, in his view, was that improvement was a permanent, ongoing matter, instead of an ill-organized spurt of energy every now and then.<sup>41</sup> It was his opinion that "large sums which ought to be raised and spent on objects more or less local (roads, canals, education, and many others), should have been provided by local taxation, locally arranged, by local bodies."<sup>42</sup> He had acquainted India with municipalities while he was in Sattara, so that money could be raised for his public works projects. Bombay was one of the more elaborate devices set up as a result of his efforts. It provided for a Municipal Commissioner and auxiliary officers in health, finance, and engineering. Financial supervision of these men was exercised by the bench of justices and the Governor-General. One of the first actions taken by the Commissioner and his health

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<sup>40</sup>C. H. B. E., V, 529-30.

<sup>41</sup>Pitalé, Speeches, 506.

<sup>42</sup>Martineau, Frere, I, 303-04.

officer was a move to cut the death rate in Bombay, an effort which proved successful in later years.<sup>43</sup>

In the end, public works became a double-edged sword. It provided the foundation for Indian industry.<sup>44</sup> Conversely, it often infringed upon Indian sensibilities, thereby laying the groundwork for the Indian Mutiny. The Mutiny in turn destroyed the old East India Company, compelling the British Government to assume responsibility in 1858. (The Governor-General also became known as Viceroy after this date.) As a result of the Mutiny, decisions about Indian government were increasingly made in London, the British grew suspicious of reform, thus losing their former sense of mission, and racial antagonism arose.<sup>45</sup> Frere, however, did not follow the trend, the reasons for which were varied and are explained in the following chapter.

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid, 71, 74, 462-63.

<sup>44</sup>Strachey, The End of Empire, 58.

<sup>45</sup>Burt, Evolution, 427, 380-83, 386, 434-35.

## CHAPTER III

### INDIAN GOVERNMENT

Two reasons can be given for the opposition of Sir Bartle Frere to the three basic trends--concentration of power in London, loss of a sense of mission, and racial antagonism--which followed the Indian Mutiny. The first reason was his admiration for three former administrators of the old East India Company, Mountstuart Elphinstone, Sir Thomas Munro and Sir John Malcolm.<sup>1</sup> Both Elphinstone and Munro believed that Indian self-government was a certain eventuality to be prepared for. Elphinstone envisioned that it would come about principally through education of the Indians. Malcolm was an advocate of Indian participation in the covenanted civil service, to be gained through vernacular education with the use of English as an auxiliary to convey Western knowledge.<sup>2</sup> One writer was essentially correct when he commented that in the first half of the nineteenth century the civil servants in India were pro-Indian.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Sir Henry Bartle Edward Frere, Indian Missions (London: John Murray, 1874), 12.

<sup>2</sup>Bearce, Attitudes, 245-47.

<sup>3</sup>Griffiths, Impact, 163-64.

The second reason for the obstinacy of Frere must be attributed to his administrative background. The Sind was a Non-Regulation area,<sup>4</sup> that is, one of those areas annexed since the late eighteenth century.<sup>5</sup> It has been described by one writer as being

characterised by simple and more direct methods of procedure and by the greater accessibility of the officials to the people; but chiefly by the union of all powers--executive, magisterial and judicial--in the hands of the District Officer, here termed Deputy Commissioner, subject, however to the appellate and supervisional jurisdiction of the Commissioner of the Division in all branches of work. The system was paternal rather than formally legal though legal principles were by no means set aside and it largely depended for its success on the personal character, initiative, vigour and discretion of the local officers.<sup>6</sup>

The system was not arbitrary, for certain principles were set down on which the District Officer based his conduct, and there was always supervision by the Commissioner. It was essentially a return to the practice of the Mughal Empire of letting executive decisions be made by the man on the spot, in this case the District Officer described above.<sup>7</sup>

With such a background, it is easy to understand the reaction of Bartle Frere to the manner in which Bengal was governed. He blamed the Indian Mutiny of 1857-58 on the fact

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<sup>4</sup>Edward Thompson and G. T. Garratt, Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India (Allahabad: Central Book Depot, 1962), 476-77. Hereinafter referred to as Thompson and Garratt, Rule.

<sup>5</sup>C. H. B. E., V, 22.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, 87.

<sup>7</sup>Griffiths, Impact, 164-65.

that the Bengal Army was controlled by paper departments and underpaid officers who had no real authority. It seemed to Frere that it had no commander. The need, therefore, was for its centralization through well-paid officers who knew their men by inspection. Fewer officers, fewer European troops and mercenaries would be needed. Diversity of units, dictated by conditions, could be tolerated. This idea was based on Frere's premise that it was very important to an Asiatic soldier to know who was his master, for he had known only despotic government. Officers, therefore, should be given complete authority over the natives, including the right to dismiss. The officer would be given blame along with praise in retrospect, and he would not have to obtain previous sanction for anything; otherwise the native soldiers would start to doubt the officer's authority, and undermine discipline.<sup>8</sup>

The premise Bartle Frere used to rationalize his approach to the Bengal Army also underlay his approach to the Bengal Government. The problem was that there was no benign despot, for a benign despotic government was the only one the natives would respect. Calcutta officials were not accessible to those natives in the outlying provinces who needed help. The answer to Bengal's problem was a structured authority, where responsible officials ruled in matters that

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<sup>8</sup>Frere to Lord Goderich (15 June 1858); Sir George Clerk (16 January 1859), Martineau, Frere, I, 265-66, 271-72.

fell below them, but were still responsible to superiors above.<sup>9</sup>

Another proposition which Frere looked at with the jaundiced eye of a Sind administrator was that of centralization. This was the movement of administration after the Mutiny to take on a more unified, technical, and departmentalized appearance.<sup>10</sup> In a dispatch of 15 January 1858 to Bombay, Frere noted that the only way centralization could work was by entrusting the government official on the spot with the responsibility for decisions. It was in this way that the British Indian Empire had been made great; centralize by departments in a far-away place and it "becomes deranged by the slightest trial or shock."<sup>11</sup> Centralization violated the area formerly covered by the District Officer and the provincial governments. The technical departments that grew up were especially mischievous, for it was "difficult for the District Officer to ease those hardships which must occur when illiterate villagers are first brought into contact with Western legal and commercial ideas."<sup>12</sup> Frere outlined the concrete result some sixteen years later, in 1874. Authority diffused into too many British administrative hands produced

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<sup>9</sup>Frere to Lord Goderich (15 June 1858), Ibid, 266-67.

<sup>10</sup>Thompson and Garratt, Rule, 477-79.

<sup>11</sup>Frere to Bombay (15 January 1858), Martineau, Frere, I, 101.

<sup>12</sup>Thompson and Garratt, Rule, 478-79.

the "Village Hampden," who played one administrator off against the other. There was the ultimate collapse of an already ancient and fossilized village structure.<sup>13</sup> Another problem department was that of public works. It was set up after the Mutiny, and caused endless trouble until Lord Mayo remedied it in 1870. There was a constant squabble between the Government of India and provincial governments over the allocation of money and control of the work to be done.<sup>14</sup> While Governor of Bombay, Frere once reminded Colonel R. Strachey that he could not be both Secretary of the public works department and also superintend all its work. Such a course would paralyze the whole scheme. The Governor proposed, instead, a minimum amount of paper work and a maximum amount of construction.<sup>15</sup>

After the Indian Mutiny, Britain gave up thoughts of unifying the whole of India under its direct control. The British felt that their former policy had impeded progress in the independent states by creating uncertainty as to their future. The new attitude towards the independent Indian states still in existence was outlined in the Proclamation of 1858. It assured their ruling heads of state of the right to perpetual rule and succession. While doing this, however,

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<sup>13</sup>Frere, Indian Missions, 59-61.

<sup>14</sup>Thompson and Garratt, Rule, 479.

<sup>15</sup>Frere to Strachey (12 October 1863), Martineau, Frere, I, 423.

the British still exercised an indirect influence by reminding rulers of their responsibility for the welfare of their people, and warned against the needless expense of standing armies.<sup>16</sup> Sir Bartle Frere brought this out at several of his durbars while he was Governor of Bombay. He warned the assembled Indian nobility, at Poona in 1865 and 1866, of the consequences of failure. Those who had led India in the past had to take a larger share in administering their country in the future, or they would be left both powerless and without honor. British dominion over the Indian princes had enhanced immensely their ability for doing good by limiting their power to do wrong. Most important, perhaps, was the exhortation by Frere at Belgaum in 1865. He invited the rulers of the Indian states to forget about enemies now far away since the arrival of the British. Instead of employing one more policeman than was necessary for internal peace, the money should be spent on roads, irrigation, bridges, and hospitals, among other projects.<sup>17</sup>

The ideas of Bartle Frere concerning centralization came into play when he joined Lord Canning, Governor-General and Viceroy of India, in Calcutta in 1859. One example was his attitude towards a proposal to reform Canning's council. One must retrace the manner in which the government of India

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<sup>16</sup>Thompson and Garratt, Rule, 479.

<sup>17</sup>4 September 1865, 29 November 1866 (Poona); 28 November 1865 (Belgaum) Durbars, Pitalé, Speeches, 4-5, 14-15, 8-9.



was set up after the Mutiny in order to understand the significance of the proposal. The British Government of Lord Derby had shaped the Indian Government Act of 1858 and guided it through Parliament after the Mutiny had been put down that same year. The Act provided for the transfer of power from the East India Company to the British Government. The intention of the Government was that British India govern itself with as little interference from Britain as possible. There was a Council of India to assist the Secretary of State. The Council was composed of fifteen members holding life membership unless a petition was put forward by both houses of Parliament. Nine of the fifteen members were to have served in India for at least ten years, seven of the fifteen were nominated by the East India Company voting in council, and eight were appointed by the Crown. The Secretary of State had to give reasons for ignoring a majority vote of the Council concerning most Indian measures; matters concerning either expenditure or loans had to have the Council's approval. It was hoped that neither Secretary nor Council would dominate the other.<sup>18</sup>

Sir Bartle Frere believed that the arrangement described above was threatened by the proposal of Lord Canning to alter his council. Canning's aim was to gain real control over that body. He wanted, first of all, to abolish the veto

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<sup>18</sup>C. H. B. E., V, 206-12.

power of the executive council over the Governor-General's plans. Canning also wanted to alter their habit of doing work on a collective basis. He proposed, instead, that he be given the right to appoint secretaries to advise him on departmental matters; group meetings would be held only if he and a departmental secretary disagreed on a matter. Lord Stanley, Secretary of State for India, was in agreement with Canning's recommendation, and an India Council committee recommended that it be expanded to include the governors' councils throughout India. When Sir Charles Wood became Secretary of State for India in June 1859, he had another India Council committee study the recommendations made by Canning. It recommended that secretaries be nominated by the Governor-General, with the Secretary of State for India having veto power. The two recommendations by the committees were transmitted to India. The subsequent letter from Sir Bartle Frere to Sir Charles Wood was the most violently critical opinion of these recommendations.<sup>19</sup>

Frere's letter to Wood argued that the veto power of the Secretary of State would make him responsible for affairs previously under the jurisdiction of the Governor-General. Such responsibility would necessitate more knowledge of the Indian situation. The knowledge could come only from the Council of India in England, but it was often out of date.<sup>20</sup> He recommended another course, if India was to be ruled from

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid, 226-28.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid, 228.

London. The Secretary should turn over responsibility for the affairs of India to a select number of Council of India members, and dispense with the remainder. This would allow the Secretary time to deal with major problems and answer questions in Parliament, while the Council under-secretaries did the actual work. Frere had written that "you can have but one real Government for India, and that . . . Government can only safely be in India." Frere was perhaps exaggerating in his letter of 15 May 1860 to Wood, but it provided some basis for his own vision of an ideal government for India. His plan kept the Secretary of State of the role described above, but substituted the Governor-General for the Council of India members. The Secretary of State would formulate the system of government for India. The Governor-General would make the actual decisions, with the Secretary of State defending them in Cabinet and Parliament.<sup>21</sup>

Two views shaped Frere's outlook on the governing of India. First, the Governor-General should be praised or blamed for his actions, but only removed, if necessary, after he had acted. Second, Frere's distrust of the Council of India was total. He once wrote to Wood that it had the potential of carrying Britain back to the days when the Colonial Office tried to dictate to the colonies across the seas, and had "very nearly lost them in the attempt." The

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<sup>21</sup>Frere to Sir Charles Wood (15 May 1860); Frere to Sir George Clerk (9 May 1860); Minute 2 October 1861, Martineau, Frere, I, 351, 309, 347.

comparison between the two--Governor-General and Council of India--presented an inescapable conclusion. It was difficult for members on the Council of India to be up-to-date, since events moved so fast in India. The Governor-General, in contrast, was admirably situated to know what was going on and advise the Secretary of State wisely.<sup>22</sup> Canning never carried out his proposals for secretarial reform. The logic in Frere's letter led Canning to abandon the idea in favor of department portfolios for councillors. This was embodied in the Council Act of 1861 which Wood had introduced in Parliament. The Governor-General had, under this Act, five councillors with different duties to advise him. These men were, in turn, helped by bodies of secretaries and under-secretaries.<sup>23</sup>

James Wilson's income tax was another problem which Frere commented on while in Calcutta. The matter of income tax had arisen because the Indian debt, including the East India Company's account, was £98 million in 1860. The operating deficit for the year 1859-60 alone stood at £7¼ million. The British Government was rather apprehensive about running more deficits. They sent a financial expert, James Wilson, from England to work on the problem. Wilson eliminated the deficit from the Indian budget by ruthlessly

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<sup>22</sup>Frere to Lord de Grey (9 June 1861); Frere to Sir Charles Wood (22 October 1860), Ibid, 357, 359.

<sup>23</sup>C. H. B. E., V, 228-29.

slashing civil and military expenditure on one hand and adding to government revenue through the use of an income tax on the other.<sup>24</sup> Frere supported the imposition of the income tax for two reasons. First, Wilson's plans for direct taxes were not revolutionary in Indian finance, since substantially similar taxes had existed until 1834 in Bengal and 1836 in Bombay. They were abolished only because making them uniform would have been an impossible task. Second, Frere favored direct rather than indirect taxation. The abolition of indirect taxes in the newly-annexed native states had been popular with everyone except capitalists; indirect taxes also hindered legitimate trade and commerce.<sup>25</sup> Frere's opinions on taxation were futuristic. The income tax was lifted in 1865, but reimposed as a permanent tax in 1886.<sup>26</sup>

Sir Bartle Frere also looked to the future of British India in the matter of representation on the governors' councils. He had noted in a letter of 10 April 1861 to Sir Charles Wood that the day had come when "'Europeans and the Europeanized community'" should be included on the legislative councils. Anything less, he feared, might lead to "'unlooked-for and dangerous explosions.'"<sup>27</sup> Both Canning

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid, 314-15.

<sup>25</sup>Frere to Sir Charles Wood (23 April 1860); Minute 17 February 1860, Martineau, Frere, I, 306-07, 303-04.

<sup>26</sup>C. H. B. E., V, 317.

<sup>27</sup>Frere to Sir Charles Wood (10 April 1861), Martineau, Frere, I, 340.

and Wood agreed in large part with Frere on the deficiencies of the councils. Wood, as a result, introduced a bill into Parliament which subsequently became the Legislative Councils Act of 1861. It provided for the expansion of the Governor-General's council from six to twelve persons. Six councillors were to be non-governmental personnel, with the implication that some would be Indian. The expanded council would consider legislation, but the Governor-General had veto power over what was passed.<sup>28</sup> The first three Indian members of the council were aristocrats, however, and it was several years before the British could use the body as a conduit to involve business and professional men in the governing of India.<sup>29</sup>

The British immigrants flooding India after the Mutiny showed a discriminatory attitude towards the Indians<sup>30</sup> that Frere abhorred. He protested, for instance, against exemptions included for non-Indians in an 1860 bill forbidding possession of arms. In Frere's view, the bill was suggestive of a slave state. There was, too, the possibility of revolt in the Northwest if the British tried to take arms away from the people there. A better way to control arms, if necessary, was through licensing or district searches of houses by authority of the Indian Government. He believed that the Government did not need to trample on Indian rights in order

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<sup>28</sup>C. H. B. E., V, 234-36, 234 n.1.

<sup>29</sup>Thompson and Garratt, Rule, 476.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid, 475.

to ensure European immigration. The goal could be attained by good administration of all inhabitants under the same laws.<sup>31</sup>

The attitude of Sir Bartle Frere on the role of missions largely paralleled his conclusion on gun control. The question of missions was an old bone of contention. It had originated in an argument between the East India Company, which feared a rebellion among the Indians if religion was pushed too hard, and those who favored an evangelical program in India. The apparent winner was the latter party, and the charter renewals of 1813 and 1833 provided for sees in Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, to be supported by territorial revenue of the Company. The East India Company was more successful, however, in erecting a barrier between its schools and colleges and Christian missionary activity. Bibles were allowed in libraries of educational institutions, but teachers were only allowed to answer spontaneous questions about religion after school hours. By themselves, church schools were allowed to qualify for grants-in-aid under an 1854 plan.<sup>32</sup> Frere held the church schools in high esteem. They taught, in his opinion, a much wider range of subjects than Government schools, and instruction was better. Their graduates were better disciplined and were willing to work hard and quietly.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Speech; Frere to Barrow (6 August 1860), Martineau, Frere, I, 328-29.

<sup>32</sup>C. H. B. E., V, 121-24.

<sup>33</sup>3 July 1862 (Poona), Pitalé, Speeches, 172-73.

Frere lavished praise upon the mission schools, yet he was adamant in barring religious activity of any kind from Government schools. Two dispatches from Sir Charles Wood, dated 17 June and 1 September 1864, to Frere in Bombay outlined a complaint by the Church Missionary Society about the lack of religious teaching in Bombay schools. The second dispatch suggested after-hours religious classes taught by schoolmasters as a solution.<sup>34</sup> The reply Frere sent was in the best tradition of the old East India Company and Mountstuart Elphinstone, both firm opposers of mixing education and religion for fear of exciting the Indians.<sup>35</sup> Frere stated that the missionaries on the spot were doing a better job at conversion than many of their friends believed. Their success resulted, in large part, from the absence of bitterness among Indians because of the "'really fair and impartial course pursued by this Government on all questions of religion and education.'" Teaching of religion in schools, besides endangering missionary work in general, would end in the same bankruptcy for the church in India as had resulted from that policy in Ireland.<sup>36</sup> In all fairness to the missionaries,

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<sup>34</sup>Martineau, Frere, I, 470.

<sup>35</sup>Minute, March 1824, George W. Forrest, ed., Selections from the Minutes and Other Official Writings of the Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1884), 81.

<sup>36</sup>Frere to Sir Charles Wood (22 July 1864, 27 September 1864), Martineau, Frere, I, 471, 470.



however, even Frere later admitted that the spread of religion in the country had been only minimal.<sup>37</sup>

The episode of the dispatch of Sir Charles Wood legitimately leads to the question of exactly what Sir Bartle Frere thought of missions, their function, and relation to government. He outlined much of his thinking on this subject in a dispatch to Lord Stanley in 1858. He noted his active, albeit private, support of Christian missions in India, and indicated his belief that they had helped to bring a big change for the better. As mentioned above, however, he did not want to see their accomplishments wiped out by ill-advised abandonment of the English tradition of religious toleration. The Government of India should not use its power to force Christianity on the Indians; such a course smacked of Inquisition.<sup>38</sup> It should, instead, ensure the toleration of individual opinion and speech. That role could not be performed by the spreading of religious instruction.<sup>39</sup> The function of independent missionaries, on the other hand, was to perform a task that no government could possibly attempt without danger; that is, they could teach what the West valued most. The missionaries needed to work first among the European community, starting with the soldiers and

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<sup>37</sup>Sir Bartle Frere, "Speech to Working Men's Meeting," Authorized Report of the Church Congress (Bath, 1873), 217.

<sup>38</sup>Frere to Lord Stanley (19 December 1858), Martineau, Frere, I, 259-60.

<sup>39</sup>Frere, Indian Missions, 77.

sailors, then the clerks, cooks, and others.<sup>40</sup> The missionaries, by doing such work, would have the European community as an example before going to the Indians themselves. It was an important aim, since every Englishman was a "public character" because of his potential influence over the Indians.<sup>41</sup>

One of the more touchy aspects of British administration in India was the covenanted<sup>42</sup> civil service. This group held the responsible positions in the Indian Government, including judicial posts under the East India Company and the British Government. It was largely British, and training for it took place at an English university after acceptance by examination. Its counterpart was the uncovenanted civil service, composed mostly of Indians who held lower posts in government. The Charter Act of 1833 and the Queen's Proclamation of 1858 had confirmed the right of native-born Indians to enter the covenanted civil service. Few Indians took the opportunity, however, because it was a certain road to social ostracism. The years from 1858 until 1886 produced no real change in the staffing of the Indian

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<sup>40</sup>Undated note on prepared Free Kirk General Assembly speech; Frere to Lord Goderich (5 January 1859), Martineau, Frere, I, 471-72, 262.

<sup>41</sup>29 August 1863 (Poona), Pitalé, Speeches, 251-52.

<sup>42</sup>The word "covenanted" was used because agreements of employment were signed with the East India Company; the practice continued after Britain assumed the duties of the Company in India. C. H. B. E., V, 357. Frere was a member of this group.

civil service. It amply upheld the tradition, as described in the House of Commons in 1853, of being a "'native agency and European superintendence.'" While Lord Lawrence was Viceroy, however, the scarcity of Indian candidates for competitive examinations to enter the covenanted civil service caused some concern. It was therefore proposed in 1868 that scholarships be provided, partially on the basis of nomination and partially be competition, to send Indians to England for education. The idea was that once the Indian's education was completed, he would enter the civil service or some other professional position.<sup>43</sup>

The proposal of the Indian Government for scholarships did not suit the Secretary of State, the Duke of Argyll, and he turned down the suggestion.<sup>44</sup> This action brought a quick retort from Bartle Frere. A "Dissent by Sir Bartle Frere," dated 18 February 1868, referred to the very limited opportunities for Indian employment in positions of high responsibility in the Indian Government. He lashed out at the "rather pompous parade . . . of a few crumbs of patronage." The way to get Indians into responsible government jobs, such as positions on the bench, was to pay them enough that lawyers could leave the bar. The objective was to Anglicize public servants so that they would identify them-

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid, 357, 359-62.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid, 360.

selves with the Indian Government in the belief that it was the best possible one.<sup>45</sup>

Entrance into the higher civil service ultimately depended on adequate Indian education, as Mountstuart Elphinstone had foreseen. Elphinstone had a two-tier education program. He favored Western learning for those Indians considering high public office. He also backed improved and expanded vernacular schools.<sup>46</sup> Generally, however, Elphinstone saw Indian education as being primarily concerned with the upper castes; otherwise there would be a danger of revolt by a dissatisfied educated lower caste. The other objective for which Elphinstone strived was education of Indians built on their own tradition.<sup>47</sup> Bartle Frere, like Elphinstone, deprecated any effort to educate the Indians on a massive scale because of lack of plans or money. He favored a return to the old Directive of 1854 with its grants-in-aid for education, the planning being done according to the needs of each province. A few general rules and guidelines as to how the money was to be spent were all that was needed.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>B. S. P., "East India (Employment of Natives)," I, 1867-1868, 293-94.

<sup>46</sup>C. H. B. E., V, 107-08.

<sup>47</sup>Bruce T. McCully, English Education and the Origin of Indian Nationalism (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), 29.

<sup>48</sup>Frere to Lord Goderich (5 January 1859), Martineau, Frere, I, 261.

Like Elphinstone, Sir Bartle Frere favored the upper classes in his framework of education. Others who would possibly benefit from education were the Bheels, coolies and some other races; some were not badly in need of it but could use it to their own advantage.<sup>49</sup> Frere stressed the Charter clause of 1833, ending discrimination against Indians in higher employment, and its importance to the upper classes.<sup>50</sup> Only by supplying men of similar caliber to those of English universities, he warned, could Indians hope to take positions in public administration. This requirement was doubly important, however, for the Sirdar youth; without education, "wealth and power" would be taken from their hands in the future.<sup>51</sup>

Regarding the university graduate, Frere envisioned a special need for him to communicate, in vernacular literature, the European learning he had acquired. Even more important was his role as teacher of the people, the "most powerful of levers to move the great mass of popular ignorance." He formed the link between men of different race and religion, keeping them together when they might otherwise fall apart. He promoted an understanding and appreciation

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid, 262.

<sup>50</sup>C. E. Carrington, The British Overseas: Exploits of a Nation of Shopkeepers, Part I: Making of the Empire (2nd ed.; Cambridge, England: University Press, 1968), 431.

<sup>51</sup>6 April 1863 (Bombay); 28 November 1865 (Belgaum) Durbar, Pitalé, Speeches, 120-22, 9-10.

of the purpose of British rule, which was pledged to administer for the good of the Indian people. Indian classical literature, such as Zend and Sanskrit, would fulfill the same function as the Western classical languages.<sup>52</sup> The educated Indian was, in short, a most important link in British rule of India.

Frere was generally true to what he conceived to be the hallmark of good government, which one author has termed "pervading influence."<sup>53</sup> The emphasis was on individual initiative on the part of the administrator; Indians were not to be forced upon, but taught the fruits of Western progress by example. Education was to be the link between the British and Indians to achieve this goal.

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<sup>52</sup>28 April 1862, 8 April 1865, 11 April 1864, 8 January 1867, 6 April 1863 (Bombay), Pitalé, Speeches, 110, 141, 133, 155, 120.

<sup>53</sup>Archibald Paton Thornton, The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies: A Study in British Power (London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966), 79. Hereinafter referred to as Thornton, Idea.

## CHAPTER IV

### DEFENSE OF INDIA

An understanding of the views of Sir Bartle Frere on the defense of India, basically a problem of the frontier tribes and Afghanistan, is essential for two reasons. First, it serves as a good barometer of the imperialist impulse in British foreign policy. The new imperialist outlook took root in the dispute over the defense of India, because it was the most pressing concern of the Empire at that time. Second, Frere's views on Indian defense provide a basis for his later actions in South Africa.

The matter of the frontier tribes arose when the British occupied the Sind in 1843 and the Punjab in 1849. They found themselves confronting the Baluches and Pathans, tribes which regularly raided the Sind and Punjab; this in turn meant they had to deal with the local overlords, the Khan of Kalat and the Amir of Afghanistan. Two schools of thought, the Sind and Punjab schools, developed as to how frontier defense should be conducted in view of the problems with the tribes. The schools differed in two important aspects. First, the Sind theory of administration emphasized repression; in contrast, the Punjab school depended more on political control of the frontier tribes. Second, the Sind

system was rather unorthodox in depending, after 1848, on Major Jacob and his completely mobile troops.<sup>1</sup> The essential character of Jacob's system was described by Bartle Frere. It meant, he wrote, that authority--civil and military, regular and native troops, engineers, police--was concentrated, and not fragmented as in the Punjab.<sup>2</sup> He was impressed with the results of the system. Jacob had introduced order where there had been none before. There was no fear of raiders and people were able to travel in perfect safety along the frontier. Jacobabad, under Jacob's direction, had been turned from an area of desert into a garden of plenty, with crops and canals crisscrossing the area.<sup>3</sup> Two points should be noted from the above description: the stress laid by Frere on the unitary nature of Jacob's system, and the resulting advances in civilized behavior. The effect on Frere cannot be emphasized enough. The success of the system was a major determinant in his thoughts on frontier defense, whether Indian or South African, for the rest of his life.

Frere continually emphasized the authoritarianism and civilized nature of the Sind system. First, it was basically a military system depending to a large extent on the cooperation of the frontier tribes and the Khan of Kalat

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<sup>1</sup>C. H. B. E., V, 448-50.

<sup>2</sup>Frere for Lord Northbrook (1876 Memorandum), Martineau, Frere, I, 165.

<sup>3</sup>Frere to Lord Falkland (March 1855), Ibid, 148-49.



in securing the border. Second, and more important, it was a civilized system. At its center was the Khan of Kalat. Uninfluenced inside his own territory, he was under British military direction concerning external relations. The Khan was treated as an independent ally. A cardinal rule was to bolster him in every way possible: complaints below the level of chief, for instance, were referred to the chiefs; complaints by or against the chiefs were referred to the Khan. The Khan was encouraged to keep an orderly government and satisfy any of these complaints.<sup>4</sup> Tribesmen along the Sind frontier were safe from British retaliation if their activities did not threaten the people on the British side of the border, or the Khan of Kalat. The use of troops was generally restricted to those cases which police were unable to handle. Armed theft of cattle, for example, was included in this category. Forays across the Sind frontier in search of marauders were purely a military matter. Troops considered everyone armed<sup>5</sup> on the British side of the border as their enemy; on the other side, an enemy of the Khan of Kalat.

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<sup>4</sup>"Extracts Illustrative of the Sind Frontier System," in Sir Bartle Frere, Afghanistan and South Africa: Letters to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P. Regarding Portions of His Midlothian Speeches, and a Letter to the Late Sir John Kaye, and Other Papers (5th ed.; London: John Murray, 1881), 76, 73. Hereinafter referred to as Frere, Afghanistan.

Sir Bartle did not doubt where the real loyalties of the chiefs lay, and he wrote about how they would revert to their own authority if British power or resolve ever weakened. Frere to Major Green (16 October 1858), Martineau, Frere, I, 244-45.

<sup>5</sup>C. H. B. E., V, 449.

Attention was directed only at those who resisted and wholesale destruction was not permitted. Prisoners taken by troops on the Khan's side of the border were turned over to him.<sup>6</sup>

Frere, in a letter to Lord Elphinstone, described a strike on a frontier tribe (the Murrees) by Major H. Green, British Resident to the Khan of Kalat. He noted that it had been done without "massacre, plunder, or destruction, or barbarity, or severity."<sup>7</sup>

Frere took a dim view, on the other hand, of the Punjab frontier system. The Sind system made every effort to bolster the authority of the Khan of Kalat. Punjab authorities, in contrast, bypassed the Amir of Afghanistan, overlord of the frontier tribes in that area. They tried, instead, to deal separately with each tribe, and to use them as a buffer between the Amir and the Punjab. Frere also criticized the retaliatory raids made along the Punjab border for marauders. Authorities failed to note, in doing so, that the tribes were usually divided into two classes: those who plundered and those who cultivated. Punjab authorities, by destroying the crops and goods of the latter, united the whole tribe against them. Writing of the retaliatory raids of 1860 along the Punjab border against the Wuzzeerees, Frere indicated that a much more telling blow could have been dealt if a

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<sup>6</sup>"Extracts Illustrative of the Sind Frontier System," in Frere, Afghanistan, 73-74.

<sup>7</sup>Frere to Lord Elphinstone, Martineau, Frere, I, 248-50.

list of the men to be surrendered had been handed to the chiefs. A large share of subsequent property and crop destruction, as a result, would have fallen on the men's heads, encouraging them to think more seriously before going on plundering forays again.<sup>8</sup>

Paralleling the problem of the frontier tribes was the question of Afghanistan. The problem dated from the 1830s, but the years from 1850 until the early part of the twentieth century saw it become even more complicated with the advent of the telegraph and cable. European governments were able both to control and be influenced by events in that sphere through these devices. Afghanistan and all of Central Asia then became the main preoccupation of Indian external policy.<sup>9</sup> Afghanistan played an especially important part in this drama because the British were advancing on it from the south, and the Russians from the north. Indian administrators were generally of either of two opinions about the conduct of relations between Great Britain, the tribes of the Northwest Frontier, and Afghanistan. First, a succession of Viceroys from Canning on regarded interference as too dangerous, especially after the events of 1838-42 described below. Second, the "forward" school felt that the course of events

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<sup>8</sup>Minute 22 May 1860; Frere for Lord Northbrook (1876 Memorandum); Frere to Lord Canning (15 November 1860), Ibid., 362-64, 165-66, 366-68.

<sup>9</sup>C. H. B. E., V, 403.

made interference inevitable. Such interference would take the form of "alliances, missions, and, where necessary, subsidies in the form of money and material of war."<sup>10</sup> John Lawrence was representative of the first view and, as we shall see, Bartle Frere of the latter.

No adequate comprehension of the problem of Afghanistan can be gained without tracing the history of active British involvement which began there in 1838. The Afghan ruler Taimur had died in 1793. A struggle ensued for the throne, and was settled in 1826 with the accession of Dost Muhammed. Twenty-three royal claimants, including the major one, Shah Shuja, had been excluded by his accession. Shah Shuja had royal descent on his side; Dost Muhammed strength and ability. At this point Afghan politics became entangled with what was happening in Persia, where Russia's influence increased steadily after 1828. The British began to worry about the situation. A Persian attack on Herat menaced Eastern Afghanistan. Dost Muhammed was also threatening the holdings of Ranjit Singh centered in Peshawar because of his cooperation with Shah Shuja for the recovery of the Afghan throne. Finally, there was the collaboration of Dost Muhammed with the Russians, already dominant in Persia. All these factors resulted in a "'Tripartite Treaty'" between Shah Shuja,

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<sup>10</sup>A. W. Ward and G. P. Gooch, eds., The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, III (New York: Macmillan Company; Cambridge, England: University Press, 1923), 72-73. Hereinafter referred to as C. H. B. F. P.

Ranjit Singh, and the British. The essential element in the treaty was the British promise to help Shah Shuja recover the Afghan throne. It was hoped that in this way Britain would secure a friendly Afghanistan. The result was an unmitigated disaster. Active British involvement lasted from November 1838 to December 1842. During that time, the British military force which had placed Shah Shuja on the Afghan throne found itself isolated in Kabul by angry Afghans. Trying to flee, they were cut down almost to a man. Once Kabul had been retaken, the British were forced to reinstate Dost Muhammed on the throne in order to extricate themselves from an impossible situation.<sup>11</sup>

Stung by the events of 1838-1842, Indian policy for another thirty years was one of non-interference in Afghan affairs.<sup>12</sup> All this was quite distasteful to Sir Bartle Frere who, along with Sir Henry Rawlinson, was worried about the Russian threat to India.<sup>13</sup> The Disraeli Ministry, which replaced that of Gladstone in 1874, gave Frere his opening. One of the aims of the new Government was to initiate a more active foreign policy, especially in Central Asia, where it wanted to eradicate the dominant position held by Russia. Lord Salisbury was made Secretary of State for India. A dis-

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<sup>11</sup>C. H. B. E., V, 484-96, 499-521.

<sup>12</sup>C. H. B. F. P., III, 72.

<sup>13</sup>R. W. Seton-Watson, Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question: A Study in Diplomacy and Party Politics (London: Macmillan and Co., 1935), 220.

patch of 22 January 1875 from Salisbury to the Indian Viceroy marked the genesis of the new British Afghan policy. It instructed the Viceroy to put into effect a program based on Sir Henry Rawlinson's minute of 1868. This minute had proposed that a resident be stationed in Afghanistan; going first to Herat, then Kabul, he was to supplement the regular native agent. The dispatch had been sent upon the instigation of Frere, then a member of the India Council.<sup>14</sup> These actions underlined a point later made by Frere (in 1880) from which he never deviated: British isolation from Afghan affairs was self-defeating, for it only drove Afghanistan into the arms of another power.<sup>15</sup>

In an article written in 1875 as a public exposition of the actions taken by Salisbury, Sir Bartle Frere gave the most comprehensive outline of his views on the Afghan problem (past and present) and Central Asia in general. Looking back on previous British policy, he ridiculed British actions against Dost Muhammed, the one man who could have assured Britain of a strong and independent, but friendly Afghan state. Backing him would have been in Britain's real interest, and not maneuvers to remove him.<sup>16</sup> British officials acted more like "Chinese mandarins" than anything else from that

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<sup>14</sup>C. H. B. F. P., III, 77-78.

<sup>15</sup>"Memorandum enclosed in Cape of Good Hope Despatch, No. 9," in Frere, Afghanistan, 11.

<sup>16</sup>C. H. B. E., IV, 493.

time on by their complete disregard of what was happening across the Indian border. The "'policy of masterly inactivity,'" Frere declared, had been nothing more than denying the existence of a Russian menace in Central Asia. But now, in the 1870s, even the supporters of the policy were abandoning the ship. Public writers were demanding that the British Government do something about the Russian threat. Moves mentioned included sending an army to the Northwest Frontier and a fleet to the Baltic.<sup>17</sup>

Frere was not as easily intimidated by the Russians as were others, for he saw Russian weaknesses in any power play involving India, Afghanistan, and Britain. Russia by itself had neither the money, men, nor necessary organization to go to war with Britain. The British navy could harass the Russians at will from the Baltic Sea to the Indus, and Britain possessed men capable of defeating any invading force by cutting its lines of communication. The problem facing the Russians, therefore, was that a direct attack on India required an aggregate of powers to overcome the first-rate navy possessed by Britain. Russia would be risking a general war in Europe, destroying the work of ages in the process, and leaving it, in the end, a second-rate European power. Russia also had to consider the potentially explosive situation at home. Revolutionary changes were taking place in the country's

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<sup>17</sup>Sir H. B. E. Frere, "England and Russia in the East," The Quarterly Review, CXXXVII (April 1875), 571-74. Hereinafter referred to as Frere, "East."

social fabric. Any attempt at conquest would drain away energy needed for problems arising between peasant, aristocracy, and educated classes.<sup>18</sup>

Russia, even so, had to be viewed as an aggressive power in its own right. Just as Britain had built its own Indian Empire, Russia was benefiting from the introduction of a more effective government in the decayed states it overran. People were glad to rid themselves of oppressors. Russian aggression was perhaps even more real than previous British expansion because of strong public support in Russia; on the other hand, the British had been compelled to contend with the majority of the home population opposed to expansion in India. Such public support in Russia was largely explainable because expansion was linked to religion, a strong political force "inseparably" bound up with the throne. Then, too, the throne's decision to stamp out slavery among the Central Asian Turkomans gave the whole enterprise the aura of a holy crusade. Frere asserted that such strong support for Russian aggression required that it be stopped by an equally civilized power. It had to "give her honest hearing and reasonable redress in all frontier discussions, and . . . require equal justice from her."<sup>19</sup>

Although the chances of outright aggression by Russia on India were so slight, Frere feared subterfuge. He had

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid, 591, 593.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid, 581, 583-86, 588.



outlined what could happen in his letter to Sir John Kaye in 1874. First, large-scale Russian influence on the Afghans could undermine Indian confidence in British rule. Second, in the case of British preoccupation with problems elsewhere, the threat of a Russo-Afghan invasion could tie down vast numbers of British troops in India. Third, and most probable, Russian and Afghan irregulars had the capacity to start frontier trouble costing the British a great deal to contain.<sup>20</sup> Of these three, the first possibility was the most unlikely. John Lawrence had pointed out in his Memorandum later in the year that most natives did not follow Russian progress in Central Asia. Those Indians who were interested had probably not given careful consideration to the problem or what an occupation of Afghanistan would entail.<sup>21</sup>

The logical question at this point was what should be done to prevent undue Russian influence in Afghanistan. Three points conveyed in the article by Frere on "Russia and England in the East" should be borne in mind in evaluating his ideas concerning this problem. First, Frere believed that the Russians had a naturally active policy. Past British policy had been not only defensive but also negative. No friends were to be won in this way among the Orientals; instead, the Russians advanced that much closer. A true

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<sup>20</sup>Frere to Sir John Kaye (12 June 1874), in Frere, Afghanistan, 36-38.

<sup>21</sup>"Memorandum by the Right Hon. Lord Lawrence on the Central Asian Question," Ibid, 48.

defensive policy, in contrast, required carefully-considered action on several fronts. Second, Frere's biggest concern was to construct a policy putting British relations with its "neighbours north and west of India on a more permanently satisfactory footing." Third, he did not contemplate Britain trying to halt the Russian advance until it reached the Afghan border.<sup>22</sup> The last point was part of his concept, mentioned in a note to Lawrence's Central Asian Memorandum (1875), of considering all areas which adjoined India as bulwarks to its security. They were not to be open to any type of political influence impairing the security of India. Besides Afghanistan, Nepal, Tibet, Baluchistan, and Kashmir fell into such a category. The British and Russians, in other words, would not meet on the Indian border.<sup>23</sup>

No natural buffer was obtainable, however, in Afghanistan. Britain had missed its one chance to have such a buffer while Dost Muhammed was alive. Now, as Frere outlined in his letter of 1874 to Sir John Kaye, it had to be done with definite intent on Britain's part, and possibly by force. One of the first suggestions Frere made was that military officers acting as agents for the British Government be stationed at Kabul, Herat, and Kandahar. They were to be well chosen and have a good knowledge of the country and

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<sup>22</sup>Frere, "East," 598, 578-81.

<sup>23</sup>"Sir Bartle Frere's Note on Lord Lawrence's Memorandum on the Central Asian Question, Dated 4th November, 1874," in Frere, Afghanistan, 71, 68.

language. Non-interference in Afghan internal affairs was to be the rule; the main task of the agents was to support the ruler in every way possible. Second, the Amir of Afghanistan had to understand that conducting relations in a manner contrary to British interests would result in him being treated as an enemy. The British Government would then take appropriate action.<sup>24</sup>

Britain was ever a trading nation, and Bartle Frere reflected its concern about any foreign intrusion into its markets in his article on "Russia and England in the East." Two groups of expansionists were represented in Moscow. The first was made up of the Czar and a small clique of high officials who opposed active expansion into Central Asia. Their reasoning was that Russia did not possess a large enough budget to administer such an empire. Those in favor of a truly active expansionist policy included ultra-nationalist politicians, military men (who did not have to worry about the cost of administration), Russianized Germans, and merchants. Public support went to the latter group. The presence of the merchants constituted the strongest impulse driving the Russian advance. There was a deep-seated dislike among Russian merchants of their exclusion from the Asian markets by British competitors. They were strongly protectionist in character, and wanted a conquered Asian territory

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<sup>24</sup>Frere to Sir John Kaye (12 June 1874), Ibid, 31, 34-35.

which they could monopolize for trade. One thing seemed certain to Frere: India's Northwest Frontier was certain to go on a war footing if Afghanistan either let Russian agents in or allowed merchants and travelers to move around freely.<sup>25</sup> He had already outlined a move to prevent such a situation in his letter of 1874 to Sir John Kaye: the British envoy to the Amir was to negotiate a commercial treaty. It was to give Britain parity at least with other countries. If it was not done Britain might be barred from Afghanistan because the Russians distrusted its commercial power.<sup>26</sup>

The letter of 1874 from Frere to Sir John Kaye also discussed important measures to be taken for the defense of the Indian frontier. An essential move was the occupation of Quetta, as permitted under previous agreements with the Khan of Kalat.<sup>27</sup> A railroad was needed to Peshawar from Karachi, via Multan and Lahore, with a spur to the Bolan Pass, and an extension by artillery road to Quetta. The occupation of Quetta served a two-fold purpose. First, it was a useful watch post for southern Afghanistan. Second, it had the

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<sup>25</sup>Frere, "East," 583, 538, 587, 597.

<sup>26</sup>"Sir Bartle Frere's Note on Lord Lawrence's Memorandum on the Central Asian Question, Dated 4th November, 1874," in Frere, Afghanistan, 63.

Frere favored stimulation of commerce on the Indus and in Karachi in order to keep tribes attached to the British. Frere to Lord Canning (1 December 1860), Martineau, Frere, I, 240-41.

<sup>27</sup>His great fear about Quetta, he said, was that a French or Russian adventurer might one day capture it. Frere to Lord Elphinstone (25 March 1858), Martineau, Frere, I, 237.

potential of becoming a rallying point for the defense of India beyond the Indus if an invasion came in that sector. It would also be a force on the flank of any advancing enemy in such case as the invasion came through the Kyber Pass and Kabul.<sup>28</sup> This whole concept was, however, attacked by John Lawrence. The occupation, he noted, was open to question on two counts: diplomatically, the Afghans might conclude that Britain was contemplating an invasion; second, the military cost of an occupation, a reserve in the Sind as a backup force, and fortification of the Bolan rail line would not make it worth the effort. British interests in India vis-a-vis Russia were best represented by British insistence to the Russians that India was to be defended at all costs. The suggestions made by Frere were, in the opinion of Lawrence, ineffectual for stopping any real Russian move towards India. They would probably lead to a situation such as had existed in 1838, ruining Indian finances in the process.<sup>29</sup> The best policy, Lawrence concluded, was to make India as prosperous and contented as possible. The frontier tribes were to be assured at the same time that neither territory nor independence was threatened. If the Russians appeared, they would be faced by a wall of allied tribes to impede their advance.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Frere to Sir John Kaye (12 June 1874), in Frere, Afghanistan, 34, 36.

<sup>29</sup>"Memorandum by the Right Hon. Lord Lawrence on the Central Asian Question," Ibid, 52-53, 48-49.

<sup>30</sup>Bosworth R. Smith, Life of Lord Lawrence (2 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1885), II, 379.

A dispatch from Bartle Frere to Lord Salisbury in March 1876 provided an outline of what Frere believed should be done respecting Afghanistan and the Indian border. It showed that he had perhaps moderated some of his proposals. He did not think that Calcutta was cognizant of what was happening on the border. Frere again expressed his opinion that Russia's aggressive moves could only be met by a frontier based on a central premise. That premise was that Afghanistan serve as a buffer between Russia and Britain in Central Asia; its accomplishment was through British friendship with the Amir. The Amir's territory was safe as long as he remained friendly with the British; if not, aggression would follow "by our instinct of self-preservation." The Amir might also be threatened by other alliances with powers such as Persia or Kalat. Frere also suggested that the envoy to the Amir's court might be able to reside in the Punjab, as long as he had assistants in Afghanistan itself.<sup>31</sup> This was a change in attitude, perhaps to make the proposals more palatable to the Amir, or to obtain support of the Punjab administrators.

Before any concrete action was taken on Afghanistan, three events followed in rapid succession during 1875 and 1876 that strengthened British power in India and detracted somewhat from Russian moves towards the Indian border. On 8 July 1875, Disraeli had announced to the House of Commons

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<sup>31</sup>Frere to Lord Salisbury (3 March 1876), Martineau, Frere, II, 145-49.

that the Prince of Wales was making a trip to India with the aim of binding it closer to Britain. Sir Bartle Frere was appointed guide for the party.<sup>32</sup> He was, as usual, concerned about impressions, and recommended that £100,000 be allocated for presents to the Indian princes instead of the £60,000 already appropriated. He wrote that presents from Indian princes worth thousands of pounds required the return of more than a "trumpery" little gift. His mind was eased when the Indian Government agreed to provide the necessary money.<sup>33</sup>

Frere had tried to persuade Gladstone to buy all the Suez Canal shares in 1873, only to be rebuffed.<sup>34</sup> While in Egypt on the way to India in October 1875, the Prince of Wales presented the son of the Khedive with the Star of India. It was only in November, when Disraeli bought the Khedive's 6/17 share of the Suez Canal for Britain, that the significance of the act by the Prince of Wales became apparent.<sup>35</sup> The British, as a result, developed a strong interest in Egypt that eventually led to a complete takeover.<sup>36</sup> Frere had written that, with the opening of the Suez Canal, India had

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<sup>32</sup>The Annual Register, 1875 (Part I), 58, 114.

<sup>33</sup>Martineau, Frere, II, 127-29.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid, 150.

<sup>35</sup>The Annual Register, 1875 (Part I), 112-13.

<sup>36</sup>R. C. K. Ensor, England, 1870-1914, Vol. XIV of The Oxford History of England, ed. by Sir George Clark (15 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936-1965), 37-38. Hereinafter referred to as Ensor, England.

become a Mediterranean power.<sup>37</sup> The purchase of the Suez Canal shares made its position secure.

The third move to strengthen British power in India during 1875-1876 was the use of the title "Empress (or Emperor) of India" for the reigning British monarch. Frere had recommended in 1857 that such a step be taken in order to restore British prestige after the Mutiny;<sup>38</sup> Disraeli had also lobbied for it in Britain.<sup>39</sup> The issue lay dormant until 1876, when Queen Victoria insisted she be invested with the title; in view of the intensity of her demand, Disraeli acceded.<sup>40</sup> The measure was opposed by the Liberals, but it passed through the House of Commons.<sup>41</sup> It had long been dreamed of by those concerned with British power in India after the Mutiny, including Frere; the Russian advance towards the Indian frontiers provided a good reason for the new title, since their ruler was styled "Emperor." It was intended to have the same reassuring effect on the Indians as the visit of the Prince of Wales.<sup>42</sup> Frere, in his report to the Queen

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<sup>37</sup>Martineau, Frere, II, 133.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid, I, 226-27.

<sup>39</sup>William Flavelle Monypenny and George Earle Buckle, The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield (6 vols.; London: John Murray, 1910-1920), V, 446-57. Hereinafter referred to as Monypenny and Buckle, Beaconsfield.

<sup>40</sup>Robert Blake, Disraeli (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1966), 562.

<sup>41</sup>Ensor, England, 39.

<sup>42</sup>Blake, Disraeli, 562-63, 563 n. 1.



on the visit of the Prince, wrote how it had established a new rapport between the monarchy and the Indian people; her assumption of the new title had transformed her from sovereign of India's conquerors to its Empress.<sup>43</sup>

About the same time, the situation in Afghanistan became more heated. By March 1876, Lord Lytton, the new Viceroy for India chosen to implement a new forward policy,<sup>44</sup> was writing that the British Government had not been forceful enough about Central Asia. There should be a clear statement that the British had paramount interest in Afghanistan, Kalat, and Baluchistan, and that Russian influence in those areas could not be tolerated. Also, the occupation of Quetta should be considered a British right.<sup>45</sup> Negotiations with Kalat in 1876 allowed such an occupation in 1877. Finally, in November 1878, the British invaded Afghanistan and forced the Afghans to grant everything they asked. The most important concessions were the establishment of a British mission at Kabul at the expense of a Russian one, and control of Afghan foreign policy. The Russians acquiesced to the new British action, not wanting to break up the terms of the Congress of Berlin so soon, and also due to general exhaustion after a war with Turkey. Britain had picked exactly the right moment to move

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<sup>43</sup>Philip Magnus, King Edward The Seventh (London: John Murray, 1964), 142.

<sup>44</sup>C. H. B. F. P., III, 81.

<sup>45</sup>Lord Lytton to Frere (26 March 1876), Martineau, Frere, II, 155.

on the Afghans. Success in the early part of the Afghan War was tarnished in September 1879, when the British mission in Kabul was massacred and British gains put in jeopardy. The renewal of war without the threat of Russian intervention, however, soon righted the matter.<sup>46</sup>

Frere had seen the imperialist view he shared with others gain acceptance. British policy in Central Asia was one of definite forward movement. The Russians, as Frere had foreseen for reasons of his own, had not retaliated. By this time, however, Frere was in South Africa, serving as High Commissioner and Governor of the Cape Colony. He was in the process of fashioning a forward movement of his own. A better understanding of Frere's South African policy can be gained, however, by examining first some of his ideas about Africa.

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<sup>46</sup>C. H. B. E., III, 103, 105, 106.

## CHAPTER V

### EAST AFRICA: THE TURKISH THREAT AND THE SLAVE TRADE

Sir Bartle Frere had left India in 1867 under a cloud of disapproval as a result of the failure of the Bank of Bombay. His appointment to the Council of India might have been, in normal circumstances, a peaceful interlude before retirement. It was not to be, however, due to the Turkish threat in the Persian Gulf and the problem of the slave trade in East Africa. They were more related than might first be imagined, and a little of their history must be examined to understand why. In 1869, with the opening of the Suez Canal, the Turks began to exert their power in the Arabian Peninsula for the first time since the seventeenth century. They subdued the North Yemen tribesmen, and with them Yemen, established a Turkish protégé at Najid on the Persian Gulf, and formed Turkish naval squadrons in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf. It was enough to perturb the British, who had come to regard the Arabian Peninsula as their own preserve.<sup>1</sup>

One British group watched the progress of Turkish influence closely, for they worried about its threat to India,

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<sup>1</sup>R. J. Gavin, "The Bartle Frere Mission to Zanzibar, 1873." The Historical Journal, V, No. 2 (1962), 127-28. Hereinafter referred to as Gavin, "Mission."

with a sizeable Moslem population. Besides Frere, the group included Badger, an expert on the Arabs, Kaye at the Indian Office, and Rawlinson, like Frere, on the India Council. It was the religious and somewhat nationalistic rhetoric that the Turks had begun to use that caught their attention. The possible effect it could have on Moslem elements in India was demonstrated, they felt, by the episode of the Hadrami chieftain. On one occasion when two chieftains were arguing, the Sherif of Mecca sent one of them a warning about his subordinate position to the Sultan of Constantinople as both political and spiritual head of all Moslems. A complication lay in the fact that the chieftain's nominal suzerain, the Nizam of Hyderabad, was very troublesome to British Indian officials. The long-term implications of the incident to Britain's position in India impressed Frere and the others. Their apprehension was reinforced by three other events: a Moslem revival in the East; the important part Moslems had played in the Indian Mutiny as pointed out in Kaye's History; and, the murder of the Viceroy, Lord Mayo, by a Moslem.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, other British Government officials were concerning themselves with the problem of keeping Muscat and Zanzibar in the British camp in view of Turkish moves into the Arabian Peninsula. Politicians, on the other hand, wanted to leave well alone; an impasse had been reached by 1871. Government officials wanted Britain to pay a subsidy

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid, 128-29, 129 n. 44.

due Muscat from Zanzibar; in return, Zanzibar would promise to suppress the slave trade. The report, issued in January 1870, was designed to keep everyone happy while not abandoning the traditional British attitude towards slavery. The officials had affirmed the old British policy towards the Middle East from 1820 to 1860. Fashioned by the Governor of Bombay, Mountstuart Elphinstone, this policy had depended on informal ties with progressive commercial elements in the area (chiefly Zanzibar and Muscat). Essentially, it aimed at free trade, eliminating the slave trade, and keeping out other European powers.<sup>3</sup>

The center of the East African slave trade was Zanzibar. Operations emanated from there, and the Sultan of Zanzibar was suzerain along the East African coast north of Cape Delgado. Previous efforts to end the trade, including the use of a British squadron to help the weak navy of the Sultan, had been unsuccessful. Just how flourishing this trade was had been outlined to an unsuspecting British public when David Livingstone was at home between 1856 and 1858.<sup>4</sup> When Britain asked the new Sultan, Barghash, to begin practicable elimination of slavery in 1870, he refused.<sup>5</sup> This

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid, 129-36.

<sup>4</sup>C. H. B. E., III, 68.

<sup>5</sup>R. Coupland, The Exploitation of East Africa, 1856-90: The Slave Trade and the Scramble (London: Faber and Faber, n.d.), 165. Hereinafter referred to as Coupland, Exploitation.

coincided with the complete impasse in 1871 between Government officials and politicians about British policy in the area. Agitation began in June in the House of Commons for a complete suppression of the slave trade. The Government decided to appoint a select committee in order to quieten the agitation.<sup>6</sup> It recommended, in turn, elimination of the slave trade without compensation, for it believed that abolition could only help Zanzibar's trade.<sup>7</sup>

At this point Sir Bartle Frere came into the picture. He had talked with Livingstone while the latter was in Bombay in 1865 and had expressed a strong interest in the abolition of the slave trade.<sup>8</sup> A strong bond of friendship had been established between the two men since their meeting.<sup>9</sup> The refusal of the Government to act on either the inter-departmental report presented in 1870 or the recommendations of the select committee in 1871, led Sir Bartle to take action. Agitation, chiefly inspired by him during 1872, brought the Government around, and that same year he was appointed to renegotiate a new treaty with Zanzibar forbidding the slave trade.<sup>10</sup> Instructions from the Earl of Granville at the Foreign Office duplicated the recommendations of the inter-

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<sup>6</sup>Gavin, "Mission," 136.

<sup>7</sup>Coupland, Exploitation, 170.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, 116.

<sup>9</sup>The Times (London), 2 November 1872, 5.

<sup>10</sup>Gavin, "Mission," 134-41.

departmental committee of 1870. Muscat and Zanzibar were to be reminded of their previous agreements to suppress the slave trade, and Frere had the power to amend the proposed treaties if either party agreed. In the case of Zanzibar, Britain pledged to pay the 40,000 crowns awarded by Canning in 1861 if her Sultan agreed to suppress the slave trade.<sup>11</sup> Frere was also instructed to report on the most effective disposition of consular officers and naval forces for ending the slave trade, and on means of disposing of liberated slaves.<sup>12</sup>

Frere left for his East African mission on 21 November 1872, arriving in Alexandria aboard the Enchantress on 14 December. After interviews with the Khedive at Cairo on the status of the slave trade in his country, Sir Bartle left for Zanzibar on 4 January, arriving there eight days later. A conversation with the Sultan on 11 February revealed that he was stalling on the question of abolition. The Sultan emphasized the effect of a recent hurricane on Zanzibar, the need for a phasing out of the slave trade, and concern about the welfare of his Arab subjects. Four days later Frere left for a tour of the southern slave ports, and the next month for a tour of the northern part of the Sultan's dominion. Here he was able, in accordance with instructions from Lord Granville,

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<sup>11</sup>B. S. P., "Correspondence Respecting Sir Bartle Frere's Mission to the East Coast of Africa," LXI, 1872-1873, C.-820, No. 3 (9 November 1872), 772-73. Hereinafter referred to as B. S. P., C 820.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid, No. 4 (9 November 1872), 774.

to obtain renewals of treaties to suppress the slave trade from Nukeeb Hilah-bin-Mahamed and the Nukeeb of Makallah. The same held true of the Sultan of Muscat, and the last stronghold was the Sultan of Zanzibar. This problem was remedied in May 1873 when Lord Granville wrote John Kirke, British Consul at Zanzibar, to threaten the Sultan with a blockade if a treaty to suppress the slave trade was not signed; the treaty was signed and Kirke sent it to Lord Granville the following month.<sup>13</sup> Frere had succeeded, at least for the time-being, in reviving the old idea of an informal British empire built upon the "universal applicability of British concepts of progress."<sup>14</sup>

The dispatches sent back by Sir Bartle Frere reflected the traditional Bombay policy; in addition, they showed a tendency to use ideas developed in India to solve a new problem. This was shown, for example, in his recommendations for coping with slavery in Egypt. The Khedive, in talks with Frere, had expressed the view that it would be difficult to ban slavery in Egypt without striking at its source. An outright ban was not feasible because slavery had existed in Egypt much too long before its present rulers had arrived.

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid, Nos. 6 (21 November 1872), 11 (15 December 1872), 12 (24 December 1872), 14 (4 January 1873), 18 (14 January 1873), 26 (13 February 1873), 30 (14 February 1873), 39 (15 March 1873), 47 (15 April 1873), 48 (16 April 1873), 49 (16 April 1873), 46 (15 May 1873), 57 (6 June 1873), 776-77, 788, 794, 806-08, 846, 859-60, 863, 858, 923.

<sup>14</sup>Gavin, "Mission," 147.



In any case, he did not believe that more than 400 slaves were sold illegally in Egypt each year.<sup>15</sup> Sir Bartle himself believed that the figure was much higher, in view of the growing affluence of the people in Lower Egypt; indeed, it was the only way to satisfy domestic needs. He cited, instead, information that thousands of slaves were sold upcountry in "rich remote provincial towns seldom visited by influential Franks."<sup>16</sup>

The answer to stamping out the slave trade in Egypt depended on the fact that a larger proportion than before was coming into Egypt from the Red Sea. The largest contingent still came through the valley of the Nile by land into Lower Egypt. It was difficult to gauge the popularity of the Red Sea route because there was no consular service in the area; it was impossible to stop the Turkish ships which carried them to get an accurate count. This problem did, however, point to a solution. Britain should extend its consular service into the area and negotiate "with Turkey for extended facilities of inquiry." Eradicating the slave trade, from a strictly British standpoint, depended on the extended use of the consular service, which consisted only of a consular agent at Suez. Such an extension would give the Consul General more than the chance information he had

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<sup>15</sup>B. S. P., C 820, Encl. 1 to No. 13 (1 January 1873), 778.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid, Encl. 2 to No. 13 (1 January 1873), 780.

received previously from Egyptian sources. The first step was to station someone nominally at Asyut, to be able to move about the valley of the Nile and intercept slave traders. He should be young, a military officer, and a gentleman. The ability to speak Arabic was essential, but he should not be native to the region. A second part of the consular agency was to consist of resident consular agents at Jiddah and Massowah. Permission would be needed from the Consul General for the "Consul at Suez or any other of his subordinates" to check other major ports along the Red Sea at irregular intervals for evidence of slave trade or anything else significant.<sup>17</sup>

In the short run, Frere advocated that the Khedive should set up a special bureau within his police establishment to stop any illegal slave trade in Egypt. It would also care for liberated slaves and keep an accurate count of liberated and domestic slaves. Cases of cruelty to slaves reported by consuls would also be investigated by this unit. The nationality of the person heading the unit was not mentioned by Frere, but he implied that he would be European. Such an official would be one "whose nationality, character, and antecedents will justify the confidence of His Highness and of all friendly Powers interested in the question." Sir Bartle envisioned industrial schools operated by a charity group connected with the slave bureau, teaching a trade and caring for liberated slave children.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid, 780-81.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid, 782.

An end to the slave trade would be a certainty only when slaveholding had been abolished in Egypt, possibly in stages, with the children being freed first. On the other hand, continuance of slavery would ultimately lead to the rise of a caste group, with the slaves doing all the labor. Sir Bartle Frere believed that anyone who had seen such a situation in India would not want to see it happen in Egypt. Such a course only impeded progress, as had so often been the case in India. It was also a barrier to any Egyptian advance towards the south, which otherwise would be the advancement of an enlightened and civilized state. No European government, Frere wrote, was going to allow expansion of a state with such an "unnatural, hideous" evil as slavery.<sup>19</sup>

An argument used by Frere against slavery in Egypt was reiterated in his discussion of slavery in Turkey. He noted that the Koran gave specific reasons for slavery, but it did not include the type of indiscriminate slavery practiced in Egypt.<sup>20</sup> Regarding Turkey, he reminded the Earl of Granville that certain interpretations of Moslem law took a dim view of slavery. Frere suggested that the Government pressure the Porte to issue decrees enforcing such interpretations. The problem in Turkey, as in Egypt, was that slaveholding was legal; trade in slaves was supposedly illegal,

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid, 782-84.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid, 781

but was definitely tolerated. Forcing Turkey to abandon slavery was "not a question of religion, or of political influence, but of common humanity." Turkey was taking a very big chance by continuing the practice, because it could expect no support from European governments of any political persuasion in the future.<sup>21</sup> Turks failed to enforce a ban against the slave trade because of the lack of means. Concessions were needed similar to those Britain had had before from other nations to ensure that the slave trade ban was effective; otherwise every slave dhow plying the Red Sea was sure to hoist the Turkish flag to ensure protection.<sup>22</sup>

Other steps had to be taken to eradicate the slave trade. Frere had written, in February 1873, that all the trade along the East Coast was in Indian hands. They supplied the capital that financed the slave trade. The Rao of Kutch had lent a willing hand in the early part of the mission by issuing a proclamation to his subjects in Zanzibar and Muscat. It had ordered them to desist from the slave trade, and Frere considered it "one of the modes in which the Rao's aid is likely to be of special use." The only way to get the Indians out of the slave trade, however, was to stop it; short of that, punishment should be given out to the Indians, British subjects or not, when implicated in it.<sup>23</sup> For the southern part

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid, No. 17 (1 January 1873), 791-92.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid, Encl. 2 to No. 13 (1 January 1873), 781-82.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid, Nos. 31 (27 February 1873), 15 (10 January 1873), Encl. 1 to No. 51 (7 May 1873), 808-09, 788-89, 875.

of East Africa, a consul was needed on Mozambique to spur Portugal to action in suppressing slavery in its territories. This would, at the same time, attract British traders and capital to keep the slave trade in check. The consul would also be able to make periodic visits to the Comoro Islands and Johanna. Slaveholding in Northeast Africa, principally among the Somalis, could be checked by the cultivation of friendship by consuls at Aden and Zanzibar, and by enforcement of non-slaveholding agreements already made.<sup>24</sup>

Bartle Frere had been successful at least in securing agreements with powers in Eastern Africa on ending the slave trade. British interests there had once again been secured, but what of the future? Frere discussed that question often in the following years, beginning with problems he dealt with during his mission to Zanzibar. In February 1873, the Earl of Granville asked Frere his opinion of using Johanna as "a depot of captured slaves . . . , and as to the probability of finding employment for them with safety to their freedom." Frere replied in favor of using Johanna,<sup>25</sup> whose inhabitants he later referred to as the most intelligent and civilized of any of the people of the region.<sup>26</sup> No doubt he had been

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid, Nos. 40 (3 April 1873), 56 (29 May 1873), 846, 914-15.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid, Nos. 21 (28 February 1873), 44 (7 April 1873), 798, 857.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid, Encl. "Memorandum on Disposal of Liberated Slaves," to No. 58 (7 May 1873), 896.

impressed by its decision two months before to forbid any further introduction of slaves and to accept freed slaves landed by British cruisers.<sup>27</sup> By doing this, Johanna fulfilled two of the conditions essential, in Sir Bartle's view, for a liberated slave depot: "free, self-sustaining communities" and "improvement in civilization, and education of those not too old to learn."<sup>28</sup> Certainly he was thinking also about the Fraser estate he had observed at Kokotoni, Zanzibar. A collection of former slaves did all the work on the estate, including operation of the machinery. They were well fed and cared for medically. Two points stood out in Frere's mind about their behavior. Sexual depravity common among slaves had been replaced by family life; there was also the beginnings of the use of manufactured goods. Fraser also employed slaves from neighboring estates on their two-day weekly holidays, paying them prevailing wages. What little crime there was resulted from this influx and not from the residents. Frere expressed the opinion that this would be the result of the abolition of the slave trade and the accompanying introduction of Indian or European capital.<sup>29</sup>

The visit to the Fraser estate had an effect on Frere's thinking, but it was allied with a religious outlook

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid, Encl. 1 to No. 34 (12 March 1873), 814.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid, Encl. "Memorandum on Disposal of Liberated Slaves," to No. 58 (7 May 1873), 887.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid, No. 25 (12 February 1873), 802-06.

he had inherited from David Livingstone. The latter's work in tropical Africa, as he himself conceived it, was not only to convert the natives; instead, it was to diffuse the principles that had made for social progress in Britain, "the arts and sciences of civilisation." Livingstone thought that the reason for African backwardness was their concentration on the material aspects of life, their ignorance, and tribal structure, which splintered them and "laid [African society] ever open to violence." Livingstone was in turn the inspiration for the University Mission to Central Africa which held Anglo-Catholic views, a result of being founded by English High Churchmen. There was an emphasis on the presence of a bishop, and the philosophy of establishing "centres of Christianity and civilisation for the promotion of true religion, agriculture and lawful commerce." Two problems plagued the U.M.C.A. however: the shortage of funds and short tours because of bad working conditions.<sup>30</sup> These problems were certainly in Frere's mind when he later theorized on missions generally.

Another influence on Frere was undoubtedly the Roman Catholic missionary station at Bagamayo, along the East African coast, which he visited, and with which he was impressed. The station was built upon the time-honored

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<sup>30</sup> Roland Oliver, The Missionary Factor in East Africa (2nd ed.; London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1965), 10-13. Hereinafter referred to as Oliver, Factor.

principles of Catholic missions since they had started in Europe: civilization dispensed with religion; appointment by Rome of mission heads; widespread giving, with allowances made for national congregations to give to one mission in money and manpower.<sup>31</sup> These ideas were brought out by Sir Bartle in remarks before the Church Congress of the Church of England in 1873. The method used by the Church, he said, in the years from the sixth to the thirteenth century to convert the pagans of Northern Europe was to evangelize in the form of a model civilized community. This community contained all the elements--clerical and lay--of a Christian society. Roman Catholic and some Protestant organizations (including the London Missionary Society) had continued the practice. They had been quite successful, as a result, in bringing the benefits of civilization to others.<sup>32</sup>

Sir Bartle Frere noted that the Church of England's missionary efforts had been heavily weighted towards the clerical at the expense of other activities. These activities could be restructured to resemble the form taken by missions in the sixth to thirteenth centuries, namely a civilized community in which converts could live. His own ideas would, he believed, give the clerical element more time for preaching rather than divert their attention from it. As for organiz-

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid, 19-20.

<sup>32</sup>Sir Bartle Frere, "Remarks on the Organization of Missions to Uncivilized Populations," Official Report of the Church Congress (Bath, 1873), 94-95.



ation, a bishop would be appointed wherever there was a mixed lay and clerical mission. This was needed because of the complexity of the operation and in view of the success of mission stations of other denominations where a superior was present. The secular element would include such people as doctors, nurses, linguists, schoolteachers, printers, agriculturists, and craftsmen. There would have to be a loosening of bonds between the societies and missionaries, though it would probably affect the lay more than the clerical element of the mission. Frere thought that the recruitment of men, and perhaps even money, should be up to the mission itself instead of being done by the laborious method of requesting it through the society headquarters as previously. Mission efforts would be enhanced by the identification of special parts of the country with certain missions, from the standpoint of real interest and money advanced to it.<sup>33</sup>

Sir Bartle Frere looked further into the problem of missions in Eastern Africa. Use of the secular element to assist the missionary and easing the line (often imaginary) between service at home and abroad were possible only by shortening the time to be spent overseas. A limited amount (two or three years) of missionary work was as commendable as work on a lifetime basis. The formation of a body to collect material on past and present exertions of missionaries of all religious bodies was a good idea; this in turn could

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid, 94-101.

take on a form such as the Board of Foreign Missions in America. It should discuss and solve differences such as territorial spheres of work, and perhaps produce a modern translation of the Bible.<sup>34</sup>

The implications of such involvement in Africa were also discussed by Sir Bartle Frere. Charges of "'equivocal and entangling engagements'" would be founded only if "we neglect our plain duty in dealing with semi-civilised or savage neighbours." Protection of citizens was essential, by friendly remonstrance or force. In either case, the sovereign, whether barbaric or semi-civilized, had to understand the power and determination of Britain to protect its citizens. Avoidance of "'equivocal and entangling engagements'" would be greatly facilitated by the employment of consular agents in Africa to keep an eye on the country and Englishmen there. In case of war, such men would be invaluable in advising how it should be conducted.<sup>35</sup>

On East African missions in general, Sir Bartle Frere believed that nowhere in the world at that time was there as wide a field for missionary work. Two factors made East Africa unusually suitable for missionary work: first, little

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<sup>34</sup>Sir Bartle Frere, Eastern Africa as a Field for Missionary Labour: Four Letters to His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury (London: John Murray, 1874), 95-96, 113-14. Hereinafter referred to as Frere, Africa.

<sup>35</sup>Sir Bartle Frere, Inaugural Address to the African Section, Journal of the Society of Arts, XXII (November 21, 1873-November 13, 1874), 204-07.

work had been done by "Christian nations" before; and second, no real obstacles existed to impede the growth of Christianity. The Comoro Islands off the coast would provide a good healthy place for mission stations. Fetishism was not common in East Africa, and an absence of belief in any abstract concepts of being was the most conspicuous aspect of the region. The natives were unable, it seemed, to conceive of any non-physical object. The problem of East African natives was that they were isolated from neighbors, without the type of "basis of moral law" provided by Christianity, which was a prerequisite for "orderly and progressive communities." Christianity, on the other hand, contained the unifying bond needed to bring the scattered atoms of Africans together into progressive, unified communities. East Africans tended "rapidly to assimilate themselves to any more highly-civilised race with which they may be brought into contact."<sup>36</sup>

The abolition of slavery entailed reviving legitimate commerce in Africa. The only way to do so was through the spread of "Christianity and Christian civilisation and enlightenment."<sup>37</sup> In an article on Livingstone written in 1874, Sir Bartle Frere discussed this in more detail. He believed that, as a result of Livingstone's work, there would be a great stimulation of commerce with the Africans. Frere was in

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<sup>36</sup>Frere, Africa, 9, 48, 15, 70.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid, 119.

complete agreement with "Livingstone's estimate of geographical discoverers as being simply the pioneers of commerce and civilisation." Trade on a greater scale than ever before would follow protection for the trader and abolition of the slave trade. For clothing and metal work especially the Africans could certainly supply such raw materials as oils, metal, and cotton.<sup>38</sup>

Underlying the optimism of Sir Bartle Frere was a commercial revolution in East Africa. Abolition of the slave trade was causing a depression in the short run, but it would help bring prosperity to industry and trade in the long run. Perhaps more important was the construction of the Suez Canal, which would put a stop to the use of transshipment facilities on the coast. The Sultan of Zanzibar could be the keystone to any hope for East Africa. He ruled over a large area, came from a civilized race, and protected Christian missionaries spreading civilization over East Africa. He was also "closely connected . . . with some of the great trading communities of the East, and ruling over a region of unsurpassed natural capabilities, he may reasonably hope for a great destiny awaiting his race in Eastern Africa." The Salvation of East Africa, therefore, was commerce. It had coal and an abundant supply of labor. Both were attractive to the capitalist. Any government, whether in South Africa,

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<sup>38</sup>Sir H. B. E. Frere, "Dr. Livingstone," Good Words (1874), 283-85.

the Portuguese possessions, or the area in the north under the Sultan of Zanzibar, could insure its prosperity through "protection of life and property."<sup>39</sup> This was very important to Frere, because he believed that the uncivilized nature of the African natives could be traced to their isolation, something that should cease now that they had met with civilized peoples. Negroes who had had only a "very imperfect amount of civilisation" through conversion to Islam showed marked physical and moral improvement. The rewards that could follow from conversion to Christianity, a greater civilizing force than Islam, could be expected to be even greater.<sup>40</sup>

Sir Bartle Frere played an important role in the development of thought first laid down by Livingstone. He had put the arts of civilization on a plane with the religious message, whereas Livingstone wanted the former only as a preliminary to the latter. Frere's ideas were not popular, however. They brought down the wrath of the evangelicals in both England and Germany upon him. Being old-fashioned, they wanted only the message carried and nothing else. Freretown was established in 1875 to follow his ideas, but was never thought by its mother society, the Church Missionary Society, to be an exceptional case of mission work.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>Sir H. B. E. Frere, "Zanzibar A Commercial Power," Macmillan's Magazine, XXXII (July 1875), 287-88.

<sup>40</sup>Frere, "Dr. Livingstone," 284.

<sup>41</sup>Oliver, Factor, 23-25.

The importance of Frere's thoughts on Eastern Africa and Africa in general lay in their potential applicability to South Africa. It was questionable what course Frere would take if some Africans disagreed with his theory and refused to submit to civilizing influences. It was precisely this question he had to deal with in South Africa some years later.

## CHAPTER VI

### SOUTH AFRICA

The career of Sir Bartle Frere in South Africa is the beginning of a story that would take years to unfold. He was not the first to attempt a policy of confederation of the South African states, but it was the first time it had a fair chance of success. It was, in this instance, to be a failure, but in 1910 was finally brought to fruition. The story of Frere in Africa, then, is a very important part of South African history; it inspired both South Africans and students of British Empire to try again some twenty-five years later.

Interestingly enough, the majority of past, present and future participants in South African confederation were present at a banquet held for Frere in London on 28 February 1877. Hosted by a group of Natal merchants and "others interested in South Africa," it was given to celebrate Frere's appointment as Governor of the Cape Colony. Among those present were the Earl of Kimberley, Earl of Carnarvon, and Marquis of Salisbury.<sup>1</sup> The original impetus for confederation of Dutch and British states in South Africa had come from the

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<sup>1</sup>The Times (London), 1 March 1877, 6.

Governor of the Cape Colony and High Commissioner for South Africa, Sir George Grey, in 1859. He was firmly rebuffed by the Colonial Office the next year.<sup>2</sup> The Earl of Kimberley had already served in various positions of government, including service in the Foreign Office, Undersecretary for India, and Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. From 1870 to 1874 he had been Colonial Secretary in Gladstone's first administration. The Cape Colony had been awarded responsible government in 1872; Kimberley subsequently noted that possibly the Orange Free State and the Transvaal would like to confederate with the Cape Colony. During the Russo-Turkish war of 1877 he opposed, but did not split with, the Liberals as a result of Gladstone's Russian bias.<sup>3</sup> Kimberley could therefore be considered an exponent of confederation by evolution.

The Earl of Carnarvon had followed Kimberley's lead in trying to federate South Africa. He was experienced at the Colonial Office, having been Secretary from 1858 to 1859 and from 1866 to 1867 in both administrations of Lord Derby. Carnarvon was deeply interested in colonial matters and in exploring ways of binding Britain and its colonies closer together. He had introduced the bill to federate Canada before his resignation in March 1867 over differences with

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<sup>2</sup>Arthur Percival Newton, ed., Select Documents Relating to the Unification of South Africa (2 vols.; London: Frank Cass & Co., 1968), 1-12. Hereinafter referred to as Newton, Unification.

<sup>3</sup>Lloyd Charles Sanders, "Wodehouse, John," D. N. B., Supplement, 1901-1911, III, 695-96.



Disraeli, and had seen it pass into law the following June. While the Conservatives were out of office from December 1868 to January 1874, Carnarvon had expanded his horizons and urged the creation of a federated British Empire.<sup>4</sup> Returning to office with the Conservatives in February 1874, he became Colonial Secretary once again. Carnarvon set to work in earnest on South African confederation. He tried from 1875 until 1876 to arrange a conference of the African states to discuss common native problems and his ideas for confederation. It came to nothing. The Cape Colony pleaded that a conference would only exacerbate problems between its eastern and western sections, and the Orange Free State refused to attend. When Carnarvon suggested changing the venue from the Cape to London, there was even more trouble. The Orange Free State refused to discuss anything but native problems, the Cape went unrepresented over what they considered unconstitutional pressures for confederation, and the South African Republic declined to discuss the proposition.<sup>5</sup>

The appointment of Sir Bartle Frere as Governor and High Commissioner was only one stage of a final three-pronged effort by Carnarvon to implement his policy of confederation. Two other moves by Carnarvon reinforced his hand: first, Sir Theophilus Shepstone declared British sovereignty in April 1877 over the Transvaal (on the assumption that the Orange

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<sup>4</sup>Sidney Lee, "Herbert, Henry Howard Molyneux," D. N. B., IX, 646-48.

<sup>5</sup>Newton, Unification, 18-43.

Free State would also be forced to join in a federated South Africa); second, the South Africa Act was passed in August 1877, erecting a framework on which federation could proceed. Frere had been agreeable to the Cape governorship.<sup>6</sup> He had already given his opinion in 1874 that the Cape Colony was "one of the most important colonial possessions of the British Empire," and a possible rival to Australia in the future.<sup>7</sup>

One of the first difficulties Frere faced when he arrived in South Africa was the Ministry of John Molteno. Carnarvon had said, in remarks at the Langham Hotel banquet, that Frere "goes out not as the Governor of a Crown Colony, but as one who will have to carry on the task of government in conjunction with local advisers." No qualifications were made,<sup>8</sup> but Frere replaced Henry Barkly as High Commissioner and Governor of the Cape Colony because the latter had fallen too much under the influence of Molteno.<sup>9</sup> Frere finally had to break the hold of the Ministry, and did it in a roundabout way. It began on 10 August 1877, after an outbreak of fighting between the Fingo and Galeka tribes at a marriage feast in Fingo territory. The Galekas involved in the fight belonged to a tribe ruled by Kreli. Skirmishing soon broke out along

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<sup>6</sup>C. H. B. E., VIII, 467-73.

<sup>7</sup>Frere, "Inaugural Address," 204.

<sup>8</sup>The Times (London), 1 March 1877, 6.

<sup>9</sup>C. H. B. E., VIII, 472.

the borders of the two groups.<sup>10</sup> The Cape Colony became actively involved on 26 September 1877, when the Galekas attacked a detachment of Frontier Armed Mounted Police, under Commander Griffith, and Fingo allies barely inside the Cape border with Kreli's Country. This particular force was driven back with heavy losses into their own territory, and in a general advance on 9 October, Commander Griffith burned Kreli's kraal. It looked for a time as if Kreli might ask for terms; this hope was shattered, however, when the Galekas slipped back across the Bashee and returned to their old homesteads as the colonials withdrew. The 24th Regiment was sent to reinforce Griffith,<sup>11</sup> and reports circulated of plans by Kreli to infiltrate the Cape Colony and incite the Gaikas.<sup>12</sup>

It was against the background of the Galeka uprising that Frere became involved in an important constitutional question concerning the definition of the power of a colonial governor. The situation came about, Frere wrote, when the Molteno Ministry pushed for a campaign in the Tambookie under exclusive colonial control. They wanted to create the office

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<sup>10</sup>B. S. P., "Further Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of South Africa," LV, 1878, C.-1961, No. 23 (28 August 1877), 560-61. Hereinafter referred to as B. S. P., C 1961.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid, Nos. 37 (20 October 1877), 45 (16 October 1877), 111 (11 December 1877), 586, 613, 734.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid, "Further Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of South Africa," LV, 1878, C.-2000, No. 22 (12 December 1877), 786. Hereinafter referred to as B. S. P., C 2000.

of Commanding General of Colonial Forces, under Commandant Griffith. He would control independent commands of colonials conducting active operations. Griffith himself was to be outside any other command structure.<sup>13</sup> This represented only one step from a previous arrangement whereby Griffith had considerable autonomy for his command east of the Kei. He did, however, receive "intimations" and forward reports to General Sir Arthur Cunynghame, who was in overall command.<sup>14</sup> It was not, however, a step Frere was ready to take. He turned the idea of "law and usage" on the proposal of the Ministry by writing that it negated any contention by Molteno that colonial forces could not be commanded by regular British officers. He explicitly reminded them of the recent Transkei campaign when Commandant Griffith was subordinate to the Commander of the Forces. There was, he continued, no real distinction between colonial and British forces, because both ultimately fell under the command of a Governor as Commander-in-Chief. The relationship of the Governor to his ministers was to take their advice and record his opposition

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<sup>13</sup>B. S. P., "Further Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of South Africa," LV, 1878, C.-2079, Nos. 53 (5 February 1878), 42 (24 January 1878), 97, 71. Hereinafter referred to as B. S. P., C 2079.

<sup>14</sup>George McCall Theal, History of South Africa from 1873 to 1884: Twelve Eventful Years (2 vols.; London: George Allen & Unwin, 1919), I, 64. Hereinafter referred to as Theal, History.

if he had a valid reason for doing so. He felt that he had followed such a course.<sup>15</sup>

The Molteno Ministry replied to Frere's remarks on 2 February 1878. Their minute asserted that the cabinet was entrusted by the Cape Parliament with the conduct of governmental business. This gave it collective control over military operations in the field and it could delegate such authority to any one of the ministers, including the Commissioner of Crown Lands and Public Works. Colonial forces had to be formally placed under the control of General Cunynghame for him to exercise any authority over them. Only if that were done by the Cape Government could authority be effective over any part of the colony's population. Relying on precedent, the minute noted it would be a complete reversal if command of military operations, for which the colony was paying, was turned over to imperial officers. Neither colony nor ministers would tolerate such a step. Military operations conducted in the name and with the money of the Cape Colony necessitated the naming of the commander of such operations by the Ministry. The Government ensured that it controlled such operations only by using this prerogative.<sup>16</sup> In his "Minute from the Governor in answer to Minute of Mr. Molteno, dated February 2, 1878" Frere referred to his Indian experi-

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<sup>15</sup>B. S. P., C 2079, Encl. 1 to No. 86 (11 May 1878), 209.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid, 214-15.

ences. He wrote that there were no colonial or regular troops in South Africa, except as a colloquial expression. As British troops in India were part of the Indian army, so was also the case in South Africa. Frere admitted only a difference in the way the South African and Indian armies were financed; ultimately the South African army was the responsibility of the South African Ministry as the Indian army was the responsibility of the Indian Ministry. The crucial note sounded in Frere's minute was, however, that any authority the Ministry possessed was through the Governor.<sup>17</sup>

Frere wrote to Carnarvon on 5 February 1878 that the note of 2 February given to him by the Molteno Ministry (at a meeting of the Executive Council) brought their downfall. Complete control over military affairs by any cabinet member was extremely risky, and would have resulted in sending the Governor, Commander of Forces, and Imperial troops from the battle scene. Such a course Frere was unwilling to follow, with its possibility of danger to the Eastern Province. The Molteno Ministry was dismissed and J. G. Sprigg chosen to form a new government.<sup>18</sup> Sir Bartle later summed up his reasons for the dismissal. General Sir Arthur Cunynghame had, from the beginning of hostilities, held command of colonial forces, the ministers being notified formally of

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid, Encl. 2, 217.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid, No. 54 (5 February 1878), 103.

this on 20 October 1877. It was not until 2 February that formal notification of opposition was given by the Molteno Ministry. The result was that the Governor as Commander-in-Chief had to use the constitutional powers at his disposal when the ministers insisted on divided command of a common area of operations.<sup>19</sup> As Frere noted in a letter to R. W. Herbert, his logic in the dismissal was as follows: it was, as a rule, up to the Parliament to choose ministers, but due to the prospect of two or three months of "unchecked Kaffir Civil War," a stand for the preservation of the constitution had to be taken; therefore he "asserted an important prerogative of the crown."<sup>20</sup>

Opinion at the time and since has been divided over the actions of Frere in dismissing the Molteno Ministry. J. X. Merriman was blunt, contending that "it does away with any kind of safeguard which Responsible Government was supposed to confer, for it is manifest that a Governor who can dismiss his ministers at will and in a huff is much less controlled than if those ministers were honest Executive Officers."<sup>21</sup> Clement Goodfellow, a writer on attempts at confederation at the time, believes that there was no con-

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid, No. 87 (21 May 1873), 252.

<sup>20</sup>Frere to Herbert (20 February 1878), Martineau, Frere, II, 212.

<sup>21</sup>Phyllis Lewsen, ed., Selections from the Correspondence of J. X. Merriman, 1870-1890 (Cape Town: Van Riebeck Society, 1960), 41.

spiracy against Molteno and in support of Sprigg, who was more inclined towards federalism. He thinks, instead, that Molteno was ousted because his actions could prolong the Kaffir War, thus hindering the movement towards confederation. Molteno was dismissed for attempting what every Secretary of State had urged the colonists to do previously, namely take over their own defense.<sup>22</sup>

The most detailed study of Frere and the ministerial crisis agrees with Goodfellow only partially. Phyllis Lewsen argues that the dismissal was connected with confederation, but was more involved. Frere recognized the need to use force if necessary to implement confederation. Worried about the Zulu threat to the Transvaal, he used the Gaika attack as an excuse to get more troops. When Molteno refused to sanction such a move, Frere fired him. The Tambookie situation, Lewsen contends, was overemphasized by Frere and did not constitute a serious enough charge to dismiss the Molteno Ministry. Started by an over-zealous Merriman who was worried about the loyalty of a certain chief, it was quelled by Griffith in a few days. It was certainly not worthy of the talents of a General Cunynghame. The genesis of the ministerial crisis had been on 30 December 1877, when Frere asked Molteno to confirm a request for new troops. When Molteno

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<sup>22</sup>Francis Clement Goodfellow, Great Britain and Confederation, 1870-1881 (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1966), 154-55. Hereinafter referred to as Goodfellow, Confederation.



refused, Frere sent the request on anyway. The crisis itself took shape on 31 January 1878, when Frere sent down an affirmative reply to his troop request, and asked the Ministry to sign the colonial treasury warrants. A minute dated the same day was the ministers' reply. An embarrassed Frere then replied with his own minute the same day. He used a handy excuse, dual command, to bring on a confrontation.<sup>23</sup>

Molteno himself, Lewsen believes, was correct in theory about a separate colonial command; however, with imperial forces engaged in the Transkei, it was practicably impossible. Molteno therefore foresaw the creation of a separate colonial command, formed later in 1879. The Governor also had to act with the advice of his Executive Council in matters of colonial defense. Frere, on the other hand, was correct in demanding a single command; at the same time he overdramatized to the Colonial Office the opposition of the Molteno Ministry to it and the possible results. In the end, Frere constituted a new threat to responsible government. It survived him, however, because of the failure of confederation. The principle for which Molteno fought was later enshrined in Dominion status.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Phyllis Lewsen, "The First Crisis in Responsible Government in the Cape Colony," Archives Yearbook for South African History, Part II (Cape Town: Minister of the Interior, 1943), 248-52.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid, 256-57, 261.

Lord Carnarvon had written to Frere in December 1876 that he envisioned the larger part of Africa under nominal British control, thereby excluding other national aspirants.<sup>25</sup> Approximately one year later Frere suggested a plan to the Colonial Office which tested this idea. Frere envisioned a protectorate stretching from the Atlantic on the west to the Transvaal-Portuguese border, and again as far north as the Portuguese possessions. He requested that at least Walwich Bay be brought under immediate control, because good harbors were scarce to the north of it. The Boers had already trekked into the region; there was always the possibility that a trekking Boer might create another Boer republic either east or west of the Transvaal. The British would then have another Transvaal problem on their hands.<sup>26</sup> The Colonial Office, however, was put in a real quandary because they neither saw the possibility of foreign intervention nor wanted the expense of governing the new annexation. If a problem such as this could throw the Colonial Office into such confusion, it is questionable just how far one could label subsequent acts of Frere as deliberate disobedience; perhaps they should instead be viewed in the context of the imperial expansion he championed. He was therefore no more

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<sup>25</sup>Goodfellow, Confederation, 117.

<sup>26</sup>B. S. P., C 2000, No. 1 (13 November 1877), 743, 745-46.

successful<sup>27</sup> with an appeal to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, successor to Carnarvon, to establish a protectorate.<sup>28</sup>

Before confederation could be assured, Sir Bartle Frere believed that first the native problem would have to be solved. This meant dealing first with the Pondos and then most certainly with the Zulus.<sup>29</sup> Concerning the Pondos, Frere could report by September 1878 that the problem had been solved by the capture of the St. John River estuary the preceding month. He considered it to be especially significant in case of trouble with Zulus, because British forces would not be attacked from the rear.<sup>30</sup> The message to Hicks-Beach meant, therefore, that he believed war with the Zulus to be imminent. Two months previously, he had requested that his powers as High Commissioner be expanded. He wanted a secretariat, but most of all Deputy Commissioners, reporting directly to him while stationed among the independent African tribes.<sup>31</sup> Obviously something was on Frere's mind. That something was the Zulus.

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<sup>27</sup>C. W. De Kiewiet, The Imperial Factor in South Africa: A Study in Politics and Economics (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1965), 221-22. Hereinafter referred to as De Kiewiet, Imperial.

<sup>28</sup>B. S. P., "Further Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of South Africa," LII, 1878-79, C.-2220, No. 17 (30 July 1878), 46-48. Hereinafter referred to as B. S. P., C2220.

<sup>29</sup>Goodfellow, Confederation, 157-60.

<sup>30</sup>B. S. P., C 2220, No. 60 (3 September 1878), 170-71.

<sup>31</sup>Goodfellow, Confederation, 157-58.

The problem between Sir Bartle Frere and the Zulus can be traced back to a year earlier. In October 1877, Sir Theophilus Shepstone had gone to a conference with them, hoping to obtain a boundary settlement favorable to the Transvaal. He was treated quite rudely by the Zulus, who remembered him taking their side formerly while he had been native administrator in Natal. The result was that Shepstone became a fanatical upholder of the Boer claim, and he warned Frere at the same time about the Zulu menace. Frere was placed in a difficult situation because Shepstone was speaking about the one subject, native affairs, on which he was supposedly an expert. Shepstone had also written that definite proof of the Dutch claim would be forthcoming. Although proof was never sent, Frere expected a favorable verdict from the boundary commission formed at the request of Lieutenant Governor Bulwer of Natal. Its verdict was, however, a victory for the Zulu claim. If sustained, it would result in a Boer revolt and the native uprising feared by Frere was certain to come.<sup>32</sup>

As one writer has noted, the subjugation of the African tribes had a qualification. It was to be for a political end, namely confederation, and was not to be social subjugation. Such a policy was the reflection of what had

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<sup>32</sup>Donald R. Morris, The Washing of the Spears: A History of the Rise of the Zulu Nation under Shaka and its Fall in the Zulu War of 1879 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1965), 269-71, 274. Hereinafter referred to as Morris, Spears.

been termed "civilizing policy" in the days of Sir George Grey.<sup>33</sup> Throughout 1878 Sir Bartle Frere spelled out what such a course meant. His opinion was that the tribes could be "made to take all the cost and much of the labour of their own government, but the impulse and the standards of right and wrong must be European."<sup>34</sup> Most necessary for permanent progress to be made was a strong central government.<sup>35</sup> There was also the problem, as in India, of getting the natives to "protect themselves against themselves."<sup>36</sup> Gun-carrying among the Kaffirs should be prohibited; courts and police could replace the system of fines with a civilized concept of offenses against society. A fundamental change, Frere thought, was to curtail the arbitrary rule of the chief in order to provide for "reasonable security for life and property." A corollary to this would be the provision for individual landholding. There was, however, a limit to how fast such measures could be accomplished. As Frere wrote, "change, like all great revolutions requires time and patience to effect peacefully."<sup>37</sup>

Another change which Sir Bartle Frere favored in South Africa was the development of an integrated civil serv-

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<sup>33</sup>Goodfellow, Confederation, 166.

<sup>34</sup>Martineau, Frere, II, 225.

<sup>35</sup>B. S. P., C 2079, No. 5 (9 January 1878), 15.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid, No. 67 (13 February 1878) 126.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid, No. 15 (9 January 1878), 15.

ice. A dispatch dated 1 June 1878 painted the picture, familiar in India, of the educated native in a very lonely position socially. Often employed as teachers and in commerce, they were seldom found in the civil service. No South African native civil service comparable to that in India had ever existed and would have to be built from scratch. The employment of educated natives had been limited to positions such as clerks and interpreters in government offices, not responsible positions such as magistrates and revenue officers on educational merit. Frere thought that the use of educated South African native public servants in native kraals would be a distinct improvement over what then existed. Having uneducated chiefs exercise arbitrary police functions was a disaster, when educated natives could be used instead.<sup>38</sup>

When Frere received the boundary commission report in July 1878, he began to devise means to delay its award and prepared for war. He sent General Theisiger to inspect Natal defenses, which the latter deemed very poor. There were too many places for the Zulus to cross and the defense force was inadequate. Theisiger recommended the invasion of Zululand instead of defense.<sup>39</sup> If Frere himself was having any second thoughts about what to do, they were dispelled by

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid, "Further Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of South Africa," LVI, 1878, C.-2144, No. 107 (1 June 1878), 606, 609. Hereinafter referred to as C 2144.

<sup>39</sup>Morris, Spears, 275.

a visit he made in September 1878 to Natal.<sup>40</sup> He was besieged in Durban by people concerned about the Zulu threat. They impressed upon him the "urgent necessity for protective and precautionary measures. Missionaries, laymen, merchants, farmers--all met him with the same story and the same appeal."<sup>41</sup> One contemporary writer summed up the general attitude: "The Zulu nation is a bugbear, and the sooner Bogy is got rid of the better."<sup>42</sup> At the end of the month, Sir Bartle sent Hicks-Beach a dispatch emphasizing the warlike behavior of the Zulus of late and declaring that they were only waiting for a good opportunity to put the British in the wrong by some means before attacking. He also emphasized the essential indefensibility of both the Cape and Natal.<sup>43</sup>

One point in Frere's dispatch of 30 September 1878 stood out from everything else. This was the confirmation of a report that two women had been dragged back across the Natal border to be murdered. The culprits had been two sons of Sirayo, a Zulu whom Frere described as very anti-British and who had recently come into favor with Cetewayo, the Zulu king. Frere thought no fine was enough for the act, because

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<sup>40</sup>De Kiewiet, Imperial, 227.

<sup>41</sup>Sir John Robinson, A Life Time in South Africa (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1900), 127-28.

<sup>42</sup>Alfred Aylward, The Transvaal of Today (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1878), 18.

<sup>43</sup>B. S. P., C 2220, No. 105 (20 September 1878), 294, 296-97.

it was "incompatible with national honour as with the future safety of Her Majesty's Colony." The Boers were most certainly watching, and he reminded Hicks-Beach that it was because President Burgers could not put down Sikukuni's rebellion that the viability of the Transvaal Republic had ended. The stakes were high, for

the future peace of this part of Africa and its progress in civilization both depend on the issue. It is not national pride, but the interests of humanity which forbid our acquiescing in failure, or even in delayed success.

Later, in a dispatch of 6 October 1878, Frere mentioned two more incidents that afforded serious attention, namely the detention of two surveyors just inside the Natal border and the ejection of farmers from their land at Luneburg and Bivana by the Zulus.<sup>44</sup> If his attitude towards the Zulus hardened in September, it is not difficult to understand why from these incidents. They had violated a fixed British line twice, and, remembering his views on Afghanistan, it is obvious why Frere took a dim view of such an occurrence; the Zulus had also violated the principle of civilized behavior that Frere had spent a lifetime trying to encourage and which he hoped to instill in the South African native.

The request by Frere for troops in late 1878 had the concurrence of Hicks-Beach, but was opposed by Disraeli. As

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid, C 2220, Nos. 105 (30 September 1878), 111 (6 October 1878), 294, 296, 298, 305.



a result, only special service officers were sent.<sup>45</sup> Sir Bartle was advised to send the troops he had to the Natal and Transvaal borders for defense. Hicks-Beach was sending more troops a month later, but felt that the peace could be maintained.<sup>46</sup> The boundary award to the Zulus was finally made on 11 December 1878, but with conditions attached which were to be affirmed in thirty days. They included the surrender of those responsible for the murder of the two women within twenty days; a fine for detaining the two surveyors; trial of Zulus accused of criminal acts, with the right of appeal to the Zulu king; return of the missionaries driven away; disarming and dismissal of the Zulu army; the admission of a Government Resident.<sup>47</sup> The Resident was included, Frere wrote, because Cetewayo was too unreliable for a treaty to be made with him. The demands were a combination of Frere's ideas on a new native society and retribution for offensive acts already perpetrated. He was enforcing, as was his way, moral superiority and superior force to right past and possible future wrongs. Zulu and Briton could be separate but

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<sup>45</sup> Monypenny and Buckle, Beaconsfield, VI, 420.

<sup>46</sup> B. S. P., C 2220, Nos. 92A (17 October 1878), 119 (21 November 1878), 289, 336.

<sup>47</sup> Theal, History, I, 304.

peaceful only as long as one recognized the superior power of the other. It could not happen while Cetewayo headed the Zulus.<sup>48</sup>

Hicks-Beach was certain that Frere was heading for war, and he confessed to Disraeli his inability to control him. His one hope was that with the swift defeat of the Zulus the Boers would be quiescent.<sup>49</sup> The Cape was indeed preparing for war,<sup>50</sup> and Frere gave Lord Chelmsford responsibility for enforcing the demands on the Zulus.<sup>51</sup> Disaster followed. An element of the British force invading Zululand was destroyed at Isandhlwana, and a fierce public descended upon the Disraeli Government.<sup>52</sup> The cabinet issued a charge of censure against Frere on 19 March 1879,<sup>53</sup> and major discussions were held in both the House of Lords and House of Commons. Radical Liberals were old opponents of Carnarvon's confederation scheme<sup>54</sup> and Sir Charles Dilke had written a letter to

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<sup>48</sup>B. S. P., "Further Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of South Africa," LII, 1878-1879, C.-2222, Nos. 45 (10 December 1878), 54 (14 December 1878), 616, 643-45.

<sup>49</sup>Monypenny and Buckle, Beaconsfield, VI, 421, 423.

<sup>50</sup>The Times (London), 6 January 1879, 6.

<sup>51</sup>B. S. P., "Further Papers Respecting the Affairs of South Africa," LII, 1878-1879, C.-2242, No. 1 (6 January 1879), 679.

<sup>52</sup>Ensor, England, 60-61.

<sup>53</sup>Monypenny and Buckle, Beaconsfield, VI, 425-26.

<sup>54</sup>Goodfellow, Confederation, 138.

the Spectator opposing it.<sup>55</sup> He introduced a motion in the House of Commons expressing regret at Frere retaining office,<sup>56</sup> only to see it discussed first in the House of Lords where Lord Lansdown introduced it verbatim.<sup>57</sup> Lansdown set the tone of the Liberal attack in the Lords when he observed that the actions of Frere had violated previous British policy of teaching savages civilized ways through good administration and example. It was a peaceful policy, not one depending on the sword. Lord Kimberley wondered why Frere was not recalled as he had completely disobeyed the Secretary; more important, however, was the fact that it was wrong to remove confidence in a man by censure but not remove him. Sir Robert Peel possibly raised the most basic question when he observed that the Zulu War was neither "a just or necessary war."<sup>58</sup>

The speech by Dilke on his motion was given two days after that of Lord Lansdown in the House of Lords. Congratulated afterwards by men from both sides of the aisle, he called it his "'greatest success.'"<sup>59</sup> Dilke's basic line of

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<sup>55</sup>Stephen Gwynn and Gertrude M. Tuckwell, The Life of the Rt. Hon. Sir Charles W. Dilke (2 vols.; New York: Macmillan Company, 1917), I, 271-72. Hereinafter referred to as Gwynn and Tuckwell, Dilke.

<sup>56</sup>Great Britain, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 3rd ser., Vol. 244 (3 March-28 March, 1879), col. 1865. Hereinafter referred to as Hansard.

<sup>57</sup>Gwynn and Tuckwell, Dilke, 273.

<sup>58</sup>Hansard, 3rd ser., Vol. 244 (3 March-28 March, 1879), cols. 1620, 1676-78, 2022.

<sup>59</sup>Gwynn and Tuckwell, Dilke, 274-75.

thought was summed up in the question: "Was it not the more prudent course to follow, instead of exhibiting a knight-errand boldness, for an English statesman to act in a spirit of watchful care?"<sup>60</sup> Joseph Chamberlain was opposed to the new imperialism that Frere and Chelmsford represented, because of the onerous responsibility it would impose.<sup>61</sup> Practicable points were made: Natal had taken prisoners from Zululand by force before (in reference to the two women); and the two surveyors were military spies, Frere having already decided on invasion. One member considered Frere too partial to missionaries. In his opinion, "they should not be under the impression that the country was prepared to spend blood and treasure in assisting them, wherever they might go."<sup>62</sup> The Marquis of Salisbury had reiterated the case of the Government in the Lords by saying that the Government did not want to question the policy of Sir Bartle Frere in the middle of a war; they did want him to understand that "Her Majesty's Advisers, and they only, must decide the grave issues of peace and war." Salisbury could not help but admire Frere and added a postscript that characterized his own policy years later, namely that rules of normal diplomacy did not always apply in areas such as South Africa. The formula that had

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<sup>60</sup>Hansard, 3rd ser., Vol. 244 (3 March-28 March, 1879), col. 1885.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid, col. 1916.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid, cols. 1877-78, 2087-88.

made the Empire great and would continue to do so was "boldness, boldness, and always boldness."<sup>63</sup>

Sir Bartle Frere rendered his own defense in a dispatch to Hicks-Beach on 30 June 1879. He described himself as captain of a ship caught at sea in a hurricane. On shore, the owners of the ship were trying to direct the captain's movements, a rather impossible situation; but it was what the people of Britain were trying to do with their colonial administrators. On the practical side, Frere complained of the lack of consideration given by the boundary commission to the welfare of the Boer families in the lands awarded to the Zulus. "I made," he wrote, "such provision as I thought would be adequate to secure the rights of property of civilised men." The other reason for imposing the demands on the Zulus, Frere contended, was the murder of the two women dragged across the Natal border. "They were human beings, who had managed to escape into British territory, and there believed themselves to be, (as we should, if asked, have told them they were) protected by British law and by the determination of British men, that British power should be employed to its utmost to defend those under British protection, and enforce British law." The description Frere gave of Cetewayo as "a blood-thirsty barbarian, utterly opposed to European

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid, cols. 1679-80.

Salisbury was Prime Minister three times, beginning in 1885. Chamberlain was the Colonial Secretary in his last cabinet (1895-1902). Ensor, England, 608-11.

civilized ideas and ways" was everything Frere had ever fought against.<sup>64</sup>

The most stinging criticism of the policy enunciated by Frere in Afghanistan and South Africa came from Gladstone during his Midlothian campaigns in Scotland in 1879 and 1880,<sup>65</sup> described as the "best summary of the Liberal doctrine on world policy."<sup>66</sup> He deprecated the annexation of the Transvaal, noting that 6,500 of its 8,000 electors had signed a petition against it. The Zulus had acted as patriots, only to be mowed down by the best weapons European science could supply. The actions taken in both South Africa and Afghanistan were wrong:

We had no business to go there with these gratuitous and unnecessary difficulties, disturbing confidence, perplexing business, unsettling the fabric of civilised society through the world. We had no business to take those engagements when our hands were full. But I contend, also that the engagements were bad; and that being bad, we ought not to have undertaken them, even if our hands, instead of being full, had been perfectly empty.<sup>67</sup>

The election that was fought in Britain in 1880 was a victory for Gladstone and the Liberals, but it had results unforeseen at that time. The recall of Sir Bartle Frere in

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<sup>64</sup>B. S. P., "Further Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of South Africa," LIV, 1878-1879, C.-2454, No. 54 (30 June 1879), 298-99, 302-03.

<sup>65</sup>Ensor, England, 63-64.

<sup>66</sup>Thornton, Idea, 43.

<sup>67</sup>W. E. Gladstone, Midlothian Speeches, 1879 (New York: Humanities Press, 1971), 48-49, 91, 63.

August 1880, after the concept of confederation had been rejected by the Cape Parliament, led to a Boer revolt. Neither was the Transvaal disannexed as Gladstone had wanted, nor was it given the self-government under the Crown that Frere envisioned; the Transvaal was given independence, and the dropping of the word "suzerainty" (over the Boers by the British) by the Convention of London in 1884 led to another twenty years of strife.<sup>68</sup> On the other hand, Gladstone's Midlothian speeches showed he did not yet comprehend that the tenet of imperialism could not be held back, for it was already a "public state of mind in Europe." Joseph Chamberlain soon reflected such a state of mind. In his opinion, political and economic control were one. He conceived of the Foreign and Colonial Offices as seekers of new markets and protectors of the old ones. If reminded that commerce with British colonies was not vital to the mother country, Chamberlain would expound Britain's role as trustee and propagator of civilization. His colonial policy was quite simple: keep current possessions, covet what looked good for the future, and fight anyone who disagreed.<sup>69</sup>

The Liberals themselves were unable to stop the imperialist advance, and the imperialists looked for any chance to damage their foe. The best chance came with the

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<sup>68</sup>Ensor, England, 64, 68-69.

<sup>69</sup>Thornton, Idea, 43, 104-05, 99-100.

"khaki election" of 1900, twenty years after Midlothian.<sup>70</sup> But the true strength of the imperial impulse was shown with the annexation of the two Boer republics--Orange Free State and Transvaal--in the early 1900s. As John Strachey has pointed out however, it was not so much the accomplishment of Rhodes and Chamberlain as of Sir Alfred Milner, the administrator, with his unequaled determination.<sup>71</sup> Appointed to his post as High Commissioner for South Africa in 1897, Milner had been imbued with the imperialist spirit as a result of working with Cromer in Egypt and observing the benefits of British rule.<sup>72</sup> British colonial policy had come full circle and Milner, the administrator, had succeeded where Frere, the administrator, had failed. The idea for which Frere had fought had become a reality.

There is another question to answer, namely Frere's place in history. Sir Reginald Copeland has ranked Frere among the three ablest men sent to South Africa by the British Government, Sir George Grey and Viscount Milner being the other two. He even thought it possible that with success in Zululand Frere could have avoided the continued strife in South Africa.<sup>73</sup> Whether or not this was possible

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid, 46-47.

<sup>71</sup>Strachey, The End of Empire, 91.

<sup>72</sup>Ensor, England, 245.

<sup>73</sup>Sir Reginald Coupland, Zulu Battle Piece: Isandhlwana (London: John Murray, 1896), 133-34.



at the time, Frere earned the ingratitude of an experienced colonial administrator of the day, Lord Blachford. The latter complained that Frere had no idea as to how colonial government was conducted, conceiving his ignorance to be "superior knowledge."<sup>74</sup> In a way, Lord Blachford was right, for as another writer has explained, Frere "belonged to the new generation of imperialists announced by Livingstone and realized by Chamberlain."<sup>75</sup> They did not want to know about the old way of handling colonial affairs; they already had their program. Some years later, Cecil Rhodes spoke of how new states had been carved out in South Africa, and how the Afrikander Bond had tried to alleviate differences between them. One excerpt is very enlightening:

I might say there is no difference between the policy of Sir Bartle Frere and the policy of the Afrikander Bond. If that had been stated at the time Sir Bartle Frere was Governor of the Cape Colony, it would have been met with laughter; but now you receive the statement in all seriousness, recognizing its truth. People are beginning to see that this is the grand central idea.<sup>76</sup>

He had also said six years earlier that the "union [of South Africa] is not to be reached as the late Sir Bartle Frere wanted to reach to Zambesi--all in a minute."<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>George Eden Marindin, Letters of Frederic Lord Blachford (London: John Murray, 1896), 394.

<sup>75</sup>De Kiewiet, Imperial, 127.

<sup>76</sup>Vindex [F. Vetschoyle], Cecil Rhodes: His Political Life and Speeches (London: Chapman and Hall, 1900), 269.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid, 114.

## CONCLUSION

The roots of Victorian imperialism are to be found, to a considerable degree, in British India, and it was there that its character was largely molded. One of the most prominent characteristics of Victorian imperialism was the emphasis on civilized progress. Public works, a basic human endeavor, were a good example of that principle. They were carried out for the benefit of the people of India. The British administrator, as exemplified by Sir Bartle Frere, was pragmatic about them. Roads, he theorized, led to trade, and trade to a better life for the Indians. Humanistic feelings were also a factor in public works.<sup>1</sup> As an administrator, Frere saw no problem in combining the two factors. No compulsion was placed on the natives by the emphasis on public works; instead, British administration was providing the basis on which the Indians would construct a new and better India. In large part, the administrators were successful, as they laid the foundation for modern industry in India. They erred, however, by touching on Indian sensibilities. It was this mistake that led to the Indian Mutiny in 1857, which transferred governmental power from the old East India Company to the British Government. The Mutiny resulted in

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<sup>1</sup>Supra, 7-9.

power steadily becoming concentrated in London, racial antagonism between the British and Indians, and a dislike among the British for further reform.<sup>2</sup>

The concentration of power in London, racial antagonism, and the loss of a sense of mission which was evident among many Britons in India after the Mutiny did not affect Sir Bartle Frere. His attitude was a reflection of his training in the Sind, where the emphasis had been on individual initiative and personal relationships with the Indians. This persuaded him to fight for the governing of British India in India itself and against racial discrimination in government. He opposed, for instance, the ideas of Canning for realigning his executive council and also the Arms Bill of 1860.<sup>3</sup> Frere never lost his sense of mission; this was reiterated when he lectured to the Indian upper classes and university students about their responsibilities for India.<sup>4</sup> As with public works, however, British administration provided only the frame of the house; the structure would have to be built by the Indians themselves. The British provided the superior moral and political leadership for the Indians, as Frere had been taught at the training college at Haileybury.<sup>5</sup> In summary, the hallmarks of Indian administration as exemplified by Frere were free trade, individual initiative in administration, personal contact with the natives, and super-

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<sup>2</sup>Supra, 19.

<sup>3</sup>Supra, 25-28, 31-32.

<sup>4</sup>Supra, 38-39.

<sup>5</sup>Supra, 1.

ior moral and political leadership. All these factors were present to one degree or another in the areas--Afghanistan and Africa--where Frere later took an imperialist stance.

Afghanistan provided the first instance of contention between the imperialist, or "forward school," and, in this case, the group favoring status quo headed by John Lawrence. The problem was how to keep Afghanistan out of Russian hands. Sir Bartle Frere emphasized two arguments in advocating a forward policy. He wanted a British agent to deal personally with the Afghan ruler and thus reduce the chance of undue Russian influence on him. The agent was also to insist on protection for British commercial interests.<sup>6</sup> John Lawrence, on the other hand, favored a less ambitious policy whereby India would be defended on its own border, if the need arose.<sup>7</sup> It was essentially the same "imperial vs. anti-imperial" argument that erupted again when the South African policy pursued by Frere was attacked by British Liberals. The major difference in earlier arguments between Frere and Lawrence over Afghanistan was that they involved two Indian administrators who were experts in their field. Their arguments therefore were of a highly technical nature, the implications of which did not appear until Lord Lytton became Viceroy and Governor-General. By this time Frere was in South Africa, and events there began to parallel those in Afghanistan,

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<sup>6</sup>Supra, 51-52.

<sup>7</sup>Supra, 54.

where the new Viceroy was taking an aggressive stance. Both cases were decided on the basis of Indian administrative experience.

The mission of Sir Bartle Frere to Zanzibar had a more direct link with India than his service in South Africa. The reason for the mission was the Turkish threat to the Persian Gulf, an area the British considered a special sphere of influence; indirectly it menaced British rule in India because of the religious significance of the Sultan of Constantinople. It was to forestall this threat that colonial administrators suggested forcing the Sultan of Zanzibar to ban the slave trade in his far-flung East African empire. They sought to reconstruct an old alliance between the British and the progressive mercantile elements and prevent any intrusion of hostile powers.<sup>8</sup> The argument made by Frere that free trade would compensate for the loss of the slave trade was natural because of his Indian background. The use of a consular system to keep the slave trade in check, and missionary groups to establish personal rapport and advance civilized behavior among the released slaves was also in keeping with his Indian experiences. More important, however, was his belief in the superior moral and political leadership of Britain in providing for the advancement of the Africans. This, in the end, was the basis for his contention that free

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<sup>8</sup>Supra, 60-62.

trade would adequately compensate for abolition of the slave trade by Zanzibar.

The same basic belief in the superior moral and political leadership that Britain could provide for uncivilized peoples underlay the actions taken by Sir Bartle Frere which led to the Zulu War. He expressed the certainty that he was right in the dispatches he sent back to the Colonial Office;<sup>9</sup> if he was not, his entire career had been a waste. Frere constructed his edifice upon that base. He envisioned a British resident able to work on a personal basis with Cetewayo.<sup>10</sup> An incident such as the dragging of the two women back across the Natal border by the Zulus gave Frere a good illustration of the need for such moral and political leadership.<sup>11</sup> Gladstone was correct in linking events in Afghanistan and South Africa. They were cut from the same cloth, and signaled the rise of the imperialist spirit that would culminate with such politicians as Joseph Chamberlain. It was another administrator, Viscount Milner, who, imbued with the imperial ideal, effectively carried British influence all the way north to the Zambesi.<sup>12</sup>

The inevitable conclusion is that the British Indian administrator was the decisive factor in the formation of Victorian imperialism. Frere had been instrumental in reversing British policy in Afghanistan, Eastern Africa, and South

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<sup>9</sup>Supra, 98-99.

<sup>10</sup>Supra, 98.

<sup>11</sup>Supra, 96-97.

<sup>12</sup>Supra, 105.

Africa. The British cleared Afghanistan of Russian influence, kept East Africa in the British sphere of influence, and prepared the way for South African confederation.

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