

THE POWER BEHIND THE PRESS

English Newspapers in The Transvaal, 1870-1899

By

Cynthia A. Robinson

B.A., The University of New Mexico

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Department of History

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

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THE POWER BEHIND THE PRESS: ABSTRACT

The thesis explores the question of whether the Johannesburg English newspapers, and particularly The Johannesburg Star, were manipulated or were independent during the volatile years leading up to the outbreak of the Second Boer War. Historians and contemporaries alike have argued that the editorial policy of the Star was dictated by either the mining magnates of the Rand or the imperial officials.

This study approaches the question by first surveying the history of English newspapers in the Transvaal. It follows the history of the press from the early diamond boom days in Kimberley in the 1870s, through the Barberton gold rush, and on to the founding and growth of the Johannesburg papers. It is established that the precedent is for editors to run their newspapers with a high degree of independence. A close look at the development of the Star, including its financial structure, indicates that the group that the Star was connected with was the local reform movement. It is shown that the editor installed just prior to the war, W. F. Monypenny, was manipulated by imperial officials and Randlords acting in concert. However, Monypenny's editorship is an exception. The thesis concludes that, for the most part, editors on the Transvaal were independent in their editorial policymaking.

The sources used in this study include more recent studies done by Alan Jeeves, A. P. Cartwright, R. V. Kubicek, Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, and Andrew Porter among others. It also makes much use of Eric Rosenthal's history of the Argus Company. For primary sources, The Johannesburg Star is heavily consulted as are the accounts of the journalists themselves, especially Francis Dormer and Frederic Hamilton.

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A Question of Control

The mass media and public opinion played a central role in the origins of the Second Boer War. The newspapers presented and commented on the issues and eventually supported the armed conflict. Politicians and administrators involved in the controversy preceding the war--British imperial officials and Boer politicians of the South African Republic--viewed garnering public support to be as important as stockpiling arms and mobilizing troops. That the South African newspapers, most notably *The Johannesburg Star*, were impacting events in the Transvaal is not a question. But, who controlled these persuasive instruments has always been a question.

Contemporary Viewpoints

One of the most vocal and influential contemporary critics of the war was J.A. Hobson. Hobson, a journalist with the *Manchester Guardian*, argued that Cecil Rhodes sought to take control of the gold rich Rand by using the military power of Britain. During the summer and fall of 1899, Hobson visited the Transvaal and Cape Colony in order to analyze the political developments there. He wrote:

"He [Rhodes] designed to use the armed forces of the British Crown and the money of the British taxpayer to obtain for himself and his fellow capitalists that political control of the Transvaal which was essential to his economical and political ambitions. To do this it was above all things necessary to apply an adequate motive-power to the minds of the British Government and the British people. For this work he found the press by far the aptest instrument. Some considerable time ago he had acquired with Messrs. Eckstein and Barnato, a leading interest in the *Cape Argus*, the evening paper at Cape Town. The Argus Company has now so far expanded its field of operations as to own the *Johannesburg Star*, the *Bulawayo Chronicle*, the *Rhodesia Herald*, and the *African Review*."¹

Hobson maintained that the syndicate of newspapers in South Africa controlled by the "Rhodesian press gang" were editorializing in favour of an imperialist, anti-Boer policy. He said that the editorial arguments, backed by sensationalist stories of Boer outrages,

". . . ran the round of the Rhodes press, gathering an accumulation of authority in the process, until, by combination and reiteration, it had fastened a misjudgment, an exaggeration, or too frequently a falsehood, upon the public mind. The opinion of the British in South Africa has been the plaything of a press which, working in closest union, has practised the most unscrupulous ingenuity in driving the fooled public along the road designed for it to go.

But the inflammation of the credulous mind of South Africa was a task comparatively simple and of subsidiary importance. The chief object of this press conspiracy, to attain which every nerve was strained, was the conquest of the Government and the conscience of Great Britain."²

Hobson, while ignoring the South African public and the importance of its collective opinion, continually stressed that the local press was the instrument of a capitalist cabal bent on using Britain to achieve its own ends. He believed that the British High Commissioner, Sir Alfred Milner, was not an active element in this "elaborate factory of misrepresentations for the purpose of stimulating British action"³ but was himself taken in by the propaganda generated by Rhodes. Hobson was convinced that Britain was drawn into the war by the contrivances of a manipulated press.

Similarly, Sir William Butler, acting High Commissioner in South Africa in 1898, was sure that the South African League and the English speaking press in South Africa were being controlled by Rhodes.⁴ He also sensed the power of the press was dragging Britain into a war that did not serve her own interests.

Perhaps the most damning accusation of press manipulation comes from Francis Dormer, former editor of *The Johannesburg Star*, managing director of the Argus Company, and supporter of Rhodes. Being more intimately acquainted with the South African situation than Hobson and, in particular, with the personalities involved, Dormer described the control of the press as being held by a lattice of influential individuals. He placed Rhodes at the centre of this network of propaganda.

Dormer described the mounting political agitation in the Transvaal in 1899 as the product of deliberate machinations of the South African League (SAL). The SAL was a virulently anti-Boer political group that had been founded in 1899 and Dormer considered its extremism to be antithetical to the true interests of all South Africans. He said that the SAL was not representative of the true interests of the English speaking population of the Rand (the Uitlanders) but was the vehicle for, ". . . the ultra-British emotions of a certain number of extremists in a British colony [the Cape], and its whole inspiration was sought and derived from Mr. Rhodes, now its president."⁵ He thought that Milner had been misled into accepting the League's propaganda as the true political line of the Uitlanders.

Furthermore, Dormer traced this network of influence which ran from Rhodes, to the League, and on to Milner as reaching Samuel Evans, an executive with the Corner House in Johannesburg and a director of the Argus Company. The Corner House was the largest and arguably the most important mining house operating on the gold rich Rand. Dormer noted that in 1899, *The Star* was taking an unacceptably inflammatory political tack and that the most influential director at the time was Evans. It so happens that Evans had, "more than a nodding acquaintance with the High Commissioner [Milner]."⁶ Dormer believed that Rhodes was controlling the newspapers through his connections with the SAL, the High Commissioner's office, and the local mining houses and the Argus directors. Once again, Dormer agreed with other contemporary observers that the newspapers, particularly *The Star*, did much to ruin peaceful negotiations.

The government of the South African Republic itself was much alarmed by the influence of *The Star*. In the course of the last attempts at negotiation between the Kruger government and the leading Johannesburg mining capitalists in 1899, Republic officials implored the capitalists to temper the press agitation. That the officials considered the press to be controlled by the local capitalists is manifest in the following extract from a letter directed to mining industry representatives:

"From your side we requested only a more friendly attitude from the Press, as we were convinced that the excessive Press campaign carried on by the newspapers, which are generally considered to be owned by you, or influenced by you, however much they may forward certain

interests, still, in the end, did infinite harm to the existing interests of all sections of the population. Through the continual and incessant agitation and creation of suspicion on the part of the papers, the public mind was constantly in a state of insecurity, and the fanning of the race hatred made it impossible for the Government as well as the legislature to improve the relations between the so-called Uitlanders and the old population."⁷

The Johannesburg capitalists, on the other hand, felt that they were being pilloried by the government subsidized press, most notably by the *Standard and Diggers News*. They absolutely denied having control over the contentious materials being published in the English speaking Johannesburg newspapers. The capitalist negotiators, in dealing with Boer officials, insisted that:

"We have already informed you, that so far as we know, there has been no organized press agitation, and that we should be willing at all times to deprecate the stirring up of strife between nationalities caused by any agency whatsoever. We consider it desirable to see that feeling more general, as we are convinced that exaggerated press campaigns conducted by newspapers generally reported to be influenced by the Government, and tending to create dissension amongst the various classes of the community, are calculated to cause an infinite amount of harm to the vested interests of all sections of the population."⁸

All the contemporaries, participants and observers alike, agreed that the press was having a great and detrimental impact on the relations among the major factions in South Africa. They also agreed that the press was being manipulated. However, this is where the agreement stops. Commentators were pointing fingers in a number of different directions in attempting to find the source of the newspaper propaganda.

The View of Historians

Now that the Transvaal imbroglio has become history, there is still no clear explanation of the nature of the alleged press manipulation or the people behind it. The talk of a "kept" press in South Africa was so frequent and sustained at the turn of the century that it has been accepted as rather a prosaic fact. In general, historians have only addressed the issue of press manipulation in passing and do so as a function of defending one party or another from the charge of media intervention. For example, Cecil Headlam refuted the

assertion that the capitalists instigated the agitation only to uphold the other old charge that the Krugerites were the real disseminators of propaganda. He wrote, "So far indeed was the Press from being controlled by the Capitalists that both telegraphic agencies at that time favoured the Boer cause, with very unfortunate results in the transmission of news to England."⁹ Furthermore, "A considerable amount of the Secret Service [of the Kruger government] money was devoted to subsidizing the Press. There is some very illuminating correspondence relating to the financing of *The Times* [J.B. Robinson's newspaper] of Africa and some Continental papers by the S.A.R."¹⁰

More recently, Geoffrey Wheatcroft absolves Rhodes of political intrigues in his study of the Rand capitalists. Wheatcroft says that the executives of the Corner House were the capitalists behind the League and the press agitation.¹¹ By far the most in-depth examinations of the press question have come from Andrew Porter and Alan Jeeves. Interestingly, and like Wheatcroft, neither subscribe to the old view that Rhodes was behind the propaganda. Jeeves sees the journalistic campaign as emanating from the Corner House and Porter traces it to imperial officials, Alfred Milner specifically. Jeeves argues that the Corner House became actively involved in local politics in 1899 because the political polarization taking place at that time made it necessary for the firm to identify itself with one of the primary factions. It chose to ally with the League and Alfred Milner. Along with financially supporting the League, the Corner House lent the use of its newspaper, *The Star*, to the cause.¹² In addition, the executives started another newspaper, the *Transvaal Leader*, to pursue the same agenda.

Andrew Porter's position echoes that of Hobson; that the South African press campaign was directed at making British public opinion amenable to going to war with Kruger's republic. He differs from Hobson, however, in identifying the source of the press manipulation. Porter asserts that it was Milner, and not Rhodes, who was orchestrating the press campaign. He substantiates this largely by pointing to Milner's close association with Edmund Garrett, editor of the *Cape Times*, and the integral role that Milner played in choosing and then monitoring *The Star's* final editor before the outbreak of the war, W.F. Monypenny.¹³

Porter ascribes all of Milner's efforts with regard to the South African press as being directed toward influencing the British press. By getting the British press, and with it British public opinion, behind him, Milner could then force Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain to follow his lead. The premise--and it is a well substantiated one--is that Milner was anxious to heighten the tensions in order to start a war. Porter underscores his position by stating,

"... the *Star* was the lynch-pin in Milner's elaborate structure, for the policy set out in its columns had to be followed by all the other Argus Company newspapers in South Africa. Not only did these enjoy a wide circulation locally, but it was from their editors acting as foreign correspondents that almost all English newspapers received their South African information." ¹⁴

Toward a New Understanding

All of the viewpoints cited above, historical and contemporary, start from the premise that the newspapers most prominent in South Africa at the close of the 19th century were under the control of either the capitalists, the imperial officials, or both. And yet, the journalists of the time insisted that they set their own editorial policy. Even W.F. Monypenny, *The Star* editor chosen by Milner and the Corner House executives in 1899, said at the time of his resignation in 1902:

"When, nearly five years ago, I accepted the position of editor of *The Star* I did so on the distinct understanding, guaranteed in writing, that I should have an entirely free hand as regards the policy of the paper, and on that understanding *The Star* has been conducted ever since. I am all the more desirous of emphasizing this fact as it has frequently, and especially during the controversy to which the war gave rise, been made a charge both against me and against the great houses who possess a holding in the Argus Company, that the policy of *The Star* was solely determined by what constituted their immediate interests. The policy of *The Star* may have been right or may have been wrong, may have been wise or may have been foolish, but it has been mine and mine alone throughout the period during which I have been its editor, and on no occasion during that time has any attempt been made to interfere with my discretion." ¹⁵

Monypenny's statement raises the question of was it perhaps true that the newspapers were not controlled by outside interests. If his statement were an anomaly, the

question could be dismissed. But the fact is that nearly every journalist in South Africa at the time made similar statements. The consistency of this assertion on the part of the newspapermen merits investigation. The general approach to analyzing the editorial policy of these newspapers begins with the traditionally recognized powerbrokers; the great mining houses, the imperial authorities, or the government of the Republic. It is the object of this study to look at the issue from the perspective of the newspapers themselves. The following chapters will investigate the development of South African newspapers in the late Victorian period. Emphasis is placed on newspapers in the Transvaal as this region was to become the politically charged arena of 1899. In particular, development of *The Star* and its parent company, the Argus Printing and Publishing Company will be discussed.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to define "independence" as it relates to newspaper editorial policies. Every newspaper included in this discussion declared, upon its inception, that its aim was to faithfully represent the best interests of and, to a large extent, the predominant views of its readership. Editors following an agenda compatible with the widely held views of their readership and the goals of their community considered themselves to be independent of special interests or powerful individuals. If they succumbed to pressures from such elements, that is, if they were controlled by nonrepresentative groups or individuals, they were not independent. This distinction as regards press independence is stressed in what follows.

Footnotes to Chapter 1

1. J.A. Hobson, *The War in South Africa, Its Causes and Effects* (New York: Howard Fertig, Inc., edition 1969, first published 1900), 206-207.
2. Ibid., 215.
3. Ibid., 216.
4. Sir William Butler, *An Autobiography* (London: Constable and Company, Ltd., 1911), 392.
5. Francis J. Dormer, *Vengeance as a Policy in Afrikanerland: A Plea for a New Departure* (Westport Conn.: Negro Universities Press, edition 1970, first published 1901), 28.
6. Ibid., 135.
7. J.P. FitzPatrick, *The Transvaal From Within, A Private Record of Public Affairs* (Toronto: William Briggs, edition 1900, first published 1899), 352.
8. Ibid., 356.
9. Cecil Headlam, *The Milner Papers, South Africa 1897-1899, Volume I* (London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1931), 322.
10. Ibid., 344.
11. Geoffrey Wheatcroft, *The Randlords* (New York: Atheneum, 1986), 208.
12. A.H. Jeeves, "The Rand Capitalists and the Coming of the South African War, 1896-1899," *The Canadian Historical Papers* (1973), 77.
13. A.N. Porter, "Sir Alfred Milner and the Press, 1897-1899," *The Historical Journal*, XVI, 2 (1973), 325.
14. Andrew Porter, *The Origins of the South African War, Joseph Chamberlain and the Diplomacy of Imperialism 1895-99* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), 198.
15. *The Johannesburg Star*, December 4, 1902.

- 2 -

Kimberley: First Generation Boom Town Press

The chrysalis for Johannesburg's political press lies in the diamond boom town of Kimberley in the Orange Free State during the 1870's. It was there that the form was cast for the relationships the press had with the mining magnates, the Uitlander population, and the British and Boer governments.

In Kimberley the independent character of the frontier South African journalist evolved as did his methods and allegiances. The newspapermen of the diamond fields set themselves up as powerbrokers in their own right. At times they allied themselves with either the mining magnates, the government officials, the radical reformers, or sometimes, it has been alleged, a combination of these groups. The Kimberley editors, however, always remained ultimately responsible only to the majority of the readership which constituted their power base.

British Imperial Policy in South Africa

Two basic premises dominate imperial action in South Africa from the time Britain acquired the Cape Colony in 1806 right on through the century. First, Britain was determined to expend as little as possible on the maintenance of her holdings in South Africa. Atmore and Marks assert that, "Britain was always anxious to minimize costs--and therefore the less of an administrative and military infrastructure she was liable to maintain the better: always provided her essential interests could be as well protected by informal as by formal means."¹

Britain's parsimony in regard to South African control led it to place its faith in

the effectiveness of its colonial collaborators or subimperialists in the region. Leonard Thompson explains:

"Throughout the period under review [1870 to 1895], there was widespread agreement among British cabinet ministers and permanent officials as to the ultimate goal. The British colonies and Afrikaner republics, from the Cape to the Limpopo and perhaps beyond, were to be joined in a self-governing, white-controlled, federal Dominion under the British Crown, following the precedent of Canada which had been federated in 1867. It was assumed that such a Dominion would be strong enough, without British military or financial aid, to keep internal law and order and to absorb any African chiefdoms that had previously remained independent; that the British navy would protect it from foreign aggression; that British entrepreneurs would dominate its foreign trade; and that the British Government would control its foreign relations and, perhaps, have some final say in its treatment of its African inhabitants."²

These hopes for empire without exertion seemed unthreatened in the middle of the century. In the 1850's, "it was clear that a politically independent Orange Free State was stable enough to offer sufficient economic openings for British trade to be left to its own devices, while the Transvaal, totally cut off from the sea, internally divided, and dependent economically upon the Cape and even more so upon Natal banks and merchant houses, could equally well be granted its 'sovereignty'."³

Between 1852 and 1854, therefore, Britain officially recognized the independence of the Boer states to the north. The South African Republic (SAR), or the Transvaal, was formed in 1858 without causing the least alarm to the confident British.

But Britain was soon to lose her complacency where the Boer states were concerned. In December of 1866 some children were playing with pebbles on the De Kalk farm in the Boer state of Natal. One of the stones caught the eye of Schalk van Niekerk who later showed the stone to Dr. William Guybon Atherstone. The doctor positively identified the stone as a 21 carat diamond.

Prospectors poured into the region and their discoveries proved the value of the deposits. One of the most spectacular finds came in 1869 when the same Schalk van Niekerk bartered 500 sheep, 10 head of cattle, and a horse to a Griqua shepherd in return for a 83 carat diamond. This stone, the Star of South Africa, was sold to Lilienfeld Brothers for £11,200. They, in turn, sold the cut and polished diamond to the Earl of Dudley for £30,000.⁴

The ante went up that same year when several minor gold discoveries were made in the Transvaal. Britain could contain herself no longer; she annexed the diamond fields in 1871 and the South African Republic in 1877. This marks the other guiding characteristic of Britain's policy in South Africa; there was no policy. At least, there was no consistent policy.

Throughout the century, Britain acted situationally--and, therefore, inconsistently--and always with half-measures. Thompson expands on this:

"Most Colonial Secretaries and High Commissioners were content to hold office rather than to initiate policies and most of the decisions that they made were merely reactions to South African events. But there were two colonial secretaries and two high commissioners who had strong imperialist convictions and used the powers of their offices to try to safeguard British interests in South Africa for future generations--Lord Carnarvon and Sir Bartle Frere in the 1870's and Joseph Chamberlain and Sir Alfred (Lord) Milner at the turn of the century. At other times British policy was negative, unco-ordinated, and unimaginative; but when these men were in office it was positive, co-ordinated, and inspired by grandiose imperialist vision."⁵

Thompson has an interesting perception of positive, coordinated, inspired policy. Under Carnarvon, Britain seized autonomous republics who were quite attached to the notion of their own independence. Under Chamberlain, Britain was drawn into a prolonged and tragic war with these same republics. Neither policy resulted in long-term British domination of the regions.

In 1881, the Boers rose up and subjected the British to an embarrassing military thrashing. Gladstone was forced to capitulate to Boer demands: British forces were withdrawn and the Boer states were once more recognized as independent. The terms of the 1881 Pretoria Convention did accede to Britain a sort of vague nominal status in the region: suzerainty. This was specifically designed to retain all control of the SAR's foreign relations in British hands. Suzerainty was, however, more a claim on paper than a reality.

Officially deleted from the updated terms set out in the revised London Convention of 1884, the foreign relations issue would nonetheless be dredged up again by Chamberlain in the 1890's. He would maintain that the Boers were pursuing foreign policy independent of Britain and in so doing had transgressed the agreements set out in the Convention.

British Officials and the Political Press

Just as British Imperial policy in South Africa was erratic and tight-fisted, the Government's control over the newspapers was inexperienced and superficial.

While it is true that the 19th century Reform Acts forced British officials to begrudgingly consider public opinion, they seemed at a loss as to how to actually control it. Andrew Porter describes the quandary posed for British officials when he writes, ". . . the Reform Acts transformed the numbers of voters out of all recognition, as old forms of influence declined and the channels of influence and opinion multiplied almost beyond the ken of politicians let alone their control, it was impossible for many to feel sure of the future."⁶

Rather than looking on the press as a tool for furthering their own aims, Victorian officials viewed the medium just as it viewed the general readership: with a great degree of mistrust and a small degree of loathing. This was also true of the Colonial Office's attitudes toward the newspapers.

Even during the 1870's, when the Colonial Office was occupied by Carnarvon, the potential of newspapers was left unexploited. Officials who felt no inhibitions when it came to making radical and violent departures from policy--who unashamedly broke treaties and gobbled up independent republics--feared the influence newspapers held over the electorate. Gladstone wrote in 1875, "I have always felt that while for domestic purposes our press is admirable we have no security whatever from it against even the most outrageous follies in matters of foreign policy."⁷

When Salisbury ran the Foreign Office in the 1880's, he enacted this sentiment by conducting foreign affairs discreetly and well removed from the media. His distaste for the instruments of public opinion was an outgrowth of his aversion for involving the public in the machinations of government. During the heated debate that preceded the Reform Bill of 1867--which resulted in a doubling of the electorate and enfranchisement of England's urban proletariat--Salisbury vociferously lobbied to resist the measure. Then known as Lord Robert

Cecil, Salisbury published a series of articles in the *Quarterly Review* decrying extension of the franchise. Barbara Tuchman provides a synopsis of his arguments:

"[Salisbury] declared it to be the business of the Conservative party to preserve the rights and privileges of the propertied class as the 'single bulwark' against the weight of numbers. To extend the suffrage would be, as he saw it, to give the working classes not merely a voice in Parliament but a preponderating one that would give to 'mere numbers a power they ought not to have.' He deplored the Liberals' adulation of the working class 'as if they were different from other Englishmen' when in fact the only difference was they had less education and property and 'in proportion as the property is small the danger of misusing the franchise is great.' He believed the workings of democracy to be dangerous to liberty, for under democracy 'passion is not the exception but the rule' and it was 'perfectly impossible' to commend farsighted passionless policy to 'men whose minds are unused to thought and undisciplined to study.' . . . He did not believe in political equality."⁸

In June of 1895, the new Conservative Government headed by Salisbury as prime minister took office. Then, 30 years after his efforts to repel extended suffrage, Salisbury's "principles had not shifted an inch."⁹

However, while Salisbury remained staunchly old school with regard to the general public and its press, his highly influential Colonial Secretary embraced the politics of public opinion. Tuchman incisively sketches Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain:

"Chamberlain was a man of surpassing force, ability, and a consuming ambition which had never been satisfied. Not born to the landowning class, he had perfected an appearance of authority and poise that was distinctly his own. . . He did not share the patrician's indifference to public opinion, but in mannerisms and dress, played up to it, making himself a memorable personality. To the public he was 'Pushful Joe' the 'Minister for Empire' and the best-known figure in the new Government."¹⁰

Chamberlain's appointment marks a sudden about face in the attitude of the Victorian British official toward the press. It was Chamberlain's stated program to utilize newspapers to further the goals of empire. No doubt Chamberlain's own experience of having risen from the commercial to the governing class; the widening of the franchise during his lifetime; and the advances in education--of which he had played a part--gave him the prescience to see that public opinion was to replace social privilege as the source of political authority.

Expansion of the franchise to the masses naturally led to an expansion of the newspaper industry. Not only were the masses now voting (at least the male members) but they were also reading. The 1870 Education Acts mandated that every child be taught to read. Between 1880 and 1900, the number of newspapers in Britain doubled.¹¹

By the mid-1880's, even *The Times* was forced to recognize that the nature of journalism had changed dramatically. It was feeling the pressure of mounting competition from the mushrooming penny press. Likewise, the men behind the newspapers realized that their increasingly important role in British society had altered the balance of power between themselves and government. *The Times* official historians note that at this juncture:

"The daily Press was now ubiquitous and no Government could avoid dealing with it in a straightforward, business-like fashion. MacDonald and Walter [John Cameron MacDonald the manager and Arthur Fraser Walter chief proprietor and chairman] were agreed that the personal Editorship practised by Delane [John Thadeus Delane, editor 1841-1871] had been rendered impossible for his successors by Gladstone's legal restrictions which prevented Civil Servants cooperating with journalists, by the expansion of the cheap Press and by its increasing party significance, and, finally, by the improvement and multiplication of the news agencies."¹²

Joseph Chamberlain, like the leading men at *The Times* recognized what was happening to the relationship between government and the press. Accordingly, he sought to implement all his Colonial Office programs in concert with his media relations program. He was the first to do so.

As a matter of course, Chamberlain also sought to staff the colonial service with like-minded people. The most significant of these (as regards the discussion here) is Alfred Milner. Milner began his career not in politics, but in journalism; he worked under the renowned William T. Stead when the latter was making his mark as a maverick innovator editing the *Pall Mall Gazette* in the early 1880's. Seen as a revolutionary:

"Stead introduced the 'interview' despite protests against his invasion of personal privacy; he conducted social and political campaigns; drew national attention despite criticism of his 'sensationalism'; checked the commercialization of vice and the exploitation of the poor despite the allegation of muckraking; campaigned on behalf of General Gordon, ignoring the taunt of jingoism; and secured news scoops again and again. It was a type of journalism which the older Victorians feared might infect even the morning Press."¹³

Never mind 'infecting' the morning Press, Stead's activist political journalism heavily influenced the Colonial Office through Milner. Just as Chamberlain endeavored to work along with the London editors, Milner incorporated the South African press into his schemes from the moment he arrived there as High Commissioner in 1897. Milner had a deep respect, almost reverence for the power of the newspapers, and he viewed cooperation with them as necessary to success. He had no doubt fully absorbed the teachings of Stead and these guided him throughout his career. In 1886, Stead thundered in the *Contemporary Review* that:

"I am but a comparatively young journalist, but I have seen Cabinets upset, Ministers driven into retirement, laws repealed, great social reforms initiated, Bills transformed, estimates remodelled, programmes modified, Acts passed, generals nominated, governors appointed, armies sent hither and thither, war proclaimed and war averted, by the agency of newspapers."¹⁴

Chamberlain's efforts to conduct a media campaign had to have been handicapped by a couple of factors. He wielded immense power as Colonial Secretary but he was still answerable to Prime Minister Salisbury whose feelings regarding the press were anything but positive. Chamberlain and Milner would as a rule try to "fix the press" covertly and through proxy. Analogous to imperial political policy in South Africa, imperial efforts to mold public opinion depended on the limited reliability of collaborators in the field.

The reliability of these journalistic collaborators proved negligible. By the time Chamberlain began his attempts to influence editorial policies, editors were not pliable scribes. They had an articulated political position from which they operated their newspapers. For instance, the people at *The Times* ascribed to the ethic that:

"If *The Times* supported a party it was because it believed its policy accorded with the nation's best interests. The duty of the journal remained what it had always been: to obtain authentic information of political, social and economic affairs and to comment upon them without regard to private ambitions or interests."¹⁵

If London newsmen followed their own political agenda, journalists in South Africa did so with even greater freedom. Editors who had carved out their own territory of influence in the budding frontier communities at the furthest reaches of the empire were not about to take direction from anyone.

South African journalists established themselves from the outset as powerbrokers in their own right. They were not apt to lend editorial support to British government policies unless these policies somehow fit into their own local political platform. Furthermore, if British imperial aims in any way conflicted with a frontier editor's political platform, he would attack it with all the propaganda he could muster. This first became patently evident in Kimberley.

Kimberley's Diamond Rush Newspapers

As early as the 1870's, newspapers were a strong and independent force in the diamond fields of Kimberley. They clashed openly with both the British officials and the large diamond mining syndicates. These two targets, in fact, drew much more printed ire than the inept (but presumably trainable) local government.

Kimberley's most vocal newspaperman was a colourful scoundrel named Alfred Aylward. A radical Fenian, Aylward landed in South Africa as a fugitive from Scotland Yard. He was, quite naturally, no great fan of the British Government.

Aylward quickly discovered that his anti-British disposition was very much in vogue among the Kimberley diamond diggers. His biographer writes that, "Aylward and those of like mind were opposed to British rule on principle, but the practical effects of British administration soon reinforced their distaste."¹⁶

Ken Smith describes the early political considerations that bonded the Kimberley diggers together in a common mood of defiance:

"In the area claimed by the Free State, the republican government had allowed the diggers in each camp to elect a Digger's Committee to frame local regulations and keep order. The Free State government interfered as little as possible with these elected committees which in practice had considerable power. Although the British promised not to make any changes, after they annexed the territory they relegated the Digger's Committees to a minor position. All decisions of importance were now taken by three government-appointed Mining Commissioners. The Digger's Committees thus lost much of their freedom to regulate their own affairs. Aylward for one was very bitter about this. In 1872 he was chairman of the Digger's Committee of Old De Beers; he regarded the benign neglect of the Orange Free State

as an enlightened policy while he feared the worst from any attempt by Whitehall or Cape Town to impose its will on the infant colony."¹⁷

In 1873 the British government represented by Lieutenant-Governor Southey took decisive steps to increase its own power and diminish the control traditionally held by the Digger's Committees. By July, Southey had introduced a new constitution which upheld the authority of the unelected executive legislative body he had installed. The diggers reacted to this by forming the Digger's Association of New Rush and elected Henry Tucker--a veteran of Cape politics--as their leader. Tucker's election platform touched all the salient points of digger demands. He lobbied for:

1. a ban on increases to claim rents
2. the maintenance of diggers' rights to free dwelling plots and sorting places
3. removal of digger disputes from the courts
4. official sanctioning of vigilante control of diamond theft through industry detective agencies
5. the right of diggers to exercise self-determination on all mining issues through their own Digger's Committees ¹⁸

When Tucker failed to win a seat in the elected body of the Southey government in the November 1873 election, the diggers became more deeply bound to their party. This rallying of support for the diggers democracy ideal, in turn, inspired more concerted action on the part of Kimberley monopolists.

In their efforts to amalgamate the mines the monopolists sought to wipe out the small claimholders. They saw Southey's government as the most appropriate instrument with which to crush the independent diggers. But the question they faced was how to motivate Southey to decisively turn on and eradicate the diggers as a political force in the fields. He had to be made to feel sufficiently threatened by the small claimholders. The monopolists' answer to this question came in the form of Alfred Aylward and his newspaper the *Diamond Field*.

Aylward vigorously articulated digger opposition to British rule which had been building since annexation in 1871. He spared no animus in editorializing on the British

seizure of the diamond fields. In describing the imperial action in his book *The Transvaal of Today* (1881), he wrote:

"Great Britain, shortly after the discovery of diamonds in what is now called Griqualand West, annexed that province for the sake of public convenience, but on false pretences. This fact is now everywhere admitted. The payment of £90,000 sterling by us [Britain] to the President of the Free State as compensation for the wrong done to him, proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that the annexation of the Diamond Fields was unjustifiable."¹⁹

The mounting popular feeling against Southey gave Aylward, as editor, the opportunity to become an estimable figure in the community. Tucker had failed to win a seat in the legislature but the diggers could still have their views presented in the public venue by the *Diamond Field*.

With his newspaper amplifying the surge of popular opinion, Aylward could become the diggers' spokesman, their champion. Aylward lived for opportunities such as this. "One of the great attractions of running a paper, he had confessed to John [Aylward's brother], was the opportunity to mould public opinion."²⁰ From the time of the annexation on, digger demands and the press became inseparable.

As the British government had largely justified the annexation with the native rights issue, it felt obliged to enact native rights measures in the diamond fields. The diggers complained, in Aylward's words,

"the 'licence' permitted in the name of law to the natives on the Diamond Fields was undermining the foundation of authority all over Africa, while the guns that were being sold in thousands daily to the Kaffirs would be, ere long, used in war. . . if the barbarous element in Kimberley was not speedily placed under fair and moderate but strong and repressive rule, great disasters would occur. . ." ²¹

Aylward spearheaded the Digger's Committee clash with the British government over the pass law. The white diggers stubbornly maintained that blacks must be made to carry passes so that vagrants could be easily identified. This demand was born out of the mounting climate of fear in which the diggers were certain that British government measures would result in armed native uprising.

When the diggers, chafing at Southey's refusal to meet with their delegation, formed the Kimberley Defence League and Protective Association on November 21, 1874, Aylward was the man who read aloud the membership pledge.

In the November 28, 1874 issue of the *Diamond Field*, Aylward argued that the native Africans had behaved with "Honesty and order" when the territory was under Boer administration. However, he complained, British rule had caused a tremendous turn for the worse:

"But what has been the result of the advent here of the 'civilizer' par excellence? . . . the natives, released from wholesome restraint, the wild Basuto freed from the Chief's law and tribal punishments, almost immediately broke out into a fever of thieving and drunkenness. Disorder prevailed in place of order, and we are told by the admirers of annexation, the apostles of civilization that corrupts and destroys, that all this, being done in the name of England, is hallowed work, and that the independent Republics of South Africa ought to be glad to embrace the loathsome giver of evil gifts because these gifts were given in a good name and under pious pretences."²²

Aylward's editorial position was challenged by Richard William Murray, Sr. who edited the pro-British newspaper, the *Diamond News*. Murray's entire journalistic career was based on the promotion of British imperial aims in South Africa. Before arriving in Cape Town in 1854, he had worked for several prominent London newspapers. After immigrating, he established himself as the editor of the *Cape Monitor*.

In January 1857 Murray went into partnership with Bryan Darnell and Saul Solomon to found the *Cape Argus*. The Argus Printing and Publishing Company would, in a little over 30 years later, become the proprietor of *The Star* in Johannesburg.

Darnell soon lost his enthusiasm for Cape journalism; being virulently pro-British he felt alienated from the readership which was demanding full responsible government. He sold his shares to Murray in 1859. Murray followed suit in 1862. He sold his part of the newspaper to Solomon who subscribed to the popular notion of introducing responsible government and preventing the separation of the colony into eastern and western parts.

In October of 1863, Murray assented to following the Governor and High Commissioner, Sir Philip Wodehouse, to the eastern part of the colony to supply the British imperial party there with journalistic support. However, Murray backed the wrong horse; the Cape Colony was not partitioned, Grahamstown hosted only one parliamentary session, and Murray's newspaper, *The Great Eastern*, expired in September 1866. The newspaper was reincarnated under new ownership as *The Eastern Star* but would eventually come under proprietorship of the Argus Company as *The Star* of Johannesburg.

Murray returned to Cape Town and took on the editorship of the *Standard and Mail* but soon left for Kimberley. His son, R. W. junior, later edited the *Standard and Mail* and was in 1876 one of the founders of the *Cape Times* which would by the 1890's moderate its views according to the Cape population's sense of self-determination but would still remain sympathetic to British imperial aims.²³

Perhaps the great irony of R. W. Murray's life was the fact that in helping to found the *Cape Argus* and *The Great Eastern*, he laid the foundation for South Africa's most powerful journalistic advocates of responsible self-government. At any rate, he could not have known that as he sat behind his desk at the *Diamond News* office in Kimberley. If anything, he was chafing at the imperial cause having lost ground in Cape Colony and was bent on preventing the same thing happening in the north.

The minimal political landscape afforded by Kimberley, an outpost of corrugated tin shacks and canvas tents, must have made Murray's task of choosing his opponent refreshingly easy. Aylward stood for everything Murray opposed, and vice versa.

Yet, the sincerity behind the printed salvos that the two battling editors hurled at one another has always been in question. Contemporary rumour held that Murray and Aylward spent their days drinking together and ruminating on how they would flail one another in the next day's editions. This is not so unlikely a scenario; in the isolated and rough camp life of Kimberley the two newsmen would be hard pressed to find many other kindred spirits.

However, this is not to say that either Murray or Aylward stood apart from their reading publics. On the contrary, in the compact new communities that sprang up out of

South Africa's mining fields no editor could afford to stray too far from the popular sentiments held by his readership. In these new societies on the veld, editorships were very much like powerful political offices and smart editors gauged, lobbied, and appeased their readerships as if they were constituencies.

In the more sophisticated mining society of Johannesburg in the 1890's, this reading constituency would be comprised of professional classes; engineers, doctors, lawyers, brokers. In the more rough and ready society of Kimberley, the white reading public was overwhelmingly comprised of the independent digger and the small entrepreneurial merchant outfitting him. Aylward's line of keeping the diamond fields wide open and free from British administration as well as monopolies appealed to the small diggers hanging on from day to day in hopes of striking it rich. Murray's call for ordered British governance and ties to the Cape struck a chord with the merchants hoping to make Kimberley into a well-appointed, civilized town.

Newspapermen were cognizant from the beginning that the support of their readership was the key to their impregnability. This knowledge fortified them in their opposition to both government and the mining houses.

Aylward staunchly defended the small independent claimholders who were fast being reduced to shareworkers during the formation of the Kimberley diamond syndicates in the 1870's. The Irishman complained bitterly that the shareworkers constituted the majority and yet the British government did not allow them representation on the Mining Board. In 1874 he is quoted as having said,

"A man takes over ground to work on shares, he gives up a high percentage (say 40 percent) to the claimholder, he by his presence and labour keeps that claims from the penalties of unworked claims in the Mining Ordinance, he feeds and pays Kaffirs, keeps gear in order, goes through bad layers and as occurs in a vast proportion of cases loses money, health, patience and time that will never return [and] an ungentlemanly claimholder may sell the claim over his head or from under his feet without giving him even an hour's notice, or worse he may let the digger on shares work through a bad layer spend perhaps £200 in getting the claim in first class order and to a paying level and then he may - and but too frequently does - step in and work the claim himself." ²⁴

By 1875 the mood of rebellion ran rampant. The Digger's Protection Association was formed. The diggers had armed themselves and took to conducting drill marches in the streets of Kimberley. The press ran announcements concerning arms distributions and Aylward himself adopted the title of Adjutant of the Insurrectionary Forces. The diggers referred to him as "the General" and he commanded his own corps which was characteristically named "Aylward's Own."²⁵

These activities were starting to give Kimberley the appearance of a town on the verge chaos; much to the chagrin of the merchant class whose commerce was being adversely affected. Murray, expressing the views of this contingent advocated gradual reform and supported the Moderate Party.

By April 1875, the armed diggers had become so threatening that Southey exhorted citizens to form a militia until troops arrived from Cape Town. George Beet of the pro-government *Diamond News* was one of the 182 volunteers.

Aylward's view of these moderates was predictable. He railed that, "Magna Charta was not wrenched from the unwilling hands of King John by moderate men, but by men who were immoderately earnest, in their defence of British liberties. Earnestness and resolution were generally virtues, moderation in pursuing what was right and good in itself would be more criminal than moderation."²⁶

This attitude did not sit well with Henry Tucker, chairman of the Association. The diggers' leaders had started to realize that all of their bravado and martial displays were heading them into a collision with the British government. As reason began to dawn, and their self-preservation instincts took over, the Association leaders adopted a moderate posture. Aylward was summarily relieved of his military command.

It was around this time that Governor Southey began to perceive what he was convinced to be the true nature of the support behind the rebel movement. He sanctioned Chief Inspector Percy's hiring a spy named Mortimer Spurgin and the resulting intelligence led Southey to trace the anti-government movement to the covert actions of what he referred to as "wire-pullers" in the form of "German diamond merchants."²⁷

The ostensibly proletarian movement was, he was sure, backed by Kimberley's capitalist monopolists who were using the discontented rank and file as a coercive wedge to gain the allegiance of the Government. They sought to encourage the threat of working class rebellion so as to frighten the Government into their own camp and to make it more amenable to granting legislation serving their aims. These capitalist aims were completely antithetical to those of the digger rebels: the abolition of claim ownership restrictions which would allow for diamond claim monopolies and consolidation of the diamond fields.

This tactic would explain the quiet support the capitalists were giving the digger movement. For example, when the diggers took over the *Diamond Field* and dispersed £10 shares in it among their political allies, the large claimholder F. Baring Gould and the large diamond merchant J.B. Robinson were among the subscribers.²⁸

This faction was bent on exploiting the diamond fields through the rapid consolidation of claim ownership. Several of the persons and firms that Southey identified as being part of this vested interest conspiracy were to emerge again in Johannesburg 20 years later applying the same tactics to gold mining interests. Among them were Jules Porges and Company represented in Kimberley by Julius Wernher.²⁹

Who these people were was probably more an issue with Southey than what they were doing. This was the period during which British imperial policy sought to hold territories through low-maintenance means; collaborators in the field were preferable to British officials and troops. Had the aspiring monopolists all been British, Southey would likely not have become so agitated. But they were not. The men seeking to grasp all of the diamond fields were a mixed group of multi-nationals.

Jules Porges and Company was a factor in Kimberley from 1873 on. Porges was Bohemian and his two chief representatives, Julius Wernher and Alfred Beit were German. The partnership, dealing in diamond shares as well as claims, had branches in London and Paris. Southey was faced with the grim prospect of a group of francophile Germans poised to take control of all the Kimberley mines.

Things were happening all around Southey but, maddening as it was, he could not discern exactly what was afoot and who was behind it. He must have been aware--and it must have irked him--that other forces had much more impact than did the British government on events in Kimberley.

One thing that Southey could be sure of was the fact that Aylward was continually attempting to chip away at his authority and whip up popular discontent. Being a British official of the 1870's, Southey could not conceive of a newspaper as a political entity in its own right. Aylward, he deduced, had to be the mouthpiece for a more conventional and recognized power group: a conspiracy of capitalists. This theory fitted nicely with the information he had sleuthed that the capitalists were contributing financial support, albeit quite nominal support, to the rebels' newspaper.

In a letter to Sir Henry Barkly dated March 25, 1875, Southey laid out his fresh insights into the digger movement:

"... wires are being pulled. My present conviction is that Hall (Walsh & Co.) is at the bottom of it and that the object is to endeavour to convince the Home authorities that there is nothing in the Province but the mines and that they ought to be in the possession of a Company of Capitalists . . . The plan has been well laid. He and some others are told off to do the apparently friendly part, to stand between the government and the Rebels. The friendly ones' duties are to interview me and urge non-opposition to the violent party; "let things slide" as Hall tried to impress on me and so show that we are unable to maintain order while inviting other members of the Government to friendly tea parties etc. to cajole and make an impression on them that temporising is the proper thing. Others such as Tucker, Ling, Aylward and Co. are told off on the other side to endeavour to strike fear in the minds of the government and the well disposed by threatening to set fire to public and other buildings. I am assured that both parties are working in concert and when I look at who the open men are I get an amount of light that could not be acquired all at once. The leaders of the violent party are all men of straw, and I think it likely that they have been offered, as myself and others were indirectly offered last session, that if success follows and a company can get the mine they shall have shares in the company without paying for them."³⁰

Less than a month after Southey penned these words, on April 12, 1875, the incident referred to as the Black Flag Rebellion occurred. Aylward raised the black flag on

Flagstaff Hill thereby giving the Association's signal to start the armed rebellion. Between 2,500 and 3,000 men, both armed and unarmed, flooded the streets and were soon met by 24 officers and men of the Griqualand West Constabulary. A bloodbath was narrowly averted as Tucker and William Ling of the Association quelled the crowd and met with Magistrate D'Arcy.

Aylward was removed from the editorial chair of the *Diamond Field* on May 1, 1875. His editorial of that day states:

"Natal, Griqualand, and the Gold Fields, pressing against the dreadful front of barbarism, all three ill-governed, all three petitioning, remonstrating, imploring, and - according to their mis-rulers - rebellious- look vainly forward through the mists of gathering storms for light and liberty. . . It ought now to be the duty of the combined associations of the Diamond fields to consider whether they are to remain the promoters of an incipient local rebellion, or whether they shall, using their larger experience and better obtained political information, unite themselves, to promote the holiest and greatest thought that can be conceived by colonial men - the creation of a South African Colonial free and Republican Confederation."³¹

Aylward was tried for his part in the April riot, and along with William Ling and Conrad Von Schlickmann, was found not guilty. Henry Tucker went on to lobby for digger's rights and edit the *Diamond Fields Advertiser*.³² Ling had been the man to authorize Aylward's dismissal from the *Diamond Field* but this did not deter him from finding a place for the Irishman on the *Independent*, the newspaper he owned. The flirtation with disaster resulting from the political press campaign in Kimberley had certainly not dampened the journalistic enthusiasm of any of the participants.

Aylward worked as either the editor or the business manager of the *Independent* until September 1876 when it was forced to close due to financial problems. The *Independent* happened to be the newspaper on which Lionel Phillips worked as a journalist.³³ Phillips went on to become one of Johannesburg's great mining executives and Uitlander reform activists.

Aylward's final brief stint as a journalist on the *Independent* provided his old rival Murray with the opportunity to assail him with a last barrage of derision. "He is going on about the working classes! Working man indeed!" Murray wrote in the *Diamond News* on May 25, 1876, "He has not done a stroke of work these twenty years."³⁴ One can almost see Murray

winking between the typeset lines: it is easy to believe that the two newspapermen did in fact concoct such prose together over a tableful of drinks and a hearty guffaw.

Did Aylward and his comrades in the reform movement sell out to the monopolists in return for a handsome payoff of diamond mine shares? Given the characters involved one is certainly tempted to believe, as Southey did, that this was the case. There is, however, the consideration that none of the "open men," as Southey described them, became rich after the great amalgamation was accomplished.

Kimberley's anti-British newsmen--Aylward, Tucker, and Ling--had no tangible connection with the capitalists who finally won the battle to monopolize the Kimberley diamond holdings. In 1880, Porges established the Paris-based *Compagnie Française des Mines de Diamants du Cap* to control the firm's Kimberley diamond mining activities and coordinate moves to monopolize the fields. R.V. Kubicek describes how the situation evolved in the early 1880's:

"When the French Company [Porges's] remained the only impediment to Barney Barnato's control of the Kimberley pipe, and when Cecil Rhodes achieved control of the De Beers pipe, the only other major source of diamonds in the region, Porges and Company came to occupy a crucial position. It backed Rhodes. Not only did it support him against Barnato through its own holdings, but Porges and Company also found Rhodes the capital he needed to pull off his coup. Beit got a syndicate of French and German financiers to provide substantial backing. Through Porges's firm, Rhodes also got Rothschild support for a loan which enabled him to purchase the French company. Porges and partners, who likely held a significant part of its share capital, along with their Paris backers turned a tidy profit. Moreover, Wernher and Beit were made life governors and were entitled to a share of the profits in De Beers Consolidated, the company Rhodes formed to effect his monopoly of diamond production."³⁵

While it is true that the men behind the amalgamation did lend some financial support to Aylward's *Diamond Field*, and in so doing helped sustain the mood of digger rebellion, it is unlikely that the connection was quite the scheming cabal that Southey imagined. Wernher, Beit, Robinson, and others probably simply recognized that the newspaper and its political party would, as a natural course, do what they wanted without requiring their direct

involvement. That is Aylward would sufficiently distract Southey, providing him with a preoccupation while leaving the capitalists free to pursue their agenda of amalgamation.

The history of Kimberley's press shows that the Transvaal's first newspapers were not mining magnate puppets, as has been charged, but were their main detractors. If the monopoly capitalists were using the journalists and their political following as a threat against the government, they were most likely doing so without the knowledge of the journalists themselves.

There is one case in Kimberley of a mining magnate flagrantly wielding the press as a weapon with the full cooperation of an editor. However, the irony of the episode's ending, along with the theatricality of its main character Barney Barnato, make the whole thing more of a comic interlude than the beginning of a significant trend.

The story of the Barney Barnato press began when the magnate's nephew, Jack Joel was found guilty of illegal diamond trading thanks to the investigations of Kimberley's chief detective John Fry. Even though young Joel eluded penalty for his crime by skipping the country for London, Barnato was bent on destroying Fry. He determined to do so through the press.

The Diamond Times came into print in 1884 under the editorship of R. W. Murray and the supposed ownership of Woolf Joel. All of Kimberley knew that the paper was actually the property of Barnato. Murray probably welcomed the project as it provided him with a new object of derision; Aylward was by this time in Lydenburg pursuing fresh vainglory and the digger movement had collapsed under the weight of amalgamation.

The Diamond Times' anti-Fry slander campaign--along with Barnato's Cape Town influence--successfully sent Fry skidding out of town on the proverbial rails. However, by a rather convenient coincidence, Fry's travelling companion in the cart leaving Kimberley was F. J. Dormer, editor of the *Cape Argus*. Dormer's newspaper was the same *Cape Argus* that Murray had helped found and then walked away from in 1863.

Fry poured out his tale of injustice and denigration to Dormer who commiserated so fully with Fry that he printed the whole sordid story. Barnato countered by

suing the editor for libel only to receive a rather backhanded victory in court: Dormer was ordered to pay Barnato a mere £10 in punitive damages.³⁶

In retrospect, perhaps the most salient aspect of the Barnato press scandal is the twist which has been accepted as a quirky chance of high veld cart travel. It very likely was no accident that Dormer happened to meet up with Fry at the moment of his ostracism.

By 1884 Dormer was connected with Barnato's arch-nemesis, Cecil Rhodes. Rhodes had helped Dormer fund his acquisition of the *Cape Argus* and the newspaper exposed Barnato at just the moment that Rhodes--backed by Porges' and Company--was wrenching control of the Kimberley monopoly from Barnato's grasp. Rhodes foiled Barnato in journalistic as well as capitalistic power plays.

Murray was also the recipient of ironic justice. He was rewarded for using his editorial voice for personal vengeance instead of political principles by being outmaneuvered by the very newspaper he had created 25 years earlier. He soon left Kimberley and returned to Cape Town.

The history of Kimberley's newspapers contains themes that would remain prevalent and would be repeated in Johannesburg.

Aylward's association with the reformist diggers of Kimberley is analogous to the situation in Johannesburg in the 1890's when editors of *The Star* became integrally involved in the reform movement there. Aylward's newspaper, like *The Star*, received some financial support from local capitalists but both papers retained an editorial stance firmly grounded in the progressive reform politics of their readerships.

The primary difference in the political campaigns waged by the *Diamond Field* and *The Star* is the fact that the former attacked the British government and the monopolists and the latter attacked the Boer government. It should be noted, however, that while *The Star* displayed an affinity for the British government, it adamantly rejected the idea of the Transvaal coming under British rule. Like Aylward and the diggers, *The Star* editors and the Uitlanders

by far preferred to be governed by the Boers rather than the British. The attitudes and alliances formed in Kimberley would become revitalized 20 years later in Johannesburg.

Journalistic experiences in Kimberley taught Transvaal newsmen the key principles that would guide them later in Barberton and Johannesburg. First and foremost, they learned that all causes and positions taken must be in concert with the inclinations of their readership. Aylward's example of his sudden lonely fall from power proved that no journalist could push his public any further than they were willing to go. Similarly, Murray's public exposure for using his newspaper for personal slander proved that a newsman could not "sell out" to a private interest and get away with it.

By remaining true to the political interests of their publics, editors of late-Victorian Transvaal newspapers were empowered to assault any opponent--British officials, Boer officials, or capitalists.

Footnotes to Chapter 2

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- 3 -

The Transvaal Becomes News: First Gold Strikes

Just as the diamond boom was reaching its peak and the large syndicates were pushing out the individual claimholders, gold was discovered in the Transvaal. Independent diggers, aware that their days in the diamond fields were numbered, migrated to the northeast to try their luck at goldmining. These first gold mining communities were at Lydenburg and Pilgrim's Rest. Aggressive newspapermen seized influential roles in these frontier societies from the beginning.

Phelan Leads the Fight at Pilgrim's Rest

The diggers of Pilgrim's Rest were possessed by a true frontiersman's resentment for authority: in this situation authority came in the form of the Boer republic government led by President Burgers. A pugnacious Irishman, M. V. Phelan owner and editor of the *Gold Fields Mercury*, became the spokesman for the diggers' position. It did not take Phelan long before he made the subtle but crucial transition from spokesman to leader of his readership.

By 1875 the gold diggers of Pilgrim's Rest shared a glowering volatile mood in the face of shattered promise. They had thronged to the area since the first gold finds of 1871. In 1873 the fortune seekers at Pilgrim's Rest numbered 1,300. Two years later, the hoped for ocean of gold proved to be a mere trickle. The short-lived boom was fast becoming a bust.¹

The diggers transferred their acrimony from its true source--the region's geological shortcoming--to the republican government. They chafed at claims regulations enforced by the Burger government. The local Gold Commissioner, John Scoble, was like a lightning rod for digger discontent and Phelan quickly capitalized on this as he virulently attacked the official in the public press. Ken Smith explains how this tact raised Phelan from news editor to working class hero:

"Phelan, through the *Gold Fields Mercury*, had been in the forefront of the campaign to discredit Burgers's government and its creations like the Lydenburg Volunteers. Ever since his appointment as Gold

Commissioner, John Scoble had been criticized, abused and held up to ridicule as the local representative of a government that Phelan and his supporters despised. But it was not simply a matter of principle. As the attack by Phelan showed, there was a good deal of personal animosity and class feeling between Phelan and a large number of diggers on one side, and Scoble and a small group of officials and merchants on the other." ²

Phelan finally eroded Scoble's tolerance in November 1876 when he critiqued Scoble for his ruling against the miner John O'Leary in a libel suit. Phelan commented in the *Gold Fields Mercury* that Scoble's decision represented, "a direct insult to a large class of this community--to the class which, in fact constitutes the back-bone of the whole place--and is a deliberate attempt to perpetuate the war of class against class." Further, Phelan wrote, Scoble's ruling confirmed the diggers' conviction that, "the head of our local court [Scoble] is also the head of a small section of this community which lays claim (Heaven save the mark!) to be the 'superior caste,' and those foolish endeavours to maintain that self-assured position are constantly causing ill-blood and perpetuating social divisions and creating invidious distinctions."³

While this sort of editorial could easily be interpreted as pure sedition, Scoble showed considerable forbearance--or perhaps awareness of Phelan's influence--by charging the editor with the less serious crime of contempt. Scoble imposed a £27.10s fine on Phelan and a two-week jail term. The latter half of the sentence, however, was not carried out as Phelan's supporters formed into an angry mob, marched to the jail, and forcibly released their editor leader.

This prompted the government to call in the Lydenburg Volunteers to deal with the rebel miners. Curiously enough, the corps was commanded by Kimberley's former rabble-raising editor Alfred Aylward. Having been a doyen of discontent himself, Aylward felt adverse to taking a firm handed approach with the anti-government diggers. A.P. Cartwright describes the meeting between Aylward and the rebels:

"The upshot was that every man-jack of them, including the commanding officer of the Lydenburg Volunteers [Aylward], got drunk, and 18 of the ringleaders voluntarily surrendered on a charge of disturbing the peace. They appeared on this charge, were released on bail, and never came to trial. . . ." ⁴

Just a few months later, Phelan led the diggers in another popular cause. The Boer government began considering conscripting the diggers for commando duty as African unrest became increasingly serious. Naturally the miners had no desire to fight the fierce Zulus and Phelan zealously defended their right to object to military service.

Marauding bands of warriors began preying on Boer farms in the spring of 1876. On May 16, 1876 the republican government declared war on the Zulus. The Uitlander miners had been untouched by the native uprising and the diggers wanted to maintain a status of neutrality.

This critical situation enabled Phelan to rise to the fore. He used the *Gold Fields Mercury* to convince the miners that if they stayed out of the Boer/Pedi conflict they would remain unscathed. This proved a popular notion and the diggers soon rallied behind Phelan. As if to validate Phelan's leadership, the Pedi King Sekhukhune sent a missive to the miners of Pilgrim's Rest verifying that his quarrel was with the Boers and not the Uitlander miners. Phelan published this message from Sekhukhune in an Extra edition on August 7, 1877.⁵

On August 28, 1877 the diggers held a meeting in which they decided that they would lend no assistance to the republican government for the Pedi campaign and would petition the British government to annex the region based on the Boers inability to control the native hostilities. These resolutions were published in the *Mercury*.⁶

As Phelan was moving his readership into open revolt, his compatriot and fellow newspaperman Alfred Aylward sided with the Burger government. Aylward had also migrated to the gold fields and in keeping with both his anathema for the British and his love of military command, had taken the position of commander of the Lydenburg Volunteers.

These were halcyon days for Aylward; he treated his post at Fort Burgers as his personal kingdom and had 108 armed men at his disposal. Aylward saw his new-founded responsibility as no reason to alter his personal style. He conducted a holiday camp atmosphere wherein the soldiers enjoyed hunting, fishing, and liquor-soaked parties. Several temporary houses were constructed and in describing their function Aylward says that one was, "large enough to serve as a ball-room, where, to the music of a good violinist, they [the

men] frequently danced. Of course there were no ladies, but nearly half the garrison were compelled to shave the upper lip and enact the character."⁷

One of Aylward's prime reasons for trading in journalistic for military leadership--besides the latter's obvious appeal to Aylward's personal disposition--was his belief that the British were behind the native uprisings. He maintained that the British deliberately mishandled native issues thereby causing the hostilities with which the Boers were forced to contend. He reflected in 1881 that:

"The war between Secocoeni [sic] and the Transvaal was the result of that policy that used the Kafirs, not as a 'check to the aggressions', but as a means for the extinction of the Republic. But this policy has produced other consequences, for which the Republic is held to be blamable. In fact, the direct and indirect results of the policy are ascribed not to it but to Republican misrule. The dangers, the widespread revolts which are the success of that treacherous and roundabout scheme has given rise to, are no longer traceable to it [the British government], but are used as arguments in proof of the 'weakness' of the Transvaal, which it was its object to destroy, and to cause the ruin of which it was initiated; hence the 'house on fire' argument."⁸

The "house on fire" argument to which Aylward refers is the rationale which the British used to justify annexing the Transvaal. The reasoning--or perhaps excuse is the more apt description--ran along the lines of if your neighbor's house is on fire and he cannot put it out, it is up to you to do it for him. Carnarvon sent Sir Theophilus Shepstone and 25 men to the Transvaal on January 4, 1877 ostensibly to look into President Burger's handling of the native problems. This was really the first step in annexing the republic.⁹

Given what is known about Carnarvon's intentions in South Africa and the digger's appeals to Great Britain, there was little doubt as to the true nature of the Shepstone delegation. Aylward wrote, "Boers are not stupid. They have seen that certain South African colonists [Phelan's followers] and colonial politicians urged on and armed the natives against them; and they know that the 'house was set on fire' by those politicians--the Annexationists--who put in firemen after they had committed the arson."¹⁰

In 1876 native unrest provided Carnarvon with the justification he needed to begin realizing his dream for a confederated South Africa under the Union Jack. In that year, Britain stepped in and annexed the native territories of Fingoland, Idutywa Reserve, and No-

Man's Land. Concurrently, Britain seized the diamond-rich Griqualand West and gave the Orange Free State £90,000 in reparations. Claiming that the Transvaal had been plunged into anarchy by Boer misgovernment, Britain annexed it in the following year.

Possession of the Transvaal proved very problematic for Britain, however, as the imperialists were not only opposed by the indigenous Boers but were embroiled in the Zulu War in 1879. Also in 1879, Britain sought to tighten its hold over the Transvaal by declaring the territory a Crown Colony. In response, the Boers revolted.

The Boers took Heidelberg on December 16 1880--Dingaan's Day--and formally established the South African Republic (SAR). The next day Paul Kruger was elected president of the new Boer republic. A year later, the Boers officially regained their independence. Their autonomous status was qualified only by a suzerainty policy which, according to the Pretoria Convention, retained British control of the SAR's foreign policy. In 1884 the Pretoria Convention was amended by the London Convention, however, the second document served to only further confuse the legitimacy of Britain's claim to exercise suzerainty over the SAR. Adding injury to insult with regard to Britain's loss of the Transvaal, massive goldfields were discovered on the Witwatersrand in 1885.¹¹

Kruger's First Major Newspaper Blunder

Prior to the Witwatersrand gold discoveries, the Uitlanders on the Transvaal had been a relatively small, albeit disgruntled, presence. Kruger could not foresee the extent of the Witwatersrand gold reef nor the en masse infusion of foreigners that its revelation would trigger. Once the British Government had been successfully expelled from his republic, he probably viewed the Uitlander minority as a manageable class that could be placated and eventually absorbed into the Republic in a positive fashion.

Many foreigners such as Gold Commissioner Scoble and Lydenburg's Commander Aylward had proven that Uitlanders could faithfully serve in the Boer administration. This perspective is very likely the explanation for Kruger's curious press release to the London papers in 1884.

According to J.P. FitzPatrick, who was to become one of Johannesburg's most vocal reform leaders, President Kruger found himself in a rather embarrassing situation following the 1884 London Convention. FitzPatrick claims that after the Convention had completed its business, Kruger realized that he did not have enough cash to pay his London hotel bill. A slightly dubious character by the name of Baron Grant presented himself to the dismayed Kruger offering to square the hotel tab if Kruger agreed to issue a press release to the London papers.

Grant had been a big money player in the London stock exchange and personally held large interests in Lydenburg gold concessions. As Lydenburg was not the windfall that Grant and others had speculated it would be, holders of Lydenburg shares desperately needed the press to issue some positive news regarding the Transvaal goldmining situation in order to boost the value of their stock. Grant convinced Kruger to promise in the London press that all British immigrants settling on the Rand would receive "full rights and protection" as citizens of the SAR.¹²

As Lydenburg's broken promise of El Dorado would soon be redeemed at other locations in the Transvaal, Kruger's pledge to bestow rights of citizenship upon Uitlanders would apply not to a small minority but to a majority of foreigners who poured into the region with the next gold boom. With this dramatic shift in demographics, Kruger quite understandably neglected his promise to the foreign immigrants.

Uitlander reform activists would harken back to Kruger's published statement for the next 15 years, using it as the basis for not only calling Kruger a tyrant, but also a welsher on a grand scale.

The Gold Boom Shifts to Barberton

Lydenburg gold mining had essentially died on the vine but it was barely over before richer deposits were unearthed around Barberton. The next incarnation of Uitlander mining society proved much more politically sophisticated and organized than the transient inhabitants of Lydenburg had been.

Kruger neglected to grant the citizenship privileges promised in his 1884 press release. To make matters worse, he sought to control the burgeoning mining activities with industry regulations which the mining community itself regarded as sadly misinformed. Miner resentment provided plenty of political unrest for newsmen to put into ink. As before, the press, the *Barberton Herald*, was inextricably aligned with Uitlander political organizations.

As early as 1885, the Barberton miners formed a Digger's Committee through which they petitioned the Kruger government to resolve inequities affecting them as a class. At this stage, reform demands were primarily aimed at mining regulations and were only marginally concerned with acquisition of political rights. Uitlander press and petitions of this time demanded that Kruger provide:

- 1.) an amendment to the 1885 Gold Law to facilitate prospecting and mining
- 2.) representation of the goldfields in the Volksraad
- 3.) regular circuit courts in the fields
- 4.) reduction of excessive taxation; especially on timber for mining purposes
- 5.) introduction of a law pegging out claims by power of attorney
- 6.) more secure tenure of ground on which capital had been expended ¹³

The nature of the demands reflect the nature of the gold mining industry at that point. The large mining houses had not yet become firmly established and the field was still open to individuals and small firms. Hence the emphasis on economic grievances by Uitlander political organizations. While the sets of reform demands later voiced in Johannesburg would contain a similar mixture of economic and political issues, later reformers would become more

concerned with the latter. The large syndicates that would dominate in a few short years were adept at lobbying special deals and compensations for government impediments to their profitability. At that point economic legislation would be beyond the control and concern of the working and middle class men who comprised Uitlander political parties and Uitlander press readerships. Shut out from the inner workings of capital gain, these Uitlander residents would then turn their attention primarily to acquiring political clout.

While their goals would shift in the 1890's, the mechanisms for a political esprit d'corp among the Uitlander majority were built in the 1880's. Their propensity for forming political parties; their alliance with the press; and their focus on the SAR government as the object of complaint would all remain indelible features of the Uitlander reform movement.

The Boer position would also be formed during the Lydenburg and later the Barberton gold rush. Wheatcroft notes that during the 1880's, "The burghers rightly saw the diggers as a threat, and for their part the diggers were hostile to the Pretoria government, forming a 'defence committee' and keeping up vituperative criticism through their papers, the *Gold Fields Mercury* and the *Transvaal Argus*."¹⁴ President Kruger, in dealing with the Barberton committee, first displayed a negotiating style that was to dominate his dealings with all the Uitlander reformers right up to the outbreak of the war. When presented with a petition containing the demands outlined above, Kruger's response was, "His Honour assures you of his warmest support and assistance--in everything except the reduction of taxation . . . You must not ask me to work for you and cut off my hands at the same time."¹⁵

Of course this statement is not in and of itself so unreasonable, but the Barberton residents took it as a patronizing dismissal of their concerns. The real problem was a cultural dissonance between Boer and Uitlander. The rugged and somewhat archaic Boer society of the veld demanded a strong patriarchal leader; Kruger was an ideal candidate for this role. He was a father figure, arbitrarily bestowing rewards and punishment on the people he ruled as though they were his children. To Kruger, the Uitlanders were his naughty children, and they were foundlings at that.

Footnotes to Chapter 3

1. Smith, *Alfred Aylward*, 75.
2. Ibid., 90.
3. Ibid., 89-90.
4. A. P. Cartwright, *Valley of Gold* (Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1961), 72.
5. Smith, *Alfred Aylward*, 76.
6. Cartwright, *Valley of Gold*, 72.
7. Smith, *Alfred Aylward*, 85.
8. Aylward, *The Transvaal of To-Day*, 220-221.
9. Smith, *Alfred Aylward*, 88.
10. Aylward, *The Transvaal of To-Day*, 222.
11. Louis Creswicke, *South Africa and the Transvaal War* (Toronto: The Publishers' Syndicate Limited, 1900), ix-x.
12. FitzPatrick, *The Transvaal From Within*, 57-58.
13. Robert Crisp, *The Outlanders, The Men Who Made Johannesburg* (London: Peter Davies Ltd., 1964), 48.
14. Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, 78.
15. Crisp, *The Outlanders*, 48.

The Men and Mines of Johannesburg

The truly unique feature of the birth and development of Johannesburg is the community's high level of sophistication from its earliest beginnings. While it is true that the first corrugated iron shacks built in Johannesburg in the late 1880's were fairly rough, the town did not really go through a canvas tent stage like Barberton or Kimberley.

Only four years after Johannesburg was founded in 1886, *The Star* ran a special illustrated issue featuring six impressive stone buildings prominently marking the community's rapid maturity. Similarly, Johannesburg was not the haven for individual prospectors that the other two mining centres had been. Johannesburg was a centre of large mining and investment corporations.

A couple of factors contributed to Johannesburg developing in this fashion. First, the unique geological conditions of the Rand gold reef required capital intensive development. Gold had, until then, been traditionally found in alluvial deposits making it accessible to individual prospectors with pans, picks, and shovels. The solid rock bankets of the Rand required that ore dug up from the reef be crushed with stamp batteries and the resulting powdered rock had to be treated with amalgam plates and mercury. Furthermore, the process required water which was in short supply and had to be hauled in by oxen. A. P. Cartwright estimates that every claimholder would need at least, "£10,000 to pay for a stamp battery, for a water rights, for timber and cement, for dynamite, for wages and food for the 'boys', for claim licences and all the other expenses of 'holding on' to claims."¹

These conditions automatically left small self-starters out of the picture. This is where the other major factor comes in: the capital-rich syndicates formed in Kimberley were in a perfect position to start operations on the Rand. The men who had become prominent in the diamond fields--Alfred Beit, Hermann Eckstein, J. B. Taylor, Lionel Phillips, Cecil Rhodes, Barney Barnato--were in on the ground floor of the Johannesburg goldmining industry.

The Most Prominent Randlords and their Mining Houses

The Corner House was the largest and most significant of the Rand mining houses. H. Eckstein and Co. was one of the first investors in the Rand. Representing and backed by Jules Porges and Co., Eckstein's key Johannesburg staff consisted of Alfred Beit, J. B. Taylor, and of course Hermann Eckstein and later his brother Friederich. By 1888 the Corner House--so named because of its location at the corner of Commissioner Street and Simmonds Street--had,

"formed three mines (Bantjes, Langlaagate, and Robinson), bought out two others (Ferreira and Henry Nourse), and held large interests in three others (Jubilee, Salisbury, and Wolhuter). Eckstein's also launched the Modderfontein on what became the far-east Rand. It also held numerous claims and options through several syndicates in which it was a significant participant."²

Porges retired from the firm in 1889 and in 1890 the other two major partners re-formed the company as Wernher Beit and Company of London. Hermann Eckstein was to leave Johannesburg in 1892 due to illness and died in his native Stuttgart a year later.

It should be noted that Wernher Beit's prime sources of outside capital were not British. Porges, along with his relative Rodolphe Kann, continued to aid the firm after his retirement by obtaining loans from the Rothschilds of Germany, France, and Austria. The raising of capital was also facilitated by Beit's relatives in Hamburg who had significant banking connections.³

By the mid-1890's Lionel Phillips piloted the firm's moving to the forefront of deep-level mining. Rand Mines had been launched in 1893 precisely for this sort of venture. By 1898 Rand Mines had performed so well that the firm could boast it had earned a 100% maiden dividend.⁴ Renowned for the intelligence and fairness of its managers, the Corner House was the leading mining house in Johannesburg.

Cecil Rhodes's Consolidated Gold Fields of South Africa did not have such a glowing reputation. Rhodes had also arrived on the Rand in 1887 but his claims purchases were not particularly shrewd and they rendered low production.⁵ In addition, by 1891 it

became apparent that Gold Fields was siphoning money off its Rand investments and putting it into its diamond interests, De Beers in particular.⁶

By the mid-1890's Gold Fields would become a little more involved in the Rand as it tried to get in on the deep-level windfall with the 1893 formation of Gold Fields Deep.⁷ Frederic Hamilton, then editor of *The Star*, observed that in late 1894 one of Gold Fields's leading American engineers, John Hays Hammond, was a leader in the move to deep-level mining. He wrote, "Largely under the inspiration and direction of Hays Hammond, it was becoming more and more clear to intelligent observers that the deep levels of the outcrop mines were richly payable, and long vistas of prosperity seemed to be suggested."⁸ However, as Rhodes was never very interested in Johannesburg dealings, Gold Fields was not the moving force on the Rand that the Corner House had become. Rhodes was far too concerned with his other affairs: De Beers; his plans to develop a second Rand in Rhodesia; and his grandiose vision of extending the British empire from the Cape to Cairo.

Two other veterans of the Kimberley diamond fields made their mark in Johannesburg but they stood apart from the generally collaborative activities of the majority of Randlords. Barney Barnato and J. B. Robinson were considered the most anti-social of the Randlords. Their dispositions were evident from the beginning.

Robinson, for instance, refused to cooperate with Beit's 1887 attempt to amalgamate the Witwatersrand mines along the lines of Kimberley. Presumably owing to his intense hatred of Rhodes who was involved in the proposed deal, Robinson would not participate and the plan came to nothing. Robinson later commented, "I told Rhodes the interests he had secured up to that time were not sufficiently valuable to induce me to amalgamate with him. After that we continued to follow our own separate speculations and ploughed our own furrows."⁹ Robinson's solitary pursuits were to include the Robinson Gold Mining Company Ltd.(1887), the Langlaagte Estate (1888), the Randfontein Estate (1889), and the Robinson Diamond Mining Company (1894) which he formed explicitly to compete with De Beers.

A feature of Robinson's management style that would become significant in Johannesburg's political arena was that, unlike Gold Fields and the Corner House, he kept his local directors on a very tight leash. His general meetings were shrouded in secrecy and his nominee directors acted as puppets merely carrying out his mandates.¹⁰ This is a very different approach from that taken by Wernher Beit who gave their local men in Johannesburg, Lionel Phillips and J. P. FitzPatrick, considerable freedom of action.

Barney Barnato arrived in Johannesburg in December 1888 and began buying up large tracts of real estate in the town. Eckstein wrote that Barnato soon got himself into trouble when, "he fought with Lilienfield in the Exchange. We sent both him and Lilienfield letters of apology to sign, which he refused to do. Pending his apology we have forbidden him entrance to the Exchange. . ."¹¹

Barnato retaliated by three months later forming his own Barnato Consolidated Mines; the Barnato Bank, Mining and Investment Corporation; and the Johannesburg Consolidated Investment Company (JCIC). The JCIC managed Johannesburg Waterworks, Estate and Exploration company which it would make a wholly owned subsidiary in 1895 as well as the Johannesburg Estate Company.¹² Barnato's 1897 suicide and the 1898 murder of his cousin Woolf Joel left the Barnato businesses in the hands of Woolf's brother Solly.

The Uitlanders' Political Predisposition

The economic edifice erected by the Randlords and their mining houses dictated the composition of Uitlander society; the workforce that flocked to Johannesburg. The mining houses required sophisticated, decisive, competent personnel and, in general, Johannesburg's Uitlander population was marked by these characteristics. Being for the most part educated men with a strong sense of their own capabilities, the Uitlanders were predisposed to insisting on controlling their own political situation.

In the main, Uitlander society on the Transvaal was made up of a professional class--engineers, lawyers, brokers, doctors, etc.--and a skilled working class. The position of African blacks in the workforce as unskilled labourers precluded any whites from being

relegated to the very bottom tier of Transvaal society. The whites were all literate (to varying degrees of course); skilled and valued in the economic sense; and politically assertive both as a class and in regard to their individual rights.

Even after the large mining houses quickly edged out the entrepreneurial prospectors on the gold fields, white workers retained considerable economic and social status. White miners acted as foremen over gangs of native miners; their mining expertise and functional authority ensured them a great deal of status as blue-collar managers.

In fact, the white miners arrived on the Transvaal with a strong sense of professional worth that could be traced back for generations. Rosenthal reports that,

"Dominating the picture among the actual workers were the 'Cousin Jacks' of Cornwall. Tracing their mining tradition back to the Phoenician tin traders who visited Cornwall long before the Romans, they were acknowledged unique in their skill and love for such employment."¹³

The Cornwall miners were known for more than their sense of professional pride. They and the skilled Australian miners arrived on the Rand as staunch acolytes of socialism.¹⁴

The remainder of the working class Uitlanders may not have been quite so politically radical as the Cousin Jacks but they were certainly as vocal when it came to asserting what they considered to be their God given rights. They immigrated with a solid sense of solidarity and a propensity for uniting into interest groups. According to Rosenthal,

"Armies of other fortune-seekers also arrived from the Netherlands, Germany, Portugal, Austria and Russia, to say nothing of the United Kingdom. So numerous were these last that special area societies were set up--Caledonian, Welsh and Irish, and for counties like Lancashire and Yorkshire, Northumberland, Somerset, Kent and so on."¹⁵

The white collar professionals, too, were from all over the world and they tended to also unite into interest groups. Engineers, lawyers, and journalists were drawn to each other out of the mutual attraction of sharing the same class distinction: white-collar professionals. Their bond would be cemented by the role that this group would assume in the

Uitlander reform movement. The professionals would become the articulators and leaders of Uitlander reform.

Added to their affinity for congregating together, Johannesburg's Uitlanders were rendered formidable by their sheer weight of numbers. Britons made up the majority of Uitlanders: between 1895 and 1898, 8,600 emigrants left the United Kingdom for South Africa and the 1896 census showed that 16,225 of the people living in the Transvaal were from the British Isles.¹⁶ Nearly two-thirds of the Transvaal British lived on the Rand and half of these were in Johannesburg.¹⁷

But the Transvaal immigrants were by no means a monolith as the same census also counted 2,262 Germans; 3,335 Russian Jews; 4,807 East Indian merchants; and certainly underestimated figure of 42,533 native blacks.¹⁸ In addition, the preceding statistics cover only the largest nationalities groups and do not account for the many Uitlanders arriving from other countries such as the United States and France.

The result of these demographic, economic, and political factors was that Uitlander society was a class society without a layer of socially/economically deprived people. It was multi-national, multi-occupational and yet galvanized by a common political platform and economic opportunity. The fact that even the fabulously rich were parvenus and that Johannesburg itself was so new and ripe with untapped opportunities, made Uitlander society fairly fluid.

The Johannesburg Uitlanders were every bit as demanding politically as their Lydenburg predecessors. The crucial difference between the two is that while Lydenburg residents were given to temperamental lawlessness and mob violence, Johannesburg citizens were more composed, deliberate, and thoughtful. It was a settled community with a predilection for middle class reformism rather than working class revolt. American mining engineer and reform leader John Hays Hammond describes the community:

". . . Johannesburg was much more like a wealthy manufacturing town than a traditional mining camp. There were, indeed, no miners, as the word was understood out West [America] in the fifties; and our gold mines could be described with greater accuracy as gold factories.

The personnel of the mines consisted of a few dozen mining engineers, a few score highly skilled mechanics, a few hundred white miners--chiefly American, Scotch, Welsh, and Cornish--and many thousands of Kaffir laborers.

The life was such as might be found in hundreds of long-settled communities in the Eastern States [America]. Bankers, business men, mining engineers, physicians, surgeons, with their wives and children, made up the 'society' of the place; and as these professional men, but especially the mining engineers, were of the highest standing in their several fields, and received munificent salaries, our social existence lacked neither elegance nor culture."¹⁹

The Uitlander community perceived itself in the modern definition of the middle class: educated, economically productive, cultural, and politically suited to responsible self-government. That they were denied political self-determination--indeed, any true political representation--by the Kruger regime was greeted with universal umbrage.

The proletariat was either placated or splintered into effete minority parties. The great Randlords were politically indifferent, or more often, politically mis-informed. Mawby states that, "professional men were communally active, and from the Rand's earliest years they were prominent petitioners and social agitators."²⁰ He also indicates that the professional's socio-economic peers, the commercial men (most of whom were in retail) were a large, highly organized power in the community.

Johannesburg's Uitlander reform movement was primarily made up of middle and/or professional classes. This population was educated and worldly enough to ascertain that they were being denied the individual political rights which by then were the status quo throughout North America and most of Europe. They were privileged enough to believe they deserved these rights. And, as a class, they shared the esprit d'corp necessary to work jointly toward acquiring their political rights. Comprising this class were "the Scottish and American mining engineers, all of them likewise earning high salaries, as well as bankers, lawyers, and newspapermen--the men who would be found at the bar of the Rand Club."²¹

Furthermore, they could oppose and attack government policies without reservation; they were not hindered by Boer sensitivities like the mining leaders who needed to maintain a good working relationship with the government in order to run their mines. The professionals were also, unlike the working men, more articulate in expressing their demands and enjoyed direct access to the region's salient power parties--journalistic, capitalist, and

political (British and Boer). "It was in the main the professional men among the Uitlanders--especially the lawyers and journalists--who founded and led the constitutional Uitlander political movement." ²² Constitutional reformism is a war waged with words and, invariably, a society's wordsmiths--lawyers and journalists--will be conscripted as commanding officers.

Based on the precedents set in Kimberley and Barberton, Johannesburg's Digger's Committee effectively served as its first town council.²³ Its members were regulars at the Rand Club which housed the hub of Uitlander reformism from the first day it opened.²⁴

Uitlander newspapers thrived on the discontent their readership felt regarding their lack of political status. The Uitlander franchise issue was the stuff that great journalistic crusades are made of and Johannesburg's press took it up from the city's earliest days.

As early as 1887, the editor of the *Transvaal Advertiser* put indignation toward the Boer oligarchy into print:

"I see the members of the Volksraad are paid: in fact their patriotism and public spirit are to be measured by their fees, and I cannot for the life of me see why the nine elected members of the Digger's Committee [an Uitlander organization] should not be paid by the State too. They expend a great deal more time on their duties than the nonentities who sit in the Volksraad.

What a pity it is the Government authorities cannot do the graceful and initiate all these reforms which are being howled into their ears week after week instead of sitting stolidly by. These feeble-brained politicians had far better go back to their farms and their coffee and make room for more intelligent men who understand the wants of the nineteenth century, who comprehend the blessings of modern civilisation, who know how to effect reforms and who are able to keep pace with this go-ahead age of steam and hustle." ²⁵

Johannesburg's "go-ahead age" spawned more than one anti-Kruger organ. The *Standard*, a newspaper set up by Scott & Co. of Queenstown,²⁶ was also taking its share of pot-shots at the Boer political machine. The *Standard* tended to, unlike the *Transvaal Advertiser*, use more restraint than rancour. This can be seen in the tone of the criticism directed at the government for its inability to cope with Johannesburg's 1889 water shortage and its subsequent refusal to grant the citizenry the necessary authority to deal with the crisis themselves. Editor Bill Brown wrote:

"Johannesburg has nothing to make it fairly habitable or ordinarily safe or healthy. The attempt to make it so by self-taxation and local control is denied. Nothing remains at present but to await the issue

of the promises made by the President and if they are not satisfactory a stronger, more continual and louder demand must be made for that which is universally granted in other civilised communities." ²⁷

In his last sentence, Brown was of course referring to suffrage--the ubiquitous shibboleth of all Transvaal Uitlander newspapers. It was a cause which he evidently voiced a little too forcefully later in 1889 when he was arrested for printing an article entitled "Reform or Revolution."

The severe water shortage mentioned above in reference to the Bill Brown article had caused not only widespread inconvenience but also severe health hazards. Johannesburg citizens appealed to Kruger for the right to establish a municipality so that they would be able to levy taxes to fund the organization and services required to meet the crisis.

Pretoria refused the Johannesburg appeals until October 23, 1889. At that time Kruger granted powers to the locally selected Johannesburg Sanitary Board which made it, in all but name, the town's representative body. ²⁸

Pretoria's intransigence during this crisis, despite the obvious hardships and life-threatening conditions afflicting Johannesburgers, helped chip away at what little good will Uitlanders felt for the Boer government.

Transvaal politics was decidedly moderate but it was also determined. By 1890 the members of the Rand Club were no longer just talking about their political disabilities, they were forming organizations with an aim to correcting these disabilities.

The Randlords' Aversion to Politics

The reform politics that figured so largely in the lives of the Uitlanders was a preoccupation not shared by the leading Randlords. J.A. Hobson was to claim in December of 1899 that the Randlords had engineered Johannesburg's political reform agitation and deliberately directed the events leading to the outbreak of the war. He wrote:

"If this war can be successfully accomplished, and a 'settlement' satisfactory to the mine owners can be reached, the first fruits of victory will be represented in a large, cheap, submissive supply of black and white labour, attended by such other economies of 'costs' as will add millions per annum to the profits of the mines. . . The men who, owning the South African press and political organisations,

engineered the agitation which has issued in this war, are the same men whose pockets will swell with this increase; open-eyed and persistent they [the mine owners] have pursued their course, plunging South Africa into temporary ruin in order that they may emerge victorious, a small confederacy of international mine-owners and speculators holding the treasures of South Africa in the hollow of their hands." ²⁹

The evidence overwhelmingly suggests that Hobson was wrong. From the beginning, the most influential leaders of the mining houses sought to stay well clear of politics as they concentrated on their corporate duties. Frederic Hamilton, who was a central figure in both the press and political party to which Hobson refers, states outright that the capitalists were not involved:

"Somewhere about 1892 I was prominently associated with the Transvaal National Union, an association designed to promote reform in the Transvaal, equal rights of the English language, and a liberal extension of the franchise. We were in those days not popular with the big mining Houses, who considered, not without reason, that our activities might interfere with markets." ³⁰

Francis Dormer, founder and editor of *The Star* likewise absolves the capitalists of any political intrigue. Dormer was opposed to the Kruger government but was dedicated to working out viable compromises with it. He abhorred the radicalization of Uitlander politics in the late 1890's and the way that editors who came after him--R.J. Pakeman, Charles Finlason, and W.F. Monypenny--catered to the public's new mood. He wrote after the outbreak of the war:

". . . it is scarcely accurate to say that the press performed its part under capitalistic domination and at capitalistic instigation. An extraordinary amount of nonsense has found its way into print upon this subject, coming from quarters in which there is evidently no real acquaintance with the facts. The truth is that excess of zeal on the part of journalistic allies whose enthusiasm for the *Uitlander* cause, as they conceived it, . . . was a source of continual embarrassment to the responsible heads of the mining industry." ³¹

The glaring exception to this Randlord apoliticism is Cecil Rhodes. However, his political involvement was actually aligned to Cape and British imperial politics and not to the Johannesburg reform movement.

The fact that Alfred Beit's misguided personal allegiance to Rhodes led him to support Rhodes in the 1895 Jameson Raid is no indication of the Corner House's official

involvement in Uitlander politics. The other Corner House senior partners were somewhat dismayed and mystified by Beit's unquestioning devotion to Rhodes; they considered Rhodes, "something of a crank--and an unbusinesslike one at that." ³²

The only other Randlord drawn into the conspiracy was George Farrar, the head of an Anglo-French company. Rhodes's Gold Fields, however, remained at the center of the coup. ³³ Also, it should be noted that Farrar, like the Corner House local managers Phillips and FitzPatrick and the Gold Fields manager Hammond, was involved in the Jameson plot out of his devotion to the Uitlander reform movement. All of the Johannesburg reformers distrusted Rhodes because they were aware that his imperial intentions were antithetical to their own of reforming the independent republic.

As for Hobson's assertion that the capitalists stood to gain from Kruger being replaced by the British, the capitalists themselves thought the outcome would be quite the opposite. They imagined that the House of Commons and British philanthropic parties would be more meddlesome than the Boers; they disliked British native policy; and they did not think that the change in government would improve the labour supply or decrease taxes. Beyond that, Robinson and Gallagher remark that, "The mine-owners were loath to turn their industry from the milch cow of the Transvaal into one for an entire south African confederation." ³⁴

R.V. Kubicek shows that during the 1890's the Corner House was concentrating on the gradual reduction of capital investment in the Rand so as to re-invest elsewhere with the aid of its international connections.³⁵ They were in no frame of mind to risk all in a bid for Uitlander self-determination; they wanted to take the profits and get out. For that matter, the senior partners had already relocated to London and the franchise in the SAR would have meant nothing to them. In Corner House correspondence throughout the 1890's the London partners continually stress their desire to keep the Boer regime in power, to try to work with it, and to prevent British intervention.³⁶

To be sure, the Rand mining houses had their own list of valid complaints with regard to the Pretoria government. But the priorities listed on their agenda differed from those of the reform movement. The randlords were chagrined at such Krugerite policies as the

harbouring of a corrupt and exploitive dynamite monopoly; sheltering of liquor merchants who were poisoning and incapacitating the African mine workers; and sponsoring an inflated railroad shipping monopoly. While these issues were often cited by reform leaders, they fell behind others such as the franchise or English language schools.

In addition, the mining industry regarded its difficulties with the Kruger policies as relatively small and manageable inconveniences. These policies did not substantially hinder the Rand mining houses from making vast fortunes both in gold mining and in the speculative stock market.

The randlords dealt with Pretoria through their own channels of influence which were quite separate from any sort of political structure involving popular representation. Their direct relationships with Pretoria officials along with their industry organizations like the Chamber of Mines afforded the leading men much more influence in regard to the Boer regime than any "one man, one vote" system could have done.

The major mining houses had, in fact, operated fairly successfully with the Kruger government all along. If they wanted any change at all, it would be in the way of some specific industry-related reforms and they would certainly not want to see the SAR's independence threatened.³⁷

Letting the franchise issue escalate to the point of war threatened their vital interests. A war, for any reason, would only cause them tremendous financial losses in the destruction of mines and machinery on top of production down-time.³⁸ Furthermore, the outbreak of hostilities would collapse the market which was the prime generator of capital for the great mining houses.

Top company officers were not terribly concerned as to whether or not their middle-rung managers (many of whom were leaders in the reform movement) and Johannesburg's merchant and working classes received the franchise. They were operating on the Rand to make money.

The leading capitalists were set apart from the Johannesburg Uitlanders by virtue of their apoliticism and by a general sense of detachment. R.V. Kubicek writes, "Despite

long experience in South Africa, many of the controllers, either resident in the Transvaal or Britain, cultivated lifestyles and business practices far removed from or indifferent to the local scene."³⁹

These men were likewise set apart from each other. The Randlords were the least homogeneous as well as the least politically involved of all the community's social groups. They were separated from each other by differing ethnic and social origin; education; cultural sophistication and status; financial competition; contrary assessments of the political situation; and differing relationships with the Boer government.

Local Managers in Johannesburg Politics

Two of the Corner House's Johannesburg partners, Lionel Phillips and J. P. FitzPatrick, represent a departure from the capitalists' general sense of detachment regarding the Uitlander reform movement. However, the full extent of their activities was not wholly understood or condoned by the senior partners. Interestingly enough, both of these men started their careers on the Transvaal as journalists. Perhaps that early experience had given them a taste for politics.

Lionel Phillips began his career in Kimberley in the 1870's as a journalist on the *Independent*, the newspaper that Alfred Aylward edited.⁴⁰ In 1889 he moved to Johannesburg to take his position of partner with the H. Eckstein Co. and Manager of the Randfontein Mines. He served as President of the Chamber of Mines from 1892 to 1895. This was the industry's official united organization designated to deal with the Kruger government. In 1893, Phillips became a partner in Wernher Beit and Company.⁴¹ Phillips's faith in deep-level mining earned him both a sizable fortune and a reputation as being one of the shrewdest, most prescient men in Johannesburg.

Despite his high level managerial position and responsibilities Phillips was one of the more radical reform leaders and was one of the key conspirators behind the 1895 Jameson Raid. Prior to that event he had acted as a sort of go-between for the reformers with the politically wary chief partners. He was the individual who saw to it that the company

supplied the reform movement with covert funds. In the aftermath of the Raid, he lost his taste for Johannesburg politics and moved to London in 1897.

Another telling example of a former newspaperman retaining his political involvement is J.P. FitzPatrick. Often described as a "political animal", FitzPatrick balanced the two roles of political reform activist and leading executive. He joined H. Eckstein and Co. as the Chief of the Intelligence Department in 1892 and three years later assumed the extra-curricular position of Secretary of the Reform Committee.

As an extension of his reform activities, FitzPatrick also was one of the inner circle involved in the Jameson Raid. However, this did not prevent him from becoming a partner in H. Eckstein and Co. in 1897. A native South African born in Cape Colony, FitzPatrick had started on the Rand as a writer for the *Barberton Herald* in the mid-1880's.⁴²

FitzPatrick doubtless received a thorough schooling on the effectiveness of combining press and political agitation in Barberton. While he was part-owner of and writer for the *Herald*, Barberton was awash in Uitlander petitions demanding reform from Kruger.

Aside from the involvement of the Corner House local partners Phillips and FitzPatrick--and the Jameson Raid involvement of John Hays Hammond, Cecil Rhodes, and George Farrar--the reform movement was confined to the general Uitlander population. A.A. Mawby argues very trenchantly that Uitlander discontent was spontaneous, extensive, and certainly "not engineered by the efforts of either the mining interests or the Imperial Government, but was the product of Uitlander frustrations."⁴³

While the Rand capitalists and British officials did at various times and to various degrees lend support to the reformers, their participation was limited, erratic, and reactive rather than proactive. Throughout its history the reform movement's one consistent ally was the newspaper that took up its party platform as its own cause, *The Star*.

Footnotes to Chapter 4

1. A.P. Cartwright, *The Corner House, The Early History of Johannesburg* (Johannesburg: Purnell & Sons S.A. PTY. Ltd., 1965), 5.
2. Kubicek, *Economic Imperialism*, 60.
3. Robert V. Kubicek, "The Randlords in 1895: A Reassessment," *The Journal of British Studies*, volume XI, #2 (May, 1972): 94-95.
4. Kubicek, *Economic Imperialism*, 71.
5. Ibid., 90.
6. Ibid., 91.
7. Ibid., 98.
8. Frederic Hamilton, "Sir Frederic Hamilton's Narrative of Events Relative to the Jameson Raid," introduction by Vincent Harlow, *English Historical Review*, 72 (1957): 288. It is interesting to note that the two men most instrumental in the inspired move to deep-level mining, Phillips and Hammond, were the only high level mining house managers heavily involved in the Uitlander reform movement.
9. Cartwright, *The Corner House*, 66.
10. Kubicek, *Economic Imperialism*, 129.
11. Cartwright, *The Corner House*, 86.
12. Kubicek, *Economic Imperialism*, 120.
13. Eric Rosenthal, *Victorian South Africa, A Collection of One Hundred and Forty-Nine Engravings* (Cape Town: Tafelberg-Uitgewers Beperk, 1975), 98.
14. A.A. Mawby, *The Political Behaviour of the British Population of the Transvaal, 1902-1907* (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, Ph.D Thesis, 1969), 15.
15. Rosenthal, *Victorian South Africa*, 98.
16. Geoffrey Wheatcroft, *The Randlords* (New York: Atheneum, 1986), 197.
17. Mawby, *The Political Behaviour*, 15.
18. Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, 197.
19. John Hays Hammond, *The Truth About the Jameson Raid* (Boston: Marshall Jones Company, 1918), 14.
20. Mawby, *The Political Behaviour*, 13.
21. Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, 3.
22. Mawby, *The Political Behaviour*, 20.
23. Crisp, *The Outlanders*, 57-58.

24. Ibid., 125.
25. Ibid., 58.
26. Rosenthal, *Today's News Today*, 35.
27. Crisp, *The Outlanders*, 126.
28. Ibid., 132.
29. Hobson, *The War in South Africa*, 240.
30. Hamilton, "Sir Frederic Hamilton's Narrative," 287.
31. Dormer, *Vengeance as a Policy*, 17-18.
32. Cartwright, *The Corner House*, 27.
33. John Flint, *Cecil Rhodes* (Toronto: Little, Brown & Company, 1974), 184.
34. Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians* (New York: St. Martin's Press Inc., 1961), 422.
35. Kubicek, *Economic Imperialism*, 72.
36. Ibid.
37. J.S. Marais, *The Fall of Kruger's Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 324.
38. G.H.L. Le May, *British Supremacy in South Africa, 1899-1907* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 30.
39. Kubicek, *Economic Imperialism*, 196.
40. Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, 69.
41. Paul H. Emden, *Randlords* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1935), 332.
42. Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, 84.
43. Mawby, *The Political Behaviour*, 20.

- 5 -

The Star is Born

In May 1889 a very different sort of Uitlander visited Johannesburg. This single man, barely noticed amid the hectic goings on, cast an intuitive eye on the new town and there saw newsworthy potential that exceeded any other community in South Africa, perhaps even the entire continent.

Francis J. Dormer, owner and managing director of the Argus Printing and Publishing Company of Cape Town, took stock of Johannesburg. He noted that there was a large, educated, and already politically concerned Anglo/European population. He saw that this readership was supporting seven newspapers, all of which were relatively weak. He was informed that the Rand boom was anticipated to continue for a very long time and that the gold output in February had reached 10,000 ounces. He was encouraged by the of presence large-scale capitalists; they were potential financial allies and investors to add to the coterie of influential shareholders then associated with his printing and publishing firm. Francis Dormer had made up his mind to start a newspaper in Johannesburg.

Francis Dormer's Empire of Ink

Francis Dormer left England at age 21 to accept a teaching post in Cape Town. The mailship on which he embarked in 1875 happened to also be carrying Cecil Rhodes who was then returning to the Kimberley fields after a year at Oxford. The two men hit it off (Rhodes was one year older than Dormer) and promised to get in touch again after they went their separate ways when the ship arrived at Cape Town. This friendship, which Dormer managed to make before even arriving in South Africa, would prove to be one of the most far-reaching connections of his career.

Dormer tried a municipal job as well as teaching and found neither suited him. In 1879 he was to hit upon the profession at which he would excel for the rest of his life. He accepted a job as the Zulu War correspondent for the *Queenstown Representative*. As that

newspaper did not have the funds to support Dormer's role, an arrangement was made with *The Argus*, then owned exclusively by Saul Solomon, to share Dormer's expenses and his battle front articles.

Solomon was sufficiently impressed with Dormer's performance to offer him the sub-editorship of *The Argus* when he returned from the Zulu campaigns. Dormer was soon promoted to editor and he appointed Edmund Powell, another Englishman, as his sub-editor.¹

In September 1880 Solomon experienced a personal tragedy--the drowning death of his five year old daughter and her governess--which caused the deterioration of his health and necessitated his leaving South Africa. Solomon's nephews Charles and Henry retained control of the printing business but, as they had no experience in the newspaper side of the enterprise, *The Argus* became available for purchase.

Dormer saw his chance and started scrambling for capital. Remembering his friendship with Rhodes, Dormer contacted him and secured the required finances. On July 1, 1881 Dormer purchased *The Argus* from Solomon with Rhodes's money. He gave Solomon £3,000 cash and Rhodes underwrote a guarantee to pay the remaining £3,000 purchase price in installments over the next several months.²

Rhodes's offer of pecuniary assistance was not a philanthropic gesture. After amassing a great fortune in the Kimberley diamond fields he had begun to pursue political aspirations and he realized that a sympathetic journal was required if he was to succeed in politics. Rhodes had already begun on this path by winning the Cape Parliament seat as the representative for Griqualand West. His friend from the diamond diggings, John X. Merriman, had provided Rhodes with an introduction to Cape society and he had developed a good rapport with the new Governor and High Commissioner Sir Hercules Robinson. However, the Cape press was panning his parliamentary performances by 1881.³ When Dormer's appeal reached Rhodes, he was aware that he would need a friendly voice in the press.

In addition, Dormer himself had made valuable political connections in the Cape which Rhodes wanted to co-opt into his own schemes. Jan Hofmeyr had become the leader of The Afrikaner Bond and as a moderate he was pledged to reaching an agreement with the

South African English. Hofmeyr did not embrace the republicanism of the radical Afrikaners and he reached out to the more moderate approachable Englishmen of influence. Among these was Francis Dormer.

Dormer was all for fashioning an alliance between the moderate English and Dutch factions. He endorsed Hofmeyr's platform which Hofmeyr stated in 1880 to be as follows:

"The national feeling of the English-speaking and Dutch-speaking inhabitants of our country must be built up and fused together. Neither can be driven out. If the Bond had as its object the creation of ill-feeling between Dutch and English it would be a curse instead of a blessing."⁴

The Argus proved a wise investment for Rhodes; it enabled him to shore up his political credibility and helped him to forge an alliance with Hofmeyr's Afrikaner Bond. He was voted into the Cape Prime Minister's office in 1890 where he stayed until his resignation following the Jameson Raid in 1896.

The role that Rhodes played in helping Dormer to acquire *The Argus* was kept secret. There was a great deal of speculation as to the identity of Dormer's benefactor and the most popular guess at the time was that it was John X. Merriman.⁵

The extent of Rhodes's influence over *The Argus* editorial policy through his financial involvement has generally been overrated. On the day that his purchase of the paper was officially completed, Dormer published an editorial outlining his editorial guidelines. Dormer took great pains to specifically allay any suspicions that *The Argus* was a "bought" newspaper:

"In the hands into which it has now passed *The Argus* will be in every respect independent and, we trust, impartial. Its supporters are the public, and the public interests will alone be kept in view. It will be the mouthpiece of no party, nor will it be under the domination of any clique. Looking to measures and not to men, it will pledge its support to no existing political combination and still less will its faith be pinned to any individual now playing his part on the political stage."⁶

In the above statement, Dormer said everything but, "and this means you Cecil Rhodes." At the time of their initial arrangement in 1881, Dormer and Rhodes did not vary

substantially in their political outlook. In fact, Rhodes being the newcomer to Cape politics, he probably tended to follow Dormer's lead.

Dormer had already acquired significant political allies and had conducted several successful political press campaigns. One such campaign was Dormer's 1879 protest against the court's failure to prosecute a group of Europeans who had slaughtered a band of cattle-stealing Africans, including women and children, in Koegas in the northern Cape.⁷ After three years of high-profile political debates in the Cape press, Dormer was much more the seasoned political veteran than Rhodes. Only later, in the mid-1890's, did the two develop political differences--over the situation in the Transvaal--and that would cause the end of their association.

The other more tangible factor that would prove whether or not Rhodes bought Dormer's allegiance would be the answer to the question: could Dormer afford to be independent from Rhodes? The answer is yes. The financial structure of the Argus Company as it evolved over the next five years bears out this assertion.

By 1885, Henry and Charles Solomon had run the publishing firm of Saul Solomon & Co. into the ground, thus clearing the way for Dormer to add South Africa's largest printing works to his newspaper holding. The firm had gone into a state of liquidation and was placed under the joint trusteeship of a Cape accountant acting for Solomon, Duncan McDonald, and the secretary of the Colonial Orphan Chamber and Trust Company, George Steytler. Dormer approached McDonald and between them, they arranged for Dormer's acquisition of the firm. Dormer had also for some months discussed purchasing the printing establishment with Cecil Rhodes.⁸

A settlement deed was signed on November 23, 1886 and the Argus Printing and Publishing Company was formed to merge Dormer's present holdings with those formerly held by the Solomons. The resulting company had a capital fixed at £25,000 in £1 shares and £18,750 of these shares were immediately issued.

The company was conducted solely by its two directors; Dormer was the managing director and McDonald was secretary and treasurer. Dormer held £10,000 shares

and McDonald, who it is assumed acted as Rhodes's proxy, held £7,371 shares. Rhodes's name appeared nowhere on the documentation and only much later was he even listed as a shareholder. At any rate, Dormer held controlling interest.

The remainder of the issued shares were bought by a wide sampling of the most influential and respected men of the Cape. These included J. W. Sauer the cabinet minister (50 shares); Godfrey Sichel the Cape legislator and director of the Rosebank Match Company (100 shares); Thomas Scanlan the former Cape premier (50 shares); J. A. Combrinck founder of the Imperial Cold Storage and Supply Company (50 shares); and a comprehensive list of other Cape commercial and professional leaders. Edmund Powell, Dormer's loyal sub-editor, was in for 500 shares and *The Argus* accountant Henry Austin had 335 shares.⁹ In all there were 25 shareholders and their holdings ranged from 2 shares to 10,000 shares (Dormer's).

Not only was Rhodes at a disadvantage to Dormer regarding shares distribution, but his surrogate director, Duncan McDonald, was forcibly removed from his post by the Board of the Argus Company--more exactly by Dormer--in August 1887 due to McDonald's having been involved in a financial scandal. McDonald's post was then divided between J. Murray Wilson who became secretary and Henry Austin, Dormer's newspaper accountant, who became cashier.¹⁰

Given these financial and political maneuverings, there can be little doubt that Dormer was free to espouse his own political platform. Once he decided to start a newspaper in Johannesburg, he turned to another source for additional capital. He went to England and there convinced the founder of the Castle Steamship Line, Donald Currie, to give him £5,000 in debentures.¹¹

With this new infusion of capital Dormer was in a position to build the strongest newspaper in Johannesburg. Just as important, he had also watered down Rhodes's financial interest to the point where the newspaper would be subject to his will alone.

After R.W. Murray abandoned his Grahamstown newspaper the *Great Eastern* to do battle with Alfred Aylward in the diamond fields, the printing plant was acquired by an

Irishman, J. V. O'Brien. O'Brien employed two young Englishmen, the brothers Thomas and George Sheffield, and they eventually became partners in the printing works which published a lackluster journal the *Grahamstown Advertiser and Anglo-African*.

In 1871, the journal was renamed the *Eastern Star* and received financial backing from the Dean of Grahamstown, the Very Rev. Dr. Frederick Henry Williams. It became a penny tri-weekly and began to enjoy considerable influence. When O'Brien left to start a newspaper in Dordrecht, the Sheffields took over the newspaper and printing works, successfully running both until Dean William's death in 1885 left them without a patron.

In 1887 Thomas Sheffield visited Johannesburg and was so impressed with the prospects there that he decided to relocate his newspaper. The *Eastern Star* was first published in Johannesburg on October 17, 1887.¹²

In his introductory editorial, Sheffield articulates the reformist ideals which were to become the central themes of the Uitlander movement:

"The *Star* will be loyal to the institutions of the land which gives it shelter and the protection of its laws. But loyalty to the institutions of a country does not mean subservience to those who are in power for the time being. True loyalty to the State consists in doing for it that which is best calculated to preserve its Constitution intact, at the same time endeavouring to bring about such reforms as will give to all who submit to its laws a voice in the government of it. Taxation and representation are all but synonymous terms in every country in which the democracy, and not an autocracy, rules. . . To bring about reforms in these respects will be one of the aims of the *Star*. . . . A Union of all these States and Colonies [of South Africa] is the wish of far-seeing statesmen of both the ruling races. To assist in bringing about such a Federation will be another object the *Star* will drive after."¹³

Interestingly enough, Sheffield's political activism predates not only the arrival of the major Randlords in Johannesburg, but also the formation of Uitlander political groups. In addition, his platform, with the exception of the call for federation, would be adopted by the Uitlander movement.

That Sheffield was taking the right editorial tact is indicated by the *Eastern Star's* circulation; competing with six other journals the *Eastern Star* by the spring of 1888 was selling

between 800 and 1,000 copies on the street and this does not count copies being delivered to subscribers.¹⁴

It is no wonder that Dormer--having decided that since Johannesburg already had so many journals it was best to purchase an existing paper rather than start a new one--chose to purchase the *Eastern Star*. After some wrangling back and forth with the Sheffield brothers through the spring of 1889, Dormer and the *Eastern Star's* owners agreed to a merger.

The merger officially took place on May 1, 1889 and *The Star* (*Eastern* was dropped from the name) was re-formed. The new company started with £70,000 in capital and its directors were Francis Dormer, Edmund Powell, James Smith, William George Vos, Alexander Smith, and Thomas Sheffield.¹⁵

Shares were not issued to the public as all of the capital was privately subscribed. In November 1889, the shareholders were listed¹⁶ as follows:

Francis Dormer	10,410 shares
James Smith	500
Edmund Powell	860
E. C. Solomon	52
Hy. Solomon, Jnr	52
W. S. Darter	156
D. M. McDonald (insolvent) ..	6,886
Johan Jansen	10
S. W. Sauer	50
D. P. Graff	50
F. L. St. Leger	52

In the negotiations leading up to *The Star* merger, Dormer had invited Hermann Ecskstein to purchase stock and nominate a director.¹⁷ At the same time, in February 1889, Dormer had also asked J.B. Robinson, another large shareholder, to nominate a director. By receiving patronage from such diverse sources as Rhodes, Eckstein, and Robinson, Dormer could be sure of attaining a balance of power vis a vis the directors. The chances of these contributors allying against him were very slim.

It is crucial to note that while the Corner House invested in the same newspaper as Rhodes, they entered the field for very different reasons. They did not seek a political

platform--they were in fact quite apolitical--and were motivated strictly by business considerations.

R.V. Kubicek has shown that the large mining houses depended on the stock markets and not mining production for much of their profits. Their viability on the London and Paris stock exchanges had become seriously threatened as newspapers in those centres exposed unscrupulous Randlord practices such as insider trading. The serious London financial newspapers--the *Statist*, the *Economist*, and the *Financial News*--unflinchingly monitored Randlord dealings with a critical eye.¹⁸

In response, the Corner House lobbied journalists in London and Paris and tried to secure a sympathetic press in South Africa. Kubicek explains:

"One tactic it [the Corner House] employed to restore investor confidence was to ensure a favorable press. Ever since Eckstein's had acquired an interest in the Argus Publishing Company in 1889, it and the London firm took an interest in the appointment of the editor of that company's newspaper in Johannesburg, *The Star*." ¹⁹

Despite their financial backing of *The Star*, the top mining directors were both physically and psychologically isolated from its editorial policy. Cecil Rhodes was preoccupied with Cape politics and his empire-building schemes to the north in Rhodesia. Hermann Eckstein left South Africa in 1892 due to illness and died in Stuttgart a year later. Alfred Beit and Julius Wernher left in 1890 to establish Wernher Beit and Company in London. They were thus remote from Uitlander society and the press that represented it.

This can be substantiated by looking at the way in which the top partners of the Corner House monitored editorial activities; through third party reports made by Johannesburg reform leaders Lionel Phillips and J.P. FitzPatrick. The Randlords did not personally involve themselves with editorial direction.

In fact, the allocation of financial favours which supposedly "bought" the loyalty of journalists, were scattered like grapeshot throughout Johannesburg and cannot be construed as specific to newspapermen. An example of this occurred in 1893 when Wernher, Beit and Eckstein founded Rand Mines. At that time they distributed £400,000 in £1 shares to various partners, European investors, and others. "A number of small allotments were also

made, mostly out of the partnership's own allocations, as public relations gestures."²⁰ These smaller allotments, about 50 in all, were dispensed to local politicians as well as Dormer who was then editing *The Star*. Dormer received a par allotment of 200 Rand Mines shares²¹ but that still does not set him apart from most of the other influential men of Johannesburg.

Besides, Dormer was too rich to be bought. He and Frederic Hamilton had invested in the Birthday Mine at its original share price of £1. Dormer sold his shares when they reached £34.²² As well, his newspaper interests were thriving; along with the *Cape Argus* and *The Star*, his newspaper empire expanded to include the *Mashonaland Herald* (founded 1891) and the *Bulawayo Chronicle* (founded 1894). Louis Cohen--a humour columnist during the Kimberley days and relative of Barney Barnato--provides a cuttingly accurate personality sketch of Dormer and his financial acumen:

". . . Mr. Dormer's ambitions towered much above the editorial chair, and being no sleeper, as his name suggests, busied himself much in speculation, promotion and general finance, in all of which he showed extraordinary skill, and proved himself not only a graceful and trenchant writer, a fluent speaker and adroit tactician, but displayed in all his acrobatic financial somersaults an intellect, an ability and an activity keen as mustard."²³

By 1891 even more influential Johannesburgers had become major shareholders in the Argus Company. They included Fritz Eckstein, Alphonse and Richard Lilienfeld, Barney Barnato, Solly Joel, Woolf Joel, Gustav Sonn, Fritz Mosenthal, and Victor Woolf. The presence of Barnato and his relatives the Joels further proves Dormer's disregard of Rhodes's wishes.

In fact, Dormer and Barnato were friends; their rowdy sophmoric drinking bouts were infamous. A contemporary wrote in 1888, "Barney and Dormer got hideously drunk, vowed eternal friendship and slept together, God knows where locked in each others arms."²³ The morning after this particular dipsomaniacal episode, Dormer's wife had to go out and look for him. She found the prodigal husband where Barnato had stashed him--commotose in a hole in a brickfield.

That the liason between "Rhodes' henchman" Dormer and Barnato was common

knowledge is corroborated by the sardonic writings of Louis Cohen. He recalls an episode in 1891:

" . . . I came down on 'Change [the Johannesburg Stock Exchange] and noticed small groups of brokers interestedly talking to each other, as they always did when some new sensation had been sprung upon them. I soon learnt that the evening before Barnato and Dormer had met, and after an hour's drinking and polite conversation, the famous financier and the mighty gladiator, figuratively fell into each other's arms, the sun went down on their anger, and they passed the night under the same roof, and so the poor shareholders got none. This day was called St. Barney's Day, and people fasted through it for many a year after, and were very hungry. After this historical rencontre, Messrs. Barnato and Dormer became as thick as honest men."²⁵

Cohen also informs us that an unspecified Rand journal printed in 1891 an editorial entitled "Barnato and Dormer One". It commented that:

"Yesterday was a day of humiliating revelations. Mr. Dormer, the man who, during Mr. Barnato's absence . . . called Mr. Barnato all the vilest names his fertile, though diseased brain could invent, was to be seen acting the part of Mr. Barnato's henchman, jackal, factotum, lick-spittle and hanger-on-in-chief. Ay! money can work wonders."²⁶

Dormer knew how much power money had better than anyone. His canny genius lay in his ability to offset the power of his capital sources against each other. Dormer was not subject to demands from any of his investors.

The only will he was subject to was that of his general readership and when it came to the direction of public opinion, Dormer was as much a leader as a follower. Within a year of his taking over as editor and managing director of *The Star* Dormer converted it to an evening paper and the sales were quadrupled. Sales again doubled when *The Star* became a daily.²⁷ By 1891, Dormer had run four of his six competitors out of business. He had the mandate of the readership.

***The Star* and Uitlander Reformism**

Organized Uitlander reformism began in the same year that Dormer formed *The Star*. It was from the start a party newspaper representing the views of the reformers.

The term "party" is somewhat misleading in this context because reformist sentiments were not the domain of a particular group but ran throughout Uitlander society. Therefore, as a party newspaper, *The Star* was actually representing the views of Uitlander society generally. And, under Dormer, the newspaper did far more than represent the political views of its readership, it defined them.

Uitlander frustration was sufficiently compounded by 1889 to instill in that portion of the community a need for an organization which--unlike the municipal administrative bodies sanctioned by Pretoria--was autonomous from and directly opposed to the Boer government. This would indicate that the Rand's foreign population had lost hope of the Boers voluntarily granting them the right to participate in the republic's government. Political participation would henceforward be sought through organized pressure groups.

The first incarnation of these reform parties was the Political Reform Association formed in 1890 under the leadership of a barrister, J.W. Leonard.²⁸ The Uitlander grievances outlined at that time would (with the exception of the first item) continue to be germane throughout the decade. They were:

- 1.) the lack of sewage or clean water supply
- 2.) the absence of English language schools for Uitlander children
- 3.) the harrassment of the mining industry by government monopolies, especially the dynamite monopoly
- 4.) the railway monopoly held by the Netherlands South Africa Railway Company (controlled mainly by Dutch, German, and Boer shareholders) levied extortionary freight rates, forcing shippers to unload freight on the Orange Free State side of the Vaal River and ox-cart it to Johannesburg
- 5.) the poisoning and incapacitation of the black labour force by liquor monopolists
- 6.) the taxation of Uitlanders while denying them a say in the allocation of municipal funds
- 7.) the interference in the Transvaal judiciary, which was neither impartial nor independent, by Kruger and his minions²⁹

More than any of the other English speaking papers on the Rand, *The Star* was serving the agenda of the reform movement. Dormer's trenchant campaign for proper municipal sanitation resulted in the first of the Reform Association's complaints being stricken from the list. In 1891 Pretoria designated a sanitation site for Johannesburg, granted the Sanitary Board the right to levy fees, and made sanitation compulsory.³⁰

Dormer also managed, in a general and pervasive sense, to make the Uitlander population more politically aware. His prowess with stirring prose was by all accounts very expert and moving. He undoubtedly motivated many Uitlanders to become active members of the Reform Association. On the eve of Johannesburg's reform period *The Star* was, like other publications, focusing on the franchise issue. Dormer, however, took the rather independent view that Uitlander apathy, and not Boer intransigence, was the primary impediment to acquiring the vote.

In fact, one of his early editorials quite thoroughly absolved the Boers of all blame as it charged that, "For this absence of healthy political life we cannot in all fairness blame the landvelders or their President."³¹ The same article went on to rebuke the Uitlander population for its political lethargy and greedy selfishness:

". . . the majority of the town's population is composed of people whose one object is to make money and get away. From such persons what of political interest can be expected so long as their prime object is not interfered with? 'Johannesburg,' said one of these the other day, 'is the freest city in the world. You can do what you like. What else do you want?' It will, we fear, be some time before the citizens of this type master the paradox that the really freest countries are those where the individual cannot do what he likes."³²

Dormer incessantly argued for political reform but, it is crucial to note that he was both sympathetic to the republican government and antagonistic to British imperial policy. He often wrote to Dr. Leyds, the State Secretary, and from July 1889 had *The Star* delivered to the Pretoria government offices. Government advertisements were regularly run in *The Star*.³³ In 1899, Dormer recapped the attitude toward the Kruger regime that figured so prominently in his editorials during the first half of the decade:

"I have laboured long enough in the cause of good government in the Transvaal to warrant my running the risk of being misunderstood when I say that, after all is said and done, the Kruger Administration

is not quite so black as it is painted. It is not an ideal Government, to be sure; it is far from being up to date; it is not a Republic, as we understand a Republic, in anything but name; it persists in the foolish course of alienating those who should be its best friends; but, with all its faults, it has given the gold-fields the best mining law in the world; it has made railways at a rate never attempted in the Cape Colony; and if it went to the Continent for the means of undertaking these important works, it was because all assistance was denied to it both in England and at the Cape. . . although it has taxed the *Uitlander* with unfair and unmerciful discrimination, and has spent much of its bountiful revenues on objects which we cannot approve, its people and its Government have ever betrayed a rare and most wholesome aversion to saddling the country with unnecessary debt. When one comes to think of the riot that might have been run if the fields had been located in some parts of the world, we may perceive some set-off even to the misfortune of having such a ruler as Oom Paul [President Kruger]." ³⁴

At the same time, Dormer's views on the British Government more closely reflect those of Alfred Aylward than those of Thomas Sheffield, former editor turned director. He wrote, "I can imagine no system of government less suited to the conditions of a mining community than a Crown Colony administration in any shape or form."³⁵

Dormer's position was like that held by his readership; he wanted an independent reformed republic. He astutely summarized the political aspirations of the Johannesburg *Uitlanders* in saying:

"And let not the delusion be entertained in England, declare it who will, that the *Afrikaner* and the *Uitlander* in the Transvaal are hungering and thirsting for sight of the Union Jack. They chafe under the rule of President Kruger, it is true; they look forward with burning impatience to the time when they will be able to overthrow Mr. Kruger and all his works; but it is not in order that they may substitute Mr. Chamberlain. . . . Their ambition is to set up a purified and progressive republic in the place of the rotten and effete monstrosity that now has the temerity to flaunt all its sins of omission and commission in face of the civilised world. Such a republic would not be hostile to Great Britain or to British South African colonies; it might, and probably would, absorb the Orange Free State; but it would be content that its neighbours should work out their own destiny, just as the United States are content that Canada on the one hand, and Mexico, on the other, should pursue their several and separate ways."³⁶

The relatively moderate reformism that Dormer espoused was very much in step with the *Uitlander* reform movement at the beginning of the 1890's. The aim of both Dormer

and the reformers at that time was not so much to attack the Boer government as it was to raise the political consciousness of the Uitlander population.

The early nonaggressive platform of *The Star* and Uitlander reform made both appear quite harmless so far as the senior partners of the Corner House were concerned. Also, the fact that Wernher and Beit received their updates on Johannesburg current events from Lionel Phillips, himself a reformist, probably meant that they were given an abridged version of the situation. In a January 30, 1890 missive to Wernher, Beit, and Company Phillips wrote,

". . . The Chamber [the Chamber of Mines] will take no part in any public meeting, but I do not think a fiery meeting will do any harm so long as the official representative bodies do not co-operate at it. The Chamber will apply to plead its case at the bar of the Volksraad the Counsel will be able to point to the friendly way of representing grievances adopted by the Chamber, but also be able to lay stress upon the ferment in the public mind."³⁷

Phillips wanted the senior partners to feel comfortable with the Johannesburg reform movement; he was working up to garnering their support for it and in less than two years he would be funding the movement with Corner House money. He knew the tact which would appeal to the pragmatic businessmen in London. Phillips convinced the senior partners that the very existence of the Uitlander reform movement would make them appear to be the voice of cool reason and approachability, a foil to the agitating reformers. The randlords wanted Kruger to feel the heat given off by popular discontent and to look upon them as moderates, and even as potential allies.

As the reform movement began to build after 1891 and *The Star* editorials took on a more radical tone, Phillips's letters began to be filled with assurances that the situation was still under control. He did not want the senior partners to balk at further support of the movement to which he belonged. In 1892, Phillips wrote to Hermann Eckstein in London, "I have felt it absolutely necessary for us to keep out of the political agitation, as it is quite a thorn in the side of the Government."³⁸

Phillips sought to assure the London partners that support of the Uitlander cause would not cause them to lose their balance as the magnates walked along a fine line in keeping Pretoria uncomfortable and, at the same time, unthreatened. In November of 1892,

Phillips wrote to Alfred Beit, "The National Union [the new reform party formed that year] is so far running on the right lines. We have discussed the matter fully and are thinking of giving a little pecuniary assistance without our names [the Corner House] appearing. I think the Union will become a power and it can only suit us."³⁹

As it was, the reform rhetoric of 1889-90 was not terribly strident and neither the senior Randlords nor the Kruger government could have been very alarmed by it. In December of 1889 Dormer was writing editorials urging Kruger to look upon Uitlander appeals for reform as friendly and supportive advice. His editorials maintained that the Uitlanders, "would prefer two thousand times remaining as they are than to be brought under such a regime [British] as that which drove the Boers into rebellion, . . ." ⁴⁰

In sharp contrast to this posture, an editorial appeared in 1890 calling into question, "the right of the Government to demand obedience and respect at the hands of those to whom it denies every right, save that of living in the country, and every privilege except that of paying taxes."⁴¹ This same article went on to make a complete turnabout from Dormer's sympathy with the republican cause in the First Boer War cited above:

". . . it is undoubtedly a fact that the wrath of England would be aroused if she saw her subjects in this country treated with ignominy without cause. . . When burghers begin to bully and bluster, diggers who are not beneath contempt will begin to look also to their ammunitions and their arms, feeling well assured that they will not be fired upon without being able to give an infinitely better account of themselves, if by any mischance it should come to that, than was given by the poor lads who were mowed down by the bullets of the Boer in 1881." ⁴²

A likely explanation for this abrupt shift in editorial stance is the addition of Frederic Howard Hamilton to the staff of *The Star*. Significantly, Hamilton was recruited by Rhodes.

Rhodes had met Hamilton in 1889 as he passed through Pietersberg while returning from his first trip to the northern territory that would become Rhodesia. Hamilton, then editing the *Zoutpansberg Review*, cagily secured two days of interviews with Rhodes on northern expansion. Hamilton accomplished this journalistic coup with the

normally reticent Rhodes by mentioning that his father and Rhodes had a mutual friend at Oxford. Within two weeks Hamilton was the assistant editor of *The Star*.⁴³

In 1891 another activist was added to *The Star* staff, James Percy FitzPatrick. Coincidentally, this South African born journalist and reformer became a staff member, like Hamilton, through his involvement in northern expansion.

Early in 1891, Alfred Beit commissioned FitzPatrick to lead an expeditionary force to the north in pursuit of mineral concessions from Lobengula. The excursion was a failure--the party was unable to obtain an audience with Lobengula--but it did yield an unexpected gain.

While in the bush, FitzPatrick met up with another party which was low on provisions and in dire need of assistance. He writes in his memoirs that this party was comprised of Uitlanders in the employ of the Kruger government. One of its disenchanted members offered to give FitzPatrick a dossier full of correspondence that would prove incriminating against Edouard Lippert. Lippert--much reviled by all the mining leaders including FitzPatrick's employer Alfred Beit--was the Kruger minion who controlled the dynamite monopoly. FitzPatrick did not accept the dossier.

He concluded the expedition and returned to Johannesburg where there was, as yet, no particular position open for him at the Corner House. However, this former Barberton journalist was soon commissioned by Dormer to write installments lampooning the expedition he led for Lord Randolph Churchill through Mashonaland earlier that year. He writes in his memoirs:

"When the trip was over and I was duly installed on the staff of Wernher Beit in Johannesburg, I came back with a better knowledge of Rhodesia than most people. I had travelled through it all with the earliest and most capable of engineers and financiers, had met up there, Rhodes, Jameson, Beit and others, and therefore was relatively an authority - anyhow sufficiently so to justify the republication of some of my writings under the title of *Through Mashonaland with Pick and Pen*. I was also asked to work for the *Star*.

F.J. Dormer, one of the ablest journalists we have ever had, was the editor of the *Star*, and a strong backer of Rhodes. I had time to spare and any amount of energy and it was no tax on me to write contributions at short notice; hence I was frequently in the editorial office and freely made use of. . . " ⁴⁴

FitzPatrick's statement about Dormer's supporting Rhodes merits qualification. At that time, the two men were still in agreement on most issues as Rhodes had not yet manifested the imperial aspirations that were to separate them. Nearly ten years later, Dormer would strongly denounce both FitzPatrick and Rhodes.⁴⁵

However, at the outset of the 1890's Dormer still felt happily at one with his fellow Uitlanders. He had every reason to feel this way. Shortly after his arrival at *The Star* FitzPatrick rescued Dormer from an impending crisis.

Dormer was being threatened with a slander suit by Edouard Lippert. FitzPatrick explains that, "the *Star* had stated that Lippert had been endeavouring to get a northern concession to upset Rhodes and his associates, that he was working for and under the instructions of Germany, and that Germany's political aim was to defeat Rhodes and thus cut off the British from the north."⁴⁶

FitzPatrick, upon hearing of the lawsuit which would bankrupt *The Star*, informed Dormer of the dossier that would uphold *The Star's* allegations. Dormer and lawyer reformer J. W. Leonard bought the confidential documents for £100 and Lippert decided to drop the suit. "The eleventh-hour triumph of the *Star* and of Dormer was dramatic and complete."⁴⁷

FitzPatrick's flair for espionage, as demonstrated by this affair, earned him an appointment as the Corner House Chief of Intelligence. He also became deeply involved in reform politics and maintained close ties with *The Star*.

The third, and probably the most radical, appointment to *The Star* staff in 1891 was that of R.J. Pakeman. This former *Barberton Herald* editor and friend of FitzPatrick would eventually undermine Dormer and the moderate editorial stance he represented.

The Transvaal Newspapers' Battlelines

The second Johannesburg reform organization, the National Union, was founded in 1892 again under the leadership of J.W. Leonard and with the additional leadership of the former Cape Minister John Tudhope, the solicitor E.P. Solomon, and Frederic Hamilton. At

first the professional men heading the National Union shared its leadership with commercial men, mining leaders, and miner unionists.

However, this evidently changed by the end of 1893 when the organization's leadership committee was made up exclusively of business and professional men. Most of its rank and file members were also from these two groups.⁴⁸

The working classes fell away from the reform movement for a couple of reasons. First, they tended to dislike the other Uitlander social classes almost as much as they disliked the Boers. A. A. Mawby describes this proletariat class sentiment:

"Many of its [the proletariat's] members, having little contact with their employers, did not share the social ethos of the clerical workers, and attempted to establish their own specifically proletarian identity. In doing so, these men rejected the social hierarchy which was accepted and co-operated with by the bulk of Rand Britons in every other walk of life. . . It led to fragmentation of that identity at the lower reaches of that society, and the development amongst some but not all working men of a political philosophy quite distinct from that of other Rand Britons."⁴⁹

This distinct philosophy mentioned above can most succinctly be described as socialism. It was brought to the Rand by the skilled miners of Cornwall and Australia. However, the insurgent tendencies that these political leanings entailed were to remain relatively dormant until the white labour agitation of the post-1907 period. Alan Jeeves explains why: "The relatively high wage levels and the deliberate policy of most of the companies to avoid wage reductions (and more importantly, the substitution of black for white labour) help to explain labour's relative quiescence."⁵⁰

While the mining companies endeavoured to keep their white workers' anti-capitalist feelings in check with monetary inducements, the pro-government elements sought to exploit these same feelings in rallying support for Kruger. Along with the proletariat's inherent, albeit somewhat latent, class animus toward the rest of Uitlander society, the second factor in their lack of involvement in the reform movement was the government propaganda campaign.

The vehicle for this propaganda was *The Standard and Diggers News*. The formerly anti-government *Standard* and the *Digger's News* were amalgamated and came under the

ownership of the government subsidized firm of Mendelssohn & Bruce. The journal called for uniting the Boer yeoman farmers and the Uitlander working classes into a kind of petty bourgeois society "something like the 'working man's paradise' of which Kimberley diggers had once dreamed." ⁵¹

Johannesburg's newspaper battlelines were clearly drawn by 1891. The fact that the anti-reform press was funded by Uitlander taxpayers' money was particularly ironic. As Dormer commented on *The Standard and Digger's News* at the 1891 Argus Company shareholders meeting, "I hope that the time is not far distant when the impropriety of Governments and Government officials interfering with the public Press at the public expense will be recognised and ended."⁵² The situation with *The Standard and Digger's News* would not end, it would only escalate.

The Kruger regime also subsidized a Pretoria English-speaking newspaper called the *Press*. Louis Cohen informs us that *The Press* editor, Leo Weinthal, achieved inordinate influence with regard to Kruger himself. This must have been a generally accepted observation among Johannesburg residents as Lionel Phillips's wife Florence felt obliged to pen some damning comments on the Kruger/Weinthal relationship:

"... Mr. Leo Weinthal, the editor of *The Press*, the Government organ, Reuter's agent, and Kruger's bosom friend. I would not like to guess what country lays claim to this gen leman[sic]; whichever it may be it is not to be congratulated. . . This same Mr. Leo Weinthal was the President's great resource. He used to go and read the papers to him every evening and translate them. The President, not being able to read English, was quite dependent on those who would impart to him a little news of the outside world, and it can easily be imagined how tempting it must have been to anyone not troubled with scruples to impart the news in the way he desired it to be received. I have often been amused, too, at the telegrams this individual used to send in his capacity as a Reuter's agent." ⁵³

Just as the political factions broke into two groups on the Uitlander side, the Boers divided into pro-Kruger and pro-reform parties. Here too, each party had its own newspaper representing its views.

Land en Volk, edited by Eugene Marais, promoted the views of the progressive Boers. This party became allied with the main body of Uitlander reform and was sympathetic to Jan Hofmeyer's Afrikaner Bond.

J.P. FitzPatrick illustrates this alliance when he discusses the Dutch-speaking liberal newspaper:

"Mr. Eugene Marais, the editor of the leading Dutch paper *Land en Volk*, a gentleman who has worked consistently and honourably both for his people, the Transvaal Dutch, and for the cause of pure and enlightened government, . . . No one in the country has fought harder against the abuses which exist in Pretoria nor has anyone risked more, nor yet is there a more loyal champion of the Boer. . ." ⁵⁴

The editorials in *Land en Volk* were running along the same lines as those appearing in *The Star* and the *Transvaal Advertiser*. This is evident by looking at how the opposition, *The Standard and Digger's News*, saw fit to attack them together. *The Standard and Digger's News* lashed out at "the jingoistic *Transvaal Advertiser* and the Africa-for-the Afrikaners *Land en Volk*" for their mutual support of the progressive Boer General Joubert.⁵⁵ This same article bristles at the idea of British intervention in the SAR which, as cited above, had been a threat invoked in the columns of *The Star*. It also defends the republic's attempts to obtain its own port:

"*Land en Volk* is also much exercised about a 'United South Africa' . . . A United South Africa is a magnificent idea; but first let us understand under what conditions it is to be obtained, and whether under the British Ensign or under a thoroughly independent flag. . . A further point about *Land en Volk* is that it is extremely concerned about the Delagoa Bay Railway, which, we are told, is to be the ruin of the country, etc., etc., while the salvation of the State lies in the Cape connection. . . we must confess that Delagoa Bay is the natural harbour of the Republic; and it is politically and commercially important to secure this line of railway." ⁵⁶

The press war was waged with melodramatic vigour and intensity. In the tradition of Victorian journalism, this involved considerable vitriol and that the battling journalists were spurred on by heartfelt antipathy for each other is most convincing.

However, the newspapermen--much like Murray and Aylward in Kimberley--could clearly tell where prose stopped and business began. Neither Dormer nor Mendelssohn

had any qualms about engaging the same newspaper distribution firm of Lindbergh and Davis. Albert Victor Lindbergh had been with *The Star* since 1892, was made publisher in 1893, and went on to achieve great circulation results. When he and Mike Davis went into partnership with The Central News Agency, the owners of *The Standard and Diggers' News* asked them to take over distribution of their newspaper. *The Star* granted Lindbergh and Davis permission to take on the contract since the Mendelssohn paper was a morning journal and they could see no reason why it would conflict with distribution of their evening paper.⁵⁷

Another even more compelling illustration of the lack of true antipathy between these journalists is the unlikely partnership of Frederic Hamilton and Leo Weinthal. In 1896, after the Jameson Raid, Hamilton took over the Argus publication, the *African Review*, in London. This weekly publication was designed to educate London readers on the Uitlander cause. Due to a surplus of African publications in London, Hamilton amalgamated his paper with Leo Weinthal's *African World* in 1905.⁵⁸

Dormer's Downfall

Francis Dormer very shrewdly protected the editorial integrity of *The Star* from manipulation by the newspaper's financial investors. It was, perhaps, this concentration on defending the newspaper from outsiders that caused him to overlook the dissension within the offices of *The Star*. His own staff would cause Dormer to lose the mandate of his readership, and ultimately, control of his newspaper.

Harry S. Lyons, a junior member of the staff, described Dormer as a mentor to *The Star* journalists. He recalled, "Every member of the staff had to contribute one original article a week, leader or special, though not a few of them failed to attain the dignity of print, and in this and many other directions he was most helpful to beginners."⁵⁹ This sort of liberal management aimed at nurturing young talent proved a destructive weapon in the hands of the experienced and wily assistant editor, R.J. Pakeman.

On January 14, 1892, while Dormer was out of town, Pakeman was left in charge. What Pakeman did that day can only be explained by extreme stupidity or extreme

malice. Queen Victoria's son, Albert, the Duke of Clarence, was very ill and Pakeman wrote a ludicrously tasteless article on the subject entitled "The Dying Duke". The first edition of *The Star* was printed with the scurrilous article. Then, a cable arrived announcing that Albert had died. Pakeman had another edition printed containing a previously prepared obituary but left in the outrageous article, changing the header to "The Dead Duke." The following extract reveals just how insulting the Pakeman article was:

"The life story of a most estimable and unexceptionable young man might thus be summed up: He condescended to be born; he meant to get married, and he died.

It was fondly hoped, even by one of his Royal parents, that the Duke of Clarence would contrive to do something, anything, to show that the peaceful vacuity of his countenance and the monotonous demureness of his Royal conduct from the cradle to maturity, were capable of concealing some sterner qualities, which would yet be revealed. The Prince of Wales, and the nation with him, would have welcomed the appearance of the peccadilloes proper to his youth and station, to redeem the all-whiteness of his unblemished career. Just a little wholesome sin to keep his virtue sweet. . . "60

When this hit the streets, the result was explosive. A mob assembled, identified Dormer as the perpetrator of the insult to the royal family, and after burning an effigy of the hapless editor, rushed *The Star* offices. Cohen describes the onslaught and the following events:

"It was wonderful to behold how the general population, Dutch and English, though living under a boer Republic, showed on one side their condemnation of the diatribe and upon the other their loyalty to the Motherland, and more especially to the English Reigning House. A hostile shouting crowd, fully believing that Dormer had written the article, and knowing he was the managing director, hurried to the front of the Star office, made a frenzied demonstration, broke every window of the place with stones, and were with difficulty restrained from doing further violence. On that same evening, Dormer unfortunately visited the Standard Theatre, where some loyal Colonials, at the head of whom was Harry Ellis, commenced to hustle and maul that affrighted scribe of the gifted pen, and it would have gone hard with him had not Stroyan, that Cock of the North, and Pullinger, rescued him from his physical monitors. During the melee, Dormer's black coat and immaculate vest got much disarranged, showing in all its purity and whiteness a well starched dicky; and from that period the black-haired journalist was called "Dicky Dormer," thus, at times, even through washerwomen do we become famous."61

Dormer never lived down the ignominy of the incident and, for that matter, had to put up with being called "Dicky" for the rest of his stay in Johannesburg. Even Pakeman's published letter of apology and his resignation did not allay strong public feeling against Dormer. He stayed on as editor for nearly two more years but he cannot have enjoyed the role as he had in the past. As Dormer adopted an increasingly low profile, his assistant editor Frederic Hamilton stepped into the limelight.

Hamilton became a member of the Argus Board in 1892 and also became an officer of the National Union. This marked a new, closer alliance between *The Star* and the reform movement.

It also marked Dormer's first exit. Dormer certainly was suffering under the "Dicky" stigma but his departure in November of 1894 and consequent resignation in February of 1895 was surely prompted by much bigger issues. Johannesburg, and *The Star* along with it, was being caught up in a political mood that precluded Dormer's cherished notion of working out a peaceful resolution with the Kruger regime.

In 1894 Kruger tried to conscript Johannesburg Uitlanders to fight a native uprising in the Northern Transvaal. The National Union seized upon this as a pretext to escalate agitation. Hamilton wrote,

"With a good deal of difficulty we induced seven men to decline to serve, and we began an agitation which culminated in Sir Henry Loch, the High Commissioner, coming to Pretoria. He declined to come to Johannesburg to receive a widely signed petition, on the ground that the Boers would fire on the crowd if he did so. The State Attorney, Dr. Eddelin, confirmed this, and informed me as a friend that if the Commissioner appeared in Johannesburg half a dozen men would be shot, and that I was third or fourth on the list." ⁶²

Hamilton went on to say that Loch did finally receive the petition from a deputation sent to his Pretoria Hotel. He pointed out that at this juncture the,

"political movement in Johannesburg gained force, and Lionel Phillips slipped into my hands, under pledge of secrecy, a bag containing five hundred sovereigns as a contribution to the National Union funds. That was the first sign of support which the Union had ever received from any of the great mining Houses, and it might perhaps have been well had it been the last." ⁶³

Hamilton saw Randlord involvement as bad sign for a couple of reasons. First, it caused suspicion among the few Labour members the Union had left and some of these defected. Second, it left the door open for Cecil Rhodes. All the leading men in the Union opposed involving Rhodes for fear that he would take control. However, John Hays Hammond of Rhodes's Goldfields company urged that he was necessary because, as Cape Prime Minister, Rhodes could secure British military backing if the Uitlanders needed it.

In mid-1894, the plot to overthrow Kruger by force had not actually been developed. The Reform Committee members of the National Union had not even discussed such a contingency. But, the talk of violence on both sides; the involvement of mining house money and of Rhodes; and the lack of results from moderate constitutional reform made a resort to force inevitable.

Dormer knew enough, and disliked what he saw enough, to get out. Hamilton was committed to follow events through their full course.

Footnotes to Chapter 5

1. Rosenthal, *Today's News Today*, 16-17.
2. *Ibid.*, 19-20.
3. Flint, *Cecil Rhodes*, 55.
4. Rosenthal, *Today's News Today*, 22.
5. *Ibid.*, 20.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, 17-18.
8. *Ibid.*, 24-25.
9. *Ibid.*, 26-28.
10. *Ibid.*, 31.
11. *Ibid.*, 32.
12. *Ibid.*, 34-37.
13. *Ibid.*, 37-38, *Eastern Star*, October 17, 1887.
14. *Ibid.*, 41.
15. *Ibid.*, 42.
16. *Ibid.*, 43.
17. Cartwright, *The Corner House*, 61.
18. Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, 134.
19. Kubicek, *Economic Imperialism*, 82.
20. *Ibid.*, 65.
21. Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, 134.
22. Rosenthal, *Today's News Today*, 82.
23. Louis Cohen, *Reminiscences of Johannesburg and London* (Johannesburg: Africana Book Society PTY Ltd., 1924), 129.
24. Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, 115.
25. Cohen, *Reminiscences of Johannesburg*, 139.
26. *Ibid.*, 139-140.

27. Rosenthal, *Today's News Today*, 47.
28. Mawby, *The Political Behaviour*, 21.
29. Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, 152.
30. Rosenthal, *Today's News Today*, 60.
31. *The Johannesburg Star*, May 8, 1889.
32. Ibid.
33. Rosenthal, *Today's News Today*, 49-50.
34. Dormer, *Vengeance as a Policy*, 151-152.
35. Ibid., 77.
36. Ibid., 198.
37. A.H. Jeeves and Maryna Fraser, *All That Glittered, Selected Correspondence of Lionel Phillips 1890-1924* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1977), 35.
38. Ibid., 61.
39. Ibid., 64.
40. Rosenthal, *Today's News Today*, 51.
41. *The Johannesburg Star*, March 14, 1890.
42. Ibid.
43. Hamilton, "Narrative of Events," 279.
44. J.P. FitzPatrick, *South African Memories, Scraps of History* (London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1932), 68.
45. Dormer, *Vengeance as a Policy*, xx.
46. FitzPatrick, *South African Memories*, 69.
47. Ibid., 70.
48. Mawby, *The Political Behaviour*, 21.
49. Ibid., 15.
50. A.H. Jeeves, "The Rand Capitalists and the Coming of the South African War, 1896-1906," *The Canadian Historical Papers* (1973): 71.
51. Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, 173.
52. Rosenthal, *Today's News Today*, 57.

53. Lady Florence Phillips, *Some South African Recollections* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1899), 176.
54. FitzPatrick, *The Transvaal From Within*, 146.
55. *The Standard and Digger's News*, April 23, 1892.
56. Ibid.
57. Rosenthal, *Today's News Today*, 80.
58. Ibid., 96-97.
59. Ibid., 83
60. Ibid., 76.
61. Cohen, *Reminiscences of Johannesburg*, 130.
62. Hamilton, "Narrative of Events," 287.
63. Ibid., 288.

- 6 -

Johannesburg Before the Raid

Frederic Hamilton's Editorship

Frederic Hamilton assumed the editorship of *The Star* upon Dormer's departure. However, the volatile climate that had precipitated Dormer's resignation soon reversed itself; Hamilton inherited a readership that was too preoccupied with business to concern itself with politics. Loch had interceded with Kruger on behalf of the Uitlanders regarding the conscription question. Kruger backed down and the whole issue was diffused. Politics soon lost its lustre for the majority of Johannesburg Uitlanders.¹

Hamilton, in later years, reflected on Johannesburg at that moment:

"The high emotional plane upon which the commandeering episode had been discussed could not of course be long sustained, and the mines, the main business of Johannesburg, began to invite increasing attention. . . There was no boom, but markets were increasingly active, and political grievances in the minds of all but a few went into cold storage."²

Hamilton's editorial platform during 1894 very much reflected the general mood of public opinion. It was reformist but not revolutionary. There was, even in the many attacks on government policies, a sort of quiet optimism. People wanted change, but it had to come through moderate constitutional means. This was also the tact of the National Union of which Hamilton was a leading officer.

Hamilton was so enmeshed in the reform movement that it became impossible to distinguish where his role as reformer left off and editor began. He quite literally combined the two into one job without any conflict of interest. The general readership and the reformers shared the same hopeful patient mood during 1894.

The Star assailed the Krugerites on a number of fronts; all of these attacks were posed as defensive actions taken in the face of direct threats to the Uitlander community. One of the most often enunciated and disturbing of these perceived threats was the fear that all

Uitlander citizens were at the mercy of an arbitrary police state against which they had no recourse and with whom they had no representation.

The constant presentation of this chimera, of course, fit in neatly with the reform movement's call for the franchise. *The Star* strongly reinforced the belief that the Krugerites (not to be confused with the Boers in general) were stubbornly prejudiced against treating the Uitlanders fairly. An 1894 editorial entitled "Closing Their Ranks" (referring to the Kruger party) stated:

". . . the Krugerite party was asked to meet at the house of Mr. J.S. Smit in Pretoria, and discuss the propriety of practically realising the motto of the Republic, by solidly uniting against the uitlander. . . It has become so well established a custom on the part of the Government press to sneer at the National Union and uitlander organizations generally, that it seems a pity to disturb so convenient a habit of thought by an appeal to hard facts." ³

This passage indicates how solidly *The Star* had become entwined in the Uitlander reform movement: it identifies the National Union as being synonymous with the Uitlander's best interests. It also illustrates the increasingly adversarial position the National Union took vis a vis the Kruger regime. *The Star* began to take issue with such unsavory Boer practices as arrest, detention, property confiscation, and expulsion without due process. It is a key issue to note, however, that such attacks were directed specifically against the Kruger party and not Boer politicians in general. Hamilton and the other reformers recognized that there was a progressive element among the Boers.

The Star also took its critiques of the Kruger government beyond the State's abrogation of individual rights. The paper attacked Krugerism's business mismanagement. For example, a November 1894 article lashed out against a current government undertaking wherein taxpayer's money was being used to provide working capital for a coal mining company and to purchase farms which were believed to contain coal deposits. *The Star* analyzed the capital formation of the enterprise and pronounced it absurd. The newspaper was essentially offended at what it considered mishandling of public funds and the editorial began with the statement, "Of all the remarkable transactions in which this Government has ever engaged since Mr. Kruger first assumed the direction of affairs and applied the doctrine of Divine Right

to Republicanism, none has been more amazing than the plunge into the troubled waters of company promotion. . ." 4

Leveling charges of graft and ineptitude, *The Star* also stingingly criticized the handling of the Delagoa Bay Railroad, the Lippert dynamite monopoly, and the illegal sale of liquor to the native work force. The newspaper's increasing emphasis on Kruger's economic/commercial policies has routinely been construed as the result of manipulation by its financial backers--Rhodes in particular. However, it is likely more correct to attribute this choice of editorial subjects to the membership of the National Union.

It was the professional men in the field, the working engineers, who were first and most acutely aware of the inequities of Kruger's business policies. These men--the men with whom Hamilton associated with in the National Union--directed the platform of the reform party. One of the most influential, John Hays Hammond, wrote,

"as my field observation broadened and my daily routine gave me an increasing familiarity with the economic problems of gold-mining in the Transvaal the conviction was forced upon me that the difficulties which the industry faced were not due to any of those technical obstacles which engineers are employed to overcome but to obstructions deliberately placed in the way of the mining community by the Boer government."⁵

Not only was the National Union--and consequently *The Star*--shaped by the convictions of men like Hammond, but the perceptions adopted by Rhodes were also much influenced by his men on the spot. Hedley Chilvers says that in 1894, while on a prospecting expedition in Rhodesia, Hammond indoctrinated Rhodes and Dr. Leander Starr Jameson in the platform on the National Union. Chilvers writes:

". . . they talked chiefly of the people of Johannesburg and the hardships they were enduring under Kruger, of their resentment of those hardships, and of the mutterings of the coming storm. Rhodes and Jameson were, for the most part, attentive listeners [to Hammond]; and Rhodes seemed thoughtful and disturbed."⁶

Essentially there is no demarcation between the political and the economic issues of Uitlander reformism. The Uitlanders required political representation in order to rectify economic hardships placed on them by the Kruger regime. And, as Hamilton pointed

out, economic and business issues were the subjects captivating the minds of Johannesburg Uitlanders in 1894. Hammond sums up the impetus behind reformism:

"The real situation in the "Republic" centered around the circumstance that 75,000 Boers, paying one-tenth of the taxes, exercised a complete and exclusive sway over 175,000 white immigrants, who paid nine-tenths of the taxes without having a word to say as to how taxation should be levied or its proceeds expended."⁷

This same sentiment is echoed in *The Star* article on the coal company enterprise cited above as Hamilton writes, "So far as they [the Krugerites] are concerned, it is a matter of heads they win, and tails, the Government, or rather the taxpayers of this country, lose." ⁸

The press war between the pro-Kruger and the pro-reform newspapers was waged over a number of economic issues. The *Digger's News* support of Kruger's Delagoa Bay Railway was mentioned in the previous chapter. Another contentious front was the Lippert dynamite monopoly. Chilvers describes the origins of Lippert's lucrative monopoly:

"They [Lippert] found the beds of Kieselguhr and certain other raw ingredients of dynamite; whereupon, armed with the detail of these discoveries, Lippert went to see the President and made out a case for a new local industry, namely, the manufacture of dynamite in the Transvaal. He got the monopoly. But, he did not actually make the explosive in the country, he imported it from Germany, and subjected it to certain treatment in the Transvaal, which he thought, might enable it to pass in the Raad for a locally manufactured product."⁹

Beyond the chagrin felt by the Uitlanders at Lippert's duplicity--which was common knowledge--there were several compelling reasons for their opposition to the Lippert monopoly. First of all, the dynamite was greatly overpriced. In addition, it was of poor and uneven quality. This made it an unpredictable and dangerous substance with which to work. The accidents caused by the faulty dynamite made the Lippert monopoly an issue which drew proletarian miners into the National Union fold.

Interestingly enough, it was the Dutch newspaper *Land en Volk*, which exposed the venality, deceit, and bribery behind the granting of the dynamite concession. The Volksraad had attempted to clean up the dynamite monopoly in 1895, only to have Kruger reinstate it.¹⁰

The dynamite monopoly duplicity--and its support by the *Digger's News*--went beyond the reform movement's attention to cause concern among the senior mining leaders. Once again, this representation of reformist concerns to senior partners was transmitted by Lionel Phillips. In recounting a Chamber of Mines meeting to Wernher and Beit in London, Phillips's January 28, 1893 correspondence complained that:

"Lippert also put up a friend of his to question me on the dynamite business and you will see my reply. Lippert then wanted to put further questions to me, but the meeting was dead against him and [acted] on a resolution that the discussion be closed. He was the only man voting against it, so that he had the worst sitting at this meeting he has ever had. That will probably account for the virulent attacks which he has been making upon me in the *Standard and Digger's News*.
.. " 11

It was not long before the *Digger's News* had cultivated enemies throughout the mining industry. In 1894 an unlikely confederation of mining house leaders, bound together by their mutual umbrage toward the newspaper, attempted a behind the scenes takeover purchase. Certainly the National Union had an operative role in convincing the mining magnates of the necessity of this venture; Charles Leonard acted as the front man for the venture. On April 9, 1894, Phillips sent a private letter to the Barnato Brothers¹² which read:

Dear Sirs,

re. Standard and Digger's News Purchase.

The above is not quite completed yet, but I have nevertheless had to pay into the bank to the credit of C. Leonard's Special Account the sum of £14,000-0-0 cheque for your share, £5,000

Gold Fields	£3,000
S. Neumann	1,000
Barnato Bros.	5,000
H. Eckstein	5,000

	£14,000

The takeover attempt failed and the *Digger's News* continued in an even more militant vein after 1894. The really curious aspect of the episode is how the anti-industry press galvanised, albeit briefly and unsuccessfully, these very politically divergent mining leaders. While Gold Fields and H. Eckstein's harboured many a reform party member on their employee roles, the other two firms were profoundly apolitical. In fact, Barney Barnato was

one of the few politically neutral men left in Johannesburg after the Jameson Raid; an untethered position which left him free to argue for leniency toward the conspirators in front of the Pretoria Court. After 1894 and until 1899, the mining interests would leave sympathetic journalists in charge of retaliations to the hostile press.

At the end of 1894, *The Star* began a new phase of propagandizing the Uitlander population. The National Union was firmly established and it was time to mobilize its somewhat complacent ranks to take concerted, but reasonably moderate, political action. In preparation for the petition drive in the spring of 1895, Hamilton would write in *The Star* in December 1894:

"The Johannesburg man in the street is the most belated creature in Christendom. Elsewhere, what with political associations and what not, he takes good care to crystallize himself, and he is enabled to give to public opinion a force and coherence which on the Rand are for the most part utterly lacking." ¹³

Throughout the spring of 1895, the National Union undertook the gathering of thousands of signatures for a franchise petition to be presented to the Raad. The act of petitioning in and of itself denotes the party's moderate and hopeful outlook regarding extracting political rights from the government.

The massive effort that this activity required did not go unnoticed by the pro-Kruger press. The newspaper battles waged during the compilation of the petition between the *Volksstem* and *The Star* offer insights into the state of Uitlander reformism at that time. Below is an extract from an April 1895 *Star* rebuttal to a *Volksstem* attack on the petition:

"The gentleman whom the *Volksstem* has set up to demolish the National Union and all its works has adopted the classic pen-name 'Brutus,' . . . After comparing the people who compose the majority in the State [the Uitlanders] to so many children, he proves what is the true nature of his attitude towards the uitlanders by regarding *The Star's* remark that the present petition would possibly be the last one in the light of a threat! . . . It will be observed that it is not in the utterances of the uitlanders that this frequent mention of rebellions and appeals for foreign aid is made. It is from "Brutus" and his friends that such suggestions come, . . . it may be pointed out to burghers who are desirous of discussing political matters in an honest and reasonable spirit that the state of affairs which "Brutus" describes has not yet been brought about in any of the other three leading South African countries, where Dutch and British are working side by side for the common good." ¹⁴

Significantly enough, this editorial indicates that Hamilton and his party believed there were burghers to whom they could appeal and with whom they could have frank and productive discussion. Also, by using the example of the other South African states in which non-Boers and Boers shared equal political rights shows that the reformers were positive that such a situation was possible in the SAR.

The National Union and *The Star* realized that the Kruger party was intransigent in its resolve to deny the Uitlanders the franchise. Kruger would never change his mind. A good illustration of this is an extract from a conversation that Kruger had at this time with a Uitlander named Godfrey Lys. The young man had the temerity to ask the President why did he not grant the Uitlanders the vote. Kruger told him, "If I gave them the vote, Lys, our people would lose the country. The Uitlanders are as the hosts of Gideon compared with us." ¹⁵

The reformists knew that this sort of fear was too deep-seated to be removed with reason. But reform leaders did have great faith that the majority of the Boers would prove reasonable. This is made clear by the fact that they would bother to petition at all.

The Wellsprings of Uitlander Hope

The Uitlander mood in 1894 was one of confidence and this confidence was based on a broad base of factors that extended beyond the situation inside the Transvaal. It was perceived that the maneuverings being conducted by Cecil Rhodes would soon reassert Cape dominance over South Africa, effectively rendering the Republic's new gold-based hegemony effete.

To the south, Rhodes (now Prime Minister of Cape Colony) had forged a strong alliance with the Cape Afrikaners through Hofmeyr and the Afrikaner Bond.¹⁶ To the north, he blocked SAR expansion by settling Matabeland with his British South Africa Company. This territory was expected to yield gold deposits that would dwarf the wealth of the Rand.

Furthermore, Rhodes was expected to be successful in his bid to purchase Delagoa Bay to the east. The 1891 Anglo-Portuguese Convention had renewed the British right of pre-emption over all colonial possessions south of the Zambesi and the bankrupt Portuguese

government appeared to be in a position to sell.¹⁷ It was a very cheering scenario for the Cape and Rand Uitlanders whose mutual interest was to reverse Kruger's growing power. Robinson and Gallagher explain:

"If Rhodes could buy the Portuguese terminus of the Republic's railway, he would be able to counter the control of the Transvaal section of the Cape-Johannesburg line [railway] which would fall to Kruger when the Sivewright agreement expired at the end of 1894. Its effort to construct a separatist system thwarted, the republic would be readier to enter a commercial union on Cape terms. Lourenco Marques was for Rhodes the key to the south African deadlock."¹⁸

Not only was Rhodes busily encircling the Transvaal with the blessings of the British government, the situation on the Rand itself looked promising. The Uitlander movement was becoming more organized and growing in numbers. And, the more progressive elements in Boer politics were starting to assert themselves against Kruger. Uitlander reformers saw individuals such as Lucas Meyer and Piet Joubert as men with whom their own reason would prevail.¹⁹ Even Joubert's presidential loss to Kruger in 1893 did not seriously dampen Uitlander hopes for the Boer progressive party.

The reform movement's perceptions of these developments can be read in *The Star*. For example, while understanding full well the implications of Rhodes' encirclement of the Transvaal, *The Star* attempted to make light of the Kruger government's and its allies' increasing alarm. In an article entitled "The Great African Bogle," Hamilton wrote:

"Surely the bogle man business [re. Rhodes] is becoming a little overdone. In Germany it is taken pretty well for granted that Mr. Rhodes intends to annex the whole province of Mozambique at the first opportunity, and now we are edified by the intelligence that M. Ribot announced to the French Chamber of Deputies that the Cape Premier has long meditated the 'seizure' of Madagascar. . . The wonder really is that his name has not yet cropped up in connection with the Chino Japanese War. Perhaps it will later on."²⁰

While trying to deflect serious attention from the Rhodes/Cape strategy, *The Star* also encouraged and praised signs of progressive directions being taken by Boer politicians. It commended the Licensing Board saying that, "For the first time, the Board has proceeded upon lines which are quite similar to those followed in older countries, and it is quite possible that the March sitting of 1895 will prove the introduction to a new era as regards local licensing questions."²¹

The 1893 election in which Kruger only narrowly squeezed by the more liberal Joubert in the polls²² left the reformers and their press spokesmen cynical but still optimistic toward changing the current political structure. This is evidenced by a September 1894 column of *The Star*:

"No man in his right senses would care to base his hopes of better things altogether upon the whims of an electorate which is so elaborately restricted to the more ignorant half of the population; but it is idle to deny that, in the opinion of many competent judges, the elections [in November] will result in a progressive majority being returned to both Chambers. If such proves to be the case, Mr. Kruger will rapidly and inevitably decline to a position similar to that which General Joubert adorned since the last presidential election."²³

The theme of effecting change within the current system predominates during the pre-Raid period. In fact, this reformist theme is specifically cited in *The Star's* article on outgoing National Union president, Mr. Tudhope. *The Star* quoted Tudhope as saying that the Union's aim is,

"the clear and simple one of pressing, by all legitimate means, on the Government, the Volksraad, and the burghers of the State that our claims for political recognition, not allowing ourselves to be drawn aside by any mere local or sectional interests from the great task of securing equal political rights for all classes of people."²⁴

The newspaper reiterated Tudhope's moderate bent by saying,

"Mr. Tudhope brought to the work of awakening Johannesburg to a sense of its political duties a ripe experience, a matured judgment [sic], and the prestige of a reputation for solidity and caution which was invaluable to a young organisation, the enemies of which desired above all things to prove was of a revolutionary character."²⁵

Hamilton could cite only the exemption of Uitlanders from commando duty as a tangible accomplishment on the part of the National Union in its first three years. He identified the majority of progress as having been in the area of informing public opinion--an area in which he and his newspaper played a major role. Hamilton wrote:

"It [the National Union] has pledged to a constitutional policy, and the only course open to it was, either directly or indirectly, to create such equities as between the burgher and the uitlander as would render the real issue [the franchise] so clear and unmistakable that he who ran might read. It will hardly be denied that from this point of view the course adopted has been vindicated by results. The Government in so far as it represents the reactionary Boer element, is far weaker to-day than it was twelve months ago, while the National Union--the

decrease of which was prophesied in several quarters with a fine confidence--is more numerous and infinitely stronger than at any previous point of its history." ²⁶

Essentially, the Transvaal reform leaders and the reform press were demanding a situation analogous to that which existed in the British dominated colonies of South Africa where both Anglo and Afrikaner citizens were enfranchised. Politics, however, which had been in "cold storage" according to Hamilton was relegated to an even lower priority in December of 1894 and January of 1895. The mining market boomed.

Hamilton explained that in a gold-based world economy which had not experienced any fresh discoveries of gold deposits since the California rush of the 1840's and the Australian rush of the 1850's, the Transvaal's newly uncovered huge yields were monumentally important. The mining industry's efforts from 1892 to 1895 revealed that the Main reef stretched far beyond the Central Rand to the east and west. Deep level mining was now technologically possible and applicable; it was certain that the bodies of ore plummeted to great and undetermined depths. Furthermore, the cyanide recovery process made it cost-effective to extract gold from these sulphide ores located at deep levels. Hamilton wrote of the impact of this development on Johannesburg:

"In a word, the existence of the greatest gold field in the world had been demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt at the precise moment when gold was most needed.

The prospect which was opening out would have fired the minds of a more phlegmatic population than that of Johannesburg. It must be remembered that the men who were directing the mines, administering the business, operating the Stock market, etc., were for the most part between 30 and 40, and Johannesburg is 6,000 feet above sea level. In that sunlit exhilarating atmosphere optimism is easy, and there was plenty to stimulate optimism. . . Hundreds of poor men became really wealthy, thousands believed that they had become so, and hardly a man or woman along the Reef was untouched by the tremendous transformation of those eight months [late 1894 to early 1895]. Interests in politics and prices had always been in an inverse relationship, and it is not surprising if in 1895 men forgot their political grievances and concentrated upon their growing fortunes." ²⁷

According to Hamilton, the combination of fortune, youth, thin atmosphere, and ultra violet rays effectively dampened Johannesburg's political zeal. He was probably right.

Footnotes to Chapter 6

1. Hamilton, "Narrative of Events," 287-288.
2. Ibid., 288.
3. *The Johannesburg Star*, September 18, 1894.
4. Ibid., November 28, 1894.
5. Hammond, *The Truth About the Jameson Raid*, 9.
6. Hedley A. Chilvers, *Out of the Crucible* (London: Cassell and Company, Ltd., 1930), 82.
7. Hammond, *The Truth About the Jameson Raid*, 15.
8. *The Johannesburg Star*, November 28, 1894.
9. Chilvers, *Out of the Crucible*, 86.
10. Ibid.
11. Jeeves and Fraser, *All That Glittered*, 70.
12. Ibid., 76-77.
13. *The Johannesburg Star*, December 1, 1894.
14. Ibid., April 27, 1895.
15. Chilvers, *Out of the Crucible*, 82.
16. Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 411.
17. Ibid., 415.
18. Ibid.
19. Thompson and Wilson, *Oxford History of South Africa*, 314.
20. *The Johannesburg Star*, December 1, 1894.
21. Ibid., April 3, 1895.
22. Thompson and Wilson, *Oxford History of South Africa*, 307.
23. *The Johannesburg Star*, September 18, 1894.
24. Ibid., January 26, 1895.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Hamilton, "Narrative of Events," 289-290.

- 7 -

The Hard Lesson of the Jameson Raid

Late in 1895 of Johannesburg's optimism distinguished^{tegrated}. Rhodes's plans for gaining hegemony in South Africa were each checkmated; the Colonial Office became nervous and impetuous; and as the gold share market fell into recession, so did the buoyant mood of the Uitlanders.

After the abortive Jameson Raid the reformers lost faith in Rhodes, the British government, and to a large degree the mining houses that had quietly funded them. Their only trusted ally was the reform press. In fact, the only anti-Kruger element left to function overtly after the Raid was the press. Joseph Chamberlain and Cecil Rhodes were effectively silenced amid the embarrassment and inquiry following the event. The reform leaders were at first jailed and later pledged to silence on political affairs for three years. The press, albeit slightly hindered by new press laws, would continue its campaign for Uitlander political rights.

The Dismantling of Uitlander Optimism

It had become apparent by 1895 that the wall of encirclement Rhodes was building around the Transvaal was more like a chalkline than a real barrier. Kruger had completed his Delagoa Bay Rail to Pretoria at the end of 1894. And, all Cape hopes of purchasing the port at Delagoa Bay had been stymied.¹

Kruger also intended to make the Transvaal/Cape rates so prohibitive that shippers would be forced to use his Delagoa Bay Rail. Instead, shippers began taking goods off the Cape Rail at the Vaal River, which marked the SAR, border and transferring them onto ox-carts which transported the freight through the river drifts and on to Johannesburg. Frustrated by this unexpected reaction, Kruger closed the Drifts in August.² Joseph Chamberlain, who had taken up the leadership of the Colonial Office, threatened to despatch a military force to the area and offered Kruger an ultimatum. Kruger backed down and re-opened the Drifts. Concurrent with the crisis, the gold shares market weakened and,

according to Hamilton, "men again became conscious of a world outside the Stock Exchange."³ Their attention turned to politics and Kruger, by initiating the Drifts Crisis, presented them with quite an absorbing subject. The direct commercial and economic consequences of the issue made it all the more relevant to the businessmen of Johannesburg. Hamilton wrote that the Drifts Crisis afforded him the opportunity to, "direct once more the minds of the public, through my newspaper, towards politics."⁴

The final crushing blow to Rhodes's encirclement came down around the same time when it became apparent where the true gold wealth in South Africa lay. Rhodesian gold prospects yielded nothing while recent deep-level strikes around Johannesburg affirmed the Rand's position as the El Dorado of Southern Africa. The prospects of his Rhodesian British South Africa Company eclipsing Kruger's mining wealth were destroyed and Rhodes now had to place his hopes for British ascension in South Africa solely on the Johannesburg Uitlanders and their bid to win political clout from Kruger.⁵

This forced dependence on the Uitlanders made Rhodes's position all the more invidious. He simply could not trust them. The major Rand capitalists certainly preferred dealing with the independent Kruger republic over having to share their wealth with and comply to the monitoring of the Cape and British governments. In support of this, R.V. Kubicek produces a letter from Wernher in London:

"Just before the Jameson Raid he [Wernher] told Phillips, who conspired in the Johannesburg plot, he did not see why it was not possible and desirable for the Kruger regime 'to strengthen itself and ally itself to that most conservative element: capital.' After the Raid he had explained to Rouliot that 'we are all interested to maintain the (South African) Republic because that keeps the land free to all nations.'⁶

Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain knew that the multi-national capitalists on the Rand were opposed to British domination of South Africa. He distrusted them as much as Rhodes did. However, he did see possibilities for Britain asserting control of the Transvaal through the Uitlander reform movement. He received intelligence from Rhodes and British High Commissioner Sir Hercules Robinson indicating that Kruger's policies had sufficiently alienated both the Cape commercial interests and the Johannesburg Uitlanders to the point

where Britain could absorb the SAR without opposition from these groups or the Orange Free State. Robinson told Chamberlain that political change in the Transvaal--that is, replacement of the Kruger regime with an anglicized republic--would be effected through violence. In August, Chamberlain gave Rhodes's chartered company the Bechuanaland territory which Jameson used as the jumping off point for his troops to invade the Republic.⁷

So Chamberlain, fearing Transvaal domination; convinced of an imminent war between the SAR and the Cape after the Drifts Crisis; and acting upon the advice of his men on the spot, secretly endorsed the plot to overthrow the republic by force.⁸ His complicity, it seems, was a secret only as far as the British government was concerned; Charles Moberly Bell and Flora Shaw of *The London Times* were involved in the conspiracy.

It was thought that once the coup had taken place, the reformers would seize control of Johannesburg. At that juncture Britain could intercede to ensure that the new regime was tied to the empire and not established as another independent republic.

Unfortunately for Rhodes, Jameson, and Chamberlain this matter of just what form the post-coup government would take was never resolved with the Johannesburg reformers. The "flag dispute" doomed the venture from the start.

The reformers' motivations for participating in the plot to a large degree parallel Rhodes's. They saw Kruger, whom they had despaired of ever granting reasonable reforms, as growing in power in relation to the rest of South Africa. However, their reasons for launching the "bloodless coup" went a lot deeper than Rhodes's.⁹

The reform movement was becoming, by 1895, quite disillusioned with the viability of constitutional reform. As indicated by extracts from *The Star* in the previous chapter, the reformers were coming to realize that their only gains were on paper. They had taken a lot of ground in the realm of shaping public opinion, but the fact remained that there was little if any actual legislation passed in their favour and the Uitlander population was in

theory supportive of reform but complacent when it came to taking action. While progressive Boer politicians were becoming more vocal, Kruger had still been re-elected in 1893. On June 16, 1894, Phillips wrote to Beit in London:

"I must confess that I have watched the recent doings in the Raad with considerable anxiety and you have no doubt followed the proceedings in the newspapers. The open hostility to the Uitlander, the clear want of appreciation as to magnitude of the subjects dealt with, and the apparent disposition to snatch as much as possible for the armed burghers at our expense, is enough to frighten anyone. Kruger's nightmare seems to be that the foreigners (of whom he regards Rhodes as the head) will gradually buy up the whole country and oust the Boer. He is bent, therefore, so far as I can judge, upon introducing repressive legislation. I may here say that, as you of course know, I have no desire for political rights and believe as a whole the community is not ambitious in this respect and only wants, as I do, good honest intelligent government. We have always thought that gradually a better and more enlightened policy would prevail, but I am beginning to doubt this. . . "10

If the reformers were starting to feel a sense of underlying despair in 1894, they did not let it deter them from their adopted course of moderate constitutional reform. Besides, this was the only appropriate type of action to take during the halcyon days of the gold shares boom. The reformers lobbied hard to acquire the 35,483 Uitlander signatures on the petition presented to the Transvaal Legislature in August 1895. This effort was well-received by the progressive party headed by General Joubert and its members delivered stirring speeches in the Raad supporting the Uitlander cause.¹¹

Despite the support of the minority Boer progressive party, the petition was summarily rejected. Uitlander sentiment plunged to despair and then turned to outrage. John Hays Hammond, reformer and Jameson Raid conspirator, described the situation:

"During 1895 general conditions in the Transvaal went from bad to worse. The Boers became ever more arbitrary and overbearing; and their intentions showed up very clearly when they began to construct forts dominating the city of Johannesburg. One deputation after another was sent to Kruger to state our grievances, but without effect. Finally he told one deputation that he would make no promises of any kind, and he brought the interview to a close by saying: 'If you want your grievances redressed, why don't you get guns and fight for what you call your rights?' We took him at his word."¹²

At the same time that appeals for moderate constitutional reform were being met with taunts and dismissals from Kruger, the Drifts were closed, and Boers were building armaments, the market took a dive. Hamilton wrote that by November the situation in Johannesburg digressed as follows:

". . . the cause of the depression was sought in politics, and there seemed a good deal to support this view. The Drifts dispute had lasted for about ten weeks, and men were forced to realise once more that the prosperous South African scene had volcanic possibilities."¹³

J.P. FitzPatrick's assessment of the events in Johannesburg in 1895 echoes Hamilton's. He wrote that while the boom during the first part of the year mitigated political participation, after the Volksraad Session of 1895--wherein the Boers' absolute rejection of reform became obvious--the Uitlanders became more radical. FitzPatrick asserts that the capitalists had stayed clear of the reform movement until 1895, and then became involved because they felt threatened by new Boer legislation and the possibility of worse to come.¹⁴ FitzPatrick described how the men involved crossed the critical line from moderate reform to the use of force. He wrote, "The subject [armed revolt] once mooted was frequently discussed, and once discussed became familiar; and the thing which a few months before had been regarded as out of the bounds of possibility came to be looked upon as a very probable contingency."¹⁵

The Johannesburg reformers knew that if they did choose a military solution, they had to combine forces with Rhodes. They needed his troops, arms, borderland stations in Bechuanaland, and his connections with the British imperial element necessary to guard against German intervention.¹⁶ In spite of the necessity to include Rhodes, the Johannesburgers still entered the alliance "with deep misgivings about his political enthusiasms, his militancy and his chartered company."¹⁷

In retrospect, the plan got up by the Johannesburg plotters sounds ludicrously naive, a schoolboy's adventure.¹⁸ Hamilton was first informed of the plot in June by Jameson

and Phillips. At that time, when the boom was still going strong, he told them that there were no military leaders among Johannesburg's financiers and that Johannesburg, being a commercial town, could not be secretly organized on a military basis.¹⁹ As it turns out, the plot was not a secret and it is quite certain that Kruger himself knew of it and was cagily waiting for the conspirators to make their move first.²⁰ In fact, everyone knew about the impending uprising; women and children were leaving Johannesburg throughout the fall of 1895.²¹ Hamilton, unable to stop the momentum of events, went along with the conspiracy and performed his assigned role in the affair--a central one--with distinction.

Journalists as Partners in the Jameson Raid

The press in both hemispheres were integrally involved in the plot from its inception. Hamilton, as early as November 1895, came to suspect that the London newspapers were involved in the plot and that perhaps they had known about it as long as he had. He felt it was one thing for himself, a Johannesburg newspaperman and reformer, to be involved in the questionable venture and quite another for the London journalists to join in. He did not like it, as indicated by the following passage:

"Jameson paid a flying visit to Johannesburg at the end of November, and I was asked to lunch with him at the house of Colonel Frank Rhodes. There was a fourth man present, Francis Villiers, a well-known English war artist. His presence seemed the more significant as Melton Prior, another war artist, was also in Johannesburg. Possibly both these gentlemen were prompted to visit the Rand by that mysterious instinct which directs the vulture, but an alternative and more probable hypothesis was that the plan was already the subject of gossip in Fleet Street."²²

Hamilton's deduction was close but slightly off; the plan was not Fleet Street gossip, it was actually an editorial agenda. Rhodes's *London Times* comrade, editor Moberly Bell, was obviously laying public opinion groundwork prior to the event as he did his best to whip up enthusiasm in favour of Rhodes and the Uitlander cause. On December 16, 1895 a leading *Times* article read, "The time is past, even in South Africa, when a helot system of

administration, organized for the exclusive advantage of a privileged minority, can long resist the force of enlightened public opinion." ²³

There is evidence that *The Times* was drawn into the affair not by Bell but actually by colonial correspondent Flora Shaw. The groundbreaking woman journalist had visited South Africa in 1892 and met with most of the prominent personalities including Lionel Phillips and Cecil Rhodes. Shaw and Rhodes shared the same imperialist vision and she became quite dedicated to promoting Rhodes's endeavours. Evidently Rhodes's man Rutherford Harris revealed the conspiracy to Shaw in 1895. She, in turn, enlisted the support of Bell and *The Times*. ²⁴

The Fleet Street journalists saw themselves as full-fledged participants and not just observers. Shaw even presumed to telegram advice to Rhodes as in this December 10 missive: "Can you advise when you will commence the plans, we wish to send at earliest opportunity sealed instructions representative *London Times* European capitals; it is most important using their influence in your favour."²⁵ She went on to suggest rescheduling the Raid to take place on Dingaan's Day, a December 16 holiday during which the Boers would be celebrating an 1838 victory over the Zulus.

Naturally, Bell was not shy about offering advice either. He convinced Rhodes to tell his brother Frank, who was in Johannesburg with the reformers, that haste was essential.

The other key player from *The Times* was Captain Francis Younghusband who was sent to South Africa as a special correspondent. After a thorough briefing from Bell, Younghusband set out for Cape Town with a code book for transmitting secret messages. He also carried a letter of instruction from his editor which read, "Contact Rhodes as soon as you reach Cape Town. Find out all about the prospects of floating the new company before you see the Johannesburg directors. I want to impress upon Rhodes that we hope the new company will not commence business on a Saturday because of Sunday papers."²⁶ It was clear to Younghusband that he was to actively manipulate events according to the editorial dictates of the *London Times*.

During his visit to Johannesburg at the end of November, Jameson had persuaded Charles Leonard and the other leaders of the Reform Committee to sign an undated letter inviting him to enter the SAR with his armed force. He explained that he needed the invitation to legitimize his action.

When Leonard told his good friend Hamilton about the letter sometime during the first week of December, Hamilton's first reaction was that handing over such a document to Jameson was madness. He had misgivings about Jameson all along. However, after Leonard explained the rationale, Hamilton came around. He recalled:

"I had my own doubts as to Jameson's amenability, but on the face of it his request seemed reasonable. On one point there is no doubt. Both Leonard and all the other signatories believed that Jameson would not use the letter until he was told to do so. The date of December 29th had been fixed only provisionally, and the initiative was to remain with Johannesburg."²⁷

Also during his November visit, Jameson revealed to the reformers that he would only be able to muster an invading force of 800 to 1,000 men instead of the 1,500 he had originally pledged. On top of this, the armaments gathering was not going according to plan and the reformers had hundreds less rifles than they had counted on. The Johannesburg contingent expressed unwillingness to continue with such a serious venture without adequate arms or troops.²⁸ According to Hamilton:

"By the middle of December even the pretence of secrecy had worn very thin. Men were sending away their womenfolk and children, the movement was publicly denounced in the Stock Exchange, and miners were beginning to leave the mines. . . and the evidences of incredible unreadiness and lack of organization multiplied."²⁹

Hamilton openly expressed his reservations and doubts to his co-conspirators. Evidently, he had George Farrar on the verge of backing out; this prompted FitzPatrick to approach Hamilton and ask him stop voicing his objections and concerns. Hamilton had to agree with FitzPatrick that things had proceeded too far to stop. He promised to keep quiet and stay with FitzPatrick--presumably at his home--for the last few days before the raid.

The editor then offered to help by serving as military secretary to the terribly disorganized Colonel Frank Rhodes. In sorting out the Colonel's lists of volunteers, he found that there were less men on the rolls than the 400 that Rhodes thought he had. Many of the names appeared twice, three times, and even four times on the different lists. Hamilton concluded that the Committee only had 200 armed volunteers but he kept his promise to FitzPatrick and did not make an issue of his findings.³⁰

Planning for the Raid was in its final stages. The military exercise was developed in the board room of Consolidated Gold Fields and the post-coup preparations were made in the editorial office of *The Star*. On December 18 in *The Star* offices, the Reform Committee delegated the job of organizing a post-coup citizen's police force to Andrew Trimble, retired sergeant of the Inniskilly Dragoons.³¹

Then, on December 19, the Reform Committee received information that caused them to refuse to proceed any further. Abe Bailey and A. Woolls-Sampson arrived in Johannesburg that day and presented the Committee with solid evidence that the Jameson/Rhodes contingent intended to raise the Union Jack over the Transvaal after the raid.³² The two men had been in communication with Rhodes and had taken the same ship home from London as Dr. Rutherford Harris, the Secretary of Rhodes's Chartered Company.³³ A telegram dated November 6 had also surfaced in which Rhodes wired to Harris in London that, "As to the English flag they must very much misunderstand me at home. I of course would not risk everything as I am doing except for the British flag."³⁴

Younghusband happened to have arrived in Johannesburg at the moment the reformers discovered this alarming evidence regarding the flag issue. They resolved to go no further until they received a pledge from Rhodes that he would not raise the Union Jack over the Transvaal. Younghusband was their special envoy to Rhodes. He informed Rhodes that the Johannesburgers refused to go through with the plot because of the flag dispute.³⁵ When arrived back in Johannesburg on December 25th, the reformers met with him to hear his report. Younghusband reported to the reformers that Rhodes's position was ambiguous but

Jameson had every intention of raising the Union Jack.³⁶ This was the sticking point that would part the unlikely allies.

George Farrar, for example, said he had, "induced every man who has joined me and who is helping me in this business to go in on the basis that we want a reformed republic. . . This is Boer country; it would be absolutely morally wrong to do anything else and I will not go a yard further in this business unless that basis is absolute."³⁷

This attitude was shared by all members of the Reform Committee. It is important to note that the Committee was a cosmopolitan group--including Afrikaner, Dutch, American, German, Swiss, and Turkish members--and none of these would have supported the SAR becoming a British colony.³⁸ For that matter, even the British members were absolutely opposed to anything but an independent reformed republic. As FitzPatrick explained, the British Committee members felt that, "to proclaim that rule [British] would be to defeat the very objects they honestly had in view, and who would have regarded the change of flag at the last moment as an unprincipled deception of those comrades who had been induced to co-operate for reform and not for annexation."³⁹

So they sent Frederic Hamilton and Charles Leonard to see Cecil Rhodes in Cape Town to secure his promise that Jameson would not cross the border without their signal and that the Union Jack would not be raised.⁴⁰

Rhodes told them he would immediately wire Jameson to hold his position at Bechuanaland and that the flag issue was to be decided by the Reformers and nobody else.⁴¹ Hamilton wired FitzPatrick in Johannesburg: "We have received satisfactory assurances from Rhodes, but a misunderstanding exists elsewhere. In our opinion continue preparations, but carefully and without any sort of hurry, as entirely fresh departure will be necessary. In view of changed conditions Jameson has been advised accordingly."⁴²

Hamilton and Leonard were reassured only to learn subsequently that Jameson invaded the Transvaal.⁴³ Hamilton wanted to set out for Johannesburg right away but Rhodes convinced him to stay, arguing that, ". . . we have twenty-four hours start of public opinion, and must write every leading article that appears in Cape Town this afternoon and tomorrow morning."⁴⁴ As Hamilton was a Director of the Cape Town *Argus*, he easily set that paper's editorial. Below is a description of how he handled the *Cape Times*:

"The *Cape Times*, the most influential morning paper in South Africa, was edited by Edmund Garrett, easily the leading and ablest journalist in the country. He was the last man who would allow me or anyone else to write his articles on matters of primary South African importance, but we were close friends and an hour's conversation was not without its effect."⁴⁵

Garrett himself gave a pretty detailed account of the events of December 30th and the few days after it. He had sent his assistant editor, E.J. Edwards, to Johannesburg but on Monday had still not received any intelligence from him as to Jameson's move. Garrett knew something was happening. But as the wires were blocked and he could not get any accurate information, not even from Hamilton and Leonard with whom he had met that day and collaborated with on an article designed to gain Afrikaner sympathy for the Uitlanders. Only later did Garrett learn of Jameson having crossed the border and this came from Imperial Secretary Graham Bower. Around 4:00 a.m. on Tuesday, Hamilton went back to Garrett's office and according to Garrett,

". . . reveals much that he had kept back so far; and goes quite hysterical when I say that Rhodes and Government [British] must and will repudiate blunder, and tell him my news from High Commissioner [Bower]. He talks like Rand rebel anti-British and says if Imperial Government don't back Jameson now he and the rest will turn Dutch. I argue with him, then sent for short-hand man and dictate very slowly in his presence the part of the leader expressing impossibility of backing Jameson."⁴⁶

Hamilton also met with John Stuart, editor of Randlord J.B. Robinson's paper, the *South African Telegraph*. This newspaper was widely acknowledged as Robinson's personal tool for attacking and discrediting Rhodes. The very nature of the *Telegraph* made getting

Stuart into line a tricky proposition. Hamilton said that while he could not divulge to Stuart the facts about Jameson's move he handled him in the following manner:

" . . . I left no doubt in his mind that an armed clash between Boers and British was certain. I concluded solemnly: 'Blood will flow in Johannesburg, and every man will have to ask himself whether he is for Britain or for Boer. You, my dear Stewart [sic], like everyone else, will have to answer that question. What is your answer?' 'By God!' was the reply, 'I am British, and what's more I'm Scotch!' I then proceeded to inspire the morrow's leading article, but before I was half way through, Stewart's Scotch caution asserted itself. 'But if I say that,' he observed, 'I shall get the sack, and I can't afford it.' 'My dear Stewart,' I replied, 'I know J.B. [Robinson] better than you do. It is true that he hates Rhodes, but he is fundamentally a devout worshipper at the shrine of the jumping cat, and there are big forces behind this movement. If it comes off, Robinson will be the first man to take the credit, and perhaps to compliment you on your prescience; but anyhow, tell me how much he is paying you.' Stewart told me. 'Well,' I said, 'if the worst comes to the worst, I promise you as a Director of the Argus Company at least an equally good job,' and I then proceeded with my inspiratory sermon without further interruption."⁴⁷

So, Hamilton employed all the means at his disposal--hysterics, persuasion, and bribery--to line up the Cape Town editorials. He, however, felt that it was an empty effort as, "From the moment Jameson crossed the border, men fell automatically into two camps, and leading articles in the Cape Town newspapers were forgotten as soon as they were read."⁴⁸ As for Stuart, he did lose his position on the *Telegraph* and Hamilton set him up with a job on the Argus Rhodesian newspaper, *The Chronicle*.

Hamilton had done all he could do in Cape Town. What is more, he learned enough to recount to his fellow reformers the exact nature of Chamberlain's involvement and Rhodes's reactions to the crisis. He returned to Johannesburg on January 1st, 1896. Significantly, Charles Leonard did not return with Hamilton; he boarded a ship in Cape Town and escaped to England.⁴⁹ Of the journalist reformer and the reform leader, there was no doubt left as to which had the greater loyalty toward the Uitlanders and their cause.

While the commandos were out on the veld capturing the would-be raiders, Johannesburg was pitched into turmoil. For a brief moment, the reformers thought that they could turn the disruption to their advantage.

The Reform Committee had taken control of the city. In Hamilton's absence, R.J. Pakeman was acting as editor of *The Star*. He had been forgiven for "The Dying Duke" affair.⁵⁰ On December 30th, he published the following editorial which, in its tone, was pure Pakeman:

"The delirium and irresolution of siege-madness are past; the rally from all sides under the banner of the manifesto has begun. . . 'Obey the law', is the stern stereotyped formula from which he [Kruger] declines to budge. We are to abandon everything and put our trust in his autocratic clemency; to receive with implicit faith anew the promises which have been so abundantly falsified in the past. It cannot and shall not be done. We have gone too far to recede. If we cannot persuade, we must coerce; or else lie down for ever [sic] in the blasting shadow of ignominy."⁵¹

The Star reflected the prevalent belief that Jameson's triumphal march into the city was a foregone conclusion. Eyewitness C.M. Rodney tells us that:

"Men and women could speak of nothing else but Jameson. Hundreds went along the roads to meet him. Others stopped at the windows to cheer him as he passed through the streets. Nothing was thought of, nothing was spoken of but Jameson. The people were in a frenzy of delight; anticipation of his arrival drove them nearly mad. He was the Hero of the hour."⁵²

But Frederic Hamilton knew that Jameson would not be marching through the streets of Johannesburg like a conquering Caesar. Hamilton later recounted how during his journey back to the Transvaal, rumours of Jameson's imminent surrender at Doornkop were buzzing at every station stop. Afrikaners were pouring back into the SAR and armies of Boer commandos were everywhere.⁵³

It appears that *The Star* also quickly began to see the situation for what it truly was; the bravado evidenced in the December 30th editorial diatribe was barely a 24 hour condition. The same rumours that were circulated up and down the rail lines were even more prevalent in Johannesburg.

On the night of Tuesday, December 31--the night before Hamilton left Cape Town--Thomas Sheffield was in a near panic to destroy evidence of his newspaper's complicity in the plot. That evening, he burst into *The Star's* composing room and grabbed the type forme containing the Reform Committee's "Proclamation To the Men of Johannesburg" which had been intended for distribution once Jameson rode into the city. Sheffield ran out to the yard with the incriminating forme and dropped it down the well. It is a good job he did, for 13 days later, Kruger's zarps made a thorough search of the premises.⁵⁴

The Star and the Committee soon adopted a very conciliatory tone at the same time. The Reform Committee, as if to officially distance itself from Jameson's imprudent act, published the following notice in *The Star* on Tuesday, December 31:

"Notice is hereby given that this committee adhere to the National Union Manifesto, and reiterates its desire to maintain the independence of the Republic. The fact that rumors are in course of circulation to the effect that a force [Jameson's] has crossed the Bechuanaland border renders it necessary to take active steps for the defence of Johannesburg and the preservation of order. The committee earnestly desires that the inhabitants should refrain from taking any action which can be considered as an overt act of hostility against the Government."⁵⁵

In the following days, as the Reform Committee sought to contain potential disruptions and entered negotiations with Kruger,⁵⁶ the Republic police were rounding up the conspirators. The list of detainees included just about every notable person in Johannesburg and Hamilton was glaringly passed over. *The Times* correspondent likewise was not arrested. "That Younghusband's considerable part in the affair escaped all notice is one of the many remarkable facts in the Raid story."⁵⁷

Miffed at being treated like a nonentity, Hamilton sent several messages to the police, informing them that he was in *The Star* offices and could be arrested there. Still, nobody showed up to detain him. Finally, Hamilton sent a note to Lt. Pieterse saying that someone had better come quickly and arrest him before it was too late. Pieterse replied by telling him that if he really wanted to be arrested, he could hurry and catch the train taking the conspirators to Pretoria prison. Hamilton dashed out, caught a cab to the station, and jumped on the train as it was pulling out.⁵⁸

In his own account of his arrest, Hamilton does not mention the sequence of events outlined above. He--in an uncharacteristically brief summary--states that during his absence in Cape Town his name had been among those issued to the government as members of the Reform Committee. "In the circumstances," he writes in regard to being identified as a Committee member, "I had no choice than to accept the honour."⁵⁹

Bitter Failure Parts Reformers From Their Allies

The events surrounding the exposure of the conspiracy were to create severe ill-feelings between the Johannesburg reformers and their erstwhile allies--the British Colonial Office and Cecil Rhodes. After Rhodes's crony Jameson botched the enterprise, the British government--and specifically Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain and High Commissioner Sir Hercules Robinson--double-crossed the Johannesburg Reform Committee. Robinson and Chamberlain deliberately led the Uitlanders to believe that if they did not surrender their temporary control of Johannesburg, Jameson and his men would likely be executed. They were misled into thinking that their next move would either sacrifice or save the lives of the men who had volunteered to help them. It was a lie.⁶⁰

J.P. FitzPatrick would write to his wife from prison on January 14, 1896:

"Those who backed us up most heartily in our struggle for reform were only using our wrongs as an excuse to further their ends. I can see it all clearly now. Chamberlain, Rhodes, Jameson, the *London Times*, Garrett of the *Cape Times*, all playing the Imperial game and trying to collar the Transvaal as a British possession."⁶¹

After the Raid, the only Reform Committee ally who still held their trust was *The Johannesburg Star*. Significantly enough, the other major South African newspaper the *Cape Times* headed by Edmund Garrett, was the only political entity which would redeem itself in the eyes of the reformers.

By the 26th of January, all the prisoners--except Lionel Phillips, George Farrar, Frank Rhodes, J.P. FitzPatrick, and John Hays Hammond--were released on bail. A few days before these men faced trial on April 27th (they were released following an appeal on May 30)

Garrett came to interview them. FitzPatrick describes the impression Garrett made on the incarcerated reformers:

"I had never met and did not know Edmund Garrett. But that day there began an intimate collaboration and warm personal friendship between us which only ended at his death. . . Garrett was intent only on getting at the truth. . . His was the first impartial testimony from a competent judge that some day the world's verdict on the Reformers would be changed, and that even the Raid might be thought worthy of examination in a wider field and from a more commanding viewpoint."⁶²

The failure of the Raid, and the international scandal its exposure caused, left the Kruger regime almost invulnerable. Rhodes was forced to retire from his prime ministership and developed an aversion for meddling in Rand affairs. Chamberlain was also compromised by the embarrassment. "It was Chamberlain's tragedy that the Jameson Raid and the economic revolution seemed to have deprived the empire of all south African allies except the Rhodesian and Uitlander interests," write Robinson and Gallagher, "Henceforward Chamberlain was tied to them. He had to follow and support them, however much he disliked and distrusted them."⁶³ As we have seen, the feeling was mutual.

A new reform association formed after the Jameson Raid, the South African League, like the National Union before it was dominated by professional men. Its president W. Wybergh and its secretary T.R. Dodd were both engineers. "The working men gave it considerable support," observes A.A. Mawby, "but the participation of mining leaders and commercial men was negligible."⁶⁴ Jameson's misadventure, and the Colonial Office's mishandling of its aftermath, had alienated the proletarian and professional classes at the same time as it had depoliticized the mining leaders.

As far as the Randlords were concerned, the plot had been a unseemly debacle with which to be associated and, beyond that, it had damaged the mining houses financially. The already weak gold share market was depressed even more in early 1896 precisely because of the adverse publicity occasioned by the Raid. R.V. Kubicek describes the post-1895

magnate stance as being one of restraint. He says, "When the conspiracy mounted by Rhodes failed, it not only occasioned his downfall but chastened his co-conspirators. They, and other magnates would complain about but nonetheless accept the dynamite monopoly of Kruger's government." ⁶⁵

Florence Phillips says that while the imprisoned reformers awaited sentencing throughout the spring of 1896, "All business was stopped at Johannesburg owing to so many important business men being imprisoned; trade was at a complete standstill, and the tension every day became more dangerous, while in the Cape Colony and the whole of South Africa every one was awaiting the development of events with bated breath."⁶⁶ This statement goes a long way toward explaining why the commercial men fell away from reformism in 1896.

Before 1899, the prime directive of the mining houses was to avoid a commitment to either the British or the Kruger government. This ensured their autonomy as well as freedom to maneuver. They reacted situationally in their dealings with the Republic; at times cooperating and at time criticizing.⁶⁷ They would not compromise this freedom by acting as open advocates for Uitlander reform.

This did not go unnoticed by the reform movement. The rift between reformism and capital is glaringly obvious in an article in *The Star* entitled "Rose-Coloured Glasses":

"Several speakers at the meeting of Consolidated Goldfields of South Africa [Rhodes's company] expatiated at some length on the 'brightening prospects' of the Transvaal situation. We sincerely wish we could go with them the length they found no difficulty in proceeding, but from a careful study of the position on the spot (as contrasted with their views formed in London) we cannot follow them throughout. So far as Lord HARRIS and Messrs. DAVIES and RUDD are concerned, as speakers at the Goldfields meeting they were obviously speaking 'to the gallery,' with its front rows filled by actual shareholders in the Company and the back ones by the general investing public. Furthermore, not one of this triumvirate have had an opportunity to accurately gauge the general feeling of dubiety which prevails here respecting the prospects of the future. . . . As regards the 'brightening prospects' here, about which he [Rudd] and his co-Directors had so much to say, it is important to observe the grounds upon which they base their roseate views. They, of course, largely indulge in unsubstantial and unsubstantiated rhapsodies about the loving-kindness displayed by the Transvaal Government towards the Rand industry. When, however they descend from the heights of ranting rhetoric to the plains of ordinary facts the entrancing panorama they pointed out from the clouds sinks far below the horizon of actual vision." ⁶⁸

The brief alliance between the Colonial Office, South African capital, and Johannesburg reformers was over. After the raid, the Transvaal Uitlanders trusted only the allies who had proven their loyalty in the course of the affair. Hamilton and Garrett had earned the respect of Johannesburg.

The editors that followed Hamilton after his departure for England in 1896 were weak. However, the newspaper that Frederic Hamilton and Francis Dormer had built was too strong a media institution to completely lose its stature in the community. There were some great moments of editorial vitality in the following years, but *The Star* would cease to be a newspaper animated by the personality of its editor. The strength of the newspaper itself, and not so much the strength of the individual editors who ran it, would determine the central role that *The Star* would continue to play in Uitlander reform politics.

Footnotes to Chapter 7

1. Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 418.
Furthermore, with the 1894 expiration of the Sivewright Agreement, Kruger regained control of the Cape line's Transvaal section thereby reducing the Cape's share of Rand rail traffic from 80% to 30%.
2. Hamilton, "Narrative of Events, 291.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 423-424.
6. Kubicek, *Economic Imperialism*, 72.
7. Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 423-424.
8. Ibid., 427.
9. Chilvers, *Out of the Crucible*, 88.
According to Chilvers, the idea for the coup originated among the Johannesburg reformers and they enlisted Rhodes's support appealing to the concern he was starting to feel regarding his ability to contain the SAR. Chilvers describes Rhodes as acting more like a wavering conscript than a steely instigator throughout the affair.
10. Jeeves and Fraser, *All That Glittered*, 78.
11. Hammond, *The Truth About the Jameson Raid*, 16-17.
12. Ibid., 24-25.
13. Hamilton, "Narrative of Events," 292.
14. FitzPatrick, *The Transvaal From Within*, 119.
15. Ibid.
16. Hammond, *The Truth About the Jameson Raid*, 2.
Rhodes's involvement was very much lobbied for by his man Hammond, a manager at Goldfields. It should be noted that while Hammond was to a great degree controlled by Rhodes, Hammond himself influenced Rhodes and he was the acknowledged leader of the 500 man American contingent. His role as leader of the Americans bound him solidly to the goal of establishing a reformed republic and not a British colony.
17. Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 423.
18. Hammond, *The Truth About the Jameson Raid*, 26.
"Our general scheme was to get some thousands of guns into Johannesburg, and then on some dark night, to take Pretoria, the Boer Capital and thirty-five miles north of Johannesburg, seize the arsenal, carry Kruger off with us, and to negotiate at leisure for the redress of our grievances and for those constitutional changes which would make the Transvaal a Republic based upon a reasonable franchise law applicable to all its white inhabitants."

19. Hamilton, "Narrative of Events," 290.
20. Ibid., 292.
21. Rosenthal, *Today's News Today*, 87.
22. Hamilton, "Narrative of Events," 293.
23. Elizabeth Longford, *Jameson's Raid: The Prelude to the Boer War* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982), 28.
24. Gerald Shaw, editor, *The Garrett Papers* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1984), 61.
25. Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, 175.
26. Crisp, *The Outlanders*, 212.
27. Hamilton, "Narrative of Events," 294.
28. FitzPatrick, *The Transvaal From Within*, 126.
29. Hamilton, "Narrative of Events," 294.
30. Ibid., 294-295.
31. Crisp, *The Outlanders*, 222.
32. FitzPatrick, *The Transvaal From Within*, 127.
33. Hamilton, "Narrative of Events," 296.
34. Ibid., 296-297.
35. Longford, *Jameson's Raid*, 186.
36. Hamilton, "Narrative of Events," 296.
37. Longford, *Jameson's Raid*, 186-187.
38. Hamilton, "Narrative of Events," 295.
39. FitzPatrick, *The Transvaal From Within*, 127.
40. Hamilton, "Narrative of Events," 297.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid., 298.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid., 300.
45. Ibid.
46. Shaw, *Garrett Papers*, 46.

47. Hamilton, "Narrative of Events," 300-301.
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49. Shaw, *Garrett Papers*, 60.
50. Rosenthal, *Today's News Today*, 89.
51. *The Johannesburg Star*, December 30, 1895.
52. C.M. Rodney, *Jameson's Ride to Johannesburg, An Incident During the Scare* (Pretoria: The State Library, Die Staatsbiblioteek, 1970, reprint 54), 23.
53. Hamilton, "Narrative of Events," 301.
54. Rosenthal, *Today's News Today*, 90.
55. *The Johannesburg Star*, December 31, 1895.
56. Thompspon and Wilson, *Oxford History of South Africa*, 317.
57. Longford, *Jameson's Raid*, 185.
58. Crisp, *The Outlanders*, 293.
59. Hamilton, "Narrative of Events," 301.
60. Hammond, *The Truth About the Jameson Raid*, 36-38.
61. A.H. Duminy and W.R. Guest, *FitzPatrick, South African Politician, Selected Papers 1888-1906* (Johannesburg: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1976), 38.
62. FitzPatrick, *South African Memories*, 160-162.
63. Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 443.
64. Mawby, *The Political Behaviour*, 21.
65. Kubicek, *Economic Imperialism*, 199.
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67. Jeeves, "The Rand Capitalists," 72.
68. *The Johannesburg Star*, November 13, 1896.

The Star is Cast Adrift

Dormer's Brief Bid at a Comeback

Francis Dormer had left South Africa in November of 1894 and officially tendered his resignation in February of 1895 from London. He left because he could see that events were leading up to a terrible crisis; the crisis which would be the Jameson Raid.

Unlike Frederic Hamilton, Dormer was not a joiner. He did not participate as an active member in the National Union. The political platform he followed was the one dictated to him by his own heart. By late 1894, he saw that the political climate in Johannesburg was not conducive to the opinion of the individual. Johannesburg was at that time dominated by the force of the group and the momentum of ridiculous commitments pledged to overblown ideals.

Frederic Hamilton thought that he could, by being involved in the conspiracy, help to guide it, perhaps to contribute his rational judgement to the decisions being made. He was soon lost this unrealistic expectation. As evidenced in the last chapter, Hamilton realized that he had no control over the wrong turns being made before the Raid even took place. Dormer never suffered from the same illusion as Hamilton. He saw the direction things were heading and knew that one man could not alter the course. Indeed, he knew that the climate was not conducive to reason and so he did the only prudent thing, he left. More importantly, he left with the intention of coming back.

Francis Dormer had always been a great proponent of the reformed republic ideal. He absolutely rejected the notion of the Transvaal coming under British Imperial or Cape domination.

As his years of tempered protest indicate, he was not a Krugerite but still held an unshakable conviction that Boer and Uitlander progressive elements within the SAR would

eventually reform the country internally and without outside intervention. In fact, he was sure that should outside intervention occur, it would only serve to galvanize the wide range of Boer sentiment into one anti-Uitlander movement. This was, of course, precisely the effect of the Jameson Raid.

In the Cape, the Raid smashed the alliance between Cecil Rhodes and Jan Hofmeyr of the Afrikaner Bond. In the Transvaal, Kruger's warnings about the Uitlanders' real intentions--to take the Republic away from the Boers--were vindicated and the progressive party there lost much of their sympathy for the reformers.

On the eve of the Raid, in December of 1895, Dormer explained his political position. He wrote:

"I am no friend or upholder of the Transvaal Government. On the contrary, I have waged almost incessant war upon it by voice and pen for seven weary years. I believe it to be one of the very worst Governments, calling itself civilized, republican, and Christian, now existing upon earth--so bad indeed that it must come down ere long through the weight of its iniquities. There is but one circumstance that can possibly prevent its fall, and that circumstance is interference from the Cape, or deliberate avowal by the Imperial Government of what we have now represented as its cherished aims. There are Boers and Boers, and it must not for a moment be supposed that this government of the rude oligarches who are grouped around President Kruger at Pretoria commands the undivided support and approval of the burghers on their farms. . . . At the present moment the Administration is undoubtedly representative of nothing more than a minority of a minority, and the day cannot be long distant when Boer opinion of the better sort will be able to assert itself in the form of legislative amelioration and administrative change. All those who believe with me that this happy issue out of all the Uitlander's afflictions is near at hand must view with unfeigned alarm and regret every suggestion, however veiled, that a policy of interference, whether direct or through the instrumentality of the Cape or any other agency, should be adopted and avowed by Her Majesty's Government."¹

If there is a note of urgency in Dormer's passage quoted above, it is because he knew of and was deeply disturbed by the plot to overtake the republic by force. He knew when he resigned in early 1895; Alfred Beit and Cecil Rhodes told him about the scheme in London. Furthermore, they told him that they were counting on him to lend his editorial/political support to the plot. Dormer promptly cabled his resignation to Johannesburg and Hamilton moved from the position of sub-editor to editor of *The Star*.²

Dormer had more prescience than all the rest of Johannesburg put together. He would have nothing to do with the scheme from the start. He was disappointed to the point of bitterness with his reformist compatriots for not recognizing, as he had, that Rhodes's true aspiration was to raise the British flag over the Transvaal.

Dormer's insight into the nature of the Rhodes/Imperial involvement was not, however, a product of clairvoyance on his part. Rhodes came right out and stated his intentions in a bristling conversation--actually, more a confrontation--which took place in Cape Town in July of 1895. Perhaps Dormer had related the substance of this encounter to Hamilton and that could partly account for the latter's mounting negative scrutiny of the scheme, although Hamilton fails to credit Dormer with any such counsel in his account of the affair.

Dormer had already resigned when the Cape Town meeting took place and Rhodes quickly maneuvered the discourse into a bid at getting Dormer back into *The Star's* editorial office. Dormer replied by telling Rhodes that ". . . I am all for tackling Mr. Kruger; but I am not for tackling the Transvaal. . .there is a strong Progressive party in the Raad, and if we go the right way about the business, some man of liberal tendencies will become President at the next election. Then we shall get all that is necessary in the way of reforms." Dormer wrote that Rhodes then countered with the following:

"But I don't want your reforms, or rather your reformed Republic,' was his quick response. 'The ideal system is that of a British colony. Our people are already in the majority, and what is good enough for us is good enough for them.'

'Yes I dare say they would be happier as a colony than they are as a republic; but they think otherwise . I don't think they are to be persuaded, and they are certainly not to be forced.'

'But you surely don't mean that things should be allowed to go on for ever as they have been going on of late?'

'I perceive nothing intolerable in the situation. Things are not as we should like them to be; but that is the fault of the Imperial Government for making such idiotic conventions [London Convention of 1881]. As for this National Union movement, I would never have anything to do with it. None of its members have any honest desire to cease to be British subjects, therefore they cannot have an honest desire to be Transvaal burghers, and they cannot possibly be both.' . .

And so, Dormer withdrew to London in disgust. In the spring of 1896 he also resigned from his station as one of *The Star's* directors.⁴

Frederic Hamilton, having chosen to ride out the Jameson affair to its conclusion, did not outlast Dormer as *The Star's* editor for long. Arrested as a member of the Reform Committee, he was obliged to pay a £2000 fine in return for his freedom and returned to England in 1896. There he edited the *African Review* until 1899.⁵

What had become a revolving door into *The Star's* editorial office next ushered in R.J. Pakeman. Actually, Pakeman was already assistant editor under Hamilton and had been acting editor while Hamilton was entangled in the raid conspiracy. Like his predecessors, Pakeman had a long history of political journalism in the Transvaal, but unlike those who came before him, Pakeman displayed a marked lack of tact or even what could be described as a sense of self-preservation.

His vituperative editorials are remarkable when put in the context of the post-raid embargo on Uitlander political agitation. That such an unlikely, unsuitable candidate should have been chosen to edit *The Star* at such a sensitive juncture can perhaps be explained by two exigencies: a great void in editorial acumen was left with the departure of Dormer and Hamilton; and, Pakeman was an old friend of J.P. FitzPatrick having been his editor during FitzPatrick's career as a political reporter on the *Barberton Herald* in the late 1880's.⁶

Dormer had his own explanation for the Pakeman appointment. He believed that Rhodes had deliberately installed Pakeman as editor to act as his mouthpiece after Dormer himself refused the part:

"Suffice it to say that his [Rhodes's] later determination was to pursue the aims he had previously entertained, but to confine himself to what were euphemistically termed 'constitutional means.' His conception of those means was not long in becoming apparent. Instead of endeavouring to get back to the status quo ante, which was in the circumstances the only prudent and honourable course to pursue, the newspapers which took their cue from Groote Schuur [Rhodes's estate] commenced a furious and seditious agitation the moment the Raiders and Reformers were out of Mr. Kruger's hands."⁷

Adopting an abrasive press campaign had become especially perilous in 1897 as the Kruger government had passed its Press Law of 1896, an instrument to be used against

sedition journalism. This law had already been successfully wielded against another Johannesburg Uitlander journal.

Suppression of *The Critic*, edited by H. Hess, could have been received as welcome news by everyone in Johannesburg, though, as Florence Phillips commented that the weekly journal's, "criticisms on men in general were often more scurrilous than true, and among others who were the constant target for their envenomed shafts were the partners in Messrs. H. Eckstein & Co. Being capitalists, they could do nothing right. *The Critic* was also a violent opponent of the Government." ⁸

FitzPatrick informed Phillips (then in London) in a letter dated December 28, 1896 that, ". . . *The Critic* has been suppressed on the grounds--most clearly stated in the President's order--that its publication is dangerous to the welfare of the state."⁹ Just two months later FitzPatrick wrote to Phillips:

" . . . There are curious reports and indications of something impending about the *Star*. They have been going about for some time and today, in the Krugersdorp Dutch paper, there is a very significant little three-line leader: 'In the opinion of the Burghers the time has arrived when something should be done to control *The Star*.' It is useless speculating. It seems impossible that they should suppress the *Star* or expel Pakeman, but that is exactly what we all said about the *Critic*. . ." ¹⁰

Evidently Pakeman himself felt his position was secure as he continued to blithely publish unrestrained criticism of the Kruger regime. For example:

"After all the fulsome flattery about Mr. Kruger's statesmanship, splendid patriotism, and deep-seated desire to benefit the mining industry, the attitude he invariably adopts when this Dynamite Concession--one of the very worst grievances under which the industry suffers--affords anything but corroborative evidence that he is in possession of all those virtues." ¹¹

Pakeman even managed to get a set of nasty jibes in at the Raad in the same issue in another article under the heading "Simply a Disgrace." Here he wrote:

"The State Attorney on Wednesday enunciated and defended the doctrine that the power of the Raad exists to do unquestioned any conceivable act which it may see fit to do, even up to the confiscation of private property without compensation or justification. . . Passion, ignorance, and prejudice have been consistently displayed by the Raad for years; and if those qualities do not constantly threaten to have issue to unreasonable acts, all human experience is set at naught. . ." ¹²

Dormer followed events surrounding his favourite newspaper project, *The Star*, with increasing alarm. He recounted that:

"Circumstances that came to my knowledge when in Cape Town convinced me that the *Star* was going altogether too far, much further than any Government with an atom of self-respect could be expected to tolerate, and I accordingly arranged a meeting with Mr. Rhodes at De Aar for the purpose of acquainting him with my opinion that the paper was doing incalculable harm to every cause which it was supposed to advocate, and that its editor [Pakeman] was only going to such outrageous lengths because he believed that violent incitements would be agreeable to him [Rhodes]; that he, at any rate, had only to say the word and the rancour of its language would be considerably abated, while if it were not abated I had good reason for believing that the paper would be suppressed and a valuable property destroyed. 'That,' was the prompt rejoinder, 'is exactly what I want: it will only be another nail in their coffin.' It was useless, of course, to ask a man to prevent what he deliberately approved of, so I went my way, a sadder and wiser man. The truth was self-evident of what had been for some time suspected."¹³

The Star's impending suppression crisis was actually a great boon for Dormer. It provided him with a fortuitous entree back into his cherished position as *The Star's* editor. According to Dormer:

"The local [Johannesburg] capitalists who were interested in the paper knew too well how much could be said on the side of the Government. In the difficulty into which they had been brought, very much against their will, they appealed to me for such assistance as I might be able to render, . . . I stipulated that the whole conduct of the difficulty with the Government should be left in my hands, and further required to know, before assuming the temporary direction of the paper, what objects they desired me to aim at, what course they expected me to pursue. The head of the principal firm declared that no objects that could possibly be promoted would please him better than that of bringing all sections of the community together [Boer and Uitlander]. . . and securing a better understanding with the Government. The other said that he wanted nothing but peace and quietness and such reforms as would enable him to work with a profit his 8 dwt. mines. These were such reasonable and proper heads of policy for a Johannesburg newspaper that I had no hesitation in adopting them as my own. . ."¹⁴

Dormer does not indicate where or with whom this conversation took place but it is reasonable to assume that it was in London with Alfred Beit and Lionel Phillips of the Corner House. This was the "principal firm" and after the raid, Phillips returned to England essentially leaving the Johannesburg operation in the hands of FitzPatrick who was not made a partner until 1898. There were not two heads of the firm in Johannesburg at the time of this

conversation, while there were in London. Beyond that, the tone and political inclinations of the two men referred to matches Beit and Phillips.

According to Robert Crisp, Dormer arrived in Johannesburg in the beginning of March, before *The Star* was officially suppressed. Pakeman was still editor and, interestingly enough, Dormer's presence did not appear to act as a curbing influence on the paper's vitriolic editorials.

The current news docket was filled with the negotiations then being held in Bloemfontein between Kruger and President Steyn of the Orange Free State to forge a mutual defense treaty between the two republics. The Uitlanders not only regarded this as a breach of the London Convention but also as another military threat added to the already ominous evidence of the SAR stockpiling armaments and constructing forts. Pakeman unleashed damning salvos at Kruger:

"If anything further were required (which is not the case) to demonstrate the amazing incongruity represented by the prominent position held by Mr. Kruger in the present day affairs of this continent, it is to be found in the harangues, or sermons, which he reeled off at Bloemfontein yesterday. . . It would be doing his Honour the rankest injustice to pretend to discover, in his Bloemfontein mouthings, the slightest scintilla of that high statesmanship with which some people are fond of crediting him. The more intelligent section of South Africans are heartily sick of the monotony of his pious patter. In the true spirit of the cast-iron autocrat, President Kruger seeks unconsciously to unite in himself as head of the State the triune office of prophet, priest, and king."¹⁵

This sort of excited mud-slinging was pretty standard fare for the editorial columns of colonial newspapers throughout the empire. However, that this diatribe found its way to print during the post-raid political embargo, in the wake of *The Critic's* suppression, and amid rumours of *The Star's* upcoming suppression is hard to explain. That this was published in the presence of Dormer, whose expressed directive was to calm the situation, is even stranger.

Robert Crisp places Dormer in Johannesburg during the publication of this editorial and goes even further by introducing a curious wrinkle. He insists that Dormer himself dictated the article practically verbatim to Pakeman and ordered him to print it while swilling champagne at the bar of the Rand Club.¹⁶ While Crisp's habit of neglecting footnotes

makes his version difficult, or even impossible, to verify, his narrative does merit some consideration.

Dormer's book does not give an exact date for his arrival in Johannesburg but an extremely lengthy editorial in *The Star* on March 20 bears his name. The Fitzpatrick letters quoted above indicate the directors were concerned about suppression in the beginning of February. That they would have contacted Dormer by the end of that month is very likely. Further, once contacted, there is little doubt that Dormer would be back on the Rand as quickly as possible. It is very likely that he was in Johannesburg by March 10.

Proving that Dormer would goad Pakeman on to such heights of seditious prose is in itself complex. Dormer seems to have been by nature too deliberate, and this opportunity was too important to him, to have been swayed by the champagne Crisp says he was gulping. The only possible motive Dormer would have had would have been to propel *The Star* editorials past the point of tolerable contentiousness, thereby causing the paper's suppression and Pakeman's dismissal, thus clearing the way for his control of *The Star*. This sort of manipulation would have to be considered ungentlemanly and unseemly in anyone's estimation and to be sure, Dormer makes no mention of any such episode having occurred.

At any rate, the result was only a matter of course: *The Star* announced it was to be suppressed on March 24th. That morning Lieutenant van Damm walked into *The Star* office with a warrant serving R.J. Pakeman and Thomas Sheffield which ordered that *The Star* was to cease circulation for three months. It is likely that the Argus Directors were informed of every detail of this move right down to the date it was to take place; the Board was in session when van Damm served the warrant.¹⁷

Dormer did not miss a beat and published a new paper the very next day under the name *The Comet* and under his own editorship. The first issue includes a reprint of the official government suppression order directed toward *The Star* and a rather gratuitous acknowledgement of the sacked editor:

". . . the directors of the Argus Company are not so unappreciative of good and faithful service that they could allow this opportunity to pass without public recognition of the splendid work performed on their behalf by the distinguished journalist who, for the time being

finds his occupation gone. It is no reproach to Mr. Pakeman that *The Star* has been suppressed and, as a mark of their continued confidence, we are glad to be able to announce that the Directors of the Company have invited that gentleman to take charge of the *Cape Argus* during the absence on leave of Mr. Edmund Powell, . . ." ¹⁸

The bulk of Dormer's introductory editorial is pretty much equally divided between expansive literary flourishes drawing metaphors between his newspaper and astral bodies and sarcasm on freedom of the press under Kruger's regime. Dormer was clearly giddy with excitement at having regained the helm of his newspaper. Circulation rates for *The Comet* were even higher than *The Star's*.

There must have also been some inside humour at work regarding the placement of Pakeman as temporary editor of *The Cape Argus* in Powell's absence. Powell was known for his conservatism. In fact, the junior members of his staff nicknamed him "Carpet Slippers" because he was so careful to avoid offending any individual or group in his newspaper.¹⁹ Pakeman's tenure on *The Cape Argus* must have made for quite a fresh departure as far as that staff was concerned.

Dormer and Thomas Sheffield then went on to win a lawsuit against Kruger's government for wrongful suppression of *The Star*. In mid-April Judge Ameshoff concluded, "the President [Kruger] is only empowered to suppress matter already printed and published, and that the Article [the Press Law; No. 26, Section 5] gives no power to prevent matter being printed in the future."²⁰ The Argus Company was awarded the court costs and *The Star* was reinstated. Francis Dormer's leading article in the first newspaper to reappear under *The Star* masthead on the afternoon of April 14th was entitled "*Star versus State*." Following is an extract:

"Mr. Kruger and his rash advisers must surely begin to reflect. They not only pass bad laws but they cannot even administer them in accordance with their own presumed intention at the time of their enactment. . .

We, at any rate, do not propose to ignore the rights, the interests, and the opinions of those whom Mr. Kruger represents, and we conclude by a sincere assurance that in his task of upholding the proper independence of the State, the President will never find a more ardent ally than *The Star*, nor in his misguided and unjustifiable assaults upon the rights, the liberties and the interests of this long-suffering and industrious community, a more determined foe."²¹

Dormer should have savoured his victory; his return as editor of *The Star* was not destined to last long. He soon tried to shore up his win by buying out the Argus shares in Rhodes's possession. His aim was to ensure that the latter would "be wholly eliminated from the control of the newspaper organisation of which the *Star* formed a part."²² Dormer cabled Rhodes in London, with a purchase offer for his Argus shares at market price. He was summarily turned down. In addition, Dormer perceived that, "The ardour of the local representatives of the principal firms for a rapprochement with the Government sensible cooled down in proportion as that better understanding loomed in sight."²³

He attributes the improved political atmosphere to his having assumed control of *The Star*. In all fairness, the removal of Pakeman probably did go a long way toward easing tension. However, a larger factor in the development of a more conciliatory milieu would have been the government's sponsorship of the Industrial Commission to study industry grievances and to devise means to ameliorate them.

Dormer felt himself powerless and essentially alone; "It was patent what sinister influences [presumably Rhodes] were at work, and as the task was not congenial without the cordial support of those at whose instance I had taken it up, I laid it down."²⁴

Dormer stayed on for a short while and then left for London where he contributed prodigiously to the British press on the subject of South African Affairs.²⁵

Finlason's Failure as Editor of *The Star*

The next man to step into *The Star's* editorship was remarkable only in his mediocrity. Charles E. Finlason was considered decidedly inadequate by mining house executives, reform leaders, and British government representatives. That he held his position for as long as he did--Finlason edited *The Star* from the summer of 1897 until February 1899--is indicative of the inertia which pervaded Johannesburg public opinion during those years.

Finlason began his journalistic career in South Africa on the *Independent* in Kimberley. However, his next assignment took him in a direction opposite to R.J. Pakeman

and, for that matter, FitzPatrick and the bulk of the Transvaal Uitlanders. Finlason joined the staff of the *Press* in Pretoria, Kruger's English newspaper advocate.²⁶

The Star and the *Press* were locked into a bitter animosity as a matter of course. For example, *The Star* savagely attacked the *Press's* coverage of Kruger's Bloemfontein speech, ending with the caveat that, "It is, however, of some little moment that the public should quite clearly understand the sort of tactics to which, when it suits their book, the reptile press of the country unscrupulously descend."²⁷

Finlason's next affiliation was not much of an improvement over the "reptile press." He moved to Johannesburg and edited the *Johannesburg Times* which belonged to Randlord J.B. Robinson. Robinson was regarded by the rest of the industry, especially the Corner House, as an irritant. He regularly created irksome obstacles to endeavours in which the various mining houses were attempting to follow a united policy: such as cooperation in the Chamber of Mines or placating the white labour force. Furthermore, Robinson was notorious for trying to strike self-serving deals with the Kruger regime.

In light of these conditions, Finlason's image must have changed for the directors of the Argus company to tolerate an editor who had served as mouthpiece for both Kruger and Robinson. In a February 7, 1897 letter to Wernher Beit and Company, FitzPatrick remarked that while Robinson, true to form, "is not yet sufficiently chastened by our mutual hardships under the present Government to make him see that the grinding of private axes will not mend matters . . . His pressing requests to the President and Executive were for personal advantages," his *Times*, under Finlason, was advocating reform. Fitzpatrick wrote:

" . . . people here do not fail to note the fact that Robinson has been flying signals of a change of attitude towards the Government. There have been a couple of nasty paragraphs in the *Johannesburg Times* and one in particular threatening exposure of the Press Censor [Leyds] for writing an improper letter to an important London newspaper. The immediate cause of this charge was the suppression or detention of one of the *Johannesburg Times* cables in which occurred a reference to Leyds's intrigues with Germany, behind Kruger's back."²⁸

Taking this tack with the *Johannesburg Times* may have removed some of the odium out of Finlason's pro-Kruger press background as far as the Argus directors were concerned. Also, in the climate of conciliation during the 1897 Industrial Commission's

investigative study, Finlason's appointment could have been considered an act of good faith. The Transvaal courts had already judged in favour of *The Star* when it contested its suppression under the Press Law. Appointing a benign editor could be interpreted as simple quid pro quo for *The Star's* reinstatement. After all, the *Critic*, which had also been suppressed under the Press Law, was not reinstated.

In all fairness to Finlason, it would have taken an editor of extraordinary ability to earn the attention, let alone the respect, of the Johannesburg readership at that time. As it was, Finlason was merely an adequate but uninspired journalist lacking the political proclivity and sense of personal vainglory that were such prominent traits in *Star* editors who had made an impact.

His first hurdle was encountered almost immediately and it appears that it was one erected by the undoubtedly bitter Dormer. On August 30th, FitzPatrick wrote to Wernher informing him of how Dormer was still trying to impose his editorial will in absentia:

". . . the Argus Company have a little affair on with the Government about a stand on which portion of their machinery is erected. This stand was leased from the Government for 10 years; they would not lease it for longer. As the time will be up next year, Sheffield [Thomas Sheffield, Argus Director] tried to get an extension, thinking that the Government had forgotten all about it. He saw [J.L.] Vander Merwe [Mining Commissioner of Johannesburg], who promised to do what he could for the Company. Then came another official, of his own accord, to tell Sheffield that Van der Merwe was working dead against the Argus Company and that they had arranged to "sell" the Company some time ago. This man said that he would fix it, however. In a day or two, he returned saying that it would be fixed up on terms, the terms being that the *Star* shall support the Government "when the latter is in the right," an easy condition as Sheffield said, and also support Kruger in the coming election! Sheffield says that Dormer, while here, spoke several times about this stand and he has no doubt that it was Dormer who put Van der Merwe on to this move." 29

Finlason found himself at odds with his old allies in the government. He was fined £100 under the Press Law for attacking Pretoria officials.³⁰ Similarly, he was without a friend in the Corner House.

The Star had always been Uitlander reform's great articulator. Its role as a leader in political events demanded editors who could define and balance the needs of reform leaders, mining houses, and the general Uitlander populace. Dormer and Hamilton both possessed an innate sensitivity as to just how far Uitlanders were willing to go for reforms and just how far the Boer government was willing to let them go. It was a precarious strategic position to be in and it required a lot of nerve and savvy. Finlason, sadly, had neither as Fitzpatrick described his performance in September 1897:

"*The Star* has lost caste and weight and it ought to be the best paper in Africa and a power in the land. We feel the want of support. In Dormer's time we wanted honest support but now it is more intelligence and grasp that are wanted. One expects to get ideas from a good journalist, at present we are only giving them."³¹

On October 18, 1897 FitzPatrick lobbied to replace Finlason with Pakeman in a letter to Phillips:

"About the *Star*. I think that unless you can get the ideal man we are looking for, Pakeman is the best we can expect. . . We cannot manage it very well at this end as Joel [Barnato's nephew Solly, a director of the Argus Company] opposes him but he would be an immense improvement on Finlason. The latter is a very good fellow and does his best but is so slow and being deaf (very deaf now) misses nearly all that goes on."³²

Johannesburg Politics Moves to the Right

Without a strong party newspaper sounding out its campaign directives, the Johannesburg reform movement began to drift between the years 1897 and 1899. True enough, the leaders who were tried after the Jameson Raid had lost their political voice (until June 1899 when the embargo on political discussion expired) but those that remained fell prey to a sort of unintellectual extremism that could have been curbed by a forceful party newspaper cautioning moderation.

The South African League, formed in 1896, was a reactionary jingo group strongest in the Cape. In the post-Raid falling out between Rhodes and Hofmeyr's Afrikaner Bond, Cape Dutch were very much on the ascension with W.P. Schreiner winning the October 1898 election for Prime Minister.³³ The SAL was fueled by an alarmist line of rhetoric charging

that a pan-Afrikaner conspiracy was afoot throughout South Africa and that its only remedy would be intervention from Britain. Lamentably, and much to the chagrin of Colonial Secretary Chamberlain,³⁴ the new High Commissioner Alfred Milner subscribed to the SAL's fervent program soon after his arrival at the Cape in May 1897.³⁵

Incendiary events proceeded at a quickened pace. Chamberlain had a showdown with Kruger in the spring of 1897 over the Republic's introduction of the Alien Immigration Law. By staging a show of force--the British navy was sent to Delagoa Bay--Chamberlain made Kruger rescind the Aliens Acts. However, this only aggravated the situation as Robinson and Gallagher note, "Strong measures only confirmed Afrikaner and Dutch suspicion that the British had determined to provoke and reconquer the Transvaal."³⁶ SAR fort building and armaments stockpiling continued with increased fervour.

Despite the conciliatory gestures of 1897--Kruger had allowed Johannesburg to elect its first Town Council in October and had sponsored the Mining Commission study--1898 saw a rapid deterioration of rapprochement between Uitlander and Boer on the Transvaal. The SAR treaty with the Free State along with the arms buildup within the Republic caused Johannesburg's Uitlanders to feel physically threatened.

When the powerplay between the SAR judiciary, represented by Chief Justice J.G. Kotze, and President Kruger resulted in Kotze's dismissal in early 1898, Johannesburg suffered another wave of grave trepidation. Kruger's victory over Kotze meant that the Volksraad--which was essentially dominated by Kruger's private will--could exercise omnipotent and arbitrary control over the Grondwet (the constitution) and the Transvaal judiciary.³⁷

The Uitlanders were now vulnerable to any sort of injustice that Kruger, through the Volksraad, felt inclined to impose on them. The SAL used Kotze's dismissal as a pretext to draft a resolution calling for British intervention as the State's subjugation of the judiciary supposedly placed Transvaal Uitlanders in danger. Conyngham Greene, British Agent in Pretoria, forwarded the resolution to Chamberlain and Milner.³⁸

The uneasiness generated by Kruger's disdain for the commonly revered judicial and constitutional institutions was compounded by the fact that he defeated the more liberal General Joubert in the fall election of 1897. Even more disturbing than Kruger's re-election was the widely accepted belief that the old man had regained his presidency by "cooking the ballot."³⁹

The last vestiges of the great optimism of 1897 were dispersed with the failure of the government to act on the findings of the Mining Commission Study. The bulk of the Commission's work had been done by representatives from the mining industry since the Republic did not have the "expertise to deal with the complex technical and financial questions."⁴⁰ It soon became apparent that the government also lacked the ability, or the desire, to enact the proposals outlined in the report.

As early as the fall of 1897 the Corner House was aware that Kruger would fall back on one of his old habits, procrastination, to avoid granting key industry recommendations. This is indicated in a letter from FitzPatrick to Wernher dated August 30, 1897:

"He [Kruger] won't refuse to do a thing, he will create an obstacle to its being done so that he may say he would if he could but he is not able! Obviously, if the Raad adjourns before the Committee's report on the Commission's report is ready, there will be no one to report to! Now, there have been (prior to this week and subsequent to the appointment of the Raad Committee) two attempts to adjourn the Raad and each made on a motion introduced by a supporter of Kruger."⁴¹

Not only was all the work put into the Commission's Report a wasted effort, but in 1898 the Kruger government proposed granting the hated dynamite monopoly a 15 year extension. All these disappointments and threats created widespread discontent which the South African League could exploit.

The SAL's popularity in Johannesburg had been fairly lackluster until 1898. It was, after all, not an indigenous political party and its predilection for requesting British intervention cannot have been very appealing to the Transvaal Uitlanders who had traditionally cherished the reformed independent republic ideal. However, an incident occurred amid the

growing climate of fear in Johannesburg in December of 1898 which drew scores of acolytes to the SAL ranks.

The famous Edgar Incident in which a nocturnal drunken brawl regrettably ended in a Johannesburg policeman named Jones shooting and killing a Uitlander, Tom Edgar, was sensationalized out of all proportion by both the League and Alfred Milner. The episode became an international incident and fodder for the SAL's propaganda machine. J.A. Hobson, writing in 1899, described the League's sudden ascension:

"Until this year the League had little influence in Johannesburg. Few men of wealth or position were among its members, and, so far as I could ascertain, it was regarded by solid business men in Johannesburg with no sympathy and with some contempt as a futile instrument of agitation. It was never in any sense representative either of the respectable middle-class or of any other class of the community, but was the name of an insignificant clique. The monster meeting which it held after the killing of Edgar first floated the League into wide notoriety, and stimulated it to redouble its efforts by means of public meetings on the Rand and the Outlander's petition for the redress of grievances. . . I am disposed to regard the Transvaal branch of it as, in the main, a genuine middle-class society, managed, and perhaps financed, by men earnestly devoted to a struggle for rights, though I cannot acquit them of gross exaggeration in the presentation of grievances and of reckless audacity in the means by which they sought to press their case on the Imperial Government."⁴²

Hobson was convinced that the League was the invention of Cecil Rhodes. The theory was that Rhodes, forced out of the political arena by the Jameson conspiracy, was covertly asserting his will through the League and the newspapers. This view was also held by Sir William Butler, acting High Commissioner during Milner's London trip in the fall of 1898 and thereafter commander of British forces in South Africa. From his post in Cape Town, Butler began to perceive a sinister web of Rhodes influence:

"There was an acerbity in political and journalistic life, a seeking for causes of offence, a girding and goading at the Dutch in and beyond the Cape Colony, that foreboded to me the development of very serious consequences. I found the English newspapers in Cape Town wholly under the influence of Mr. Rhodes.

The English journals in the Transvaal were outrageous in their language of insult and annoyance. Threats and menaces were being used every day against the governments of the Republic and the people of Dutch race. The visit of Sir Alfred Milner to England was spoken of as having for its chief object the preparation and picking of rods for the Republic, and I soon had no difficulty in tracing connections more or less close between the thoughts expressed in the letters which I received from the Transvaal, and the language used by

the journals in Cape Town which were being worked in Mr. Rhodes's interest."⁴³

Given these suspicions, Butler refused to forward to London a petition presented to him by the Transvaal SAL following the Edgar shooting. Also, he banned the *Cape Times* editor, Edmund Garrett, from visiting his office after an incident which convinced him that Garrett published information he gained while eavesdropping from the room adjoining Butler's office.⁴⁴

Dormer also suspected the League and *The Star* under Finlason were in Rhodes's hands. In describing Finlason, Dormer wrote that he was, "personally charming, one of the mildest-mannered men, indeed, that ever scuttled ship, had served his apprenticeship in Kimberley, and from start to finish of his career in Johannesburg there could never be the slightest doubt as to his design to set heather ablaze."⁴⁵

Like Hobson, Dormer also asserts that the League did not become a force in the Transvaal until late in 1898 and that it "had no more right to prosecute its campaign in the Transvaal than the Afrikaner [sic] Bond."⁴⁶ He branded the SAL as outside agitators:

"The aggressive activity of the League was the most powerful of all the proximate causes of the war, but in no sense can that organisation be said to be representative of the 'wealth of the Transvaal.' It was representative of the ultra-British emotions of a certain number of extremists in a British colony [the Cape], and its whole inspiration was sought and derived from Mr. Rhodes, now its president."⁴⁷

There are no records directly incriminating Finlason of acting under Rhodes's direction or of being a mouthpiece of the League. There are, however, some fairly enlightening *Star* editorials which represent a dramatic departure from traditional *Star* political policy and are suspiciously redolent of the type of rhetoric favoured by the League. For instance, Finlason echoed the SAL pan-Afrikaner conspiracy paranoia as well as Rhodes's animosity toward his erstwhile ally, Hofmeyr of the Afrikaner Bond. Finlason quarreled with Hofmeyr's assurances of Dutch loyalty to the Queen published in the *Daily Mail* and he essentially called Hofmeyr a liar:

"We know that a campaign for securing Dutch paramountcy--the paramountcy of Dutch ideals and the facilities for realizing Dutch [pan-Afrikaner] aspirations--in the legislature is proceeding in the Cape Colony, and any number of quibbles and evasions and so-called refutations will not avail to disabuse us of the conviction."⁴⁸

Finlason brazenly promoted a concept that was the ultimate anathema for his predecessors at *The Star* and the Johannesburg reform movement prior the League's inception. He actually endorsed a united federation of all South Africa under the British flag. Referring to Rhodes's record as the "Great Amalgamator" of the Kimberley diamond industry, Finlason happily proposed that Rhodes could and should work the same effect over all the disparate political entities of South Africa, whether they liked it or not. He wrote:

"When Mr. Rhodes's record is reviewed, it will be noted that he has generally succeeded, and if he lives [Rhodes was suffering from a heart condition] we believe that he will succeed in not only bringing about the federation of the three British States in South Africa, but, eventually, in attaining his ideal of a united South Africa. . . It is difficult for us, squirming under the dead weight of an unsympathetic oligarchy, to imagine a Transvaal without Mr. Kruger and Dr. Leyds, but the time will assuredly come when there will be no Kruger and no Leyds. In course of time this country must be governed properly by the intelligent majority, and when the helm is in the hands of the intelligent majority the advantages of an United South Africa will be so apparent that great and desirable event must inevitably become an accomplishment." ⁴⁹

No wonder Dormer despised Finlason, and, no wonder the Johannesburg Argus directors were fast losing their complacency regarding the job of replacing him. He further alienated the Argus Board by publicly criticizing Edmund Powell of *The Cape Argus*. The Board was obliged to officially prohibit Argus newspapers from attacking each other. In addition, Finlason's political tack was so unacceptable that, for the first time, the Board had to mandate that it, and not the individual editors, was to determine the line taken on all but local political issues.⁵⁰ Rhodes did not intervene on Finlason's behalf or in any way attempt to check the restraints the Board was placing on Finlason.

It is just possible that Finlason, bereft of allies among Johannesburg's capitalists and reformers, as well as his own Board of Directors, was attempting to attract support from the League and Rhodes. There is no evidence that he gained backing from either. Also, Hobson, Dormer, Butler, and Finlason may have all overestimated the extent of Rhodes's influence following the raid.

At the same time that Finlason was judged inadequate for what he was doing, he was even more guilty of inadequacy by virtue of what he was not doing. He was not effectively

combatting the anti-capitalist propaganda then being issued by the *Standard and Digger's News*. Perhaps Finlason just did not care. His interests in Reef stores had made him a rich man and before the Board was forced to actually fire him, he retired,⁵¹ presumably to concentrate on his tennis game.

Footnotes to Chapter 8

1. Dormer, *Vengeance as a Policy*, 193-194.
2. W.J. deKock, editor-in-chief, *Dictionary of South African Biography* (Johannesburg: National Council for Social Research, Pretoria, 1968), 251.
3. Dormer, *Vengeance as a Policy*, 204-205.
4. deKock, *Dictionary of South African Biography*, 251.
5. Eric Rosenthal, compiler, *Southern African Dictionary of National Biography* (London & New York: Frederick Warnes & Co. Ltd., 1966), 157.
6. Duminy and Guest, *FitzPatrick*, 13.
7. Dormer, *Vengeance as a Policy*, 20-21.
8. Phillips, *South African Recollections*, 57.
9. Duminy and Guest, *FitzPatrick*, 76.
10. *Ibid.*, letter dated February 8, 1897.
11. *The Johannesburg Star*, February 27, 1897.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Dormer, *Vengeance as a Policy*, 21.
14. *Ibid.*, 23.
15. *The Johannesburg Star*, March 11, 1897.
16. Crisp, *The Outlanders*, 366.
17. Rosenthal, *Today's News Today*, 99-100.
18. *The Johannesburg Star*, March 25, 1897.
19. Rosenthal, *Today's News Today*, 114.
20. *Ibid.*, 102.
21. *The Johannesburg Star*, April 14, 1897.
22. Dormer, *Vengeance as a Policy*, 25.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*
25. deKock, *Dictionary of South African Biography*, 251.
26. Rosenthal, *Dictionary of National Biography*, 123.

27. *The Johannesburg Star*, March 15, 1897.
28. Duminy and Guest, *FitzPatrick*, 80.
29. *Ibid.*, 115.
30. Rosenthal, *Today's News Today*, 109.
31. Duminy and Guest, *FitzPatrick*, 120. letter from FitzPatrick to Alfred Beit dated September 27, 1897.
32. *Ibid.*, 124-125.
33. Thompson and Wilson, *Oxford History of South Africa*, 319.
34. LeMay, *British Supremacy in South Africa*, 14.
35. Thompson and Wilson, *Oxford History of South Africa*, 321.
36. Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 444.
37. Thompson and Wilson, *Oxford History of South Africa*, 319.
38. Crisp, *The Outlanders*, 389.
39. Duminy and Guest, *FitzPatrick*, 129.
40. Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido, "Lord Milner and the South African State," *History Workshop, A Journal of Socialist Historians* 8 (Autumn 1979), 61.
41. Duminy and Guest, *FitzPatrick*, 113.
42. Hobson, *The War in South Africa*, 200-201.
43. Butler, *An Autobiography*, 392-393.
44. *Ibid.*, 393.
45. Dormer, *Vengeance as a Policy*, 26.
46. *Ibid.*, 27.
47. *Ibid.*, 28.
48. *The Johannesburg Star*, January 19, 1898.
49. *Ibid.*, May 7, 1898.
50. Rosenthal, *Today's News Today*, 109.
51. *Ibid.*

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The Star Becomes a Political Pawn

Alfred Milner's Policy in South Africa

The watchword for High Commissioner Alfred Milner and the mining executives alike during 1897 was patience. It seems that--although Milner was considering war with the Republic before he even arrived in Cape Town in May 1897--he decided initially to try the advise of Sir Michael Hicks Beach, Chancellor of the Exchequer. Hicks Beach had written to Milner that:

"I believe the great thing necessary is 'patience.' Impatience has been at the root of our difficulties . . . If Kruger's Govt. really mean to fight, the utmost patience on our part is absolutely necessary, in order to make them put themselves clearly in the wrong. . ." ¹

Milner started his term as High Commissioner listening to the advise of Hicks Beach and respecting the established policy of Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain. Upon his arrival at the Cape, Milner told Chamberlain, "The Franchise [sic] can wait, though there will be no ultimate peace without extension of the Franchise." ²

Around the same time, Chamberlain would state his own position in a letter to Milner; "Personally I should be satisfied with a municipality for Johannesburg on the English pattern and a liberal administration of the Education Laws." ³

Chamberlain's aims would not change significantly right up to the outbreak of the war. Milner would come around to a position which departed from the official stance held in London.

Like the mining leaders on the Rand, Milner was encouraged by the activities of the Mining Commission in 1897. He thought the Commission's Report denoted the existence of, ". . . a breadth of view, a liberality of judgement and a force of expression, which, if of genuine Boer origin, give me quite a new idea of the nouveau intellectuel of the Boer." ⁴

He was hopeful that this progressive element within Boer politics would effect the desired changes: ". . . I am watching with the deepest interest the growth of opposition to the ruling oligarchy among the Boers themselves."⁵

However, the events of late 1897 and 1898 soon radicalized Milner's position. He worked himself into a kind of single-minded conviction, an unbending obsession to force the Boers into either granting the Uitlander franchise or going to war over it. One by one, his justifications for patience were invalidated: the Mining Commission Report came to nothing; Kotze was dismissed; Kruger was re-elected; the Republic's treaty with the Orange Free State was signed; both the Transvaal and the Free State were arming heavily; and the Afrikaner Bond swept the Cape elections of 1898.

In the meantime, the South African League was gaining momentum and was given an extra push by exploitation of the December 1898 Edgar Incident. Milner feared that if he did not accede to SAL petitions for British support, Britain would lose the last vestiges of loyalty it tenuously held among the inhabitants of South Africa.

Another factor in Milner's embracing the platform of the SAL is the influence of Edmund Garrett, by then a Cape Parliament minister as well as editor of the influential *Cape Times*. The two men were old friends. Apparently Milner had become an admirer of Garrett's journalism as early as 1887 when he said of him, "Behold the new Stead [William T. Stead], with all of his virtues and none of his faults."⁶

The two men first met each other in the Sudan around 1894. The personal contact seems to have only deepened Milner's appreciation of Garrett. He said at the time that Garrett was, "One of the nicest, ablest, and best of fellows."⁷ In 1897, before Milner's appointment to South Africa was officially announced, Garrett made a visit to London and they had two lengthy conversations.⁸

When Milner and Garrett met up again in South Africa, they talked on practically a daily basis. In a letter to his cousin Agnes, Garrett wrote, ". . . Milner sent asking me to come up, as he often does, for a chat over affairs. We have had a good few, and he has often asked my views with seeming useful results."⁹

Milner became so dependent upon Garrett's counsel that he asked him to take the post of Imperial Secretary. Chamberlain refused to sanction Garrett taking the post as he considered the editor to be too involved in political intrigues. The Colonial Secretary is reported to have reacted to Milner's proposition of Garrett with the statement, "Sir A. Milner has been captured by a conceited self-confident partizan [sic] chatterer like Garrett. However, I will not appoint him at any price."¹⁰

It appears that after only a few short months in Cape Town, Milner had gone over from listening to Chamberlain to listening to Garrett. This would not have been a dangerous thing if Garrett's views had remained relatively stable between 1896 and the time he renewed his friendship with Milner. But Garrett's views had changed dramatically. He was no longer advocating moderation, but a harder line that resembled the one taken by the SAL. In 1896 Garrett was appalled at the prospect of war in South Africa. By 1899, he was not advocating war, but considered it a reasonable option if it meant preventing South Africa becoming united under the Afrikaners.¹¹

By February 2, 1898, Milner would write to Chamberlain, "There is no way out of the political troubles of S. Africa except reform in the Transvaal or war. And at present the chances of reform in the Transvaal are worse than ever."¹²

Of the two options cited above, Milner seems to have strongly favoured the latter. He essentially sabotaged the June 1899 Bloemfontein Conference, where he met with Kruger, by refusing to discuss anything but an immediate franchise. He then refused to consider subsequent Boer enfranchisement proposals. By, in every practical sense, cutting off the flow of diplomatic discourse, Milner forced the issuance of the British ultimatum to the Republic on September 29, 1899 and the outbreak of the war on October 11. Andrew Porter explains why war became for Milner the most desirable outcome:

"It [war] promised a rapid solution and a clean slate in the Transvaal; victory would deliver the Republic into the hands of the Imperial Government, not those of the Uitlanders, and the future of southern Africa would be framed in London rather than by local politicians in either Cape Town or Pretoria."¹³

Rand Capitalists are Drawn into the Fray

The Transvaal mining houses were apolitical in the aftermath of the Jameson Raid. Alan Jeeves notes that the senior people at the Corner House carefully steered their firm clear of political involvements:

"At various times Hermann Eckstein, J.B. Taylor and Lionel Phillips expressed considerable distrust of Rhodes. In London, Wernher was no lover of 'showy schemes.' After 1895 Georges Rouliot and Friedrich Eckstein, the senior partners in Johannesburg, resisted the designs of FitzPatrick and Samuel Evans to involve their company in renewed political activity."¹⁴

Management's apoliticism did not, however, deter FitzPatrick from pressing for Corner House intervention into politics. In his capacity as Chief of Mining Intelligence, FitzPatrick sent a steady stream of political updates to the London partners. Knowing that the senior executive were averse to political intervention, FitzPatrick was careful to avoid direct demands for political action. Instead, he routinely infused his news updates with a heavy editorial element as evidenced by his October 11, 1897 letter to Wernher:

"The best that one can hope for out of the present state of things is that our worthy rulers will have learnt to quarrel among themselves and so form two distinct parties and bring about a change in the Government. If this is the best, you will say, the best is not very good! Quite true; for any new party would be almost as bad as this present one as soon as they were securely in power. I am afraid that, in the present case, what is wanted is the surgeon's knife and that a change of diet, so to say, will be trifling with the case."¹⁵

In response to FitzPatrick's constant attempts to involve the firm in political agitation, the senior partners would calmly remind him that their business was strictly business and not extracurricular political intrigues. An example of this type of gentle remonstrance is found in the one of Phillips' letters:

"All we can think of today is the defence of the mining industry and economic working. The disabilities of the Uitlanders are thoroughly known to the world and heartily appreciated. The political aspect of the case, therefore, is in stronger hands than ours. The economic aspect, of course, forms part of our business, and consistent opposition to excessive taxation or extravagant expenditure, is merely a duty to ourselves and to those who, in following us, have sunk both labour and capital in the Transvaal. . . we must confine ourselves strictly to the material aspect of the case and we, above all people, should avoid doing anything, however true, which might be construed as conceived in spite!"¹⁶

Ironically, this apolitical posture adopted by the Corner House leaders is the very thing that led to their becoming politically involved in 1899. By that year, the South African League had become a moving force on the Rand, largely due to the backing given to it by Milner and enacted through the imperial officials on the spot, Conyngham Greene and Edmund Fraser.¹⁷

League leaders began to construe the mining houses' aversion to supporting their party as an indication of their having been crypto-Krugerites. In a secret missive sent to Greene on October 3, 1898, SAL leaders T.R. Dodd and P.A. Ogilvie maintained that:

"We see that the Rand mining financiers anticipate with great uneasiness the introduction of that political liberty, that municipal honesty, and that judicial and legislative purity which distinguish the growth of a people on Anglo-Saxon lines, and that they view with strong distaste the probability of the Imperial authorities having more or less of a say in the internal administration of the two Boer republics. And we suspect these feelings to be so strong as already to have led the 'big houses' into active intrigue with the Krugerite gang in Pretoria, to the end of finding a common scheme of action, without making the bond between them too apparent."¹⁸

The League was trying to use such allegations of untrustworthiness on the part of the mining houses as leverage in a bid to gain Imperial intervention and support. At the same time, Imperial officials began to harbour suspicions of their own with regard to the mining houses.

From November 1898, Chamberlain suspected that the mining houses were negotiating offering a loan to Kruger in return for certain industry concessions. Completion of such a deal between industry and government would have cut the legs out from under the reform movement.¹⁹

The Great Deal which the government offered to the heads of the Chamber of Mines in February of 1899 included, along with financial policy changes, a scheme by which the Volksraad would consider granting the franchise to Uitlanders after a five year waiting period. "In return it was suggested that the capitalists disassociate themselves from the South African League, put an end to their press agitation against the Republic, aid the Boers in settling disputes with Britain over the treatment of Coloureds and Indians, and, finally, help the Republic obtain a loan in Europe."²⁰

It should be noted that the government/capitalists discussions were hindered by endemic misperceptions. For example, the capitalists on the Rand were certainly not involved in the SAL and as for the press agitation, they disliked the editorials coming out of Finlason's office as much as the Krugerites did.

Milner, like Chamberlain, had severe misgivings regarding the capitalists negotiating with the government exclusive of imperial participation. He wrote that,

"The danger is that the big financial houses will think only of themselves, and, if they can get the questions, which specially affect their pockets, settled satisfactorily, will give away the bulk of the Uitlander population, and the Imperial Govt. to boot. They would be making a fatal mistake if they did, but money-bags are apt to be short-sighted." ²¹

That imperial officials notified mining leaders of the allegations being made against them by the League is evident by the capitalists growing concern about their own alienation within the Johannesburg Uitlander community. Georges Rouliot, by late 1898, began to register his concerns with the London partners about the Corner House becoming politically isolated and reviled. He also, as President of the Chamber of Mines, began to notify other mining house leaders of the League's increasing antipathy toward them. ²²

The League was not the only Uitlander entity attacking the mining houses. The government funded *Standard and Digger's News* stepped up its anti-capitalist press campaign. The *Digger's News* sought to redirect Uitlander grievances away from political issues to what it purported to be the true source of Johannesburg's troubles, economic inequality.

The newspaper was calling for a reformation of the class structure in the Transvaal and insisted that the average Uitlander citizen was not being exploited by the government, but by the capitalist overlords. Alan Jeeves describes how this editorial position was articulated into a political force:

"The editors were calling for the creation of a kind of petty-bourgeois society, in which sturdy and independent burgher pastoralists would make common cause with independent workmen and small-scale businessmen in Johannesburg. Ultimately, it was suggested, the giant mining and financial houses would be disestablished and the economy returned to the hands of those who had been the victim of the big interests." ²³

Class tensions were becoming heightened during this period and the *Digger's News* was quick to sense this phenomenon and to, just as quickly, exacerbate it. While other mining leaders were becoming aware of the rift developing between themselves and their white workers, J.B. Robinson obstinately continued to mistreat and provoke his employees. FitzPatrick related to Wernher in a letter dated May 8, 1897 how the *Digger's News* editor, E. Mendelssohn, turned the bad blood created by Robinson to his advantage:

"I also note that his [Mendelssohn's] paper took up the miners' case against Robinson and is working it strongly. There they were right as it was too bad - too utterly unjustifiable on J.B.R.'s part - to forbid all games on the property, to dig up a tennis court made by the men at their own expense and to forbid anyone to leave the Company's property without leave. But they went further and suggested a Union and are now working it up. I cannot help thinking that the hand of the Government and its friends is somewhere in this." ²⁴

The *Digger's News* was having such an impact that by the summer of 1899, Samuel Evans of the Corner House was obliged to put together an informal report on its influence for the senior partners. Evans, who had joined the firm in 1898, was a confidant of FitzPatrick's²⁵ and was the Corner House's executive in charge of overseeing the firm's newspaper affiliations as an Argus director. He reported that the *Digger's News*, from its advantageous position of being the only morning newspaper, had a daily circulation of 7,500 to 8,000. At the same time, *The Star* was selling about 11,000 copies per day.

Evans's finding would have underscored observations made by FitzPatrick in December of 1898; *The Star* was weakening vis a vis the *Digger's News*. He wrote to Wernher:

"You do not know the bitterness of feeling and the distrust of the capitalist which obtain here, fostered by the *Digger's News*. The conspiracy to crush the place and grab all and to compound it like another Kimberley, is accepted as a fact beyond dispute. The delightful *Digger's News* is fomenting that. No doubt it was a constant reader who gave vent to his feelings three weeks ago by smacking in five of our windows because he was hungry and had [asked for] money and been refused . . . it throws a light on our anxiety to get a decent *Star* [editor]. The morning paper's work is devoted to violence pure and simple. [Faced] with a hostile Government and a [hungry] population, we should have both a readable *Star* and a morning paper to represent the truth on the [side of the] Industry. . . " ²⁶

Rouliot's conversion to political/journalistic activism in response to the class threat posed by the *Digger's News* is significant. He was one of the senior partners forever

pouring calming waters on the sparks of political activism within the Corner House. But, by January 1899 he felt sufficiently threatened to urge Wernher to support the adoption of a corporate political thrust and to strike up political alliances:

"The [*Standard and Digger's News*] is fairly well-written and widely circulated while the *Star*, the only other paper which takes an opposite view is absolutely rotten, and people do not take any interest in reading it. Of course the *Diggers News* takes advantage of the constant political articles appearing in the *Star*, to say that the mines agitate against the government, ask for British intervention, and such nonsense but which serves their purpose with the Pretoria people. As if we could help ourselves: we have the government, the Jews, the Liquor gang and many of the unemployed all against us. We must therefore [look?] for support elsewhere, and as those who have in view only British interests [the South African League] base their agitation precisely on the economic reforms which we demand we are obliged to a great extent not to interfere with their actions which do not concern us and with which even we may not sympathize. But otherwise we should have everyone against us. . . ." ²⁷

The mandate was clear: a new and forceful editor had to be found for *The Star*, a competitive new morning newspaper had to be established; and the landlords must align themselves with the least unattractive of the Rand's political parties, the SAL which brought with it British Imperial support. The mining leaders, therefore, concluded their negotiations with the Transvaal government by aligning with Alfred Milner's policy of insisting that the immediate franchise for the Uitlanders had to be the prerequisite issue for settlement.²⁸

Lionel Phillips conveyed the London partners' approval of the Johannesburg executives' proposal to becoming fully involved in political journalism in a February 4, 1899 letter: "We agree with you as to the desirability of an antidote to the poison administered daily by the *Standard and Digger's News*." ²⁹ The "antidote," in the form of William Flavelle Monypenny and R.J. Pakeman, had already been prescribed and both editors were on their way to Johannesburg.

Monypenny's Appointment

W.F. Monypenny's appointment to the editorship of *The Star* was the result of a curious collaboration between Corner House executives, Alfred Milner, and George Buckle, editor of the *London Times*.

Up until 1899, Milner's attention had been focused primarily on rallying the British, not the South African press, around the Uitlander cause. Lack of support in the British press, and, in turn, in British public opinion, was the primary reason that Chamberlain refused to go along with Milner's radical insistence on the franchise. Milner, therefore, concentrated on swaying the London papers and his trip to London in the fall of 1898 was occupied largely with meeting with editors there.

By the spring of 1899, Milner was recruiting J.P. FitzPatrick to the task of bringing the London press into his camp. FitzPatrick was an obvious choice for this sort of work by virtue of his record as a spokesman for the reform movement and his influential position in the mining industry. Also, and perhaps more significantly, Milner became most interested in FitzPatrick when he discovered that the latter had written an unpublished book, *The Transvaal from Within*, which trenchantly elucidated the Uitlander grievances.

At a time when Milner was ardently collecting material to substantiate the case for British intervention, his private secretary Ossy Walrond came across Fitzpatrick's manuscript. In his memoirs, FitzPatrick recalled:

"It must have been about the end of 1898, on a Sunday, that a number of young friends were as usual gathered for tennis and to spend the day at Hohenheim [his home]. Among them was Ossy Walrond, the private secretary to Lord Milner, who was in Cape Town. Walrond had come up, I think, for the Christmas recess, and being very keen on his work he was just having a 'sniff round,' as he put it. During the morning I noticed that he was not sharing in the games, and found him buried in an armchair in the library so completely absorbed in a book he was reading that he did not see me or notice my presence until I stood over him and recognized the book. I took it from him, saying chaffingly, 'What the devil do you mean by reading my private papers?'

He got very excited, completely ignored my protest and asked me why on earth I had never spoken about this, why I had never sent it to the Chief. Hadn't I realized that there was no such record in existence, and no book of reference containing this information? He finally took it from my hands, saying he would put it in his bag at once as he was returning the next day, and Lord Milner would be interested in it."³⁰

Milner did find FitzPatrick's manuscript very interesting and urged him to publish it. FitzPatrick, however, not wishing to add to the list of irritants that were leading to war, held off on publishing *The Transvaal From Within* until war was certain in October of 1899. But Milner's interest in FitzPatrick's publicity potential was piqued and he continued to try to

solicit his efforts in that area. While he was in Cape Town in April of 1899, Milner tried to recruit FitzPatrick to lobby the press. FitzPatrick quotes Milner's line of persuasion:

"Now all hinges upon the treatment accorded to the petition [Uitlander Petition to Britain of March 24 1899]and that depends on the Press. I know all these fellows and could move them but I am not going to do so. You have to do that. You must back me up. The biggest real danger I have is that Chamberlain might get the idea that I want to rush him. Any one of the newspapermen letting drop a hint that I had touched them up would give him that idea and then he would see me damned before he moved a finger. Then I should have lost his confidence and the whole business would be dashed and done for as far as I am concerned. . . You have got to do the press and you have got to try and get before the House or the public the mass of damning evidence that lies in the petitions . . ." ³¹

The newspapermen Milner was referring to were members of the London press. When FitzPatrick arrived in London in mid-July, he dutifully, "made contact with the newspaper editors and wrote several letters to the *Times* under the nom de plume, 'South African'." ³²

Samual Evans and the other *Argus* directors had begun to send out feelers for a new editor as early as summer, 1898. They felt the man they were looking for was not to be found in South Africa and, having been suitably impressed with Edmund Garrett (the *London Times* journalist turned *Cape Times* editor) they felt that the right man could be located among Britain's pressmen. Therefore, on July 7, 1898 Evans wrote to W.T. Stead:

"He [the new editor] must have faith in the English speaking race and be able and willing to render substantial aid to Sir Alfred Milner in forwarding the Imperial Policy in South Africa. . . His mission would be educate, guide and unite the men who read English on the Rand and who are for the most part today an incoherent and factious crowd. He would have to do in Johannesburg what Garrett is doing at the Cape, and more. He would have to do much of what Sir Alfred Milner is doing here." ³³

Milner himself was brought into the search for an editor and a copy of the letter quoted above was forwarded to him. During his trip to London, he met with Wernher twice to

discuss the appointment; in December of 1898 and then again on January 9, 1899 when:

" . . . the decision was taken on this occasion to approach *The Times* directly, so see whether they would supply someone whom they could allow to be under the direction of Milner and the House of Eckstein, rather than answerable solely to Printing House Square. The next day, therefore, Milner saw his long-standing acquaintance G.E. Buckle, the Editor of *The Times*. . . The organisers of *The Times* agreed amongst themselves, and on 17 January William Flavelle Monypenny visited the High Commissioner. Obviously both of these old Balliol men approved of the arrangement and of each other, . . ." ³⁴

Essentially, the choice of Monypenny was made by Alfred Milner and *The Times*.

Not only was Monypenny not a member of the established South African journalist tradition, but he was operating on the distinctively peculiar condition that he was under orders from the High Commissioner's office. His obligation to follow directions given by the Argus Directors, many of whom were executives in the Corner House, was by this time a moot point since the Corner House had decided to follow Milner's lead.

In light of Milner's preoccupation with the London press, his role in locating Monypenny for *The Star* editorship was motivated more from his desire to control the English rather than the Transvaal editorials. Monypenny, once appointed, was charged with the dual task of editing *The Star* and serving as the *London Times* chief correspondent in South Africa. Milner was involved in Monypenny's appointment and continued to monitor and guide Monypenny after he had taken up his post as editor. Through Monypenny, Milner exercised considerable control over representation of South African events in the *London Times*.

For the first time, *The Star* had an editor who was not a member of the Johannesburg community and who was not espousing his own convictions.

Monypenny: More Outsider Than Uitlander

Monypenny's brief career as editor of *The Star* is a classic study in a man being on the outside looking in. Unlike Edmund Garrett, he had not spent years analyzing the South African situation before assuming his post. He had not developed his own views on the

complex interplay of politics and personalities which were then leading to an unavoidable and catastrophic clash.

All of Monypenny's positions regarding the Transvaal situation were spoon fed to him by imperial officials who themselves held a very one-sided set of views. He seemed uninterested in the historical background leading up to current developments and the evolution of the political parties.

He was initially briefed by Milner upon arriving in Cape Town in February of 1899 and was then turned over to Conyningham Greene when he went on to Johannesburg. The imperial men felt Monypenny required an intensive indoctrination program before he could be trusted to take the editorial chair and this was provided by Greene. On March 10, Greene reported on Monypenny's progress to Milner:

"Monypenny came to see me today and we had a long chat: he seems sound on all points except the S.A. League, on which he appeared uncertain. When, however, I had explained to him that they agreed to limit their agitation to constitutional means, in support of the Reforms of which all parties recognize the necessity, and bound themselves to be guided by me, as in the past, he was quite reassured, and said, while he might not support them publicly in his paper, as a political Body for fear of spoiling the game, he would take care that their objects and efforts were supported. This is, after all, what we want."
35

If Monypenny still had not figured out how he should interpret such a central crucial issue as the workings of the SAL, it is difficult to imagine just what points he was "sound" on. In fact, the only evidence of a firm conviction on his part was his adoption of racial jingoism in his editorial agenda. Just five days after assuming the editor role, Monypenny wrote to Moberley Bell of the *Times* that the Boers:

"are very Oriental, treacherous and cunning in a small way, but with no backbone and no real cleverness. You can always treat them by straightness and firmness and I am very sanguine now that within a few years we can have our own way."³⁶

Dormer met with Monypenny while the fledgling editor was "still in his apprenticeship" and he found the latter to be rigidly doctrinaire. Dormer chafed at the fact that Monypenny--functioning strictly as an editor without any of the duties of an Argus director--was earning twice the salary he had been given for editing *The Star* and supervising the other

six Argus newspapers. He noted that Monypenny, "comes direct from Printing-House Square, and proposes to go back there (as Editor, I believe) when he has fulfilled the mission he has condescended to make to this country.. . ."37 Dormer was thoroughly convinced that Monypenny was a journalistic opportunist who intended to use the volatile Transvaal situation as a springboard from which to further his personal career.

Even worse, he was marching along lockstep with imperial officials in South Africa, regardless of the true interests of his Uitlander readership and the dangers to which Milner's confrontational policy exposed them. "It was plain, however," Dormer later wrote, "that an open mind was just what the new editor of the *Star* did not possess.. . . Barely twenty-four hours in the country, he was satisfied not only of the intolerable nature of the Uitlander grievances, but likewise of the sovereign remedy by which alone those grievances could be removed. 'Franchise' was the word, 'immediate enfranchisement'." 38

Monypenny quite obviously adhered to the pan-Afrikaner conspiracy theory and his fear of Afrikanerism was from a strictly British point of view. Dormer had suggested to him that the franchise was an internal issue and did not warrant British intervention, the consequences of which would be tragic for South Africans. Monypenny's reply underscores his British, as opposed to South African, perspective:

"'Then England is to do nothing,' roared the young lion, 'despite the danger to her prestige by allowing Krugerism to develop? It has taken hold of the Free State and is rapidly taking hold of the Colony. England must either come to grips with Mr. Kruger now, or confess her inability to tackle him, with the inevitable result that Krugerism becomes the ruling force, and England's hold upon any portion of South Africa is not worth five years' purchase. She must either take up the cause of her subjects now or they will make their own terms with Pretoria, and the rest will follow as certain as night follows the day.'" 39

About a month after Monypenny was installed on *The Star*, Samuel Evans and J.P. FitzPatrick acting in concert with imperial officials launched a new morning paper, the *Transvaal Leader*, under R.J. Pakeman. The Corner House purchased J.B. Robinson's printing facilities--formerly used for the *Johannesburg Times* which had folded--for the production of the *Leader*. 40

That *The Star* and the *Leader* were following twin editorial policies is obvious.

J.A. Hobson observed,

"The single aim of the *Star* and the *Leader* during the six months preceding October was to inflame the passions of the Outlander by harping upon the Cape 'Boy', the Edgar, the Appelbe outrages,⁴¹ and to harden the hearts of the Government by a constant tirade of abuse and insult directed against them."⁴²

That both editors were responding directly to orders from imperial officials is also obvious. Milner sent his Imperial Secretary, Sir George Fiddes, to Pretoria and Johannesburg in April in order to investigate and influence political developments there.⁴³ Fiddes's visit included a meeting with Monypenny and Pakeman which he reported to Milner was most worthwhile since, "both needed guidance badly, especially Pakeman. But I succeeded in convincing both, and now, unless they go back on me they will strike the right note if necessary."⁴⁴

Monypenny continued correspondence with Milner's secretary, Walrond, on his progress and even seems to have evinced some tentativeness about performing his task in Greene's absence.⁴⁵ Monypenny evidently became quite dependent on the constant handholding with imperial officials which guided him in his editorial duties.

He was painfully out of touch with local politics all along. For instance, he wrote to Moberley Bell on May 2 that the Great Petition of March 24, "was to everybody - to Milner, to Greene, and to myself, a bolt from the blue but we all had to recognize that it created a situation which must make or mar us."⁴⁶

On May 15 in an update to Walrond, Monypenny indicated that the "we" he so often referred to meant the imperial officials in South Africa and not the Johannesburg Uitlanders and that the aim of swaying opinion in Britain was, as with Milner, at the forefront of his aims:

"People here--even the rotters--have rallied wonderfully to our side, but they do nothing but talk . . . We shall I hope . . . as soon as possible after the 30th when Fitz[FitzPatrick] and the other Reformers will be free, get our Uitlander Parliament. . . I suppose in a week or ten days we shall have the answer to the Petition. That ought to give us a great lift. One thing is wholly good. It is perfectly clear that we shall have got the public opinion of England, indeed of the world, behind us."⁴⁷

These remarks underscore the very different role Monypenny played in contrast to previous *Star* editors. Not only was Monypenny outside of Johannesburg politics, but he identified himself solely with British imperial officials.

It is not surprising that Monypenny's brusque bigotry and alienation from Johannesburg society soon got him into trouble. In April Daniel Theron--who would become a hero in the Second Boer War and was at that time a Krugersdorp lawyer--called on Monypenny in his office demanding a retraction of an article which he considered especially offensive due to remarks made about Boer women.⁴⁸ Monypenny refused to retract the article which, incidentally, he had not even written himself, whereupon Theron struck him twice in the face. Not even Pakeman had ever offended readers to the point of provoking a physical assault. Monypenny then compounded his problem by taking Theron to court and was awarded a £20 fine.⁴⁹

From that point on, Monypenny lived in a state of quasi-hysterical fear. On May 14, he wrote to Walrond, "Every day I get warnings that the *Star* Office is to be wrecked, or that I am to be waylaid and set upon. . ." ⁵⁰

The significance of Monypenny's editorship lies solely in his dedication to British aims. Never before had *The Star* been used to promote exclusively imperial objectives. It seems that the Argus Company directors foresaw the breakdown of negotiations between Milner and Kruger and they knew that war would be the unavoidable result. For the first time, they essentially did not care about the editorship of *The Star*. There was no reason why they should since the first nine months of 1899 were nothing but an interim period before the denouement.

Accordingly, they compiled a list the newspaper's machinery and plant assets and, together with a current stock book and other valuable documents, locked the papers up in a deed box and shipped it off to Cape Town in January 1899 for safekeeping.⁵¹ At the same time, never before had *The Star* been of such little relevance to its readership.

The fact was that the bellicose tone of the paper was one of the signs alerting Johannesburgers to the fact that Britain was going to force the situation to a military

conclusion. Refugees were streaming out of the Transvaal throughout early and mid-1899. This is no wonder given that it was becoming commonplace for the Johannesburg reader to pick up the newspaper and find headers like "BRITISH INFLUENCE AT STAKE" and "BRITISH INTERVENTION NECESSARY"⁵² screaming at him from the editorial page.

The deterioration of the situation, and Monypenny's editorials, spooked the staff of *The Star* along with the general populace. On May 18 they sent a letter to the directors enquiring as to compensation for injuries during the political crisis and a request for the company to supply revolvers.⁵³

Monypenny's editorials on the Bloemfontein Conference during the first week of June 1899 sound as if they had been written by Milner himself. The editor endorsed Milner's refusal to accept Kruger's proposals in the course of his absolute insistence on immediate enfranchisement. He wrote:

"The Conference has been a failure . . . To SIR ALFRED MILNER the people of Johannesburg owe a debt of gratitude for his exertions in their behalf, and the entire Uitlander population will, we have little doubt, support him with one accord in the attitude he has taken up; in his firmness in insisting on his own proposals as the irreducible minimum that could be regarded as a satisfactory solution; in his objections to the proposals of the President; and in his final rejection of those proposals as an utterly inadequate concession to the just demands of the new population. . . [Milner] shows an extraordinary grasp of the whole complicated question, a remarkable insight into the tactics and character of the Boers, and a power of anticipating possibilities of subterfuge and evasion which could not be surpassed by someone who had spent his life among the race."⁵⁴

Milner's conduct at the conference effectively removed the option of diplomacy. Talk between Britain and the Kruger government was from then on reduced to brief ultimatums. Negotiations ceased.

After the Conference, Monypenny continually alluded to the outbreak of war as if it were almost inevitable. Perhaps he was so rattled by then that he would have been relieved to see the British cavalry riding into the Transvaal. Stories that should have indicated a positive trend--like the formation of the Uitlander Parliament--were cast in a negative, foreboding light. In what may have been the longest single sentence ever published in *The Star*,

Monypenny concluded his coverage of the inception of the Uitlander Parliament with:

"We have not yet despaired of peace, and we sincerely hope that the present crisis will have a peaceful termination, but the one condition of such a happy result is that Pretoria should abandon illusions, that it should cease to play with proposals with which no one will have anything to do, and that it should make haste to carry out in their fullness the very moderate programme of the High Commissioner which the meeting on Saturday night accepted, but accepted with thinly veiled reluctance through confidence in its author and through earnest desire for peace."⁵⁵

By August Milner's intransigence and Monypenny's frantic editorials had done their work; the town was pretty much abandoned. One of Monypenny's articles remarked on the low turnout at the Johannesburg racetrack:

"Even in racing, which has naturally a larger following than other branches of sport, those whose business takes them round to all or most of the meetings cannot fail to notice that what is known as the general public is largely conspicuous by its absence, and the great majority of those to be found on the various racecourses would be classed at Home with the professional element."⁵⁶

If there was no one going to the races on the Rand, it is quite certain that there was simply no one on the Rand. Monypenny had to know that *The Star* had become effete by virtue of the fact that the readership had fled. It is interesting to note yet another indication of Monypenny's British perspective in the passage quoted above; the "Home" he refers to is England.

The Argus directors had become aware that Monypenny himself would likely join the exodus soon. It is not clear whether Thomas Sheffield thought Monypenny would be arrested or would flee, but the Argus director did make arrangements on July 27 with J.C. Hall, an American, to take the editorship if required. Hall received £50 per month for just waiting in the wings and, should he actually be called on to edit the newspaper, he was to be paid £100 monthly.⁵⁷

Hall was not a journalist but he was likely the best available facsimile. Journalists were becoming a rare breed in Johannesburg. H.S. Lyons of *The Star* left to represent the *London Daily Mail* in Durban and most of the other staff members were being sent to work on the other Argus newspapers outside the Transvaal.⁵⁸

For his part, Pakeman was publishing some very contentious editorials. In a July 17 article entitled "Justice in the Transvaal", Pakeman wrote, "But nothing is easier than to rig justice in the Transvaal if only the interested parties are of the beloved Burgher flock. . . It will soon become impossible to get a Boer punished, no matter what his crime." 59

Pakeman soon went on to blatantly advocate armed insurrection as in his August 29 article: "Even yet there is time for some strong and just man to arise and lead the burghers to Pretoria and sweep the gang from power, to annul the decree of the Raad by a coup d'etat and eject the dynamitards from the State."60

It did not take long for the "dynamitards" to react. *The Star's* September 4 issue announced Pakeman's arrest in an article entitled "Throwing Down the Gauntlet" which proclaimed, "the arrest [Pakeman's], and the issue of warrants for the arrest of others supposed to be prominently identified with the local movement of reform and pure government, if not virtually a declaration of war, is a declaration of defiance which brings the prospect of war perilously and imminently nearer." 61

Monypenny, no doubt aware that his arrest was imminent, went to his office after this article hit the streets to retrieve some papers from his desk. Presumably he was about to make his escape from Johannesburg. He had not been there ten minutes before two detectives walked in and asked for the editor. They were taken to Hall's office.

The detectives, upon seeing Hall, exclaimed that he was not the man they were after. In a bid to hold them in his office and give Monypenny a chance to get out of the building, Hall showed them the September 2 edition of *The Star* which carried his name as the editor. He plied them with cigars and made conversation. It worked. Monypenny slipped out of the office and made it to the Rand Club.

He was not safe for long. A telephone tip alerted him that the detectives were on their way to the Club. The head porter, a fellow named Purcell, then took his turn at running interference. He would not admit the two men, saying that it was a private club and they were not members. By the time they made their way past the door, Monypenny had left by the side door and fled down Commissioner Street.

He made his way to a pre-arranged hiding place in the Orange Free State which had been set up for Monypenny and H.C. Hull, another fugitive. Hull's arrest had also been anticipated as the lawyer was a very high profile political activist. The two hid out together in an abandoned mine shaft, the entrance to which had been concealed by a rock garden and fish pond. During the week that police searched Johannesburg for them, they grew their beards and then managed to cross the southern OFS border in a horse cart disguised as prospectors.⁶²

Pakeman skipped his £500 bail and made it to Durban. He sent letters to each of the officials assigned to his September 15 court case informing them that he had no intention of appearing at his trial.⁶³ *The Star* continued to publish right up until Britain issued the final ultimatum to Pretoria on October 10.⁶⁴

Monypenny served during the war with the Imperial Light Horse and, during the early part of the war, was involved in the Natal campaign. However, the siege at Ladysmith wore down his health so badly he was obliged to take on noncombatant duties. Under Milner's administration Monypenny was director of civil supplies in Johannesburg and served on the committee that helped returning refugees who had left when the war broke out.

In 1902 Monypenny once again edited the resurrected *Star* which had not operated for 27 months. He, however, resigned the next year over a dispute with the paper's proprietors regarding the importation of Chinese coolie labour. He left South Africa for the *London Times* just as Francis Dormer predicted he would years before.⁶⁵

Footnotes to Chapter 9

1. Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, 33. letter from Michael Hicks Beach to Alfred Milner March 22, 1897.
2. Ibid., 65. letter from Alfred Milner to Joseph Chamberlain May 25, 1897.
3. Ibid., 71. letter from Joseph Chamberlain to Alfred Milner July 5, 1897.
4. Ibid., 83. letter to Conyngham Greene August 12, 1897.
5. Ibid., 89. letter to Joseph Chamberlain August 29, 1897.
6. E.T. Cook, *Edmund Garrett, A Memoir* (London: Edward Arnold, 1909), 17.
7. Ibid., 60.
8. Porter, "Sir Alfred Milner and the Press," 326.
9. Shaw, *The Garrett Papers*, 109.
10. Ibid., 34.
11. Ibid., 36.
12. Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, 221.
13. Porter, *The Origins of the South African War*, 171.
14. Jeeves, "The Rand Capitalists," 70.
15. Duminy and Guest, *FitzPatrick*, 123.
16. Jeeves and Fraser, *All That Glittered*, 105.
17. Jeeves, "The Rand Capitalists," 68.
18. Ibid., 75.
19. Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 450.
20. Porter, *The Origins of the South African War*, 188.
21. Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, 324.
22. Jeeves, "The Rand Capitalists," 75.
23. Ibid., 73.
24. Duminy and Guest, *FitzPatrick*, 104-105.
25. Ibid., 514.
26. Ibid., 171.

27. Jeeves, "The Rand Capitalists," 75.
28. Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, 319.
29. Jeeves and Fraser, *All That Glittered*, 111.
30. FitzPatrick, *South African Memories*, 162.
31. Duminy and Guest, *FitzPatrick*, 204.
32. *Ibid.*, 222.
33. Porter, *The Origins of the South African War*, 180-181.
34. *Ibid.*, 33.
35. Porter, "Sir Alfred Milner," 334-335.
36. *Ibid.*, 335.
37. Dormer, *Vengeance as a Policy*, 126.
38. *Ibid.*, 127.
39. *Ibid.*, 128.
40. Jeeves, "The Rand Capitalists," 78.

Hobson provides some pretty thorough details on the dealings behind the launching of the *Transvaal Leader*:

"The company [*Leader*] was registered on April 18 with a capital of £15,000 in £1 shares. The first two directors were Mr. W. Hosken (chairman of the Chamber of Mines) and Mr. J.J. Hoyle, a local solicitor. The great bulk of the shares, no less than 14,878, stood in the name of Mr. Pakeman, a former sub-editor of the *Star*, who had been brought at a most liberal salary to edit the new paper, and whom no one believed to be capable of venturing so large a sum of money upon so precarious an investment. The other shares, with the exception of two allotments of fifty each to the two above-named directors, were registered in the names of twenty-two persons holding one share each, the majority of whom are known to have been in the employ of a firm of solicitors who act for Messrs. Beit and Eckstein. The immediate capital outlay considerably exceeded the total capital of the company, for £10,000 was paid at once for the plant of the defunct Johannesburg Times, and £7000 to Mr. J.B. Robinson for the property on which the offices stand. Moreover, the expenses of the new paper were utterly disproportionate to its nominal resources, and indicated a free supply from some large external source, generally believed to have been Eckstein's."

J.A. Hobson, *The War in South Africa, Its Causes and Effects* (New York: Howard Fertig Inc., 1969), 209.

41. The SAL and Milner were making a political cause over the three "outrages" cited in this passage. The Cape Boy issue centred around alleged unfair treatment of "Coloured" people from the Cape--blacks, Indians, and persons of mixed race--who were being attacked and/or falsely arrested and imprisoned by Johannesburg police and pass officials. The Appelbe affair concerned the brutal attack of the wife of a Wesleyan missionary, Reverend R.F. Appelbe, and another missionary named Wilson. Mrs. Appelbe died as a result of her injuries. Since the victims had been trying to expose the illegal sales of liquor to native blacks, it was widely assumed that their assailants were liquor traders. The SAR government offered a reward for information as to the identity of the assailants, but no leads were forthcoming. Milner and the British officials on the spot believed that the crime would go unsolved as they thought that Republic officials--many of whom were Kruger's relatives and friends--were in league with the liquor traders. The Edgar case is discussed in Chapter IX. see Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, 292 & 316.
42. J.A. Hobson, *The War in South Africa*, 210.
43. Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, 346-7.
44. Porter, *The Origins of the South African War*, 197.
45. *Ibid.*, 212.
46. *Ibid.*, 190.
47. Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, 377. letter from W.F. Monypenny to A. Milner, May 14, 1899.
48. Rosenthal, *Dictionary of National Biography*, 257.
49. deKock, *Dictionary of South African Biography*, 556.
50. Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, 344.
51. Rosenthal, *Today's News Today*, 124.
52. *The Johannesburg Star*, May 25, 1899.
53. Rosenthal, *Today's News Today*, 124.
54. *The Johannesburg Star*, June 7, 1899.
55. *Ibid.*, June 12, 1899.
56. *Ibid.*, August 2, 1899.
57. Rosenthal, *Today's News Today*, 124-125.
58. *Ibid.*, 127.
59. Hobson, *The War in South Africa*, 211.
60. *Ibid.*, 212.
61. Rosenthal, *Today's News Today*, 125-126.

62. Ibid., 126.
63. Ibid., 127.
64. Ibid., 128.
65. deKock, *Dictionary of South African Biography*, 556.

The Seat of Editorial Control

The object of this discussion has been to ascertain whether or not the English speaking press of the Transvaal, and specifically *The Johannesburg Star*, was subject to direction by mine owners or imperial authorities. The answer is sometimes yes, sometimes no.

Significantly, however, for the majority of the period covered, the answer is no. Furthermore, whenever interests beyond the editor himself--and his true representation of his readership's views and interests--were dictating editorial policy, the manipulation appears to be brief and not well sustained.

A Tradition of Independence

Early newspapermen, those who made a name for themselves in Kimberley and Barberton, saw themselves as independent. Alfred Alyward and M.V. Phelan were not dictated to by special interest groups. Control of the editorial platform, if it emanated from anywhere outside an editor's personal agenda, came in the form of popular opinion. The editors were obliged to remain in step with the political sentiments of their readerships. They were inclined to reflect rather than to impose opinions on their readers.

This kind of independence continued to flourish in Johannesburg. It has been shown that Francis Dormer's skilful management of The Argus Printing and Publishing Company precluded the domination of any one his many investors; including Cecil Rhodes, J.B. Robinson, Barney Barnato, or the Corner House executives.

While Andrew Porter admits that during this period an editor's freedom to dictate his own political positions was highly valued, he argues that editors were appointed and resigned according to how well their views matched those of the newspapers' ownership. He writes, "Thus while it is strictly incorrect to talk of the editors being controlled either by the papers' owners or major shareholders, the practical effect was scarcely different."¹ The point

being made here is that the practical effect was very different; Dormer did retain control over his newspapers' content. By ensuring himself to be the major shareholder in *Argus* and by splitting the remainder of the shares among a variety of investors he effectively nullified Rhodes's, or anyone else's, ability to dictate editorial direction.

Likewise, Rhodes was prevented from controlling the editorial line taken by his other newspaper investment, the *Cape Times*. South African newspaperman George Green began his career on the *Cape Times* as a reporter and then went on to edit the *Diamond Fields Advertiser*. In 1910 he went to work for *Argus*, editing the *Cape Argus*. He described the "rumour" that the *Cape Times* had been controlled by Rhodes as, ". . . one of those plausible myths which periodically, as I know well from long experience, so easily gain currency."² At the time that Frederick Y. St. Leger, editor and chief proprietor of the *Cape Times*, agreed to accept an infusion of capital from Rhodes's man Rutherford Harris, secretary of the Chartered Company, it was because advertising revenue in those days was very low. St. Leger made it a clear condition, set out in a legal document, that Harris--or Rhodes behind him--was to have no influence over the policy or management of the newspaper. When St. Leger retired and Edmund Garrett took his place in 1894, Garrett inherited the same legal structure within which he could freely pilot the editorial course of the *Cape Times*.

Garrett most assuredly followed a political agenda that was exclusively his own. He remarked on the fatuousness behind investors presuming that they could dictate editorial policy when he said, "Rich men imagine that only money is needed to make a paper. They can order the machines, the plant, the printing ink, the brains, the enterprise, 'the novel and attractive features,' all for cash down. Why not the soul too? Ah! there's the rub."³

The Corner House, the other major capitalist investor in *Argus*, found it may have owned a good chunk of the property but still could not control what was coming off of the printing presses. Ample evidence has been given of dismay the executives felt at reading the editorials of Charles Finlason. And, trying to prove that Finlason was writing at the behest of Rhodes is a fruitless exercise. There are only a few very tenuous ties between Finlason and Rhodes. It is true that Finlason wrote for the *Independent* in Kimberley when that newspaper

was championing the efforts of the Great Amalgamator.⁴ However, Finlason was writing a humour column entitled "Tatler" and was more renowned for his performances on the field with the Kimberley Pirates' Cricket Club than for being a political pundit. And, although in his lighthearted travelogue, *A Nobody in Mashonaland*, he refers to Rhodes as "*the great man of South Africa*," it is obvious that his only contact with Rhodes had been as a spectator.⁵ It is doubtful that they ever even said hello to one another. Furthermore, Finlason's career as a political chameleon--writing for Kruger and Robinson and then trying to write what he thought would appeal to Rhodes or the South African League, or both--dismisses him from serious consideration.

As for William F. Monypenny, he was definitely selected for the editorship of *The Star* and then handled very closely by Alfred Milner and his representatives. Monypenny was manipulated at the outset of his tenure in Johannesburg because he was very untutored in current local affairs. He accepted guidance from his fellow Balliol man, Milner, who was clearly the emerging strong man in South Africa, and not Rhodes. The fact that Milner interviewed him for the post, naturally, would have been a large factor in his deciding to follow the High Commissioner's lead.

After the war, significantly enough, Monypenny did develop a strong enough set of personal convictions on local issues and resigned his post over a disagreement with the directors, most of them leading capitalists. The falling out was over the importation of Chinese labour for the mines. Had Monypenny merely been in disagreement with the directors over the coolie question he may have weathered the fracas and been able to promote his own view. However, he was at odds with practically the entire Uitlander population of Rand on the issue.⁶ He was desperately out of sync with *The Star's* readership and this more than anything else precipitated his having to leave the newspaper.

In the final analysis, the Transvaal newspapers were commercial enterprises dependent on circulation. This dependency equated survival with the ability to accurately interpret prevailing readership opinion. No degree of patronage could outweigh the importance of circulation, the barometer of popular appeal.

But newspapers did not slavishly follow public opinion. They did have some persuasive power. Even the relatively mundane could be promoted. For example, in Johannesburg on July 26, 1899, a prize fight between title holder J.R. Couper and Wolf Bendoff of London became a grandiose media event. The contest took place seven miles out of town and *The Star* went to great and elaborate lengths to print four editions throughout the day chronicling the details of and commentaries on the fight. The point is that the eager Johannesburg readership snatched up every single copy of all four editions released that day.⁷

Newspapers also engaged their readers on more serious matters. During the Jameson Raid, crowds gathered outside the office of *The Cape Argus* and waited there all day and all night for news. Eric Rosenthal describes the scene,

"The Argus printed special editions, and a line of men, including the editorial staff, conveyed the papers from the machine room to the publishing counter.

Don [Charles Davidson Don, assistant to Edmund Powell, editor] remembered that a telegram received late one night which stated that Jameson and his men were 'fighting their way inch by inch into Johannesburg' was read to the crowd by the sub-editor, Charles Dimpleby, perched precariously on the window sill of the Argus building.

Later came the news of Jameson's surrender; but it was decided not to make any announcement that night. Public tension was such that 'the editor feared that the office would be wrecked by the disappointed and angry crowd'.⁸

The decision to withhold disclosure of Jameson's surrender was by no means a neurotic or even vainglorious one on the part of the editorial staff. No one had forgotten the "Dying Duke" riot in Johannesburg that so seriously harmed "Dicky" Dormer's career.

It is hard to imagine a throng of people trying to tear down the local newspaper office over a tasteless editorial or storming nearest television station when the broadcaster announces a bit of bad news. But the equivalent of these things did happen then in South

Africa. And the fact that they did happen verifies how seriously people took their one and only news medium, the local newspaper. They read it and more importantly, they reacted to it, intellectually and emotionally. Contemporary British editor E.T. Cook wrote:

"The influence of an editor with a fixed and definite policy must always, however, be considerable, and especially in times of unsettlement. He is on the platform every day. He enforces, or insinuates, his principles on every occasion. His paper is a mirror which flashes the light from every point. The forces of reiteration and emphasis are great; and it is a tenable proposition that this influence of a newspaper with a definite policy is greater than elsewhere in new and sparsely populated countries, where other means for the formation of public opinion are less highly developed."⁹

Cook was referring to South Africa and his statement is borne out by the many examples of influence newspapers had among their readership in the sub-continent. This influence that newspapers exerted, however, was only half of the reciprocal relationship that existed between them and their readerships. The readers exercised influence over the newspapers also. For instance, *The Star* was most effective when it was edited by an individual who was sensitive to Uitlander opinion. This synergy between newspaper and readership was very much in evidence during the tenure of Francis Dormer and Frederic Hamilton.

It follows that this influence, which ran both ways, empowered South African newspapermen and allowed them considerable independence from outside influences; politicians or capitalists. These newsmen had a support system derived from their readership and did not need to align themselves with other factions. The only *Star* editors who could with any degree of certainty be identified as affiliated with parties or aims outside of their readerships were imported from England like Monypenny. They did not have nearly the impact on the local scene that the indigenous newsman had.

These foreign editorial implants were summarily rejected by the readership upon which they were foisted. The independence and persuasive powers that editors had was derived from their readerships and could only be exercised with the continued support of the public.¹⁰

The notion that an interest group used the Johannesburg media to get the population to accept a political platform not serving their interests is basically untenable. This

can be seen in the way Monypenny's 1899 editorials only served to stampede the populace out of the city instead of inspiring them to take up arms.

Lord Lytton in the late Victorian period observed that:

"Large classes of men entertain certain views on matters of policy, trade or morals. A newspaper supports itself by addressing these classes; it brings to light all the knowledge requisite to enforce or illustrate the view of its supporters; it embodies also the prejudice, the passion and the sectarian bigotry that belong to one body of men engaged in active opposition to another. It is, therefore, the organ of opinion; expressing at once the truth, the errors, the good and bad of the prevalent opinion it represents." ¹¹

In the case of *The Johannesburg Star* the class from which it derived its support was the Uitlanders who constituted the mainstay of its readership. The newspaper kept closely aligned with the sentiments held by this group. Whenever it did drift away from the Uitlanders' general opinion, *The Star* soon made editorial changes to correct its course. The newspapers of the late Victorian Rand, and specifically *The Johannesburg Star*, have been described by both contemporaries and historians as a manipulated press. For the most part, they were not.

Footnotes to Chapter 10

1. Porter, "Sir Alfred Milner and the Press," 325.
2. George A.L. Green, *An Editor Looks Back, South African and other Memories 1883-1946* (Westport Conn.: Negro Universities Press, 1970), 44.
3. Cook, *Edmund Garrett*, 84.
4. Robert I. Rotberg and Miles F. Shore, *The Founder, Cecil Rhodes and the Pursuit of Power* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 138.
5. Charles E. Finlason, *A Nobody in Mashonaland* (Bulawayo: Books of Rhodesia Publishing Co. PVT. Ltd., 1970), 127.
6. Rosenthal, *Today's News Today*, 138.
7. *Ibid.*, 46.
8. *Ibid.*, 114.
9. Cook, *Edmund Garrett*, 134.
10. Koss, *Rise and Fall of the Political Press*, 188.
11. Alan J. Lee, *The Origins of the Popular Press in England 1855-1914* (London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1976), 21-22.

Appendix: Timeline of Events

- 1836-1838** - The Great Trek; Boer exodus from British ruled Cape Colony to interior to form Independent Republics
- 1843-1848** - Britain claims sovereignty over Republican territories
- January 1857** - R.W. Murray, Bryan Darnell, and Saul Solomon found the *Cape Argus* in Cape Town
- 1858** - the South African Republic (Transvaal) is formed
- October 1863** - R.W. Murray founds The Great Eastern in Grahamstown to support the Imperial party
- 1866** - diamonds discovered in Natal
- several minor gold finds in the Transvaal
- Murray's The Great Eastern in Grahamstown folds and he goes on to edit Diamond News in Kimberley
- 1871** - Britain annexes the diamond fields
- 1872** - Alfred Aylward, editor of the *Diamond Field*, is Chairman of Kimberley's Digger's Committee
- 1873** - Lieutenant-Governor Southey takes away the Kimberley diggers' political power with the new constitution
- diggers' react by forming the Diggers' Association of the New Rush
- Jules Porges and Company established in Kimberley
- 1874** - diamond diggers' form the Kimberley Defence League and Protective Association
- 1875** - diamond diggers' show open signs of intending to mount an armed rebellion against British authority at Kimberley and Aylward adopts title of Adjutant of the Insurrectionary Forces
- M.V. Phelan, editor of *Gold Fields Mercury*, directs diggers' discontent at Pilgrim's Rest toward Gold Commissioner John Scoble of the Burger government
- Francis Dormer leaves England for South Africa and meets Cecil Rhodes aboard ship
- April 12, 1875** - Black Flag Rebellion at Kimberley is touched off by Aylward
- Aylward is removed from *Diamond Field* editorship and diggers' movement is put down
- Aylward is given editorship of *Independent*
- September 1876** - *Independent* folds due to financial problems
- 1876** - the *Cape Times* is founded in Cape Town by R.W. Murray, Jr.
- Britain annexes native territories

- November 1876** - diggers at Pilgrim's Rest mob the local jail to free Phelan and the Lydenburg Volunteers are called in, led by Aylward who is now in the employ of the Burger government
- 1877** - Britain annexes the SAR
- Phelan leads digger discontent toward republican government over conscription for Pedi campaign
- 1879** - Britain embroiled in Zulu War
- Francis Dormer covers Zulu War for Cape papers, *Queenstown Representative* and *The Argus*
- Britain declares Transvaal a crown colony and war breaks out
- 1880** - Saul Solomon leaves South Africa
- Cecil Rhodes elected to Cape Parliament as representative of Griqualand West
- Dec. 16, 1880** - Dingaan's Day; Boers take Heidelberg and formally establish South African Republic
- 1881** - First Boer War ends; SAR regains its independence and Britain, through the Pretoria Convention, retains suzerainty in the region
- July 1, 1881** - Dormer buys *The Argus* with the secret financial backing from Cecil Rhodes
- 1882-1891** - The Great Amalgamation; Kimberley diamond holdings monopolized under De Beers Consolidated Mines
- 1883** - Paul Kruger elected SAR State President
- Kruger initiates practice of granting commercial monopolies
- Johannesburg is founded
- 1884** - Pretoria Convention is updated with the London Convention; suzerainty clause was deleted from this agreement but would later be maintained by Imperial officials to have been left in it
- *The Diamond Times*, owned by Barney Barnato, is founded with R.W. Murray as editor; F.J. Dormer of the *Cape Argus* exposes the *Times'* slander campaign against John Fry, Kimberley's chief detective
- Kruger issues press release to London papers promising full citizenship rights to immigrants
- 1885** - gold digger discontent at Barberton toward Kruger's government led by *Barberton Herald*
- Nov. 23, 1886** - Dormer purchases Saul Solomon and Co. publishing and forms the Argus Printing and Publishing Co.
- Oct. 17, 1887** - Thomas and George Sheffield print first Johannesburg edition of their newspaper, the *Eastern Star* (formerly the *Great Eastern*), relocated from Grahamstown
- 1887** - Corner House--Eckstein's and Co.--established in Johannesburg with backing from Jules Porges and Co.
- Cecil Rhodes also arrives and starts up Consolidated Gold Fields of South Africa
- J.B. Robinson starts Robinson Gold Mining Company Ltd.

- 1888**
- Barney Barnato arrives in Johannesburg and establishes, among a number of enterprises, the Johannesburg Consolidated Investment Company and Barnato Consolidated Mines
 - Kruger reelected for second term of office
- 1889**
- Johannesburg suffers from severe water shortage causing Uitlander umbrage toward Kruger government; discontent articulated by the *Transvaal Advertiser*
 - Transvaal Chamber of Mines founded
- May 1, 1889**
- Dormer merges with the Sheffield brothers' *Eastern Star* to form *The Johannesburg Star*
 - Frederic Hamilton leaves editorship of *Zoutansberg Review* to become assistant editor of *The Star*
- 1890**
- after retirement of Jules Porges, Eckstein's is re-formed; Wernher Beit and Co. established in London
 - Political Reform Association founded in Johannesburg with J.W. Leonard as president
 - Cecil Rhodes becomes Prime Minister of the Cape
- 1891**
- Argus Co. establishes *Mashonaland Herald*
 - J.P. FitzPatrick works as columnist for *The Star* before taking post with Corner House
 - R.J. Pakeman leaves editorship of *Barberton Herald* to join staff of *The Star*
- Jan. 14, 1892**
- Pakeman's "The Dying Duke" article incites riot in Johannesburg and seriously injures Dormer's credibility
- 1892**
- National Union founded under leadership of J.W. Leonard, John Tudhope, E.P. Solomon, and Frederic Hamilton
 - Hermann Eckstein leaves Johannesburg and dies in Stuttgart a year later
 - Frederic Hamilton becomes member Argus Board
- 1893**
- Corner House starts up Rand Mines for deep-level mining under direction of Lionel Phillips
 - Kruger reelected for third term
- 1894**
- Argus Co. establishes *Bulawayo Chronicle*
- April 1894**
- group of Johannesburg capitalists make failed attempt at taking over government funded *Standard and Diggers' News*
- November 1894**
- Dormer goes to London on three months leave and Hamilton becomes acting editor of *The Star*
- December 1894**
- Sivewright Agreement expires; Kruger regains rights to Transvaal rail lines and raises freight rates
- 1895**
- deep level mining begins
 - gold shares crash on London market

- February 1895**
- Dormer, now in London, resigns from editorship of *The Star* and Argus Managing Directorship after Cecil Rhodes and Alfred Beit inform him of the Jameson Raid plot and expect him to lend his support to it
 - Frederic Hamilton becomes editor of *The Star*
- July 1895**
- in Cape Town, Rhodes informs Dormer he intends for the Jameson Raid to result in British flag over the Transvaal
- August 1895**
- Drifts Crisis; Chamberlain forces Kruger to back down over rail tariffs issue with show of naval force off Delagoa Bay
- October 1895**
- Dormer resigns his ordinary directorship of the Argus Co.
- November 1895**
- Jameson Raid conspirators, including Hamilton, resolve to proceed with plot to overthrow Kruger by force
- Dec. 29, 1895**
- Jameson crosses border; he and his men are rounded up by Boer commandos within a few days as are the Johannesburg Reform Committee members
- Jan. 26, 1896**
- all reform prisoners released from Pretoria prison except Lionel Phillips, George Farrar, J.P. FitzPatrick, John Hays Hammond, and Frank Rhodes
- April 27, 1896**
- Edmund Garrett of *Cape Times* visits reform prisoners in Pretoria and wins their confidence
- May 30, 1896**
- remaining reform prisoners released on condition of abstaining from any political discussion or activity for three years
- 1896**
- Frederic Hamilton leaves South Africa and edits the Argus publication, *African Review*, in London
 - R.J. Pakeman becomes editor of *The Star*
- 1897**
- Barney Barnato commits suicide
 - South African League founded with branches throughout South Africa; in Johannesburg led by W. Wybergh and T.R. Dodd
 - Kruger allows Johannesburg its first Town Council
 - government sponsors Mining Commission Study but then fails to act on the findings
 - Alien Immigration Law enacted
 - Press Law enacted
- March 1897**
- SAR and OFS meet at Bloemfontein Conference and forge alliance
 - *The Star* introduces new system of half-tone photographic line blocks to replace dated wood engraving process
- March 24, 1897**
- *The Star* is suspended by government order
- March 25, 1897**
- *Star* reappears as *The Comet* under Dormer's editorship
 - Pakeman is sent to Cape Town to act as temporary editor of *Cape Argus*
- May 5, 1897**
- Alfred Milner arrives at the Cape and assumes post of High Commissioner

- Summer 1897**
 - Dormer fails in attempt to buy back Argus shares from Rhodes; leaves South Africa shortly thereafter
 - Charles Finlason becomes editor of *The Star* after editing the pro-government *Press* and J.B. Robinson's *Johannesburg Times*
- October 1897**
 - President Kruger is re-elected
 - he allows Johannesburg to have its own Town Council
- 1898**
 - Boer government proposes 15 year extension of dynamite monopoly
- March 3, 1898**
 - Milner makes his famous Graaff Reinett speech calling for the Transvaal to institute reform
- April 1898**
 - *The Star* imports six new Linotype machines
- Fall 1898**
 - Milner visits England, meets with Julius Wernher and George Buckle, editor of *The Times*, to discuss new editor for *The Star*
- Jan. 17, 1899**
 - Milner interviews and is instrumental in selection of William F. Monypenny for editorship of *The Star*
- Dec. 23, 1898**
 - Edgar Incident; a Johannesburg policeman shoots and kills the Uitlander Thomas Edgar in a late-night drunken incident and the event becomes a rallying point for SAL and Imperial propaganda
- December 1898**
 - Uitlanders' First Petition is rejected by acting High Commissioner Sir William Butler
- January 1899**
 - Argus directors compile *The Star's* inventory lists and valuable documents and have them shipped to Cape Town for safekeeping
- January 14, 1899**
 - Battle of the Johannesburg Amphitheatre; the South African League holds a mass meeting to protest Constable Jones' acquittal for the murder of Thomas Edgar and it is turned into a terrible brawl by organized Boer rioters
- February 1899**
 - Monypenny arrives at the Cape and is schooled by Milner
 - four heavy Krupp guns are placed in forts overlooking Johannesburg; over £1.5 M spent on these forts as of this date
- March 1899**
 - Monypenny starts editing *The Star*
 - Corner House executes purchase printing works from J.B. Robinson and use them to launch the *Transvaal Leader*, edited by R.J. Pakeman
- March 27, 1899**
 - Uitlanders present a 21,684 signature petition to Milner
- March 27, 1899**
 - negotiations regarding naturalization and granting of citizenship privileges to Uitlanders between Kruger government and a delegation of leading capitalists led by M. Rouliot and J.P. Fitzpatrick break down
 - "The Great Deal" is rejected
- April 1899**
 - Monypenny is attacked in his office by Boer lawyer, Daniel Theron, and lives in fear thereafter

- May 4, 1899** - Milner issues his "Helot Despatch" to Chamberlain:
"The case for intervention is overwhelming. . . The spectacle of thousands of British subjects kept permanently in the position of helots, constantly chafing under undoubted grievances, and calling vainly to Her Majesty's Government for redress, does steadily undermine the influence and reputation of Great Britain and the respect for the British Government within its own dominions. . . "
- May 15, 1899** - the False Conspiracy; seven people, including the ex-chairman of the local SAL Richard Nicholls, are arrested and charged with conspiring to overthrow the Boer government
the conspiracy was proven to be a fabrication by the Johannesburg Commissioner of Police and his Agent
- May 31-June 5 1899** - Bloemfontein Conference
last attempt at negotiations between Kruger and Britain break down when Milner walks out after not receiving satisfaction on his demand for immediate franchise
- September 1899** - Pakeman is arrested then skips bail and escapes to Duban
- Monympenny flees the Transvaal and joins the Imperial Light Horse
- Sept. 29, 1899** - Britain issues ultimatum to Kruger government
- October 1899** - J.P. FitzPatrick's book supporting Uitlander reform politics, *The Transvaal From Within*, is published
- October 11, 1899** - war breaks out
- *The Star* enter 27 month hiatus
- 1905** - Milner's secretary, George Geoffrey Robinson, becomes editor of *The Star*
- Argus's *African Review* amalgamates with Leo Weinthal's *African World* in London
- 1911** - John Martin becomes General Manager of Argus and turns around the company's sagging financial condition
- Corner House London partners resolve to discontinue investment in newspaper enterprises

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