The Concept of Economic Imperialism
Author(s): Richard Koebner
Source: *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1949), pp. 1-29
Published by: Wiley on behalf of the Economic History Society
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2590079
Accessed: 14-04-2017 04:37 UTC

THE
ECONOMIC HISTORY
REVIEW

SECOND SERIES, VOL. II, NO. 1 1949

THE CONCEPT OF ECONOMIC IMPERIALISM

BY RICHARD KOEBNER

I

THE term 'imperialism' has in the course of its rapid career become variegated and elusive to a degree. The word has been accepted as a key to the understanding of contemporary history. But there is reason to doubt whether the writers, who in the past used it most confidently in this sense, were certain of what they meant by it, and did not, in fact, become enmeshed in its ambiguity. There is, however, one connotation which tends to overshadow all others and to convey to the reader a clear-cut meaning tantamount to a great historical revelation. This connotation is implied most clearly when the noun 'imperialism' is qualified by the adjective 'economic'. Indeed authors and propagandists are sometimes so certain of the economic interpretation as to drop the adjective and to assume that the reader cannot but think of special economic interests whenever the word imperialism is brought out.[1]

The meaning of the word in this application is as follows. The men representing the interests of capital in the greater countries of the West have obtained control of the foreign and colonial policy of their governments. The nations which are commonly referred to by the term of 'western civilization' have been goaded by their capitalists into bringing weaker peoples oversea within their grip and into exploiting them. The same had been done by Venetians, Dutchmen and Englishmen in former centuries; but—so the doctrine runs—getting hold of undeveloped countries did not become a dominant factor in politics until capitalism reached its full efflorescence—that is to say, until the last decades of the nineteenth century. It is then that the age of imperialism—or of economic imperialism or of modern imperialism—came into being. How long it lasted—whether imperialism is still vigorous in our days or already far on its decline—on this question opinions differ. They differ on other points too. Is the capitalist interest which dominates the whole movement rooted in the first

[1] Cf. for example F. Sternberg, *Der Imperialismus* (1926), p. 49: '. . . Imperialismus, das heisst Kapitalexpansion in nicht kapitalistischen Territorien.'

place in great industrial enterprises, or in the profit-making of financiers and speculators? Are the instigations of capitalists the only decisive factors in the expansionist activities of Western countries or have other motives, especially national pride, been of more than subsidiary influence?

Besides differences of historical interpretation there are others concerning the application of the term to individual cases. To many people it will sound absurd if a minor state, as for instance Belgium or the Netherlands, is credited with 'imperialism' in its colonies; nevertheless, this is done. But all such divergences are of minor importance in relation to the general point of view represented by the term 'economic imperialism': modern foreign and colonial policies obeying the dictates of capitalist interests.

At the time when this view of modern history was wedded to 'imperialism' the word had already been for some time a topic in animated controversies.[1] But accentuated by the economic connotation it was eventually to become a powerful irritant. Whatever the truth of its assertion concerning economic influences on modern politics—its claim to expose these influences has conferred on the word the quality of a powerful factor in modern public life.

The term 'imperialism' is altogether of recent origin. It started its career when Europe, and especially England, pondered over the destinies of the second French Empire. Twenty years later it was called in to denote contemporary ways of English foreign politics, the politics of Disraeli. After one more decade it began to be accepted as an expression which embodied belief in the British Empire. This last meaning has endured to our own day. But most people who value the Empire connexion have become shy of styling themselves imperialists. They cannot but be conscious of the ominous connotations which have accrued to both 'imperialism' and 'imperialist'. In these connotations the original bias of the term which implied criticism of Louis Napoléon and of Beaconsfield is still to be traced; but this bias has been resuscitated and applied to the objects of enthusiasm which inspired the 'imperialism' in the 1890's. This enthusiasm was then itself expanding its meaning. While at first it had given pride of place to the connexion between the mother-country and the self-governing dominions, in the last years of the century the Asiatic and especially the new African dependencies came to be valued no less highly. The African exploits led to grave political repercussions, internationally as well as internally, and it was in this connexion that a bad name attached again to 'imperialism'. An echo arose across the Atlantic. In the United States the expansionist moves, prominent during the war of 1898, were dubbed 'imperialism' by their opponents. The danger of imperialism was proclaimed in both countries, and in connexion with this the economic explanation entered the field. Imperialist maxims and imperialist politics were said to be the chosen creed of sections of society which were materially interested in activities such as the conflict with the Transvaal which led to

[1] In the following, I sometimes venture to anticipate results of a study, to be published later, concerning the career of the term 'imperialism' and cognate notions.

the Boer War and the bid for annexations which emerged from the Spanish-American War.

The fundamental notions of economic imperialism were conceived in this atmosphere. They were welded into a theory by that great advocate of a co-ordination between economic effort and social progress, John Atkinson Hobson. In his *Imperialism, A Study* (published in 1902), the concept was given a place in the critical analysis of capitalist economics. Such an interpretation implied that the concept was applicable not only to the politics of Britain and the United States but also to those of other countries especially France and Germany. A world-wide application had in fact been given to the word by authors who did not approach imperialism from the economic point of view. The attempts of the great European powers to secure spheres of interest in China were thus resented. English and American writers were the first to see the light. In the first years of the present century German, French and Italian writers followed suit and discussed the newly-discovered spirit of the time. It was, however, well noticed on the continent that there was a special connexion between imperialism and the British Empire. The French and—still longer—the German public employed the word imperialism to describe and to criticize either the ascent of the British Empire or modern endeavours to strengthen its coherence. These uses of the word were, of course, also frequent in English public opinion. Here an assertive as well as a negative ring could be given to the term. In Germany the circumstantial scholarship of Schulze-Gaevernitz tried to interpret British imperialism as the joint result of diverse historical factors: Puritan education of will-power, new national restlessness and economic apprehension.

These new vicissitudes of the term suggest that the exclusive association of imperialism and capitalist acquisitiveness had so far failed to establish itself. The vogue attained by the word contributed only to still more meanings being read into it. It was also applied to the history of empires generally. 'In a sense it may be said that imperialism is as old as the world'; so Lord Cromer justified his thoughtful comparison between 'Ancient and Modern Imperialism', the first of many disquisitions to which the concept meant neither more nor less than the phenomenon of empire-building throughout history. Before 1914 the line indicated by Hobson was followed only by socialist authors in Germany and Austria who incorporated the imperialist policy of capitalist expansion into the framework of ideas of Karl Marx, i.e. by O. Bauer, K. Hilferding, Rosa Luxemburg. But they were as yet of little consequence, even in the Marxian camp.[1] Another adept was won during the war. While German socialists were still quarrelling whether the concept of imperialism was to be adopted into their system of thought, Lenin was studying Hobson's book in Zürich and basing on it the far-reaching conclusions of his pamphlet *Imperialism the Highest State of Capitalism*. This pamphlet was printed in Petrograd when its author returned there in 1917.

Lenin wished to make the Russians understand that fighting the war against Germany was nothing but bleeding for international capitalism.

[1] The same holds true of H. N. Brailsford's *War of Steel and Gold* (1914).

It would be interesting to know whether and with whom his argument carried influence while Russia's adherence to the Allied cause was still in suspense. The world-wide influence of his pamphlet dates, however, from 1920 when it was translated into German and French and helped to enhance the reputations of the earlier books of Hilferding and Rosa Luxemburg with the Marxists. But by that time doctrines of economic imperialism directly derived from Hobson had found favour with socialists too, who did not profess Marxian orthodoxy. Leonard Woolf by his *Empire and Commerce in Africa* and his more popular pamphlet *Economic Imperialism* started the campaign of the English Labour Research Department for winding up colonial empires. In 1921 'economic imperialism' was the subject of a series of lectures delivered by the French Professor Achille Viallate at the Institute of Politics, William's College, Mass. These lectures were published in English and French in 1923. The author, who twenty years earlier had interpreted the protectionist imperialism of Chamberlain as a contribution to British self-sufficiency,[1] enlarged now on the subject of imperialist expansion. It was, according to him, dictated by the desire of the 'great industrial nations' to find 'outlets both for the utilization of their available capital and for the surplus of their production'. This economic imperialism, he said, had worsened international relations before the war; people ought to be warned against the portent of its being intensified now.[2] Soon afterwards economic imperialism in this meaning became a topic of a vast American literature which was by no means intended to further the cause of socialism. W. S. Culbertson emphasized the influence of surplus capital on the scramble for raw materials and the ensuing international frictions. Carlton Hayes and Parker T. Moon set out to see recent European history in the light of 'substitution of the more peaceful and subtle methods of economic imperialism, of investment and trade for the aggressive military imperialism of the old régime'. A flood of publications written in the same vein followed. Economic imperialism was made more or less responsible for the World War. 'Dollar diplomacy', the name once chosen for the politics of Presidents Th. Roosevelt and W. Taft, was now taken to represent the American brand of a world-embracing movement. J. Viner stated in 1929 that the term imperialism had become 'a downright nuisance'; but in the meantime the economic views expressed by it had been adopted in general historical literature.[3]

The three groups of thought and propaganda which we may call the Marxian, the Fabian and the American by no means represent an identical attitude towards contemporary society and politics. But their mutual independence gives only greater importance to the facts that they all at

[1] *La Crise Anglaise. Impérialisme et Protection* (1905). Cf. especially p. viii.

[2] *Economic Imperialism and International Relations during the last fifty years* (New York, 1923), pp. 62 f., 167 f.

[3] American writing based on the concept has been reviewed by E. M. Winslow, 'Marxian, Liberal and Sociological Theories of Imperialism', *The Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 39 (1931), pp. 737 ff. IV. 'The Formula of Economic Imperialism and the Historians.'

the same time have seen reason to elaborate J. A. Hobson's ideas and that they have arrived at views on history much akin to each other. They have joined in achieving a victory for the concept of economic imperialism. This success has indeed been frequently and—as we may assume—convincingly contested by historians and sociologists. But scholarly criticism was unable to prevent the forming of an international *communis opinio* for which economic imperialism has become an accepted fact. This acceptance has had enormous consequences. The historical view expressed in the term has gone far to stereotype popular attitudes to western civilization and western states. For communists, all the world round, it has given shape to the background against which their new world is to emerge. But it has had an impact no less vehement on consciences not converted to communism. It may have greatly contributed to the American distrust of western Europe and the British Empire. In England it has been a moral solvent. It has made people averse to colonial activity of every kind and apathetic towards imperial misfortunes; these could be easily construed as retributions for the economic imperialism of former days. The concept has finally become widely known among the peoples who had reasons to regard themselves as objects of 'imperialist' expansion. It has inspired and embittered national movements in Asiatic nations, in colonies, and in mandatory countries; it has widened the gulf between their intellectuals and the western nations, Great Britain in particular.

In all these directions the impact is still felt. To trace its channels and to measure its range is no task for the historian yet. But to ask how modern political and economic developments came to be understood by the terms of economic imperialism, and how this interpretation was able to carry conviction, is to put questions capable of historical investigation.

The questions would be easily answered if the advocates of the concept had succeeded in making good its postulates. For this purpose they would have had to clear the concept of its ambiguities and show it to embody an adequate interpretation of a certain category of political and administrative actions. This brought out, it should have shown that in these actions groups of capitalists have taken a leading part. The activities of these capitalists ought finally to be demonstrated as consequences of the economic structure of capitalist society. If all this were a matter of convincing proof there would be no need to ask why the concept has proved convincing.

Some advocates of the historical view implied in the concept have indeed been very active in explaining it and in collecting evidence in its proof. But the criticism with which they have met has been based on arguments more conclusive than the thesis itself. The criticism is equally convincing when it dissects the Neo-Marxian tenets (as J. A. Schumpeter has done)[1] as when (as in the writings of J. Viner and E. M. Winslow) it exposes the exaggerations and misconstructions which have marred American scholarship. It has been demonstrated again and again that statistical data do not in fact, as has been asserted, bring out a tendency of surplus capital to flow into

[1] *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (1943), pp. 49–55.

colonial and other 'imperial' enterprises rather than into other investments.[1] It has been shown (by W. K. Hancock and S. H. Frankel) that the practical problems of colonial economics are by far too serious to be disposed of by the indictment of imperialist greed.[2] Research on diplomatic history even if prepared to accept economic influences in general terms has seen no occasion to trace them individually.

In short the critics of the concept have done enough to show that the assurance with which it is proclaimed and the confidence with which it is accepted are not based on its demonstrability. This negative result adds special importance to the questions: How did the concept emerge, how came it to carry conviction?

II

The concept of economic imperialism thus passed through four distinct stages. The first stage saw the emergence of its characteristic motifs which were finally arranged into a system by J. A. Hobson. The second stage was one of adaptation of Hobson's views to the framework of Marxist thought. In the third stage, since 1920, the doctrine that mankind was fettered by economic imperialism was widely propagated, not only in the Marxist-Leninist version but in specifically British and American versions as well. This promulgation was in the fourth stage followed by the concept becoming a powerful political ferment all over the world. We are especially concerned with the first of these stages.

At the beginning of this century the economic interpretation of imperialism was a special instance of a certain historical view. This was the view that the nations of the west were obsessed by a common tendency to expand their dominance over the world and that this tendency impressed its character on the age. In this way one historical generalization—the economic one—was quickly superimposed upon another relating to modern 'world politics'. Both generalizations implied a historical retrospect. According to them the age of imperialism, whether economically interpreted or not, had started in the 1880's and was now in its prime. This view has since become a part of school-book history. It cannot, however, be thought insignificant to note that this historical doctrine was not widely accepted until the very end of the century whose last decades it purported to interpret. It was so obviously influenced by contemporary events and actions, that we are bound to ask: Do these challenges perhaps apply, in fact, not to the whole period but only to those few years in which the term 'imperialism' came to be used in that far-reaching application?

This application had no basis in tradition. Reminiscences of the Roman Empire had little or nothing to do with its cropping up. It was not customary as yet to speak of 'Roman imperialism' to describe the rise and

[1] Lately by W. K. Hancock, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs* (1940), vol. II, pt. 1, pp. 26 f., and by Louis M. Hacker, *England and America; the ties that bind.* Inaugural Lecture (Oxford, 1948), pp. 19 f.

[2] Hancock, *Survey*, etc. vol. II, pt. 2, pp. 300–2; Frankel, *Capital investment in Africa* (1938), p. 28.

growth of this classical empire, and its Mediterranean scope offered no obvious analogy to the overseas ventures of modern European powers. The word 'imperialism' was used somewhat traditionally only in the English language and only with regard to the British Empire. In this context it did not, in the first place, apply to every extension of the Empire. If abusively used it meant Disraelian adventures; if used sympathetically it meant strengthening the ties between the mother-country and the self-governing colonies. In continental countries a word implying the notion of empire ought to suggest meanings very different from that of acquisitions overseas. The Austro-Hungarian and the Russian empires had no possessions of this kind. Germany and France had both laid claim to such possessions; but it was by no means natural to call their colonial aspirations 'imperial'. The German Emperor and Empire (Kaiser und Reich) were symbols of regained national unity and strength. In France 'imperial' phraseology recalled the two Napoléons.

But apart from the name—what about the identity of purpose which the term implies existed in the far-flung enterprises of western nations? These activities ranged—it is true—over the whole globe and had followed one another very quickly. But to represent them as if they had originated in the same motives impelling all nations alike—these interpretations conflicted with well-known facts. Let us take our stand at a date in the middle of the period, about 1892. Western European nations had by then proceeded rather far in the activities which are thought to have brought about the imperialist age. After Salisbury's treaties of 1890 the 'partition of Africa' was on the whole settled. France had extended its dominance from Algiers to Tunis and from Cochin-China to Annam and Tongking. Britain's Eastern Empire had been rounded off in Burma and Baluchistan. Britain would not retreat from Egypt within a measurable space of time; that had become certain. In the twentieth century all these facts were to be regarded as initial phases of one and the same movement. But they were scarcely seen in this light at the time when Wilhelm II took over from Bismarck and Rosebery from Salisbury. And it is easy to see why contemporaries did not indulge in such sweeping concepts. They knew better. The Dark Continent, Egypt, the Far East—these regions of the globe had attracted the interest either of volunteers in colonial enterprise or of statesmen or of both. But this interest was obviously not the same at every place. To trade with Negroes was not the same as to trade with Chinese. To control the Khedive and the Suez Canal was a task obviously different from controlling African or Polynesian chieftains. Furthermore, the move oversea was not a spontaneous move everywhere and at every moment. Britain had taken the largest share. Nevertheless, it was an obvious fact that the rulers of the nation had not spontaneously set out for expansion, as Jules Ferry and Bismarck had done. They had been 'forced by stress of circumstances',[1] in Egypt first and afterwards still more unmistakably, in tropical Africa and Polynesia. When Gladstone's cabinet

[1] Ch. W. Dilke, *Problems of Greater Britain*, II, 164–6, passages summarizing the author's cabinet experience and later observation.

slowly approached the question of taking New Guinea, Derby was shocked by the apprehension that Australian claims extended 'to the possession of (virtually) all the South Pacific Islands within 1000 miles' of the continent.[1] It was not easy for Salisbury to satisfy the forwardness of the Australians. He offended their delegates at the colonial conference of 1887 by his chilly attitude towards their complaints concerning French intrusion in the New Hebrides.[2]

Imperial responsibilities were enlarged step by step by a hesitant government. One must not imagine a strong popular will to have been the driving force. It is a striking fact that the imperial nation manifested no interest to see its empire extended. That the occupation of Egypt should not be maintained for the duration was not only a dogma for Gladstone and his cabinet but also a leading maxim for Salisbury until 1887, and at that time it was accepted opinion in England generally.[3] *The Times*, indeed, spurred by its Cairo correspondent, demanded an Egyptian protectorate while Gordon's mission to London still looked hopeful.[4] But after the catastrophe a publicist like Edward Dicey who maintained this claim, found himself in mournful isolation.[5] The builders of the new African empire, Goldie, MacKinnon, Johnston and Rhodes, did their work without encouragement from home and did not ask for it. Rhodes, eager to have Afrikander support for going north, was for a time even anxious not to

[1] Letter to Gladstone, 13 September 1883. Brit. Mus. Add. MS. 44141, fol. 146. The reluctance with which the question of New Guinea was handled in Gladstone's Cabinet is vividly mirrored in Dilke's diaries (Gwynn and Tuckwell, *The Life of Sir Ch. W. Dilke*, vol. II, passim). 'Anti-imperialistic grounds' made Gladstone and Harcourt refuse at first (loc. cit. p. 82).

[2] Dilke, *The Present Position of European Politics* (1887), pp. 347–9. With regard to Africa, the decisive steps which secured England's share in the partition are, indeed, to be credited to Salisbury. But that is not to say that he wished for them; he always held back until the last moment. The delays which taxed the patience of Mackinnon (McDermott, *British East Africa or IBEA*, pp. 11 ff.) are more characteristic of him than the somewhat complacent conclusions which H. H. Johnston drew from a conversation at Hatfield. (*The Story of my Life*, pp. 204 f.)

[3] Allegations that secret intentions inside the Gladstone cabinet were at variance with public declarations concerning the temporary character of the occupation of Egypt are easily disposed of by Dilke's diary entries, May 1884, summarized in his autobiography and published by Gwynn and Tuckwell, II, 52 f. Of Dilke's letter to Grant Duff, 22 May, which is quoted there, a copy is preserved with the Gladstone Papers (Add. MS. 44149, fols. 215, 216). An occasional remark of Derby in a letter to Gladstone concerning Zululand is, if possible, still more expressive: 'It might be openly announced that we governed the country only *ad interim*—much as we do Egypt' (18 December 1883, Add. MS. 44142, fol. 27). With regard to public opinion, Chamberlain's view is worth noting. Like most members of the cabinet he welcomed Dilke's suggestion to propose an international guarantee of the neutrality of Egypt. He gave as one of his reasons: 'To make Egypt the Belgium of the East is an object easily popularized. The phrase will carry the proposal' (Gwynn and Tuckwell, loc. cit.).

[4] *The History of 'The Times'* (vol. III), *The Twentieth Century Test* (1947), pp. 20–38.

[5] 'The Khedivate of Egypt', *The Nineteenth Century*, vol. XVIII (1885), p. 1.

attract English popular acclamation which might conjure up the portent of the 'imperial factor'. In this device he was rather too successful. He was suspected to go out for a great South African republic with himself as President.[1] The 'Mercantile Company' by dint of which Rhodes wished to make his way was a danger signal to W. A. Henley, who was one of the few men at home who in 1889 believed in a British mission in these regions.[2] When New Guinea and Zululand were discussed in 1883–4, Derby's remark that 'England has already black subjects enough' became again a winged word.[3] Public attitudes towards the affairs of Zululand are especially characteristic. It was clearly a British responsibility to care for a stable régime in this native community whose strength and cohesion had been broken by British arms. An extension of the protectorate was the only promising way for giving effect to this responsibility. Gladstone and most of his colleagues were not ready for such a step. But they were allowed, too, by public opinion, to cling to an irresolute attitude for two years. In July 1884 the matter was suddenly brought up for discussion in the House of Commons by conservative members who branded this default 'of a power which boasted that in its dominions the sun never set' as a shameful betrayal. But when in the debate speakers on the Government benches referred to the conservative appeal as an 'imperial spread-eagle policy' this was thought to be an insult. Press comments on the whole betrayed only embarrassment and did not urge more resolute action.[4] Impending enlargements of the colonial area were not chosen as a topic of propaganda, when the Prince of Wales and his assistants cared to bring home to the English public the value of the Empire by the foundation of the Imperial Institute. Generally, the response with which the exhibition met must not be thought to have been very vivid. *Punch* sometimes satirized the public's obtuseness, but on occasion it satirized the Institute itself. And in Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee national satisfaction was not as yet, as in the Diamond Jubilee, mixed with imperial pride and exotic glamour.[5]

[1] E. A. Walker, 'The Jameson Raid', *Camb. Hist. Journ.* vol. VI (1941), p. 286.

[2] *Scots Observer* (25 May 1889), p. 11 ('Sir Hercules Robinson').

[3] Cf. J. S. Cotton, *Colonies and Dependencies*, 1883 (part of the text-book series, *The English Citizen*, as aptly emphasized by Dilke, *Problems*, loc. cit.), p. 114. That 'the Cabinet do not want more niggers', was Kimberley's comment on the meeting of 22 March 1884 which decided against an increase of the Zululand protectorate. (Dilke's diaries, Gwynn and Tuckwell, loc. cit. p. 86.)

[4] Hansard, 3rd ser. vol. 291, pp. 1050–1126, especially the speech of Dawnay explaining the motion (p. 1054), Randolph Churchill's menaces (pp. 1100 f.), P. Ryland's and W. E. Forster's altercation on the question whether the speech of the seconder Wodehouse was advocating 'imperial spread-eagle policy' or not (pp. 1081, 1103). Of prominent London papers only the *Standard* fell in with the opposition. Stead, in *Pall Mall Gazette*, somewhat timidly offered the opinion that British responsibilities towards the natives went further than the Prime Minister assumed. In the same year, 1884, 'the Empire Theatre in Leicester Square opened its doors'. Was the name (as assumed by A. Cobban, 'The New Imperialism', *The Listener*, vol. XXXIX, p. 776), 'calculated to appeal to a new generation'? One has to consider that at that time preventing the dismemberment of the Empire was the rallying-cry against the Irish demand for Home Rule.

[5] Tennyson's Odes offer, of course, no proof to the contrary.

In the two countries, whose statesmen really initiated the 'scramble' for colonies, enthusiasm was no greater. Bismarck's forwardness in South-west Africa was a surprise for his people no less than for the Earl of Granville. Ferry's achievements in Africa and Indo-China did not endear him to the French who never gave him power again after his misfortune in Tongking.

Now, if the great territorial acquisitions of the 1880's were so clearly not the outcome of strong national passions, were they forced upon governments and nations by economic interests? 'Colonization and empire-building', it has been said, 'are above all economic acts, undertaken for economic reasons and very seldom for any others.'[1] Though there is truth in this statement some distinctions are necessary. Economic reasons are at work, if colonies are what was once called 'plantations'—when lands are to be settled, first of all by agricultural immigrants, and for that end claimed by governments. Economic interests of another kind are furthered when trade is made or assumed 'to follow the flag'. Other economic reasons for occupying a country may be the exploitation of its mineral wealth or prospects of its internal development, which are to be achieved by organizing native agriculture and by introducing transport and machinery. This last motive may go together with that of advancement of commerce, and in most cases some or all these motives may come into play together. But in every one of these cases the measure and structure of the economic energies which take an active interest in the occupation make a great difference. Considerable numbers of emigrants willing to live on the land may be at hand or on the contrary the promoters of the foundation may only expect that settlers will come in due course. The country may be desirable to important groups of traders, importing industrialists and investors—or private interests involved at the initial stage may be insignificant, compared to interests on behalf of which the State has entered upon its new responsibilities. It is furthermore, important, whether or not the interests of trade, industry and finance involved in the dependency are in a prominent position in the occupying nation. The term 'economic imperialism'—this much should be clear—has a meaning only when the 'interests' belong to the spheres of trade, industry, or investment; when these 'interests' are in the hands of discernible groups of capitalists who put the dependency to their own use, when they form an essential part of the economic interests to which the home government (the 'imperial' government) must pay attention. Only if all these conditions are fulfilled can there be reason for saying that the government and the nation which make themselves responsible for the dependency have become 'tools of capitalism'.

To define thus this contingency is as much as to state that, until very late in the century, little had happened to justify the belief that powerful economic considerations were taking shape. Ferry was unable to point to concrete advantages when he spoke of the prospects which his colonial policy would open for commerce and investment. Bismarck made Hanseatic merchants hoist the German flag in Angra Pequena and in the Cameroons; but his colonial annexations were not followed by large

[1] R. Pares, *Econ. Hist. Rev.* vol. VII (1937), p. 119.

economic enterprises. His expectation that private organizations, comparable to the British Chartered Companies, would bear the burden of colonial administration came to nothing. When in the course of the quarrels concerning colonial boundaries in East Africa Bismarck was represented to be powerless against the obstinacy of German traders the news could be ridiculed in England.[1] In England the prospects of the African market were glowingly depicted to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce by H. M. Stanley. But he did not then advocate British colonization in the Congo basin. He spoke in favour of King Leopold's 'association'; he wished it to be protected against Portuguese encroachments on the lower reaches of the river. The merchants of Manchester gave a ready response; they published a report of the meeting and fervently endorsed Stanley's entreaties on behalf of 'the earnest efforts of His Majesty the King of the Belgians to establish civilization and free trade on the Upper Congo'.[2] The year after they—and the London Chamber of Commerce with them—gave also a support to Taubman Goldie's endeavours for wringing a Charter for his National African Company. But this time when existence of a nascent British colony was at stake the businessmen did not emphasize national trade interests. They only demanded 'the establishment of an adequate police force to overawe predatory tribes as well as to enforce the decisions of judicial officers'.[3]

Of the Chartered Companies the eldest, that of North Borneo (1881), was perhaps the most optimistic about the prospect of attracting capital from Great Britain. Their managers inspired an English journalist to write a colourful propaganda book in which the foundation was called the 'New Ceylon'. He compared the firm with the old East India Company and prophesied that its work would initiate 'a new era in the history of the colonizing aspirations of the Anglo-Saxon'.[4] His book has since been forgotten and the colony has not become one of the most renowned parts of the British Empire. Goldie's Royal Niger Company kept to practices and earned successes which, on first sight, have some similarity with what was represented later as 'economic imperialism'. The commercial monopoly which had been planned by Goldie in his treaties with the native chieftains, but was decidedly rejected by Salisbury, was carried into effect by his managers. Salisbury took offence and authorized the inquiry of 1889. Sir Claude Macdonald reported that the manner in which the Company directed the channels of local commerce was to the unqualified detriment of native traders and that it robbed of their markets those of the western Niger delta, direct subjects of the Crown. Nevertheless, the government did not take action. It swallowed also the injunction of the Company on its servants not to make public any facts concerning the administration and

[1] *Scots Observer* (20 April 1889), pp. 595 f. ('Our Traders in Africa').

[2] 'Manchester Chamber of Commerce.' Special meeting of members, 21 October 1884, etc. *Report of Proceedings*.

[3] William N. M. Geary, *Nigeria under British Rule* (1927), p. 182.

[4] Joseph Hatton, *The New Ceylon. Being a sketch of British North Borneo, or Sabah* (1881), especially pp. 2, 30.

business of the Company. That was certainly capitalist high-handedness, from which the shareholders got benefit. Nevertheless, it would have been difficult to make the case appear a major instance for the dependence of colonial régime on the ascendancy of 'monopolist capitalism'. For the financial interests, which were stimulated by Goldie's creation, were not large and widespread enough. The manifest reason why the government, in the end, withheld interference was that it accepted the reasons which had made Goldie insist on monopoly rights. Restoring unhampered competition in the oil trade on the river might have resulted in such a decline of the Company's returns that its whole activities—including new governmental work—would have been paralysed.[1] MacKinnon of East Africa could less than any other man be suspect of capitalist ambitions. When after his and H. H. Johnston's protracted struggles with the Germans he finally founded the 'Imperial British East African Company', he had, like Goldie before him, to enlist subscribers in order to make certain that the Company would be equal to its administrative undertaking. In the list the names of Sir John Kirk and of military men are prominent; it is certainly not a galaxy of big capital interests.[2] Rhodes's South African Company was more closely connected with speculative capitalism. Of its original stock one-fifth represented the investment of the profits of De Beers. The exclusive claim to the exploitation of mineral resources, which was granted to this company as to the others, was in its case bound up with fresh speculative expectations. But in the opinion of Rhodes, as well as in that of the wary Charles W. Dilke,[3] the likelihood of the country being opened up rested on its being specially suitable to agricultural development, and it was expected to attract numerous British settlers. Finally, the fact that British capital was at all available for colonial enterprises was not yet known as a cause for complaint. The enthusiast Henley mentioned it, by the way, as one of the advantages which the imperial country could offer as no other one could.[4]

Salisbury's treaties of 1890 with Germany, France and Portugal coincided with signs of growing sympathy with and belief in the work of the African companies. Rhodes on his visits to England won the confidence and even the admiration of important men. The 'studied plainness' of his appearance made his successes in South African business and Cape politics appear to forbode the greatest accomplishments in the service of the race. Henley, who brought out this impression in an inimitable character sketch, was now ready to drop his misgivings about the 'mercantile company'; he became convinced that 'financier, filibuster, statesman' was 'a typical hero for a commercial age'. W. T. Stead discovered in him the man destined by Providence for making Englishmen understand their own providential mission in 'the upward trend of human progress'.[5] Chamberlain, who not

[1] Geary, loc. cit. pp. 177, 183, 188–92. [2] McDermott, op. cit. p. 14.
[3] 'The Uganda Problem', *Fortnightly Review*, vol. CIII (1893), p. 148.
[4] *Scots Observer* (2 March 1889), p. 405, 'Nyasaland'.
[5] Henley, *National Observer* (18 April 1891), pp. 556 f. 'The Hon. Cecil Rhodes.' To Stead's enthusiasm Edmund Garrett's reports from South Africa, 1889–90, made an important contribution. Cf. J. A. Spender and Cyril

long ago had thought the Boers to be indispensable instruments of civilization in South Africa, forgot his anxiety lest injustice should be done to them by English expansion.[1] Rosebery made this expansion the main object of his enthusiasm for the imperial mission of the race. Gladstone, who could not share such belief without reserve, admitted in private that he had 'fallen behind the age in point of colonial information'[2] and desisted from obstructing the growth of imperial feeling in the liberal ranks. Harcourt, indeed, was known to have remained immovably inimical to colonies; but poured out in letters only his anger at liberal apostates to 'Jingoism'.[3] The very fact that in 1892 Gladstone had to entrust Rosebery with the Foreign Office indicated that the African policy to which Salisbury had become converted would be continued by the Liberal cabinet. The new Foreign Secretary felt entitled to proclaim that the nation was 'engaged...in pegging out claims for the future' and that it was 'part of our responsibility and heritage to take care that the world as far as it can be moulded, shall receive the Anglo-Saxon, and not another character'.[4]

The phrase was understood to refer to a topic of the day. The East African Company faced great difficulties; the financial responsibilities which it had to face surpassed its means even if railway building was postponed. Its enterprise would be jeopardized, unless parliament agreed to expenses on its behalf. The discussion of the Uganda problem extended quite naturally to the whole African policy which was under way. It is interesting to see how the economic aspects were handled on this occasion. The irreconcilable radicals exposed, of course, the dangers of financial waste, of which the small expenditure demanded at first would be only the prelude. One of them declared himself to be bound in honour and as a Christian to protest against a government which might be prepared to expend millions of sterling in Central Africa while in their own country 'millions of people were living under shameful and insanitary conditions'. But such social objections were not yet accentuated by the charge that the expense was to serve class interests. The sin which Labouchère felt bound

Asquith, *Life of H. H. Asquith* (1932), I, 147. The passage quoted above is from the appeal 'To all English-speaking Folk', *Review of Reviews* (1891). The only disquieting element in 'the potentialities that lie hidden in this remarkable personality' was for Stead at the time that Rhodes was 'deficient in his appreciation of existing factors in our home politics'; he wished to improve upon the great man's erudition by providing him with instructive books and asked Gladstone for advice, which, of course, was withheld (Add. MS. 44303, fol. 462, 17 August 1891). Dilke's attitude to the same question was characteristically different; he was simply annoyed by Rhodes's 'avowed intention of ultimately coming to England to take part in English politics' (Gwynn and Tuckwell, loc. cit. p. 301).

[1] Cf. Chamberlain's speech in the Zululand debate, 1884 (Hansard, loc. cit. pp. 1113 f., and Johnston, loc. cit. p. 223).

[2] Letter to Stead (28 May 1889), Add. MS. 44303, fol. 406.

[3] Gardiner, *Life of Harcourt*, II, 151, 192, 195, 198, 227. Harcourt believed, so Balfour said, 'in the curtailment of the British Empire if he believed in nothing else' (Fred. Whyte, *The Life of W. T. Stead*, II, 31).

[4] Speech at the Royal Colonial Institute, 1 March 1893.

to stigmatize was simply lust for aggrandisement: 'Jingoism'. 'These Jingoes were most remarkable men; they did not seem to care whether the land they required was valuable or valueless. They were like magpies, they loved stealing for the pleasure of stealing.'[1] Dilke, on the occasion of the Uganda problem, restated his confidence in Rhodes's enterprise, but disapproved of the inclination of the Liberal party to enter into 'a rivalry with the Conservative in the race for the heart of Africa'. In his opinion nothing 'likely to prove profitable' to the nation could be gained there. His dislike of chartered companies, which dated from the days of the North Borneo affair, required substance now that a company was about to commit the imperial parliament 'to the costly occupation of unhealthy districts, exposed to war, and out of reach'. But he, too, had no scruples as yet about the gains which a company might earn while committing the nation.[2] On the other hand the government and the conservative and unionist supporters of the Uganda grant had little to say about economic prospects. They laid stress on the obligation to civilize Africa, to fight slavery, to come up to expectations and, besides this, mentioned strategical needs concerning the Nile valley. Lugard in his *Rise of our East African Empire*, which was written as an appeal to the national interest, emphasized the same reasons and mentioned only by the way the 'commercial necessity of finding new markets'.[3] Chamberlain in the Commons debate enlarged on this point only a little more. In answer to the member who postulated priority for social misery at home, he called attention to the 'great proportion' of the people which 'earned its livelihood by the trade brought to this country in consequence of the action of our ancestors, who were not ashamed...to peg out claims for posterity'. He went on to glorify 'the spirit of travel and adventure and enterprise distinguishing the Anglo-Saxon race'.[4] He thus inaugurated the style in which he was to co-ordinate economic and patriotic arguments when conducting colonial, and a good deal of the foreign, policy of his country.

After Chamberlain came into office two years later, the whole aspect of colonial policy and of oversea engagements changed within a very short time. Economic arguments were, by advocates as well as by adversaries of such engagements, discussed far more specifically. Out of the discussions arose an indictment against capitalist rapacity. This was the power which was now seen to bring in its train fateful commitments for the English in South Africa, for the Americans in the Pacific and for the western nations generally in China. The portent was discovered which was to go under the name of 'economic imperialism'.

The facts which gave occasion for this dismal comment are well known. There was the gold of the Rand. There was the sugar of Hawaii. There were, in 1898, voices heard from America, which cried out for the Spanish

[1] Hansard, 4th ser. vol. 10, pp. 560 (Storey), 547 (Labouchère).

[2] *Fortnightly Review*, loc. cit. In 1895 Dilke sold his South African Company shares, 'not thinking them things for a politician'. Gwynn and Tuckwell, op. cit. II, 496.

[3] Ibid. p. 592.

[4] Hansard, loc. cit. pp. 593 f.

island colonies in the interests of trade and surplus capital. 'We must have them if we would not drop out of the procession of the nations struggling for the commerce of the world.'[1] 'There is but one choice—either to enter by some means upon the competition for employment of American capital and enterprise in these colonies or to continue the needless duplication of existing means of production and communication.'[2] Finally, there was the spectacle of the French, German and British governments competing with each other in earmarking for their respective capitalists priorities of trade and of railway construction in China. There was, once again, reason to warn against lust of conquest reaching out overseas. But there was also apparent reason to think that such ambitions were allied to particular financial interests, which were or would soon be prominent on the Stock Exchange and might clandestinely influence the press and public men.

III

It is profitable to consider the manner in which the word imperialism was used during the critical years after 1895. Sometimes it occurs in contexts where it appears to bear the full meaning of 'economic imperialism', but, in fact, the appearance is deceptive. For, very often, the word has reference not to the structure of politics generally, but to the British Empire and to the attitude of Englishmen towards its values. In the understanding of this attitude there are differences which deserve to be noticed in just those cases in which emphasis is laid on economic interests.

'The results of free trade have led our manufacturers and merchants to become imperialists.' Having read only these words written in November 1897, we might understand the author—J. Holland Rose—to assume that English businessmen, harassed by foreign competition at home, are eagerly interested in new markets to be opened by imperial expansion. But he goes on to say: '...the great manufacturing towns, which were once the strongholds of a somewhat narrow Radicalism, now vie with London and the counties in their desire to maintain our naval supremacy and to secure the co-operation of all parts of the empire'.[3] The British imperialism, to which Holland Rose alluded, was speculating neither on conquest nor on share quotations.

It was both, it was 'stock-jobbing imperialism', in the verdict which in 1896 Harcourt passed upon the evidence of the 'cipher telegrams' as to the complicity of Rhodes's Chartered Company in the Jameson Raid. But this censure, too, must be read in its full context. An 'unlawful conspiracy', he told the House of Commons, had been promoted 'by de Beers Company and the Gold Fields Company of Pretoria. There is something, I think, inexpressibly revolting to any high-minded man in the low morality and vulgar slang of these communications. It is a squalid and a sordid picture

[1] Cf. Fred. Greenwood, 'The Anglo-American Future', *The Nineteenth Century*, vol. XXXXIV (July 1898), p. 10.

[2] Ch. A. Conant, 'The Economic Basis of Imperialism', *North American Review*, CLXVII, 339.

[3] *The Rise and Growth of Democracy in Great Britain* (1898), p. 246.

of stock-jobbing imperialism.'[1] Here a distinction between different shades of imperialism is in the speaker's mind. But that 'imperialism', against which the new monetary one is set off, is not the loyalty to the Empire, of which we have just heard; it is craving for boisterous adventure at the expense of the nation—the meaning which had been annexed to the word at the time when Harcourt took part in the Liberal strictures on Disraeli's Turkish and Afghan politics.

Financial intrigue and bellicose aggressiveness were together contrasted implicitly with creditable British imperialism in the resolution submitted to the Fabian Society in December 1899: 'That the Society should dissociate itself from the imperialism of capitalism and vainglorious nationalism.'[2] The juxtaposition of the words 'imperialism' and 'capitalism' is not equivalent to 'economic imperialism', though to readers of to-day it might possibly suggest this concept. Capitalism and vainglorious nationalism are thought to have united in degrading British imperialism and causing an unjust war.

In the following year, Francis W. Hirst alleged that Britain had passed through three stages of imperialism: 'The first species was the bluff military imperialism of Lord Palmerston. Then shot up the sham imperialism of Lord Beaconsfield. The third and most poisonous species grows in auriferous soil; it is the financial or speculative imperialism of Mr Rhodes.'[3] The qualifications bestowed on 'the third species' could be used as variants of 'economic imperialism'. Here, however, the word 'imperialism' is called in to denote consecutive stages of British politics; to the stalwart radical the name of Rhodes conjures up those of Palmerston and Disraeli.

But the difference is no longer very great. In the same year 1900 the full doctrine of economic imperialism was implied in a resolution submitted to the 5th International Socialist Congress at Paris by its 5th Committee:

> ...que le développement du capitalisme mène fatalement à l'expansion coloniale, cette cause de conflits entre les gouvernements; que l'impérialisme qui en est la conséquence excite le chauvinisme dans tous les pays et force à des dépenses toujours grandissantes au profit du militarisme; que la politique coloniale de la bourgeoisie n'a d'autre but que d'élargir les profits de la classe capitaliste et le maintien du système capitaliste, tout en épuisant le sang et l'argent du prolétariat producteur, et en commettant des crimes et des cruautés sans nombre envers les races indigènes des colonies conquises par la force des armes.[4]

The language of the resolution is French; the reasoning and terminology are not. They are doubtlessly inspired by the English members of the committee. These had taught their comrades how a discussion of 'la politique coloniale' ought to co-ordinate Marxist doctrine with what they believed to be the experience gained during the last years in England.

[1] H.o.C. 8 May 1896, Hansard, 4th ser. vol. 40, p. 889.
[2] Edward R. Pease, *The History of the Fabian Society* (1925), p. 130.
[3] *Liberalism and the Empire*, three essays by F. W. Hirst, Gilbert Murray and J. L. Hammond (1900), p. 4.
[4] Compte rendu sténographique, *Cahiers de la Quinzaine* (1901), p. 175.

The actual experience which was most fresh in their minds, and which must have been persuasive for the delegates from other countries, was that to which our previous quotations referred: the Transvaal question, connected as it was with the activities and aspirations of the South African Company. The emergence of this problem was seen as a typical instance of what 'imperialism' could mean in practice. This view of the case was by no means restricted to the opponents of the politics into which Rhodes and the Rand interests had drawn Chamberlain and the nation at large. The henchmen of Rhodes had, after the Jameson Raid, contrived to bring home to the British public that his cause was that of the empire, and ought to be supported by true imperialism. 'If Mr Rhodes had not been an avowed imperialist we should have been spared nine-tenths of the criticism lavished upon his aims, objects and ambitions.' So wrote 'an imperialist' in his 'Vindication of the principle...of Chartered Companies, with special reference to the British South African Company', published in 1896 under the name of *The Pioneers of Empire*.[1] The assertion was still in need of justification for those who remembered that ten years ago Rhodes 'avowed' abhorrence of the 'imperial factor' in South Africa. It was for this reason that soon afterwards 'imperialist', aided by Dr Jameson, provided the public with 'a biography and appreciation' which, by personal anecdotes and plausible explanations, established the view that 'the expansion of our Empire' had always been 'the paramount idea' in Rhodes's mind and that only, 'an imperialism, as intense as it was enlightened' had guided him at the time, when the sympathies of the imperial government were less important to him than those of the Cape Dutch. Now the latter had been irretrievably lost. In view of this change, it was to the interest of Rhodes's party that the English nation should be prepared for a policy such as had been adumbrated by Sir Hercules Robinson in 1889: 'Colonialism through imperialism; in other words, colonial expansion through imperial aid, the home government doing what the colonies cannot do for themselves, having constitutionally no authority beyond their borders.'[2] In the eyes of the Cape English and of the Uitlanders in Johannesburg the occasion on which this obligation was to be honoured had now come. And they realized that the aid of the 'Home government' could be effective only if it was endorsed by enthusiasm on the part of the 'home country'.

This meant that activities 'beyond the borders' of a colony should be thought a national cause in Great Britain. The English had lately become used to the conviction that the colonials were precious sections of their own nation, that 'Greater Britain' was the real 'Great Britain'. And this creed was—though Seeley, who had done most for making it accepted, did not

[1] *The Pioneers*, etc. p. 1. *Cecil Rhodes. A Biography and Appreciation*, by Imperialist, with personal reminiscences by Dr Jameson (1897), p. 33. 'The Plain Truth about Mr Rhodes and the Transvaal', *Fortnightly Review* (1 June 1896), pp. 839 ff., is signed 'Imperialist' too, while Elisabeth Lecky wrote at the same time 'A Warning to Imperialists' against those who 'obscured the issues' with regard to the Jameson Raid (*The Nineteenth Century*, XC, 19 ff.).

[2] *The Times* (20 May 1889), p. 6, col. 1.

like 'imperial' language—expressed in the word 'imperialism'. But to follow colonials in South Africa beyond their borders might mean aggressiveness, and a resuscitation of that 'Disraelite imperialism or jingoism' which even a conservative had, on the morrow of the election of 1895, deemed to be the object of an 'unquestionable and, as I think, just aversion'.[1] If the aspirations of Rhodes's party—and those cherished by Chamberlain and Milner too—were to have their way, this aversion had to be overcome and both brands of 'imperialism' blended in the minds of the nation at large. The fervour of imperialist aggressiveness was to be firmly rooted in the sympathies of imperialist solidarity. And this union of feelings had to embrace solidarity with groups of people who were, to a large extent, neither English nor Colonial in origin: the capitalists interested in the goldfields of the Rand. Milner fully realized that this was a dangerous issue and during the first year of his South African mission (1897–8) refused to adopt the legitimate grievances of the mining companies against Kruger's monopoly, and to make them a reason for imperial interference.[2]

In England, however, just at that time, popular sentiment gave the impression that such fastidiousness had become out of date. Growing masses were caught by a vision of the Empire, in which loyalty to its common causes figured not as the counterpart of, but as an incitement to, adventures which were to give palpable proof of the superiority of the race. And those business interests which might be the first to profit from such ventures could rely on being glorified in the halo of this vision. They would be trusted as carrying out pioneering activities for the common welfare of the nation, its empire and the peoples under its sway. We have seen Rosebery and Chamberlain designing publicly the framework of these opinions when, in connexion with the Uganda grant of 1893, they gave out the watchword of 'pegging out claims'. The fact that, immediately afterwards, the opening of the Imperial Institute met with far more sympathetic interest from the middle-class public than had its foundation in 1887, gave colour to the assumption that the future of the empire had decisively risen in popular favour, just because of its economic prospects. 'Material interests, measurable in terms of £. *s. d.*, are what pervade and regulate the public judgement; and rightly so.' Still G. Baden-Powell, who interpreted the event in these terms,[3] related the material interests to the existing empire only—with special reference to its self-governing colonies—and not to additions to its sphere of dominance. And confidence that 'jingoism' in colonial affairs would not be encouraged from above seemed justified even after the Jameson Raid. Chamberlain's influence was considered just then to be an element of circumspection and restraint.[4] Nevertheless, popular responses to the Raid gave grounds for the expectation that public opinion would concur with more spirited interpretations of empire causes in official demonstrations and politics. The Poet Laureate of the day was by no means

[1] J. S. Stuart-Glennie, *Fortnightly Review* (December 1895), p. 854.
[2] E. A. Walker, *Lord Milner and South Africa* (1942), p. 11.
[3] *Fortnightly Review*, vol. 53, p. 892.
[4] Beatrice Webb's Diaries, *Our Partnership*, p. 131.

disgraced by his eulogy of the conspirators. 'The country's love' was pledged to them by the *Evening News*, whose editors after a few months proclaimed the other pledge, to make their new paper, the *Daily Mail*, 'the embodiment and mouthpiece of the imperial idea'.[1]

For the first time in England this emotion was represented as an idea. The government rose to the situation in two ways. To the surprise of Lord Cromer it initiated the conquest of the Sudan. Chamberlain chose to make the Queen's Diamond Jubilee the occasion not only for disclosing his views on empire reform to the conference of Colonial Prime Ministers, but also for arranging the pageant of 22 June 1897 which made the man in the street visualize his empire more tellingly than the Imperial Institute had done. 'Imperialism in the air—all classes drunk with sightseeing and hysterical loyalty'; so Beatrice Webb noted in her diary. For once her feelings were shared by Rudyard Kipling, who saw his countrymen 'drunk with sight of power' and invoked the merciful castigation of the Lord. But the self-satisfaction which had been sanctioned by the Jubilee celebrations did not die away after they were over. When in the following month, the Report on the Jameson Raid had been discussed in parliament and Rhodes's honour declared by Chamberlain to be unblemished, *The Times* wrote that the Raid had 'taken its place in the perspective of empire building'. For John Morley this view was, naturally, a proof that the whole perspective was wrong. He ventured to direct the attention of his constituents in Cornwall to the ominous implications of the case: 'All this empire building —why, the whole thing is tainted with the spirit of the hunt for gold. . . . I do not say of Mr Rhodes himself that his imperialism is a mere veil for stock operations and company operations; but this I do say that he is surrounded with men with whom imperialism is, and cannot be anything else, but a name for operations of that ignoble kind.'

The effect of this censure was lost at that time just because of its wording. The *Spectator*, who professed to think of Rhodes no less severely, regretted that Morley had not realized, 'that the way to fight the dangerous and sordid Rhodesian imperialism is not by condemning the Empire altogether but by contrasting Rhodesian imperialism with the truer, nobler, and saner imperialism which, whether sound or not in policy, is at any rate clear and honest'.[2]

The paper saw 'the true English imperialism. . . working on well-tried Indian lines', expounded by Sir Harry Johnston. Yet to the popular mind this imperialism was, a year later, exemplified not by acts of colonial administration but by Omdurman and Fashoda. The cause of the Empire was again a matter of excitement, even military excitement.

In this view people became confirmed by the triumphs and aspirations which resulted from the war of 1898 in which the other great English-speaking nation was involved. There was much talk that year on both sides of the Atlantic about the superiority and the destinies of the Anglo-Saxon

[1] Kennedy Jones, *Fleet Street and Downing Street* (1919), pp. 144–6. W. L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism*, vol. 1 (1935), p. 83.

[2] *The Times* (29 September 1897), p. 4, col. d. *Spectator* (2 October), p. 428.

race.[1] Hopes were held out for realising these destinies by co-operation in world affairs. Chamberlain himself hinted at this prospect. He did it just at the time when Admiral Dewey's fleet attacked Manila and the acquisition of the Philippines became the foremost topic in American discussion on war-aims. This moment opened a new chapter not only in American politics but also in the development of 'imperial' ideas. Americans had heeded the rise of these ideas in England. Now many of them were eager either to adopt them or to show that their implications were at variance with the hallowed traditions of the republic. For some weeks the former of these attitudes prevailed. 'We see the beginning of an "Imperial" party here' wrote W. H. Page to James Bryce on 9 May. And a few weeks later the *Washington Post* asserted that empire had become the cry of American democracy. 'A new consciousness seems to have come upon us.... We are face to face with a strange destiny.... The taste of empire is in the mouth of the people even as the taste of blood in the jungle.' 'It means an imperial policy....' The *Washington Post* enjoyed the fame of being a level-headed paper and had been respected just because of its caution; its acceptance of imperial feelings as an irreversible current was therefore particularly noticed.[2] Congressmen and publicists were, indeed, quick to denounce 'the spectre of imperialism'—and the advocates of annexation themselves came to think unfavourably of imperial phraseology.[3] But, in fact, it was the attitude implied in this phraseology which prevailed.

At the end of the year it was said to have become the state of mind of the English too. 'At the moment when I write these lines there is noticeable through the British Empire a very strange alertness of concentrated attention...my own memories go back faintly, so far as to the Crimean War; never in all those variegated years have I seen anything approaching the attentive silence of to-day. The lion has straightened his front paws, and rises, and listens.'

In such terms were Englishmen represented to Americans by Edmund Gosse at New Year 1899.[4] Observers who were less given to rhetorical images found the temper of the nation by no means 'silent'. The *Spectator* stated that current 'talk about "empire" was at once eternal and ex-

[1] For early comments, cf. the letter of W. H. Page quoted below (Burton J. Hendrick, *The Earlier Life and Letters of W. H. P.* (1928), p. 264); *New York Nation* (July 1898); O. Flower, *The Arena* (Boston, 1898); F. Greenwood, 'The Anglo-American Future', *Nineteenth Century*, vol. XCIV. In England Edward Dicey, the veteran of anti-Gladstonianism, became a most eloquent champion of the case in 'The New American Imperialism', *Nineteenth Century*, loc. cit. pp. 487 ff.

[2] Congress. Record, 55th Congress, 2nd Session, Appendix, p. 573. *Kölnische Zeitung* (21 June), p. 1, col. 3.

[3] The discussion includes Bryan's speeches, Karl Schurz, 'American Imperialism' and, on the other hand, President McKinley's message to Congress concerning the annexations. It has given rise to important scholarly comment, but deserves special surveying with regard to the concepts of 'empire' and 'imperialism'.

[4] 'The Literature of Action', *North American Review*, vol. CLXVIII (January 1898), p. 14.

aggerated'.[1] Foreign writers who stayed in London then were startled by the fervour of the 'imperial' ideas which were current everywhere. They became aware of the passions symbolized and the problems implied in these topics as something relatively new. The German anglicist W. Wetz noted that the press spoke no longer of the Kaiser and the Czar as of 'emperors'. Words relating to 'imperial' causes had by the British become reserved for their empire, Greater Britain. This was, he thought, the result of 'the imperialist movement in England', which expressed itself in newspaper discussions, associations, and books. The movement, he confessed, had made him reverse his views on the spirit of the nation.[2] Olindo Malagodi, who visited London clubs found their members since 1898 constantly involved in 'quella capitale questione che è scoppiata improvvisamente, col folgore di un gigantesco fuoco artificiale sulla frontiera oscura di due secoli: la questione dell' imperialismo'.[3] And François de Pressensé asked Englishmen to consider the 'curious thing, but a fact beyond dispute, that when the masses are on the verge of rising in their majesty and asking for their rights, the classes have only to throw into their eyes the powder of "imperialism", and to raise the cry of the fatherland is in danger'.[4]

These observations are strikingly unanimous and strikingly simultaneous. They go far to show that, though prepared by manifold antecedents, the surge of imperial sentiment in 1898 was, like the corresponding excitement in America, remarkably sudden. Attempts to interpret it in terms of sociology and to trace it back to literary influences have been made by the same contemporary writers who directed attention to it. But no explanation can be adequate which does not take full account of the one fact: that the waves of 'imperialism' between 1897 and 1899 were not only in the nature of a social phenomenon, but also in the nature of historical events.

The upheaval of 1898 evoked an antagonism no less influential than the sympathy which it aroused. This antagonism had two lasting effects, both of them foreshadowed already in the discussion of the Philippines problem in the United States.[5]. To the notion of imperialism it attached the stigma which was finally to obscure its nobler meanings. Moreover, it demanded a vigorous inspection into the particular economic interests which could be suspected of forcing the hands of statesmen and of inspiring the emotions of the multitude in affairs called 'imperial'.

[1] 'Mr Morley on Jingoism' (21 January 1899), p. 77.

[2] 'Die imperialistische Bewegung in England', *Die Grenzboten* (58. Jahrgang, 1. Vierteljahr 1899), pp. 14 f. The first German student of the movement was, however, the socialist refugee, M. Beer, who in the Jubilee year 1897 wrote an article, 'Der moderne englische Imperialismus', for *Die Neue Zeit* (Jahrg. 16, 1), pp. 300 ff.

[3] *Imperialismo. La civiltà industriale et le sue conquiste. Studii Inglesi* (Milano, 1901), Prefazione. The book had been in preparation since 1898.

[4] 'England and France. An examination and an appeal'. *Contemporary Review*, vol. LXXV (February 1899), especially pp. 158–60.

[5] See the quotations above, p. 19.

This effect was not intended by the man who started the campaign. John Morley on 17 January 1899 informed his constituents of his resolve 'no longer to take an active and responsible part in the formal counsels of the heads of the Liberal party'. He summarized the dividing issue in two words which had, he insisted, recently become nearly synonymous: 'you may call it jingoism, you may call it imperialism'. Remembering the censures he had incurred sixteen months earlier he recognized this time that 'imperialism' could be interpreted in a favourable sense: 'national duty, not national vainglory...the guardianship and the guidance of a great state'. But that was not 'what "imperialism" is in the sense in which it is now used'. The current significance of the word was exhibited in the Sudan expedition with its cruel incidents, in the Fashoda crisis, which was the only palpable result of this expedition, and in the prospect of militarism, which meant gigantic expenditure and inevitably led to war. Imperialism was the state of mind which acquiesced in all this, as the liberal leaders were doing.[1] The tenor of the speech was not very different from that of the essay in which twenty years earlier Robert Lowe had launched the indictment of 'imperialism' against Beaconsfield's Oriental policy, and by this attack given the word a meaning in English public life.[2] But the situation was different. Consequences far more momentous than those which had immediately resulted from Lowe's invective ensued now from Morley's solemn confession of faith. It gave the cue to a lively discussion which focused on the concept of imperialism, and was protracted for months in party speeches and dignified addresses, in newspaper articles and pamphlets, until late in the year it was merged in the altercations aroused by the outbreak and conduct of the Boer War.[3]

In this discussion champions of imperialism were the first to raise the question of economic interests. Chamberlain was not the only one who emphasized the interconnexion of empire and commerce. George Wyndham at the War Ministry defined an imperialist as 'a man who realizes... that those places which were recondite, visited at great intervals by travellers, are now the markets, the open ports, the exchanges of the world to which every energetic Briton should tend his footsteps and where a great part of the capital of Great Britain is invested'. *The Times* railed at Morley who still clung to the ideals which had been valid in the year of the Great

[1] Speech at Brechin, *The Times* (18 January), p. 6, col. b.

[2] 'Imperialism', *Fortnightly Review*, vol. XXIV (1 October 1878), pp. 453 ff. The important article started the debate which caused Lord Carnarvon to speak in Edinburgh (15 November) of 'imperialism' as 'a newly coined word' (*Fortnightly Review*, loc. cit. p. 760).

[3] Among political speeches those of Hicks-Beach, Chamberlain, G. Wyndham, Asquith, 18, 19 and 28 January, and the address of Campbell-Bannerman to the National Liberal Federation on 8 March, are notable for being reported and commented upon copiously in the daily and weekly press. Sir R. Giffen's paper on 'the Relative Growth of the Component Parts of the Empire', read at the Royal Colonial Institute on 14 February and Rosebery's address at the Cromwell tercentenary belong to the series as well. Of articles in periodicals, 'Imperialism' by J. Lawson Walton, *Contemporary Review*, vol. LXXV (March), pp. 305 ff., deserves notice; it challenged R. Wallace to his article quoted below.

Exhibition 'while the world has not stood still...and nations...have learned that wealth and progress, like all other good things, have to be guarded by strong hands and stout hearts'. This assertion was somewhat more militant than the similar remark of J. Holland Rose a year earlier; and so was that of the liberal J. L. Walton that 'the motive for the Manchester School has outlived the pacific philanthropy....Now that...markets are in danger of closing, the industrial spirit is imperialist and even warlike and demands that they be kept open.'

Such opinions were certainly voiced among the businessmen themselves.[1] But, in the course of the year, they encountered answers. Demonstrations of protest and distrust followed three different lines. One was that indicated by Morley: disgust with the bravado and the reckless desire for further expansion. This sentiment was expressed most forcefully by Leonard Courtney and John L. Hammond;[2] it was countenanced by Campbell-Bannerman who thought abjuring 'the vulgar and bastard imperialism of irritation, and provocation, and aggression' a hopeful device for avoiding an incurable rift within the Liberal party. Other critics, who like him did not wish to be mixed up with Little Englanders and would even agree to well-considered imperial expansion, discovered that economic repercussions might be provoked by expanding finance. They warned against the dangers of 'the capitalist era which is now slowly superseding the industrial era'. Capital flowing abroad into the spheres of 'imperial interest' would soon stimulate the productive forces of other nations instead of those of the mother-country. From colonial countries in particular it would in fact not come back, and only shareholders would benefit from this investment. This was the economic reality into which 'pegging out for posterity' was about to be transformed, as long as 'a sham imperialism turns our heads'. The economist who uttered this warning[3] directed attention to an aspect of the case which a special group of critics thought to be no less morally revolting than were the militant emotions and, indeed, suspiciously allied to these. In the 200-odd pages in which John M. Robertson expatiated upon the mutual relations between 'patriotism and empire' this alliance between 'the temper of national pride' and the interests of investment which cried for new markets was reserved for the concluding chapter. The 'commercial aristocracy and rich middle class' was about to occupy

[1] Cf. Fred. Greenwood, 'The Cry for new Markets', *Nineteenth Century*, vol. XLV (April 1899), pp. 538 ff., especially pp. 541, 543.

[2] And satirically by *Punch* (24 May): 'Private Views: Mostly Unpopular. No. II, Empire Makers.'

[3] Ritortus, 'The Imperialism of British Trade', *Contemporary Review*, vol. LXXVI (July, August), pp. 132–52, 282–304, especially pp. 145f., 295 ff. where the author referred also to similar warnings of the *Financial News*. F. Greenwood, 'The Cry', etc., states that 'the lords and princes of British commerce are not in all things and in all ways the patriots they probably believe themselves to be', since they do not 'fill the markets they have already got' and are comparable to farmers who look out for new virgin soil when they are no longer surrounded by wilderness. G.'s principal concern is not, like that of Ritortus, misdirection of capital, but the efficiency of German competition. He too, however, deprecates being suspected of having become a Little Englander or declaring 'against further expansion'.

the place which feudalism and the landlord system had held before. Among them 'the sinister interest of those industrial sections which thrive on the production of war material' was notable. Alongside the 'mere pride and passion of nation and race which had been characteristic of Disraelian Imperialism', there was now 'the concept of commercial interest' emerging more and more distinctly. It was more dangerous because it could hold its own better against criticism. And it was all directed only 'to the end of heaping up more capital for investment', while 'our own toilers are not to do more consuming'. Finally, besides the commercial and capitalist interest there was another stigmatized, though only occasionally, by the author: the service interest, which, since Gladstone abolished purchase in the army, had also become a middle-class interest.[1]

These short indictments were to become headlines in later anti-imperialist literature. Upon contemporaries their impression was lost because they were ejaculated only in passing and because Robertson repelled readers by his disparagement of patriotism. Another radical, however, made a great impression by attacks in a similar vein. Robert Wallace exposed 'the seamy side of Imperialism'. He wished to back Morley, but surpassed him in that he charged the Liberal party with having become dependent on 'a thousand firms, financiers, adventurers and company promoters who seize on every new market'. More important still, he extended the charge to the businessmen who traded and made money in the colonies, and thereby he extended it to the dependent empire at large. The native was to these people merely an object of manifold exploitation, now by dispossessing him of his land, now by selling him gin; 'and then expansionists boast that trade is following the flag'. And Wallace saw no difference between these modern ways and 'the mode in which the Empire generally had been acquired'.[2]

The stirring effect of these strictures is best measured by the fact that Mary Kingsley singled them out for special refutation when in autumn 1899 she went on a lecture tour in order to make the manufacturing towns of the North share her interest in West Africa. She was appalled by 'the spectacle of a distinct outbreak of anti-imperialism up here in England'. In a way she thought men like Morley, Courtney and Wallace deserving the gratitude of the nation 'for their honest endeavours to keep England's honour clean and to preserve her imperialism from sinking into being in our times a stockbroker's nigger business'. But she felt, of course, compelled to emphasize the national merit of the 'buccaneers, privateers, pirates' of yore without whom 'we should not be Imperial England', and to defend the honour of the colonial merchants of the present day to whose expert understanding she would have chosen to confide the empire in Africa.[3] The *Spectator* held, like Mary Kingsley, 'that it is the business of England...to

[1] Pp. 140, 172–8.

[2] *Contemporary Review*, vol. LXXV (June), pp. 788 f., 792.

[3] *West African Studies* (2nd ed. 1901), pp. 415 ff., especially pp. 419, 423 ff. On Mary Kingsley's attitude to colonial economics, cf. Hancock, *Survey*, II, 2, pp. 332 f.

take over and rule the inferior races of mankind'. But in October the paper saw reason to speak of people who nowadays practised this 'taking over' in terms not very different from those of Wallace. 'New jingoism' was afoot, which was 'tainted by the desire for great and rapid gain.... From China, from Central Africa, from West Africa, from South Africa and from the Pacific we receive the same messages which mean: use force, coerce the dark men, defy the white men in battle, and then Englishmen will have new trades, new concessions, new mines, new pecuniary prosperity.' The writer was satisfied that the wrongdoers had 'little hold on Parliament and none on the Administration'; probably, by censuring the new jingoes he wished also to parry the detractions of anti-imperialists.[1]

War at the Transvaal border was imminent when the article appeared; but the author made no sign of being disquieted by the fact that the British government had espoused the Uitlanders' demands, which were prompted by 'the desire for great and rapid gain'.[2] An economist to whom the relation of capital accumulation to social welfare had been for years the crucial problem of modern economics held other views. J. A. Hobson had gone out to South Africa in order to inspect the conditions underlying the crisis. He was horrified by the mentality which pervaded the society of Johannesburg, and gave vent to his impressions and conclusions in reports to a London paper. These letters were, in the first year of the war, republished in his book *The War in South Africa. Its causes and effects.*

IV

Thus, when the South African War broke out, thoughtful and courageous Englishmen were just in the mood to inquire severely into the prospects as well as into the roots of all that was now called imperialism. In this inquiry economic acquisitiveness was the object of special suspicion. The manner in which England was drawn into the war could not but make such reflections highly unpopular. To all appearance the Empire was attacked. To say, or even to suggest that the war was the responsibility of the men in charge of imperial policies, or, still worse, of pecuniary interests countenanced by such men was to lower the national spirit. And the maintenance of this spirit was urgently necessary in view of the initial reverses and of the light which they threw on the national preparations. But it was just this situation which aroused searchings of the heart which could not be satisfied by overcoming the danger, still less by conquering the Boer countries. The depth of the shame with which conscientious hearts watched the next months is impressively brought out in reflexions which high-minded

[1] 'The New Jingoism', vol. LXXXI (8 October), p. 480—preceded by an appeal for imperial concentration, loc. cit. (30 July), p. 137; the tendency of which is similar to that of Greenwood's article quoted above.

[2] In the renewed criticism of South African politics, voiced in the Commons debates of 28 July 1899, the question of economic interests was not prominent, while the debates concerning transfer of administration from the Royal Niger Company to the Imperial Government, on 3 and 26 July, had enlarged upon the subject of commercial monopoly (Hansard, 4th ser. vol. 75).

women confided to their diaries.[1] But, at the same time, such sentiments stimulated a resolute approach to systematic thought. To accept the war and to carry it on until the republics were brought under the British flag was thought a touchstone of imperialism by the great majority of the nation. If that was true, then for people with a conscience the imperialism which had brought about this war against a small brave people was a hideous power to be brought down by all intellectual means.

In this reasoning three groups of argument were prominent. They corresponded, broadly speaking, to the themes which had turned up in the discussions of 1899. The first argument fastened on the international situation. Anglophobia had been increased in France as well as in Germany and might be welcome to statesmen of both continental power-groups. To contemplate this danger was the more painful because it was now difficult for a scrupulous mind to draw a distinctive line between British imperialism on the one hand and German militarism or French chauvinism on the other. This trend of thought had historical implications. It was no longer of first importance that in the overseas expansion of the last two decades French and German politicians had shown more initiative and lust for prestige than those of Great Britain. There was, in fact, one imperialism which pervaded all the great nations, including America and Russia. But —and that was a second line of thought—England had a responsibility of her own rooted in a past which was wholly her own. England had grown into the British Empire which had become the model for the other nations. Was not imperial greatness a doubtful boon, fraught not only with political and financial risks but no less necessarily with moral evils? The young joint-authors of *Liberalism and the Empire*, who were 'blind neither to the glories nor yet to the responsibilities of the British Empire' expressed regret that the 'ambiguous and unfortunate' word 'empire' had blurred the great distinction to be made between the relations of England to free Canada and free Australia on the one hand, and her rule over 'all those tropical provinces which she has won as a conqueror and holds as a foreign despot'.

The third topic was the connexion between politics and economics. It was attached to two main issues. One was the danger threatening the great national principle of free trade. Was not 'every imperialist' at heart an 'emporialist'?[2] The second dominating issue was the particular connexion which to all appearances existed between imperial expansion and capital accumulated at home. It was the animating influence of overseas enterprises on the Stock Exchange, which made thousands of agents busy for a considerable section of society. And it was the reciprocal influence which these interests might bring to bear on an obliging press which made them indiscernible from the national cause.[3] Both these dangerous elements of

[1] Beatrice Webb, *Our Partnership*, pp. 190, 194 f. A. Ruth Fry, *Emily Hobhouse* (1929), p. 74. (A mournful strophe added by E. H. to Kipling's *Recessional*.)

[2] Hirst in *Liberalism and the Empire*, pp. 72–4.

[3] Hirst, loc. cit. pp. 63 f. More sarcastically, Bernard Shaw, *Fabianism and the Empire* (1900), pp. 9 f.

capitalist society, abettors of protection and speculators in exotic investments, had been shown up before the war. But the second species appeared an ominously commanding power now that it might be identified with those capitalists who had handled transactions in and earned big gains from Transvaal mines and the Chartered Company. The 'average citizen' was to be informed that his empire so 'magnificent and once so magnanimous' was liable to be overruled by the 'black magic of imperialism' which made sordid motives direct the actions of 'little minds' in government and parliament.[1]

All these indictments were inspired by spontaneous disgust and sincere moral apprehension. Nevertheless, one cannot fail to discover in them the influence of two master-minds—one of them long dead and often declared to be completely out of date, the other to many people still the 'Grand Old Man'—Cobden and Gladstone. The ethics were Gladstone's; the teachings were Cobden's. Fabians, indeed, wished to part with Gladstonian liberalism which 'thinks in individuals';[2] but at that time there were other things than that to be learned from liberalism, and from Cobden in particular. Cobden had spoken with disrespect of the intellects working in Foreign and Colonial Offices. Cobden had preached to his people that economic wisdom and peace would prevail in the world if only England would take the lead. Cobden had been convinced that the Empire connexions of Britain were obstructing this prospect. Cobden, finally, had denounced particular class interests as being the ultimate mischief-makers, whose unearned privileges barred the path to material and moral progress. These interests, indeed, had been different from those which had to be faced now. They had been those of the feudal landlord class, whereas now the economic antagonists of peace, humanity and public welfare were detected in the capitalist class, whose enlightened self-interest was according to him a steady element of progress. This made it difficult for a liberal to weld all the indictments against imperialist statecraft and imperialist society into a coherent system of interpretation. To attain such a high goal and to form a real theory of imperialism was possible only to a mind which was prepared to combine the Cobdenian motives with unorthodox views concerning the mechanism of society.

This it is that J. A. Hobson did. In many respects his study *Imperialism*, which came out in the year of the peace treaty, is only an amplified restatement of all the charges which had been voiced before and during the

[1] Hirst, loc. cit. pp. 43–57. Occasional remarks of the author (pp. 4, 39) hit ironically upon the Jewish element in South African finance, which was more sharply censured in a special chapter of Hobson's *War in South Africa* and elsewhere. The intense anti-Jewish feeling of the labour leader John Burns burst out, together with compassion on Kruger, in a diary-entry upon the outbreak of war (Add. MS. 46317; 10 October 1899).

[2] Beatrice Webb's diary-entries of September and October 1901 (*Our Partnership*, pp. 220–3), compared with those of January 1900 (loc. cit. p. 194) show how socialist thinking at this time was not necessarily bound to take up an anti-imperialist line. The closing pages of the book (pp. 488 f.) are remarkable for mirroring the change of mind after the Great War.

war against perverted feelings and against harmful interests which played upon these feelings. But the argument concerning 'the economics of imperialism' reaches out further. Hobson surveys 'the measure of imperialism'. Taking as example Great Britain, because it has 'travelled so much faster and further along this road', he tabulates chronological data which show the overseas areas acquired during the previous twenty years. Thus he makes clear that he wishes to bring the whole colonial development of this period under the head of 'imperialism'. He gives historical definiteness to this term. He then proceeds to show that these imperialist acquisitions have been valuable neither as 'outlets for population' nor as markets for the commerce of the metropolitan country, such as former colonial foundations had been. He thinks relatively little of the imperialist driving force domiciled in mercantile counting houses. These exclusions appropriately lead to the inference that only 'certain sectional interests that usurp control of the national resources' can have made for imperialist expansion. The 'economic parasites of imperialism' are on the one hand the industries and professions which profit immediately from annexation and war: the 'services', the armament industry. More fundamentally significant are, however, financial parasites: investors, dealers in investments, or 'financiers', and certain industrial magnates which look out for big establishments in undeveloped countries because the home market is bound to render diminishing returns. And here Hobson finds the way to connect imperialism with the great defect which earlier meditation had led him to discover in the capitalist system. 'The taproot of imperialism' is inadequate distribution of industrial gains at home, 'under-consumption' and 'over-saving'.

Parasites are discovered who are sheltered by the prevailing economic system. They make this system act against the true interest of society. They make it pervert politics. They find the way to foster passions, romantic as well as savage. In this edifice of ideas a Cobdenite ground-plan is unmistakable. But the original motive has been transferred, so to speak, to another historical level. The pernicious parasites are no longer identified with the privileged remnants of feudal society; they are the outgrowth of capitalist society. The process of capitalist profit-making has developed so far that it sees no prospects of further expansion other than those opening in colonial and other exotic investments. This discovery entails a historical conclusion. Colonial enterprises, and other political operations overseas which made investment necessary, are to be understood solely on the basis of the urge of accumulated capital to be turned to profit in undeveloped countries. This urge, at the same time, can work only because capital is not put to healthier social use at home. It follows that the whole recent colonial development which clearly coincided with large capitalist gains, can be understood only as a consequence of the unhealthy organization of society. The driving force issuing from these conditions necessarily forced the hands of the men who had been active in these enterprises. It is this interpretation that gives unity to the whole process. It explains, in very fact, the dimensions of modern colonial exploit, the 'measure of imperialism'. The 'age of

imperialism' assumes a shape under this one aspect. 'Imperialism' is really one and the same as 'economic imperialism'.

It would not be impossible to weigh against each other the modicum of historical facts to which this deduction can be supposed to refer, and the volume of other facts which make its full implications appear a distortion of historical evidence. This, however, is not our task here. It will have become clear that economic experience was only a part though an indispensable one of the reality which brought to birth the concepts of 'the age of imperialism' and of 'economic imperialism'. Motives of political morality were the most powerful and these motives were deeply rooted in the English tradition, as indeed was the Empire with which they found fault. We need not show why Hobson's views were attractive to Marxian economists some of whom had in fact (as the Paris resolution of 1900 shows) learnt to think similarly, before they knew Hobson. To study how the concept restarted its career and grew into a world-power during and after the Great War would be another task which cannot be tried here. Probably close inquiry would show moral and political forces to have been primarily at work again: this time strong reasons of expediency in the communist camp, but once more moral misgivings concerning the national past in England and second thoughts concerning recent politics in America. In both countries the situation in which consciences had found themselves in the years 1898 to 1900 was renewed on a very much greater scale.

Hebrew University, Jerusalem