Princeton Model United Nations
Conference 2017

JCC First Boer War – British Committee
Chair: Matthew Edelstein
(If relevant) Director: Alex Fager
## CONTENTS

Letter from the Chair........................................................................................................... 3
Committee Description....................................................................................................... 5
  Introduction ...................................................................................................................... 5
  History of the Topic ........................................................................................................ 9
  Current Status ................................................................................................................. 17
  Questions for Consideration ............................................................................................ 25

Positions............................................................................................................................ 28
Dear Delegates,

I’m very excited to welcome you to PMUNC 2017! My name is Matthew Edelstein, and I am thrilled to be your chair for the British Committee within this year’s Joint Crisis Committee (JCC) on the First Boer War. First, to give you a little bit about myself, I am currently a senior at Princeton, majoring in Classics with a particular focus on Roman history and Latin literature. I am from New York City (the greatest city on earth, although I am admittedly a bit biased), and I am an avid sports fan, particularly of the Brooklyn Nets. On campus, aside from Model UN, I am also currently involved in the International Relations Council and the Princeton Corporate Finance Club. I am a member of the Princeton Tower Club (one of Princeton’s eating clubs), and an active participant in various intramural sports. Feel free to ask me about campus life if you’re interested!

This year will be my fourth (and, sadly, final) time staffing PMUNC, although I have participated in Model UN as a delegate since my freshman year of high school. In terms of staffing, I had the opportunity to work as an Assistant Chargé D’Affaires for the conference as well as a director for one of the JCCs during my freshman year, and I served as the Director-General for Regional and Specialized Committees at PMUNC 2015 during my sophomore year. Last year, at PMUNC 2016, I chaired the Tsar Nicholas II/Russian State Council crisis committee, which I found to be an incredibly fun experience. While I have greatly enjoyed all of the various positions that I have held at PMUNC up to this point, I am glad to be chairing one of the JCCs this year, as it brings me back full circle from my time as a director in the JCC 3 years ago.

As I am extremely interested in history myself, I personally considered historical crisis committees to be some of the most fun, exciting, and intellectually stimulating committees when I was a delegate, so I am thrilled that I have the chance to run a historical crisis in our committee this year. Our committee, which takes place on the tip of Southern Africa in 1878, will force you as delegates to immerse yourselves in a different place and time period and to try to address problems from the perspectives of individuals who were alive at the time rather than simply from a modern perspective. I also hope that researching this topic will allow you to learn more about a corner of history that you may not already know much about, but that was nevertheless significant in the context of
international affairs during what the British historian Eric Hobsbawm has termed the “Age of Empire” \(^1\) of the late 19\(^{th}\) century.

Indeed, in immersing yourselves in late 19\(^{th}\) century South Africa just prior to the outbreak of the First Boer War (otherwise known as the First Anglo-Boer War or the Transvaal War), we will force you to jump straight into a situation that holds immense geopolitical and economic implications for the players involved as well as into a society wracked with various political and social tensions. At the time that our committee begins, the political fate of the southern tip of the continent more generally, and the extent of British hegemony in the region in particular, is still very much up in the air and subject to change. Faced with a diverse set of pressures both on the ground in South Africa and coming from back home in London, you will have to make important and oftentimes difficult decisions in order to try to implement policies that will promote the best interests of the British Crown and its subjects. You will also have to think on your feet and adjust your plans in the face of new challenges and developments that will be thrown at you. You will not necessarily all agree on the best course of action. How you respond to such challenges and disagreements will directly impact the success of the committee’s initiatives. Furthermore, the choices that you make could have significant and broad-reaching consequences for both the Cape Colony in particular and the international order more generally.

I am certain that our committee will be one of, if not the most, fun committee at PMUNC (albeit possibly one of the more challenging committees), and I am eagerly looking forward to seeing what solutions you come up with and how our committee’s efforts turn out. I look forward to meeting you all soon, and I hope you find this experience both rewarding and engaging! Please shoot me an email if you have any questions about the committee, the conference, or myself. I would be more than happy to hear from you!

Best,
Matthew Edelstein
Chair,
JCC: First Boer War – British Committee

---

COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION

Introduction

As a brief introduction to the context and setting of our committee itself, the council represented by our committee will take place in the British Cape Colony on the tip of Southern Africa beginning in 1878 just before what would historically become known as the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. More specifically, many of the key British political and economic players on the sub-continent have been assembled for a meeting in Cape Town to discuss the direction of British involvement in the region and to develop a strategy that will most effectively further British interests. In other words, a major portion of the committee’s task will be to determine what the scope of British interests in the region should be and what actions must be taken to ensure that those goals are successfully achieved. While, in actuality, no such meeting with all of the specific players in our committee ever took place in 1878, each of the military officers, politicians, bureaucrats, envoys, and businessmen in our committee were, in fact, real people who would have had a variety of differing perspectives on how to address the issues facing the British in late 19th century South Africa. Thus, part of the challenge for you as delegates will be to balance the body’s broader mission to set the course for British involvement in South Africa that looks out for Britain’s best interests as a whole with what may be your character’s individual biases and motivations.

In addition to setting a course of action for British involvement, this committee will also be a crisis committee and, as such, will be responsible for adjusting to challenges as they arise, particularly in response to the actions of the Boers and Zulus in the other JCC committees. The crises and outcomes facing the committee when it convenes may or may not perfectly align with the reality of what actually occurred after 1878. For instance, while Cecil Rhodes, an individual in our committee, would go on in real life to become the single most influential figure in South African
politics and economics in the late 1880s and 1890s, in 1878, the businessman was not yet quite as prominent a political player. Whether he will go on to become quite as wealthy a magnate with as much political influence in the region over the course of our committee as in real life will depend on the decisions made, and actions undertaken, by this committee.

With that brief introduction, welcome to the JCC: First Boer War – British Committee.

In order to make it a bit easier to understand the historical background of the conflict described below, here are a couple of maps of the region in order to give a bit of a sense of where places are. Unfortunately, though, these maps are not perfect and may be a bit hard to read in certain places after they have been uploaded to the PMUNC website, so I recommend that, if needed, you do some additional basic research to find any other maps that may be helpful.
History of the topic

While there were several other tribes and peoples on the subcontinent at the time when our committee is meeting in the 1870s, the three most significant groups in South Africa from a political perspective were the Boers, the Zulus, and the British. Thus, it would make sense to start by giving a very brief history of each of these three groups’ involvement in the region:

1. Boers:

Initial Dutch Settlement Followed by British Annexation

In 1651, the Dutch East India Company first chartered a small settlement on the Cape of Good Hope, a post that was designed to resupply Dutch ships heading to the East Indies. Upon arriving at the Cape in three ships on April 6, 1652, Dutch settlers under the leadership of Jan van Riebeek founded the intended outpost, a settlement that would later grow and come to be known as Cape Town. Over time, the Dutch expanded beyond the small coastal outpost with its fortifications further into surrounding land taken from various tribes (such as a group known as the Khoikhoi), and, as a result, the outpost began to resemble a more substantial town. However, it was not until the 1670s when the British and French began to attempt to infiltrate trade in the Indian Ocean that the Dutch East India Company, which had originally discouraged the creation of an actual colony, moved to convert the relatively small town into an actual permanent settlement on the Cape. Indeed, in 1672, when the Netherlands was at war with the British and the French, the Company formally declared itself the owner of the territory on the Cape in order to stave off any potential ownership claims by the two rival European powers.²

Jumping ahead a century, after over a hundred years of Dutch control, the Dutch Cape Colony came to change hands several times during the European wars of the 1790s and early 1800s.

For instance, the Dutch colony first fell into foreign hands when, after France invaded the Netherlands in 1795, the Colony was occupied by the British, who were at war with France. The British held the Colony until 1803 when they returned the territory to the Dutch. Ultimately, after several transfers of control, the British took full, permanent control of the colony in 1814 at the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars. One major significance of this shift to British authority and the beginning of British administration of the Colony’s affairs was that it caused the migration of many Dutch farmers, who saw themselves as lacking economic opportunity under British rule, away from the Colony to other areas of Southern Africa.

The Boers, the Great Trek, and the Establishment of Boer Republics

As mentioned above, a lack of economic opportunities under British rule after 1814 led many Boers – who, by way of definition, were the early Dutch-speaking settlers of the Cape Colony – to turn to the self-sufficient life of the so-called trekboeren, or wandering farmer. The Boers were an independent people, often engaging in range wars against neighboring African kingdoms and even frequently rebelling against their own government. Disapproval of the new British policies caused approximately 13,000 Boers to emigrate from the Cape Colony to the interior of what would become modern South Africa, with many migrating between 1835 and the early 1840s in what came to be known as the Great Trek. While these groups all crossed the Orange River, they ultimately settled in various different areas. As a result, the trekkers established several independent Boer Republics, such as, most significantly, the Transvaal (also known as the South African Republic) and the Orange Free State.

---

Following the trek, tensions over land and property caused the Boers to come into conflict with the Zulus as well as with other African kingdoms. The Boers were able to overpower the Zulus in 1838 and establish what was known as the Natalia Republic. The British, however, soon grew worried about aggressive actions taken by the government in Natalia as well as came to value the small port city of Durban located in Natal along the coast. By 1843, instability prevailed in Natalia, as various African groups returned to lands that they had previously ceded to the Zulus. Due to the unstable situation as well as British reluctance to allow an independent state along the coast of Southern Africa, the British annexed the region as a colony. Many Boers left once again after this annexation in search of new lands towards the interior of what would become the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.\(^7\)

In the 1870s, the two principal sovereign Boer republics formed as a result of the Great Trek of which one should be aware are the South African Republic and the Orange Free State. The South African Republic, which was formed from a unification of smaller Boer republics in the region delimited by the Vaal, Hartz, and Limpopo rivers, was formally recognized as an independent state at the so-called Sand River Convention of 1852 in which the British recognized the Boers’ right to govern themselves independently in the South African interior without interference. The new state took on the name of the South African Republic eight years later in 1860. However, in 1877, just prior to the start of our committee, Britain officially annexed the South African Republic as the “Cape Colony of the Transvaal” in its newfound goal to federate the colonies of South Africa (see more detail in the “Current Situation for British” section below).\(^8\) Similar to the South African Republic, the Orange Free State, which was situated between the Orange and Vaal rivers with its

---

capital at Bloemfontein, formally received recognition of its independence via a treaty with the British at the Bloemfontein Convention of 1854. Although the British had annexed the territory as the “Orange River Sovereignty” in 1848, the Crown’s inability to establish a well-ordered administration in the province as well as constant conflicts with the nearby Sotho people caused the British to decide to withdraw in 1854. By 1869, the Boer republic, having established a system of government based, in part, on the U.S. Constitution, had successfully quelled the Sotho peoples, annexed various Sotho territories under a treaty, and set what would be the Orange Free State’s permanent borders.  

2. Zulu:

Zulu before 1828

At the beginning of the 19th century, the Zulu tribe, located near the White Mfolozi River, was one of the smaller Nguni clans in South Africa. They survived by farming grain and raising cattle that they raided from their neighbors.  

Their society was based on the formation of clans. Each clan owned property that the clan’s patriarch, or chief, controlled. Headmen aided the chief by running sections of the clan. Meanwhile chiefs from all the nation’s clans, as well as other leaders, advised the king.

Shaka

When Shaka became king in 1816, he organized the chieftaincy into an efficient military force that conquered all of present-day Natal by 1823. Shaka then proceeded to establish

---

11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
amakhanda, which were enormous city-like settlements, all over the kingdom in order to assert royal power.¹⁴

Shaka also reorganized the Zulu army into specialized regiments that used standard tactics and deadly assegai weapons.¹⁵ By the 1870s, the army also incorporated obsolete firearms that it acquired from European traders. When forming regiments, instead of grouping soldiers based on home village, the Zulu under Shaka used an age-based regimentation system that grouped similarly-aged soldiers together. The soldiers lived in their own separate villages and rarely returned home, which promoted the centralization of power and loyalty around the king instead of local leaders.¹⁶ Finally, regiments cultivated strong morale and associated honor and status with killing, which created soldiers eager to wage Shaka’s countless military campaigns.¹⁷

Shaka’s most famous innovation during his rule was the so-called “chest and horns” battle formation. In this formation, the attacking force would stay clumped together until it was close to the enemy. Then, the experienced warriors acted as the “chest,” engaging the trapped enemy in a frontal assault. Meanwhile, the younger warriors would act as the “horns,” flanking and surrounding the opponent. A reserve of experienced warriors, “the loins,” provided support for the formation’s chest.¹⁸ The goal of the “chest and horns” formation as well as other Zulu military techniques was to force the enemy into close combat.

Zulu from 1828 to 1878

---

¹⁷ http://smu-facweb.smu.ca/~wmills/course316/9Zulu_Shaka.html
In 1828, Shaka was assassinated and succeeded by one his half-brothers, Dingane. Under Dingane, Boers who were leaving Cape Town during the Great Trek streamed into lands controlled by the Zulu Empire. This migration led to a serious destabilization of the kingdom when Dingane’s brother, Mpande, allied with the Boers in order to seize power. He succeeded in ousting Dingane during the resulting Zulu civil war and reigned until his son, Cetshwayo, effectively wrested power from him in the 1860s.

Meanwhile, the physical borders of the Zulu Empire were fluctuating during this period. In 1840, the Boers acquired control of historically Zulu territory south of the Black Mfolozi river, thus effectively splitting the Zulu kingdom in two. However, the Boers were ousted when Britain annexed Natal in 1843. During the annexation, the British returned some territory to the Zulu, giving the Zulu control of all land between the Pongolo/a and Tugela rivers until the time when our committee begins in 1878.

3. British:

British Annexation and Administration of the Cape Colony

As mentioned earlier, after the French occupation of the Netherlands in 1795, the British took control of the Dutch Cape Colony and held it until 1803 when they returned the territory to the Dutch. After several transfers of control, the British finally established full, permanent

---

19 Ibid.
22 The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "Zululand."
23 Ibid.
sovereignty over the colony in 1814 at the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars. Following the beginning of British administration of the colony, as many Dutch farmers began to migrate to other areas in Southern Africa, British settlers founded Port Elizabeth in 1820, and a gradual immigration of British subjects to the region began (although this immigration was quite small relative to immigration to other British colonies at the time). By 1853, the Cape Colony formally became a crown colony, thus giving it its own government with a parliament. The parliament in the Cape Colony was elected on the basis of “Cape Qualified Franchise,” which was multi-racial and required a minimum level of property ownership. Executive power, though, rested in the Crown-appointed Governor.24

Griqualand and its Annexation

In addition to the Cape Colony itself, by 1878, the British also held sovereignty over several other territories in the region that had been settled by other groups. One example was the territory known as Griqualand. At the same time that the Boers began their treks out of the Cape Colony in the first half of the 19th century, the mixed-race people of the Colony sought to establish their own state as well. These groups left the Cape Colony and, led by a former slave named Adam Kok I, went north to areas along the western end of the habitable lengths of the Orange River. These mixed-race people were known as Griqua and spoke Afrikaans. By 1834, the Cape Colony formally recognized the territory of the Griqua people in Griqualand West, which at the time was under the leadership of Andries Waterboer.25

In 1866, diamonds were discovered for the first time near the banks of the Orange River in the Griqualand West territory. By 1869, larger diamond finds had led to the establishment of a mine

25 Martin Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold, and War* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007); 22.
at the location that would come to be the city of Kimberley. Following the finds, the nearby Boers of both the Transvaal and the Orange Free State laid claim to the region as well as to the Griqualand West government. After a mediation awarded the land to Griqualand West’s existing government, the Griqualand West government petitioned the British for annexation, which extension of control occurred in 1871. The British formally proclaimed sovereignty over the territory on October 27, 1871. Although Nicolaas Waterboer, the eldest son of Andries and the leader of the Griqua people, had expected to incorporate the colony immediately into the Cape Colony, in 1873, the Cape Colony government refused to do so due, in part, to Griqualand West’s ongoing disputes with the Orange Free State. As a result, the territory became a separate crown colony, governed by the unpopular Owen Lanyon, until the resolution of its disputes led to the incorporation of the territory into the Cape Colony in July 1877. Similarly, a territory on the southern end of Britain’s colony of Natal, known as Griqualand East, was also incorporated into Natal by 1878.

**Annexation of Basutoland**

Another territory over which the British claimed sovereignty by the 1870s was Basutoland. After a series of disastrous wars with the Orange Free State in the middle of the 19th Century, the King of Basutoland sought British protection and offered the country to the British for annexation in 1866. Annexed to Natal in 1868, the territory was transferred to formal Cape administration in 1871 but, from a practical perspective, remained under the control of the Basuto tribal organization.

---

27 Ralph, Julia (1900). *Towards Pretoria; a record of the war between Briton and Boer, to the relief of Kimberley*. Frederick A. Stokes company.
Current Situation for British

Changing Perspectives on the Place and Significance of South Africa within the Broader British Empire

When considering the issues that must be addressed by the delegates at this council in Cape Town in 1878, it is important to recognize that South Africa was only one small piece of the broader British Empire of the 19th century, an Empire that the historian John Darwin has described as encompassing an entire “British world-system” managed from London. Darwin defines the British Empire as a “world-system” because, in the period from 1840 to 1940, Britain exerted its presence commercially and militarily in every region of the world. However, it is important to understand that, while the Empire was global in its breadth of reach, it was not simply a formal territorial empire in the conventional sense whereby Great Britain exerted hegemonic control over every location in which it held interests, but rather it included a variety of different relationships and colonies. The Empire contained so-called “colonies of rule,” such as India (which was arguably Britain’s most significant colony), over which Great Britain exerted direct control as well as “settlement colonies,” such as Canada and Australia, which, although closely tied to the mother country, nevertheless were largely self-governed. In addition, the British Empire also comprised of, among other things, various protectorates, mandates, naval and military fortresses (such as Gibraltar and Malta), occupations (like Egypt), treaty-ports, and indirect colonies of commercial importance over which Britain did not claim ownership or sovereignty but exerted significant influence.

The British world-system held such an amalgamation of different relationships partly because the British Empire was not the result of any formal policy decision or master plan by the government in London. Darwin, for instance, argues that most of Britain’s colonies or commercial

---

32 Darwin, John. The Empire Project, 1.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
equivalents came about as the result of actions by “private enthusiasts in search of wealth, virtue or religious redemption” who would then drag the government in Whitehall behind them. As Darwin summarizes, “British expansion was driven not by official designs but by the chaotic pluralism of British interests at home and of their agents and allies abroad.”

Once these areas that held British interests and influence were established, the Crown felt an obligation to protect those interests militarily, and the primary source of British military might in the 19th Century was the superiority of Britain’s navy. Hence, certain areas took on geopolitical significance for the Crown due to their importance for the British Navy by serving such functions as being centers for resupplying British ships or protecting important trade routes. Thus, one of the principal factors connecting the disparate parts of Britain’s world-system was the way in which Britain’s naval and military forces protected British interests all across the globe. In addition to the military, another major source of connectivity within Britain’s far-flung empire were commercial links, as British capital from London often supported investment and economic growth in the colonies. Finally, the British Empire was also tied from a demographic perspective resulting from the migration of British citizens to the various corners of the empire. In fact, migration to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa helped to relieve domestic distress at home stemming from population changes that were occurring as a result of Britain’s industrial revolution.

In this context, the Crown historically only perceived South Africa as being important from a strategic perspective in that it needed to have naval bases on the coast in order to maintain naval superiority over the shipping routes to India and the far east. As a result, Britain’s interest was originally only in controlling the coastal areas (such as around Cape Town and Durban), and the

---

36 Ibid.
Crown did not particularly care as much about the inland regions that were largely controlled by the native African kingdoms and Boer republics.

However, by the 1870s, the Crown’s attitude towards the interior of the South African subcontinent began to change, with Whitehall beginning to have a greater interest in the region for several reasons. First, South Africa began to be of increased commercial interest due to a diamond rush that took place in the area around Kimberley starting in 1867 and continuing into the 1870s. As Darwin describes, the speculative mining world around Kimberley and its “voracious demand for imports, capital, railways and black labour transformed the Southern African economy… [Kimberley] was a magnet for capital and enterprise and the natural springboard for the penetration of the northern interior by traders, prospectors, speculators, and land-hungry settlers. It was the forward base-camp of sub-imperialism.”\(^{38}\) One particularly significant example of such a businessman who arrived in South Africa during this diamond rush was none other than Cecil Rhodes, who first made it to the region in 1870. By the time he was twenty-three years old in 1876, Rhodes, who based his diamond businesses in Kimberley, had already obtained a small fortune,\(^{39}\) and, at the time that our committee begins, his endeavors continue to flourish.

Second, the British attitude towards the interior of South Africa also shifted due to a change in administration back in London, which resulted in the appointment in 1874 of Henry Howard Molyneux Herbert, the 4th Earl of Carnarvon, to his second term in office as British Colonial Secretary. Herbert had earlier served his first term in office from 1866 to 1867, during which period he oversaw the federalization of Canada and the granting of its dominion status. In his second term in office, beginning in 1874, he sought to carry out a similar form of confederation in Southern

\(^{38}\) Darwin, John. *The Empire Project*, 228.

\(^{39}\) Darwin, John, 227.
Africa. As a result, Herbert sent Sir Bartle Frere as Governor and High Commissioner to South Africa to accomplish this goal of confederation in 1877. However, in addition to Frere, Herbert also had another proxy in Southern Africa who had been instructed to accomplish this goal, namely the Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal, Sir Theophilus Shepstone. The South African Republic had recently engaged in an expensive war against a group called the Pedi under a leader named Sekhukhune in the north of the Transvaal as well as in a border war with the Zulu in 1876 (see more below), and, so, the South African Republic’s government under President T. F. Burgers had been left in a politically insecure position. Thus, in January 1877, Shepstone traveled as a special commissioner to the Transvaal, and, by April, the Republic had been annexed. Although this annexation was carried out in a non-violent manner, many Boers remained unsatisfied with the result, as the negotiations were perceived by many to have been settled by unsavory (i.e., potentially corrupt) methods. Thus, many Boers began to agitate against the British by launching formal complaints.

Third, the British government’s interest in the interior increased as a result of geopolitical concerns about the potential encroachment of rival European powers into the region, a major consideration for the British in the context of the overall colonial struggle for global influence among the nations of Europe at the time. Indeed, the British government was particularly concerned in the 1870’s with the potential for other powers to enter the region, as the Germans were increasing their influence in Namibia and the French were doing the same in Madagascar. As a result, the existence of independent Boer republics in the region, which could in the future trade with - or ally

---

themselves with foreign powers at the expense of the British, began to be seen as a potential threat to British hegemony in the region.

**Responsible Government of the Cape Colony and the Issue of Local vs. Crown Administration**

This increased interest by the British Crown in the South African subcontinent exacerbated a pre-existing debate within South Africa over the degree to which the Cape Colony should be administered by the local British subjects on the ground as compared to by the imperial government and its representatives. In 1872, John Molteno, a politician in the Cape Colony’s parliament, was able finally to get the right to self-government for the Cape Colony by convincing the Colonial Office and the recently-appointed British Governor Henry Barkly. Following his efforts, Molteno became the first Prime Minister of the Cape Colony. During his tenure, he pursued a strong set of policies that sought to counter regional and ethnic factionalism, used revenues from taxes on diamonds and ostrich feathers to fix shortfalls in budgets, and invested heavily in infrastructure. Molteno’s administration, which has often been referred to as the “Responsible Government” after the political system of self-governance for which Molteno’s political movement had advocated, also founded the University of the Cape of Good Hope during his term in office.

**Last Xhosa War and the Continued British Dispute over Administration of the Cape Colony**

Since the conclusion of the Cape Colony’s previous war against the Xhosa in the 1850s and the Xhosa cattle killing movement of 1857-1858, the Cape Colony government had striven hard to maintain low-cost peace on its eastern borders through a combination of various different policies, including the multi-racial franchise, mixed-race frontier police forces, and the legal recognition of indigenous land tenure. Indigenous groups, though, adapted to the era of peace differently, with some, such as the Fengu people in particular, integrating into Cape society and joining the police...
forces.\textsuperscript{44} The King of Thembuland, an area in the north of the free Xhosa territories, decided to allow the territory to be annexed by the British in 1876.\textsuperscript{45} However, Kaffraria, the Xhosa region between the Cape Colony and Natal, remained independent.

The independent status of Kaffraria, though, ran contrary to the plans of Carnarvon and the new British imperial design for a South African confederation. Thus, when a drought intensified in late 1877 and tensions spread between Gcaleka and Fengu tribes within Kaffraria, the High Commissioner for South Africa Bartle Frere had the opportunity that he needed to spur a conflict that may result in annexation. After a border skirmish, Frere demanded to see the Gcaleka chief Sarhili, who refused. Frere replied that this rejection was an act of war, and, so, soon afterward, Gcaleka attacks began to take place along the borders of the Cape Colony.\textsuperscript{46} The Cape Colony government, which was wary of any heavy-handed interference by the British imperial government, sent forces of its own to deal with the Gcaleka without any help from British imperial soldiers. These highly mobile forces sent by the Cape Colony government were quite successful.

Nonetheless, in spite of these initial successes, Frere insisted on moving ahead with an invasion by British imperial troops. To accomplish this plan, he first declared the disarmament of the Cape’s native militias. Predictably, this action led to chaos in the Eastern Cape, thus giving Frere an excuse to bring in imperial troops. The British forces were able to take over Gcaleka territory easily, but the Gcaleka combatants themselves evaded the slow moving imperial forces and began to attack settlements in the Eastern Cape. In the face of attacks on settlements in the Eastern Cape, the Cape Colony government demanded to be able to re-arm the native militias. In response to the

\textsuperscript{44} Oliver, Roland; Fage, J. D.; Sanderson, G. N. (1985). \textit{The Cambridge History of Africa}. Cambridge University Press.


locals’ demand, Frere petitioned for the disbandment of the Cape government, using the chaos in the Eastern Cape as evidence of their incompetence.  

In the meantime, Frere allowed the re-armament of the native militias, who gave the imperial forces the necessary force and mobility to defeat decisively the Gcaleka and send the last of the hostiles into the Amatola mountain range. The final remnants were defeated by March 1878, and the last of the independent Xhosa territories had been integrated into the British empire. However, the Cape Colony’s right to self-government, previously advocated for and achieved by Molteno, had been lost in the process, as Frere’s petition for the imperial administration of the Cape government came through by February 1878.

Zulu Tensions

There had been tense border fights between the Boers of the Transvaal and the Zulus in 1876, and it had long been perceived by the Zulu that they needed to rely on British support to counter the Boers of the region. This alignment of interests between the Zulu and the British in relation to the Boers meant that the Boers could not resist the British annexation of 1877 without fear of the intervention of the Zulu against them. After annexation, though, the Boers took what actions they could to try to increase tensions between the Zulus and the British. Thus, they helped to scuttle negotiations between Shepstone, now administrator of the Transvaal, and the Zulu in 1877, after which the view of the British colonial administrators towards the Zulu began to turn increasingly sour. Furthermore, the British administration under Carnavron and Frere intended to move forward with their eventual goal of a confederation of the entire subcontinent.

Other Useful Information about the Situation in 1878

Although there are no significant resources currently known in the lands beyond the Limpopo and Orange Rivers, exploration is needed to determine what trade, settlement, and development might be possible.

The Portuguese have established a harbor and base on Delagoa Bay in the settlement of Lourenço Marques. The bay is one of the best in all of Southern Africa, but there is little infrastructure. Further north, the Portuguese have strong trading connections along the coast all the way up to Zanzibar and inland along the Zambezi. A powerful native power, the Gaza Empire of the Tsonga people, has emerged along this territory. The Gaza Empire is ruled by individuals who are related to the leaders of the Zulu and Swazi royalties. Across the sea, the French and British have been competing for influence in Madagascar as well as for control over the Mascarene Islands of Reunion and Mauritius.

Bordering the Orange Free State along the Orange River live the Tswana people in what is known as the Bechuanaland Kingdom. The King, Khama III, is closely aligned with the British, having converted to Christianity and taken over the Kingdom with missionary support.

In the arid plains north of the mouth of the Orange River, several groups of mixed blood have settled in what is known as Namaqualand. These people, descendants of Boers and Khoisan peoples, have set up settlements in the region, but various unorganized tribes live throughout the region. German missionaries and traders have set up extensive networks along the coast of this region. Beyond, the Portuguese control settlements near the mouth of the Congo in Angola.

Finally, it is pertinent to remember that Germany and France are powerful, wealthy, and looking to counter British power wherever possible. Other international players such as the United States of America, the Low Countries, and other European nations may also be interested in significant investments in the region.
Questions to Consider

Although by no means all-encompassing, here are a series of possible questions to keep in mind while you are doing your research:

- To what extent do the British need to control the independent Boer republics, particularly the South African Republic (which was recently annexed by the British) and the Orange Free State? If the British should control these lands, what form should British administration of those territories take? How much of a say in the government should the local Boers have? In other words, what would effective British control over the Boer states look like?

- How much of a threat to British hegemony in the region do the independent Boer republics actually pose? Does their independence pose more of a geopolitical or economic (or other type of) challenge for the British? What is the likelihood that the Boer republics would ally themselves, or trade, with any of Britain’s European rivals?

- How should the British deal with local Boer discontent in the recently annexed Transvaal?

- Given the fact that, even after the Great Trek, there is still a large population of Afrikaners living within the Cape Colony, would British conflict (particularly armed conflict) with the independent Boer republics serve to alienate the Afrikaners currently living in British territory? How might the Afrikaners in the Cape Colony respond? If conflict were to occur, how might the British co-opt the Afrikaner population in the Cape?

- How should the British address the internal disputes that exist over the amount of self-rule that the Cape Colony should have? By having too much imperial oversight, does the Crown risk alienating the local British subjects, who are wary of too heavy a hand from Whitehall? Or do the benefits for the Empire as a whole that come from Crown oversight of the colony outweigh the potential problems of local discontent?
• To what extent are the interests of the British businessmen and mining companies in South Africa in line with those of the British Crown more broadly? Would the Confederation of South Africa as proposed in the Confederation Plan inevitably result in more active involvement in South African affairs by the imperial government in London? If so, would such increased involvement be detrimental to the interests of the British companies and businessmen in South Africa?

• How should the British address growing tensions with the Zulu tribes?

• How might the British work to block the expansion of the spheres of influence of other European powers in the region?

• What role should the Cape Colony (with or without confederation of the entirety of the subcontinent) play within the broader British Empire moving forward?

• What is public sentiment like back in Britain, and how might the public back in Britain respond to the actions that the committee might take?
Positions

You will each be assigned a character for the duration of this council, the unique perspective of whom you will represent at the meeting. Remember that the council consists of a variety of different individuals who may have differing perspectives. Indeed, the committee consists of, among others, appointed representatives of the British Crown, local British subjects involved in the local government, British businessmen who have made their fortunes in the region, chiefs of indigenous groups, and even a leader of one of the Cape Colony’s native militias. Thus, when researching your character, you should try to think about how your specific historical individual may have viewed the issues facing the Cape Colony (and the direction of the Colony going forward) and how that perspective may differ from that of some of the other characters in the committee.

While the Chair will not represent a specific individual throughout the conference, you should regard the Chair as the so-called “President” of the council that has been assembled (similar to how John Hancock was the “President” of the Second Continental Congress), whose role is primarily to preside over the proceedings and to moderate the debate within the committee. Furthermore, the Chair is responsible for upholding the council’s parliamentary procedures, coordinating its actions, reporting its decisions back to the British Crown, and relaying its directives through the proper channels as appropriate to ensure their timely implementation.

Below are the names of the characters within the committee. You will each be responsible for carrying out your own independent research into your characters. I should note that there might be a lot more material on the characters for some of you than for others. If you are someone for whom not a lot of specific information is known about your character in particular, you should not feel discouraged, as ultimately the individual details of the characters are less significant than the quality of debate and policy ideas that you come up with. You can also learn more about your specific portfolio powers once you arrive at the conference. Furthermore, I suggest that you think
about how someone in your character’s position at the time may have plausibly viewed the issues at hand.

1. **Henry Bartle Frere** - High Commissioner for South Africa
2. **Sir Theophilus Shepstone** - Secretary for Native Affairs
3. **John Molteno** - former Prime Minister of the Cape Colony
4. **John X. Merriman** - former Commissioner of Public Works for the Cape Colony
5. **Gordon Sprigg** - current Prime Minister of the Cape Colony [for the purposes of the committee, although the imperial government has taken over administration of the Cape Colony by 1878, the parliament itself technically was not disbanded, so there is still a head of the majority coalition]
6. **Frederic Thesiger** - 2nd Baron of Chelmsford and Lieutenant General of British forces in South Africa
7. **Letsie I Moshoeshoe** - Paramount Chief of Basotho
8. **John Colenso** - Bishop of Natal
9. **Captain Bikitsha** of the Cape’s Native paramilitary (i.e., militia) units
10. **Nicolaas Waterboer** - Captain of the Griqua people
11. **Saul Solomon** - prominent Cape Colony MP for Cape Town [liberal, supporter of enfranchisement, runs the liberal newspaper *Cape Argus*]
12. **John Paterson** - prominent Cape Colony MP for Port Elizabeth [prominent businessman, ally of Sprigg and Frere]
13. **Cecil Rhodes** - mining businessman in Kimberley
14. **Charles Rudd** - mining businessman in Kimberley
15. **Barney Barnato** - mining businessman in Kimberley
16. **Thomas Charles Scanlen** - Cape Colony MP for Cradock
17. **Owen Lanyon** - Governor of Griqualand West